



TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
CHEMNITZ

Faculty of Humanities
English Department
Chair of English Literatures

Turning Pages
An Annual Creative Writing Journal
at Chemnitz University of Technology
Issue 2, 2020



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten (Editor)
Dr. Mandy Beck (Editor)



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Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the diversity and originality of *Turning Pages* with their textual and graphic pieces, thereby encouraging us to continue with this unique project at Chemnitz University of Technology.

Ian Watson

Day Job

George Bernard Shaw
has a lot to answer for.

*Those who can, do, and
those who can't, teach,*
she asserted, after I'd scraped
her Tolkien clone
bone-clean of adjectives.

*Actually, I can, I say,
but I teach as well
anyway.*

I could be a bank clerk like T S Eliot
or a tax collector like Robert Burns
or work in a library like Philip Larkin
or even be a bloody paediatrician
like William Carlos Fucking Red
Wheelbarrow Fucking Williams.

But I do this Monday to Friday,
day by day,
like Kathleen Jamie, Simon Armitage,
Carol Ann Duffy, Alice Oswald,
Andrew Motion, Paul Muldoon and
Jackie Kay.

Ian Watson

Two Poets

Two poets out for a walk
with thermos flasks and rucksacks
and sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs
and brand-new waterproof notebooks.

They wandered boldly through the crowd
to where the city's river slimes
down to a sunless sea, down past
the coal barge and the railway bridge,
and drank the milk of pararhymes.

Then one said, a tad too loud,
I want to be Wordsworth today;
I'm tired of being Coleridge.

Ian Watson

Raw Material?

For years I'd read the working-class writer.
His description of the drudgery in that
Midlands factory was something I could
identify with. Not exactly a role model,
but maybe something to draw on.

I stopped when he brought out this book
about a working-class writer who has lost his roots,
so goes back home from Notting Hill to tap his former life
and find some raw material for a novel he's writing
about a working-class writer in Nottingham
who has lost his roots and goes back home
to gather material for a novel about a
working-class writer who has lost his roots and
goes back home to harvest raw material...

Ian Watson

Dead Time

Reduced to public transport by a puncture,
I windscreen-wipe my glove
and squint at a mirror copy of myself,

then cup my hands to where the steam has been
and turn my faces into a split pea pod,
to find the town I'm used to riding through.

This is the time I always moaned for
that others have, with nothing else to do
but write. But write? Anything but.

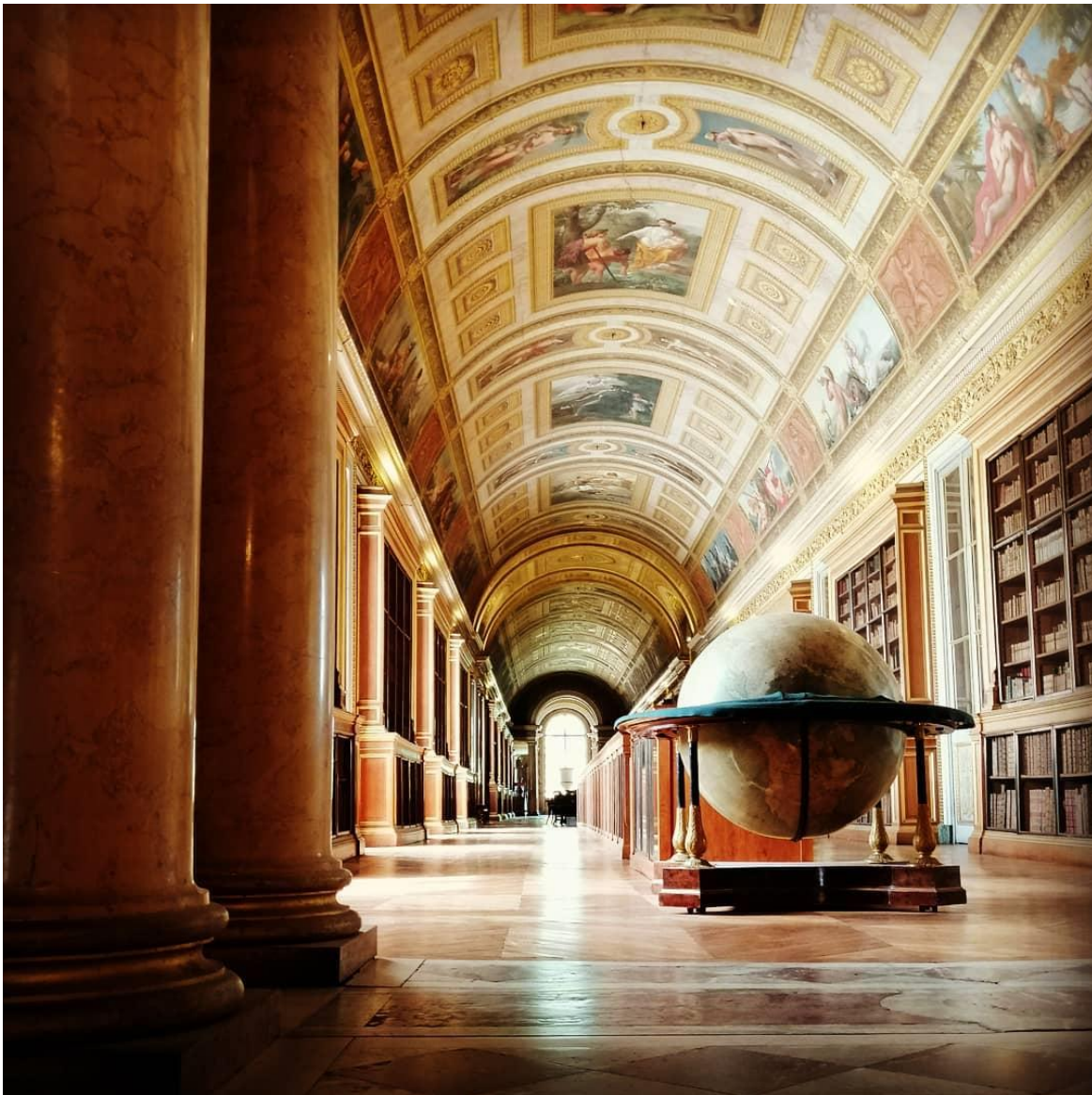
Where is the muse on the ten o'clock tram
that's tough enough to deal with zombie coughs
and handkerchiefs? The bike is more hygienic.

Ghosts window-wipe and lean to meet their
clones; they scowl at slithering laundrettes
or grumble to their steaming dogs.

I hunch, pull up my collar, then
see out of the corner of the other eye
that my better half is reaching for a pen.

Andreas Gloge

They stored the old books in a marble hallway that got touched by golden sunbeams every morning. Little did they know... The books thereby learned about all the forgotten tales of everything the sun had ever seen and then the books whispered to each other. Word by word. Tale by tale. Into the void of the golden marble hallway. Only the globe listened. Only the globe understood. And by that simple words were able to move the globe...



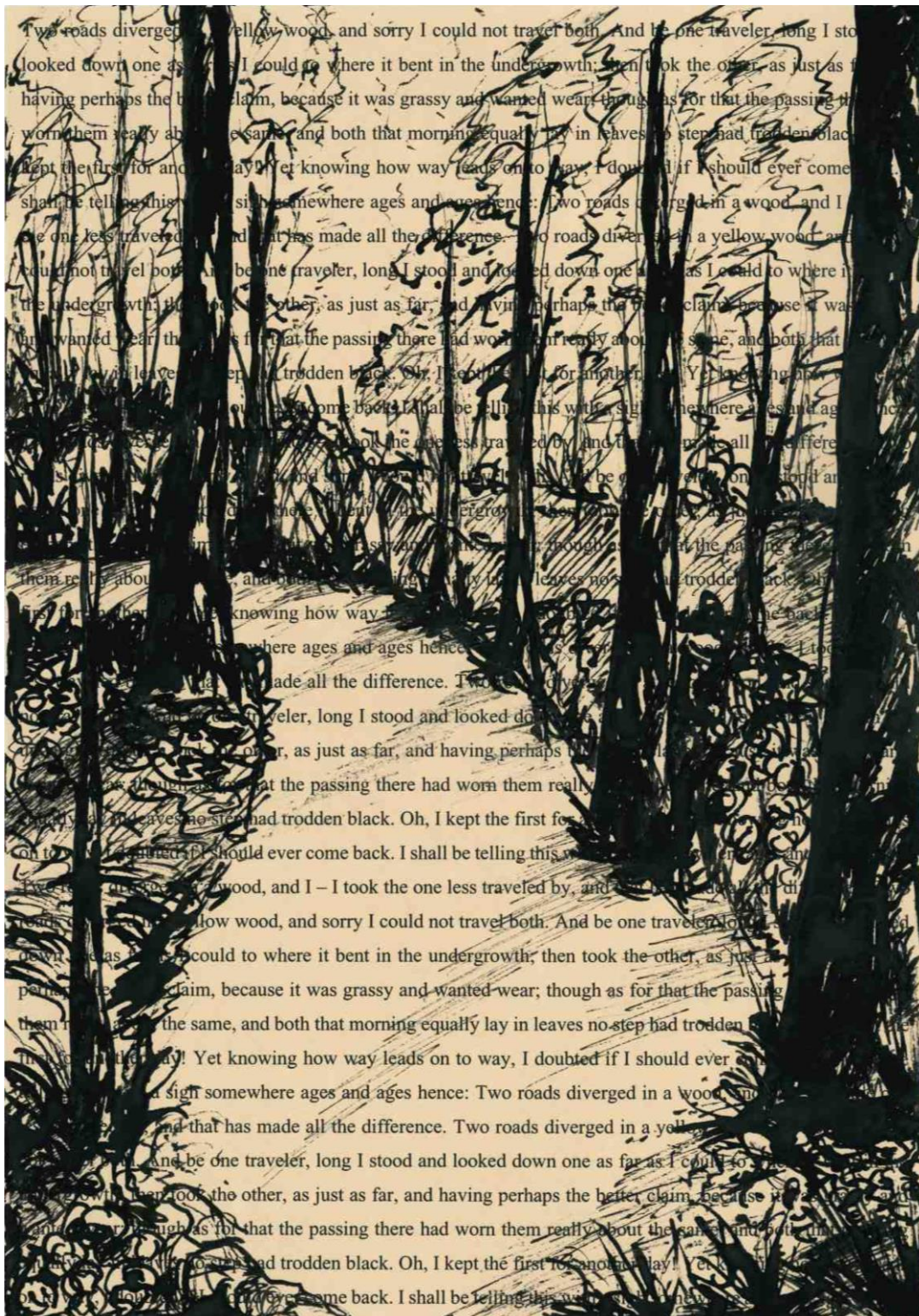
Andreas Gloge

Sometimes it's easy to spot the fairies. The trick is to blink with open eyes while humming silently to your own heartbeat while standing on one leg with both feet on the ground while taking a picture against the sun with your lens closed. As I said: just a piece of cake, really...





Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both. And be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth; then took the other, as just as far, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear; though as for that the passing there had worn them really about the same, and both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back. I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.



Sophia Merkl, *The Road (Not) Taken – Lebenswege / Paths of Life*

Harald Linke

The Linden-tree in front of my Window

How tall you are,
You grow to reach the sky!
O yes, you make me sing!
When morning dawns,
your rustling wakes me up
and blessed eyes perceive
the day's first wonderworld:
It's you, my beauty.

Then, spring-time marching in,
the birds sit in your greening heights,
the cock repeats his "Here I am"
until the hen has found him.
They mate and mating flatters you, my beauty.
Summer makes you bloom
and smell in sweetest scents,
which causes guests that hum and buzz and whirr
to come and taste a drink of purest purity,
and nature freely serves it
as long as stocks allow.
In autumn all your leaves turn dry
and fall to dress a meadow,
where gardeners will pile them up
so hedgehogs and companions
can find a cosy bed beneath them.
Well, winter knows you bare,
and yet presents a song to praise you:
your branches strong, your twigs so filigree.
That's you, my beauty.

You teach me to reflect
on how things go together,
on spring, on summer, autumn, winter,
on cock and hen,
on steadiness and change,
on hurried moments, on eternity.

Harald Linke

Only you

When morning dawns the beach is at its best:
No people chatting, while the gulls still sleep.
The burning globe starts on its way for west,
adds golden glitter to the ocean's deep.
I'm standing at the door strangely beguiled,
cannot but marvel at a sky so blue,
don't dare to move, amazed like a child
and yet I do
'cause like a clarinet so mild your voice does purr:
"Good morning, dear!" I slowly turn around.
You're snuggling in our bed of love. Now I must stir
and I am bound
to greet with my guitar so swell a day
and to compare its pride to you.
To only you, I say.
 I sing this summer morning's twofold grace:
 It's beautiful, it's perfect, it's like you.
 My words are praise and never-ending praise.
 I know I cannot overdo.
You listen and you sigh.
Your smile invites me. Soon we float on high!
Clung to each other, all our doubts are gone.
Two lovers. In our love but one.

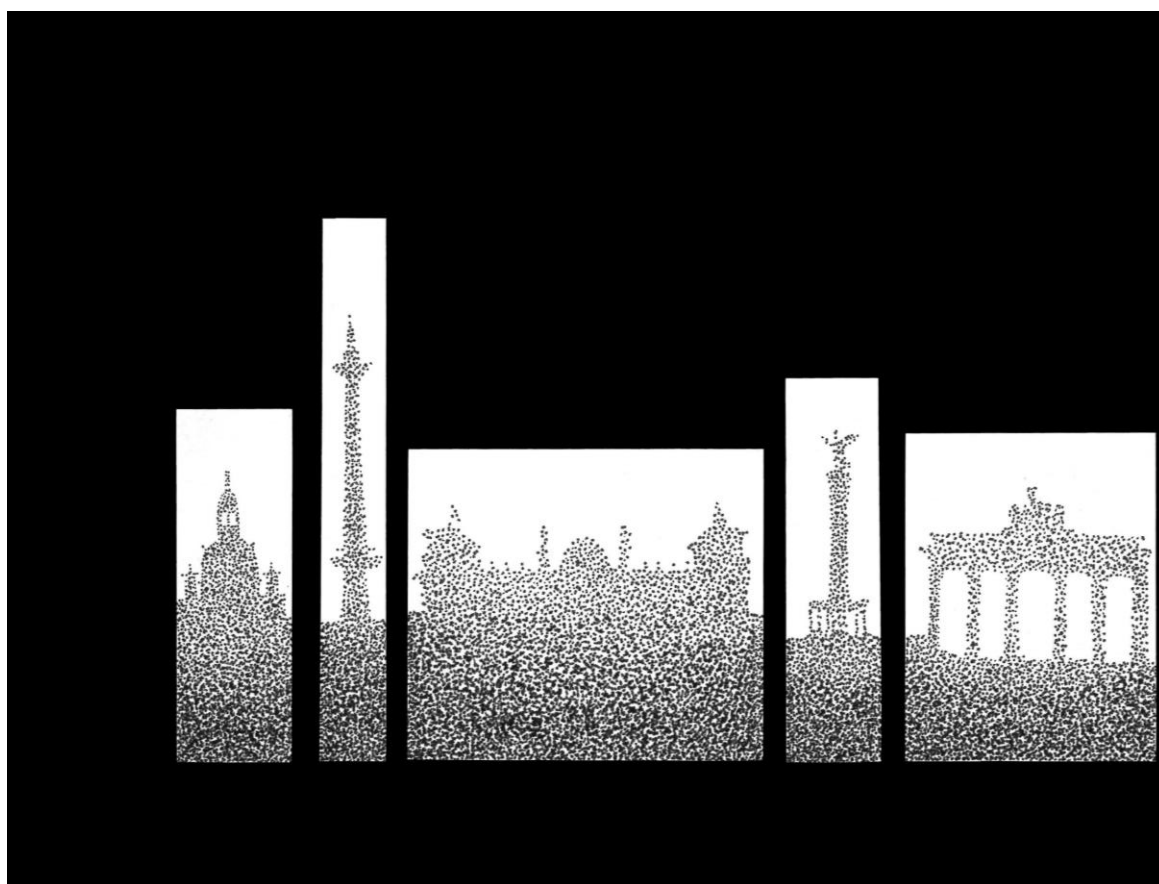
Harald Linke

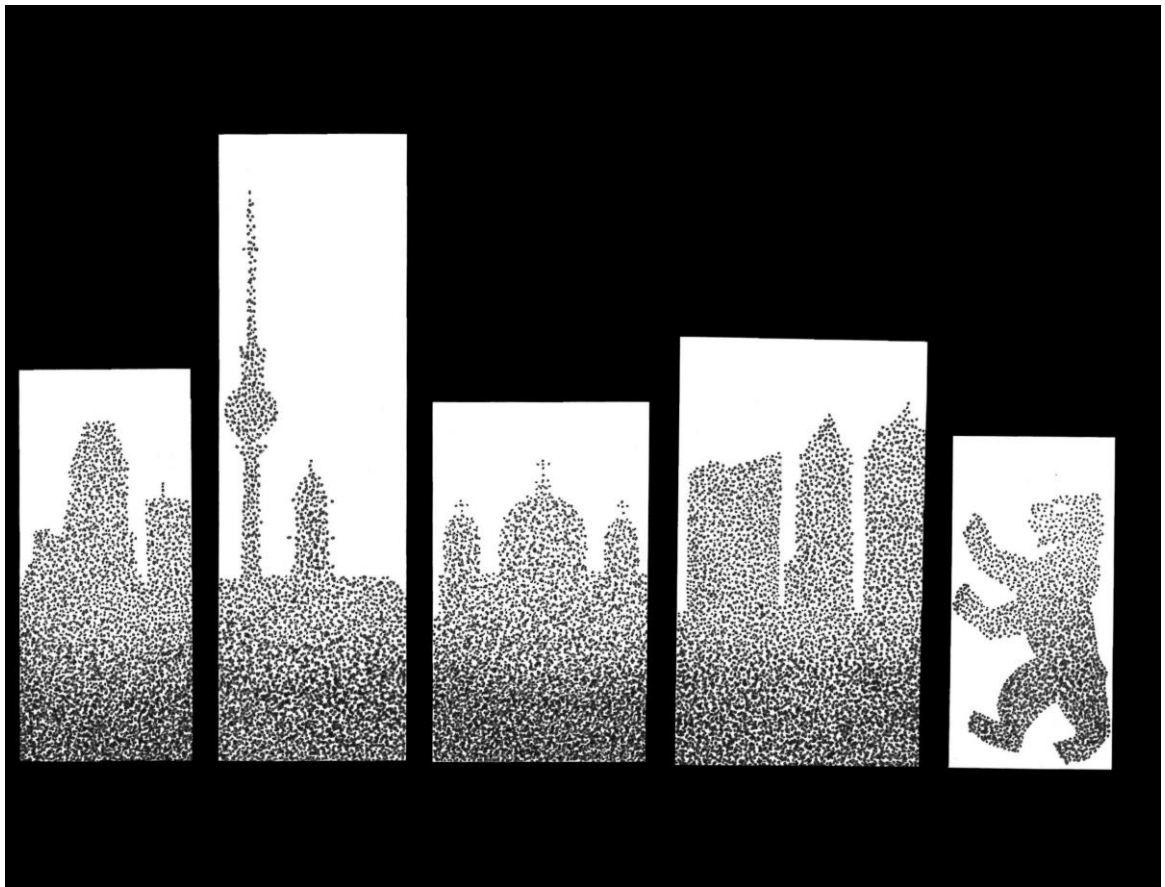
Certainty

Storm-beaten, grey and tired, worn.
Yes, life has hammered on me many a blow.
My face shows tracks of all I count forlorn.
Old age is what remains. And ever so.
I am the fire that will soon stop burning,
am more and more the ashes of my past.
I am the ruins of my outlived yearning.
Now, does that say my love will wane as fast?

Love! Can it, if it's real, really wane?
I doubt that. What is enshrined deeply in one's heart –
how should it fall apart?
O no, it will remain.

This is my pledge: May time disgrace my name,
dreams unaccomplished mean to me so little.
Love gives much more than hunting for an aim
that turns out too much wanted, frail and brittle.
O yes, it's love that powers my old brain.
Brings all wherein I satisfaction gain.
For sure:
When yesterday meanders through my mind,
My chin is up.
Don't see that?
Are you blind?





Miriam Beck, Ich Bin ein Berliner.

Elena Furlanetto

Geographies

where are you from
the easiest and most damning
of questions

neither you or I
could answer

but you gave me five languages
five hypothetical children three countries burned
forests an all-white-except-one family
two capitals I did not know a story
with a tiger in it

I left into the night
did that answer your question

10 July 2020

Elena Furlanetto

Belatedly

yes I have
left you very alone
learnt your language and forgot it
set fire to the field your mother owned
and I didn't wake you the night I saw
a flock of shooting questions

the one with the crows

yes I did give you a dead shell
as a present I swear I didn't know
it meant something else in your language

but this is not reason enough
to forget my birthday

01 September 2019

Andreas Gloge

Out of the old glass menagerie a pyramid arose and its reflection didn't lead me to the moon, I went much further – for time is the longest distance between two places...



Marvin Bergt

Strange

The new, the unexpected, the unknown
Is standing right in front of me
Staring at me with its unfamiliar eyes
Scanning me, making me feel uncomfortable,
Letting me know that I'm a stranger
Yet I can see beauty in it, a new adventure,
A new universe waiting to be discovered
Strange places, strange people, strange habits
That's what it feels like to me
Going to new places
However far or close they might be

Bassem Al Jogami

Captain Fantastic




She stood tall facing the storm,
All on her own.
They called her names,
Threatened with chains,
Yet, she entered the port and roared.

A soul like no other soul.
They call her captain,
But she is more:
The saviour of the Mediterranean's lost souls,
Carola is her name¹,
And I am in love all over again.

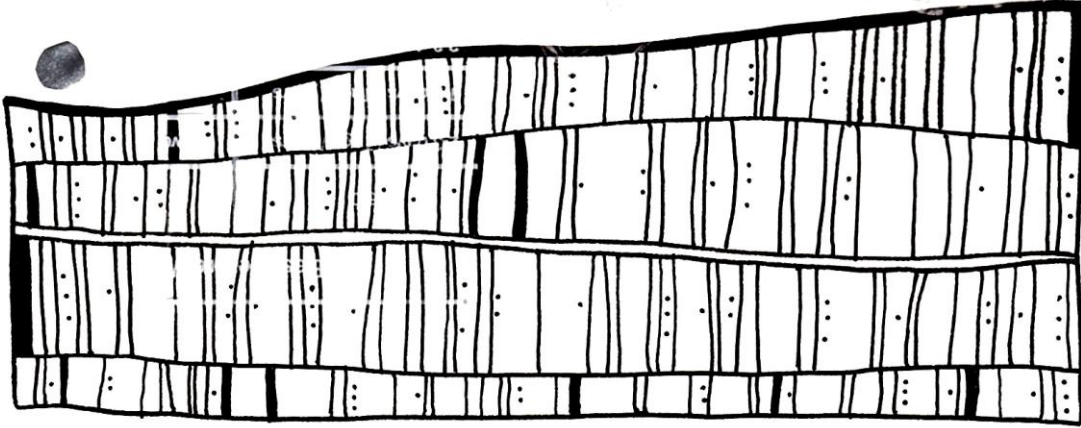
¹ Dedicated to the activist Carola Rakete: Although she was threatened with 10 years behind bars, the German captain of the rescue ship Sea-Watch 3 defied the Italian government ban and docked at Lampedusa, saving the lives of hundreds of innocent people.

Y t e e ? t P
 ? t P t P Y ? Y
 Y P ? Y Y P
 t P t e ? Y
 P e Y ? t P
 e t t P t Y ?

DIGITAL CRYSTAL GEAR

QUALITY CONTROL	
Gas Test	
Electric Test	
Ceran Test	
Flame Check	
Cavity Final Check	
Final Check	

Y p e P t
[t p e y e P t]





Jenny Oehme, What Would Humboldt Do?

Ogaga Ifowodo

Excerpts from *Augusta's Poodle*
(Poems of Childhood, a work-in-progress)

I

I wakened to the soft green-filtered light
of my second residence on earth, some place
unknown to the wider world: the orange trees
had ripened to that yellow-green
of enchanting juice pressed from the pulp
by both hands of a child, running down his chin
and elbows to make him screech with delight.
The air wore neatly its citrus perfume mixed
with the blended scent of my great-uncle's orchard —
it had all the fruit trees and plants of the world:
avocado (we called it pear), pineapple,
pepperfruit, cocoa, coconut, kolanut, *ube*
or African pear—its Latin name, I learn
decades later, is *dacryodes edulis*:
it deserved the poetry of the ornate Latin
but had I not first known it among the tall trees,
had my tongue not first loved the sweet bitterness
of its olive-green flesh, I might have thought it
of the same class as the potable amaryllis.

II

I could never tell the greater temptation to climb
when a forked pole was not ready to hand:
mangoes mottled at full ripeness beyond reach
on slender branch dangling from the peak
or oranges shimmering yellow on spiked boughs?
Bananas were easier to pluck: two four-year-olds
could just pull and pull at newly-withered branches
with all their strength and the sun-softened bunch
would bow at last!

It was divided loyalty
for pepper-fruit which burned my tongue long
after its lush ripe-red skin had trickled down
the throat. I have not mentioned toffee, or coffee
which Brother Reuben—my mother's first cousin
but more like her first son—swears were among
the pride of that orchard: "We used to roast
and crush them for their heady aroma,

but I guess you were too young to notice.”
Oh, I have not mentioned all the roots and branches
of my great-uncle’s Garden-of-Èzè!

III

Pa Ukuevo. He lived the bounty of his name:
a benevolent overflow. Planted
an all-season acre that stayed the feet of
passers-by, was the children’s favoured place
for hide-and-seek, scaling up a tree eyes
fixed on the delicious high branch when stones,
clubs and their weak arms had failed to fell a fruit.
At six-foot-and-two, I saw him as tall as a tree
looking up from his knees. He had struck out
east to try his hands in the palm-oil trade—
some place called Okpai where they spoke
in tongues—taking with him my mother,
his newly orphaned niece. He returned many
years later with barely more than a sackful,
trade busts and ill-health summing up his fortune-
seeker’s tales. Gone, too, was his straight bearing
and I remember him more often seated
or crouched on the ground under the wide-branched
mango, first among the great trees of his well-tended
garden, a fragrant breeze smoothing his creased
forehead, by his side Schnapp bottle long emptied
of its foreign brew filled with *ogogoro*, distilled
from the yeasted sap of pristine raffia palms.

IV

Osaye-te! Near eye-level with him crouched,
he would wrap one hand round my spindly legs
at the ankles, smiling and calling
me by the name of my earliest childhood,
bestowed with a suffix I could never
tell was endearment or wonder at limbs
so little and brittle! Many years later
when I learnt of how the Zulus hail their kings
I rhymed my great uncle’s *Osaye-te* with *Bayete!*
—for the majesty of simple things,
like the acres of fruit trees he planted:
from the prickly pineapple held down to earth
by its saw-toothed leaves to the kolanut

of lofted branches and pods. The birds
and the bees blessed Pa Ukuevo's labours
when they sucked nectar sweeter and in greater
abundance than elsewhere in the world—
as did squirrels who prayed for him clutching
nuts in both hands, tails splayed in thanksgiving.
And the splendour of colour in bloom season!
I loved most the feathery white of the orange trees,
seduced by perfume of their miniature gowns
as the bees drunk and lost in their ruffled hems.
And I remember now how we sucked where the bees
sucked, mango juice and orange juice running
down our elbows, among the bewitching
blossoms of my great-uncle's Garden of Ẹṣẹ!

X

If you stood still and opened your heart as
the rising sun shined its light on this humble
patch of the Tropics, a pretty pattern
would greet you: the precise map of roads to farms,
to the edge of the water, the swamps and settlements,
surprising you with as much marvel as
watching a field of flowers opening and dying
at dusk. It's true you'd find no stone columns,
limestone facades darkened for added awe
by millennial mists, no marbled walls,
gables or gargoyles but Eden had none
of that and you long still for that beginning
to be your end. You will see an old woman
bent over a stick tell her grandchildren,
just joining a silent gaggle of mates,
not to play more than they listen at school.
Just behind you, a cock in free range may
crow the hour next to a hen scratching
breakfast for its brood. A council clerk,
sporting his permanently knotted tie
with the tell-tale stain says "Good morning, brother,"
and, not waiting for your reply, mounts his Raleigh.
There is a world here as world elsewhere,
and if you stood still and looked with your heart
round this landscape of plantains and mudpaths,
tin-roof tenements and unsteeped churches,

you might find yourself face to face
with the highest common factor of all lives.

XI

Isoja ma' rọ!

Aaami!

Isoja ma' rọ!

Aaami!

Owho n'ori emu

A rẹ sae kpe

Kuuuu!

We are soldiers!

In the army!

We are soldiers!

In the army!

If you look back

You'll be shot dead

Kuuuu!

Nineteen seventy-one, the Biafran war barely ended. A platoon of half-naked boys kitted in dirty khaki shorts, some riddled with holes—as if hung on lines strung on bamboo poles for shooting practice at a warfront, where hundreds died (something had to be saved)—and the drill sergeant's faded boy scout's shirt.

Leff-rite, leff-rite, leff-rite, leff-rite . . .

We marched to the war just ended, our guns smithed from shorn plantain branches, wide end as butt and a cut flap the trigger, held straight against the right arm up the shoulder, left hand swinging to the stirring rhythm of unmeasured bravery. Our parade ground was a stretch of the street, just suitable, especially after rains, for stamping feet to match the sound of battle-worn boots.

Leff-rite, leff-rite, leff-rite, leff-rite . . .

We marched to the end of the street facing the sun and marched back past our mustering point, to the other end soldered to the heart of the town. Saturday was drill sergeant (his father owned a Dane gun), said, *To keep Nigeria one*

is a task that must be done,
so we marched till the moon matched
our zeal and streamed the street with silver light.

Leff-rite, leff-rite, leff-rite, leff-rite . . .

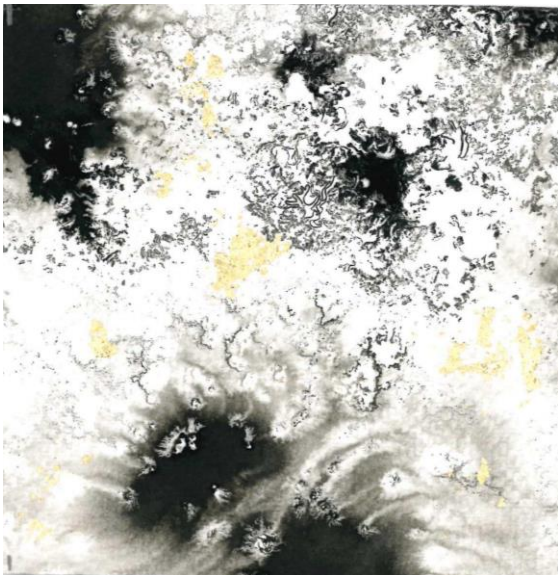
Karo's mother hailed us from her doorstep,
"My brave soldiers, take a break for dinner.
Not even Gowon went to war on an empty stomach!"
We broke for our mothers' kitchens, marching
to a new melody:

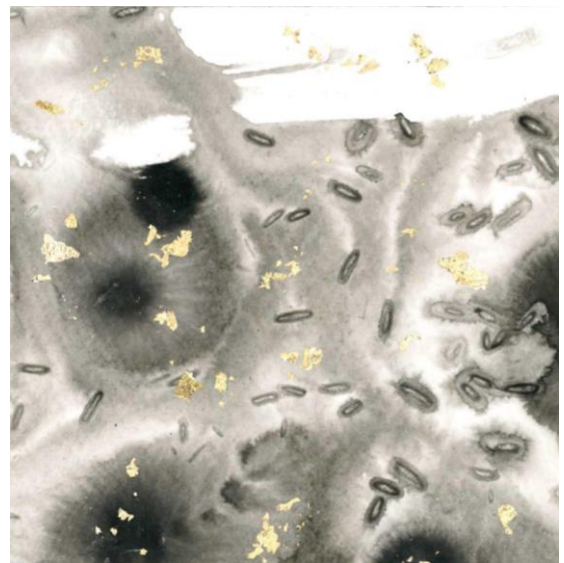
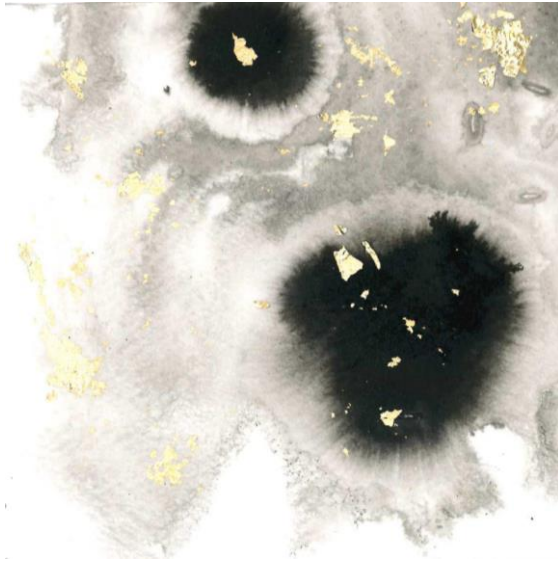
*We are soldiers
Marching off to war
In the name of Jesus
We shall conquer!*

Emma Fischer

Unpacking

violence is much more than an art form,
it's a way of life
passed from tongue to teeth to tender limb
like an electric shock
rattling and shattering, breathing in new life,
regurgitating exhaust
fumes and stale air, swollen memories of safety
and assurance, mixing
whole truths with well-intended lies, not the kind
you recite to blue uniforms
at late hours, but the kind that drip off your tongue
like honey or blood
pooling around your feet until they hold you in place
sticky sustenance
something that always comes up hollow, leaves
a funny taste lingering,
rotting in your mouth like ashes or pennies, raw
and coarsely metallic,
something to hold near to your chest to keep you
cold on warm nights
instill a permanent chill.





Lucienne Thienel, The Changing Point of View

Mahshid Mayar

In this Bond

my perceptions have nothing to do with confidence,
and everything to do with my belief in the religion
of biting into carrots and of waiting; the religion
of jumping up and down in shorts; the religion
of losing milk teeth and of wide, wild laughs;
of eyes tight-closed to the naughty taste of lime.
the tale of a sparsely populated religion, of the road.

2012/2020

Mahshid Mayar

My Palms, the Fish Tank.

The cupboard is empty; the door unlocked; the window ajar,
The lights are on; the ventilator cuts the light thrice every turn it completes;
The fish at the end of my fingertips are dead in memories.
The anything-but-perfect tangerine I left by the books is rolling on the floor;
The book thinks of its short appendix. No note on the fridge –
it's silently decided: I shall be gone already, long before your wake-up time.
Today, I love you, surely a little less than yesterday, but still
– remembering 'you' (who is me more than me) – outnumbering my fingers.

July 2020

E. Sharon Jeevarajathy

Through the Window

A comfortable window sill
A rocking chair nearby had its rhythm
A sudden breeze aroused
The stink and fragrance of a rainy evening
The scent of wet soil
The nasty odour of smashed insects
Unusual smell of roses, lilies and guava
Filled the veranda.

Casually did I position myself
Against the chill window panes.
Signed my name instinctively
On the tempting dewy side of the glass
The raindrops on the other side
Dripped and followed a pattern
The blurry surface fused my image
With an unfamiliar sight
The scattered red seeds
Jeweled the ground brightly
Unlaboured white followers
Peeped their heads out
The fluttering butterflies charmed around
Like magical dust
Evenly pressed moist soil
Showed vivid paw prints.
Those traceable trails
End with a wall designed in muddy kitten paws.

N. Lavanya

Safest Place

Deep darkness, yet pleasant.
Wet surrounding, yet warm.
Swaddled inside the delicate cave
The innocent snuggled itself into sleep
Peacefully breathing in the choking space
The boxer, floating,
Gave a kick.
The compact area
The limited dwelling is sufficient.
The voice of silence
Sweet as a lullaby
The taste of moisture
Soothing as drizzle
Those eyes shut tightly
Knew not the shade of brightness
Those closely wrapped fingers
Hold on to precious nothingness.
Thoughts of the mother
Were heard.
The unuttered words
Made sense
The unborn life
Locked inside its flexible heaven
Enjoyed every moment
Unaware of the scary way out.

Elena Furlanetto

Earlyrisers

clearest lines of early mornings

our home is light grey and safe

I am glad my mother has not texted me goodmorning
it means she is sleeping and not fearing

coffee enters you in waves
while I am wrapped in darkness and feathers

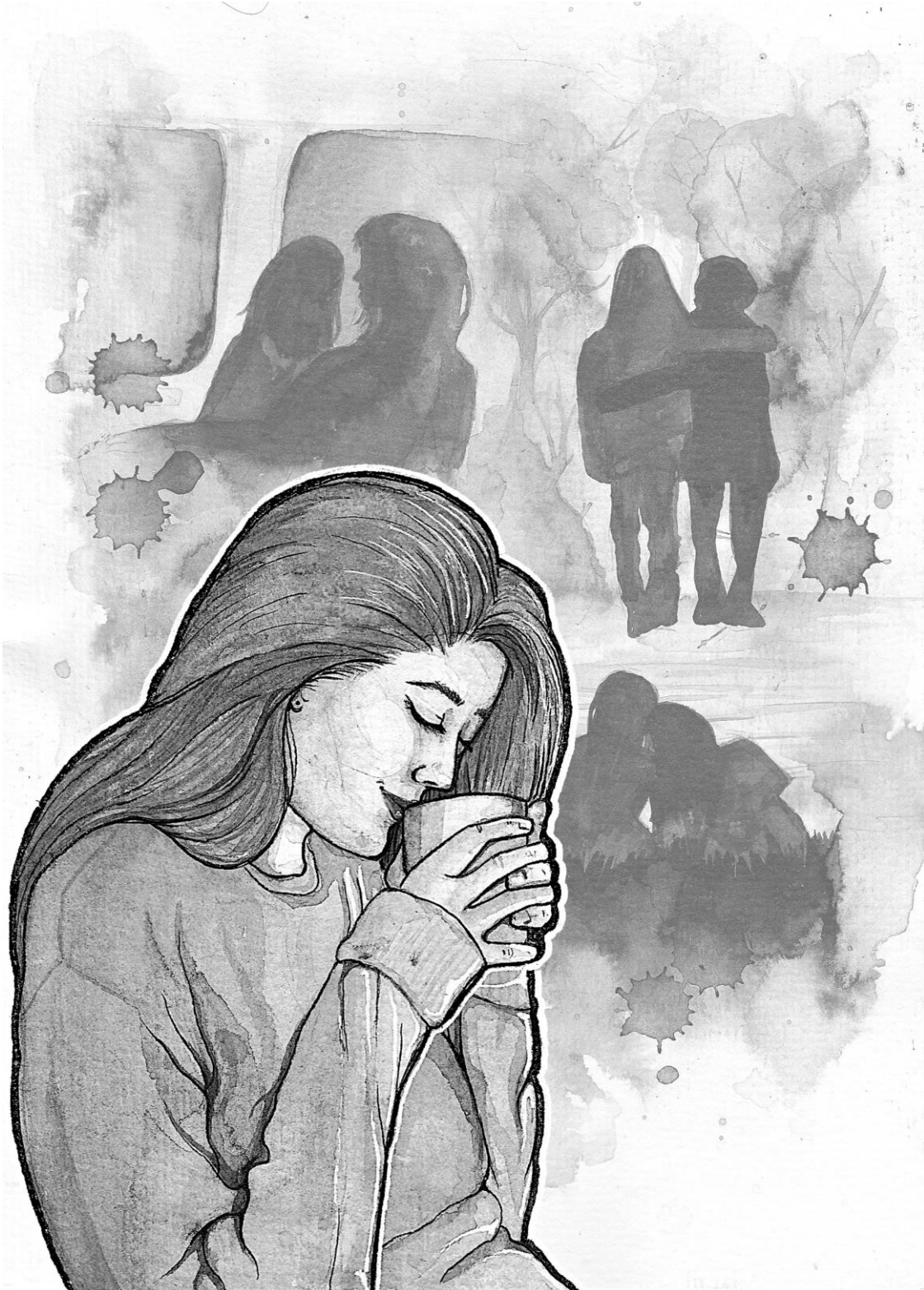
I am ~~not~~ thinking of you

but I acknowledge you sitting
in the next room

like I do not see but acknowledge
the empty streets and the disease raging

I learnt by heart the wildfires on your forehead
gave them names

28 April 2020



Lisa-Marie Pöhland, Illustration to Coda, teal.

Carolyn Isabel Steiner

Coda, teal.

First, a persimmon orchard. A dozen or a hundred trees, bony like skeletons covered with pastel dots of watercolor, leaves on the ground. The Carolina fall sun, in your long, auburn hair, on your freckled face, on your fruit punch lips. You twirl, I stumble, you laugh. You take my face in your hands and take a breath, like there's something you want to say, but then you think better of it and we're skeletons with the trees again.

Then, a subway car. People stare at us because we speak in languages they don't understand. You're a lopsided smile on two legs and I'm in love. Your back is sinking into dusty blue cushions and the city I love so much races past us. We meet your parents by the channel and your mother looks at me like I'm the one that's going to hurt her Baby. She's right, because I'm seventeen and that is what adolescence does to people.

Later, a glistening lake. Waves break over pebbles. The light explodes on the lake's surface and so does your heart. We're a syncopation, but we've missed the beat we were supposed to be. We're all wrong and I know and you know. There's a bitter taste in my mouth because this is how it was always going to end. You nod and leave and I'm sitting alone by the lake, with the waves breaking over the pebbles, listening to your explosions in the distance.

Now, a desk. Soft fir wood beneath my fingertips and dents and cracks everywhere. On a coaster, a teal mug. It used to be emerald, but a decade has cracked the glaze and color away. I write because the pages feel like home and you're still with me, because you taught me that it is okay to hide out between the words. I run my fingers over your initials, etched into the mug's bottom in your pottery class, three lifetimes ago. You're five hundred kilometers away and I don't need you to come back, because I know you are alright and so am I. The tea in the teal mug is hot and sweet and I am grateful.

Emma Fischer

Witness

Sometimes I bruise myself to remember your touch,
drag you up from my bones, wear you on my flesh

At times I even command another to paint it onto me
using fists and teeth, trace the lines of your embrace

What other means does one have to measure affection
how do you recognize love if not seared to your skin

The truth never wins awards unless you package it,
tie it up with a bow or strike at the right cultural time

Swallow the lies like a raw egg, like a needy lover,
and I'll pretend to believe that it's different with her

That we can grow, become fitted for better masks,
seal the records and see where money can take us

Let us believe wounds heal when you stop picking,
and you mean it when you tell me *never again*

It's a downward slope, and I'm marching upstream,
waiting to notch another pyrrhic victory under the belt

But someone has to bear the weight of remembering,
relay the message that violence is, indeed, learned

For though your hands trained mine to break and tear,
I believe stains can be lifted with enough strength

And with enough patience you can train yourself
To press fingers to the keyboard (and not a throat)

Emma Fischer

Limbo

slip inside another wall
in the back of my mind
we're the same
(the back of my mind lies)

Tessa Najasek

I Might Have Shaved my Head, but this Itch Sits Deeper than the Roots of my Hair

I cut off my hair.
Buzzed it all off, made a harvested field of the top of my head.
I will never wonder about hairstyles again. Never flinch at the memory of high ponytails.

The ringtone of my phone is the least important thing now.

Tough love, they call it.
But taunts born out of love are still taunts. And at the end of the day it's me who lays in bed,
Mind wide open, wide awake. Replaying scene after scene to see where I misstepped.

So many apologies, sometimes all my lips remember is to say "I'm sorry".
Would I have found the way without the constant instructions?
I clung to the sunny days like it would make the dark ones disappear.
Why didn't I realize sooner it had turned into artificial light?

But moths, with their paper-thin wings, seem to prefer lamplight to the sun.
Maybe I, too, was used to knowing only darkness.









Leoni Hager, Once upon a Time...

Emma Fischer

Hi(men)

they say you are a sum of your parts
but does that include those which have
been taken or that which was given away
how do you count back paces in the ink
of night to determine your ultimate value
must you put your body on display like a
fine china and allow esteemed men to
seek out cracks, determine your appraisal
place you on a temporary pedestal as
tiny pencil marks make scratches on paper
while hands reach into your ovaries to
pluck an egg from the stem of what it means
to be a woman, where you can pay the fee
in flesh before they cast you back into a garden
of your own making, into *selva oscura* singing
hallelujah, hallelujah—not a note left unsung.

V. Janane

Eunuch

She woke up to the ringing pain
That reverberated throughout her body
Wanting to express. To release. To free *itself*.
Her feminine desires
Tied up to a cobweb of the masculine body
Pushed her to the dead end of realisation:
All that was “his” was “hers” from now on.
The bodily change reigned over all that she treasured
Like a tyrannical ruler
To loot. Exploit. Ruin.
It made her family name her a stranger
Made the roots denounce the boughs
And chased her from where
She assumed she belonged to,
All in the span of a mutation.
Peace rested in the horizon

As she battled with the rising tides everyday
Questioning why her?
The thought of suppressing and chaining her femininity revolved
Her femininity was gaining power
It unleashed itself in a way
That even stillness didn't come to the rescue
The more she exposed
The more she lost!
The unleashed ran wild trying to find
A place for her,
She fought battles for survival,
Selling her body, her wishes, and her dreams
Not to win but to sustain,
To lead a life of normalcy.
She is still trying to find "her" place
Leaving pieces of "him" along the way.

Tessa Najasek

Gloria, circa 2011

I look at you and you look at the room and you tell me
After a while they don't even feel like prison cells anymore.
Your eyes blur out the bars.

We are standing on the bridge.
Your eyes fixated on the deep grey; my eyes fixated on you.
You say
If I fell right now, I don't think I would ever hit the water.

The movie theatre is empty. The hostile stares have stayed.
We glance up at the castle.
You look at the white, and you look at the dirty brown, and you smile,
As if it's a metaphor.
I don't want to see anymore.

I'm leaving.
You say goodbye near the river, like you're tethered to it.
It's summer.

Srishti Chaudhary

Extract from the Novel *Once upon a Curfew*
(published by Penguin Random House India, 2019)

Summary:

It is 1974. Indu has inherited a flat from her grandmother and wants to turn it into a library for women. Her parents think this will keep her suitably occupied till she marries her fiancé, Rajat, who's away studying in London. But then she meets Rana, a young lawyer with sparkling wit and a heart of gold. He helps set up the library and their days light up with playful banter and the many Rajesh Khanna movies they watch together. When the Emergency is declared, Indu's life turns upside down. Rana finds himself in trouble, while Rajat decides it's time to visit India and settle down. As the Emergency pervades their lives, Indu must decide not only who but what kind of life she will choose.²

'It has been almost twenty-seven years since Independence, yet, in the building and progress of a young and free India, among those who have been left behind are women. Nowhere in the world is a woman so truly worshipped, so greatly idolized, yet so pathetically deplored. While the literacy rate for the male population in the country is slightly short of forty per cent, for the women, it's just eighteen per cent, less than even half that of men. While men get countless chances, time after time, to educate and train themselves, to stand on their own two feet, to maintain and support a family, to feel able and in control, the women have to simply stand by and surrender our fate to the forces of society that govern our lives at every point.'

'In that situation, it is important sometimes it is too easy to be led away by the forces of imagination, to sit and just think for some time, what is it that holds us back? Why don't we have jobs that bring home money, and why aren't there more of us in the Parliament, elected and voted, to formulate laws and policies? What is it that keeps us from achieving and being something that comes so easily to the other sex, but is rare and exemplary for us? Where does it all begin to go wrong? We have the same faculties. The Prime Minister is a woman, and the roads haven't collapsed, the railways haven't stopped working! In fact, we are making progress.'

Indu paused to take a sip of water from the bottle in front of her and was suddenly aware that each and every pair of eyes was on her, each person listening in

² For eighteen months starting from June 1975, the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, declared a state of Emergency across the country. The Emergency imposed a censorship on the press, and took away fundamental rights of its citizens. It is considered one of the most controversial periods in India's history.

singular attention. Somehow, the thought gave her more confidence. She went back to her paper.

'I don't believe it's because we are born less intelligent or are in any way less capable, but we are not equal when the statistics reveal themselves. It is because we are not given a fair chance, a fair opportunity; that we are given a few things, the scraps and the leftovers, simply because the law says we must. We are given the right to education, but not the conditions that facilitate the smooth functioning of this process—clean public toilets, the transport required to reach the educational institute, the safety that needs to be assured to a marginalized group. Are we given the time to bloom and flourish, or the encouragement needed to move forward and chase the goal we set for ourselves in life? Are we given a quiet room of our own and three hours a day to study in peace, to take time out for ourselves, to train our minds to be better every day?'

'The Library at No. 7 is an attempt to create an alternative space that might have been denied to you in your life, denied to the extent that you don't even realize that it must exist in the first place. In your daily humdrum routine, we provide you with a space where you can find time for yourself. We encourage you to spend at least a few hours every day to sit and read here. To pick up a book that you have been meaning to read but haven't gotten around to. To flip through a magazine or cookbook without your kids running about. To find the space and time to study for that teaching diploma.'

'Most of all, we hope that you will come here to engage and relate with other women who think like you, who will laugh in your company, give you a little tip that might prove useful. So that together we might form a community that will raise each other, for when we have been put down for so long, a little support can go a long way. We ask that you register to become a member. Membership is absolutely free and will give you access to a large number of books. We will organize activities and workshops, little courses that you can take to learn something new, and a movie screening every week. Most of all, you get a space of your own, one absolutely free from any diversions, to use your free time as you want. We hope that you will join us in this room.'



help I've done it again
I have been here before
I'm right again today
and the worst part is
that I no-one else



Tessa Koch, Breathe me Hold me Unfold me

Danny Coposescu

Fear of the Ball

I'm on the left wing. There's a landing strip's worth of open space in front of me. The grass sparkles and glistens seductively, beckoning me to a gallop. All that's missing is the ball.

He sees me on the left wing. His eyes meet mine fleetingly, perhaps linger for a moment too long before he bows his head and it begins. The machine starts its churn, the chain of events is set in motion, the touch paper is being lit.

His left arm swings back.

I stiffen like a board, nails hammered in, rooting me to the spot for good measure. Short and squat, I'm just a poorly cut plank. It will bounce off me in any direction, it will reject my touch and scamper away eagerly. We are opposites: motion and stasis, curves and edges, speed and sloth. Our natures do not match and this vague knowledge spreads through every corner of my wooden limbs.

His left foot is planted.

I melt like butter in the evening sun. I am a plasticine porter, my joints are useless for carrying this load. This weakness is dreamy and almost freeing. What does it matter? It will bulldoze me with its force and flatten me into the pitch, where I can lay among the leaves of grass hidden from it all. It will disperse me into the earth, where I can listen to the thundering sound of heavy boots and sharp studs in peace.

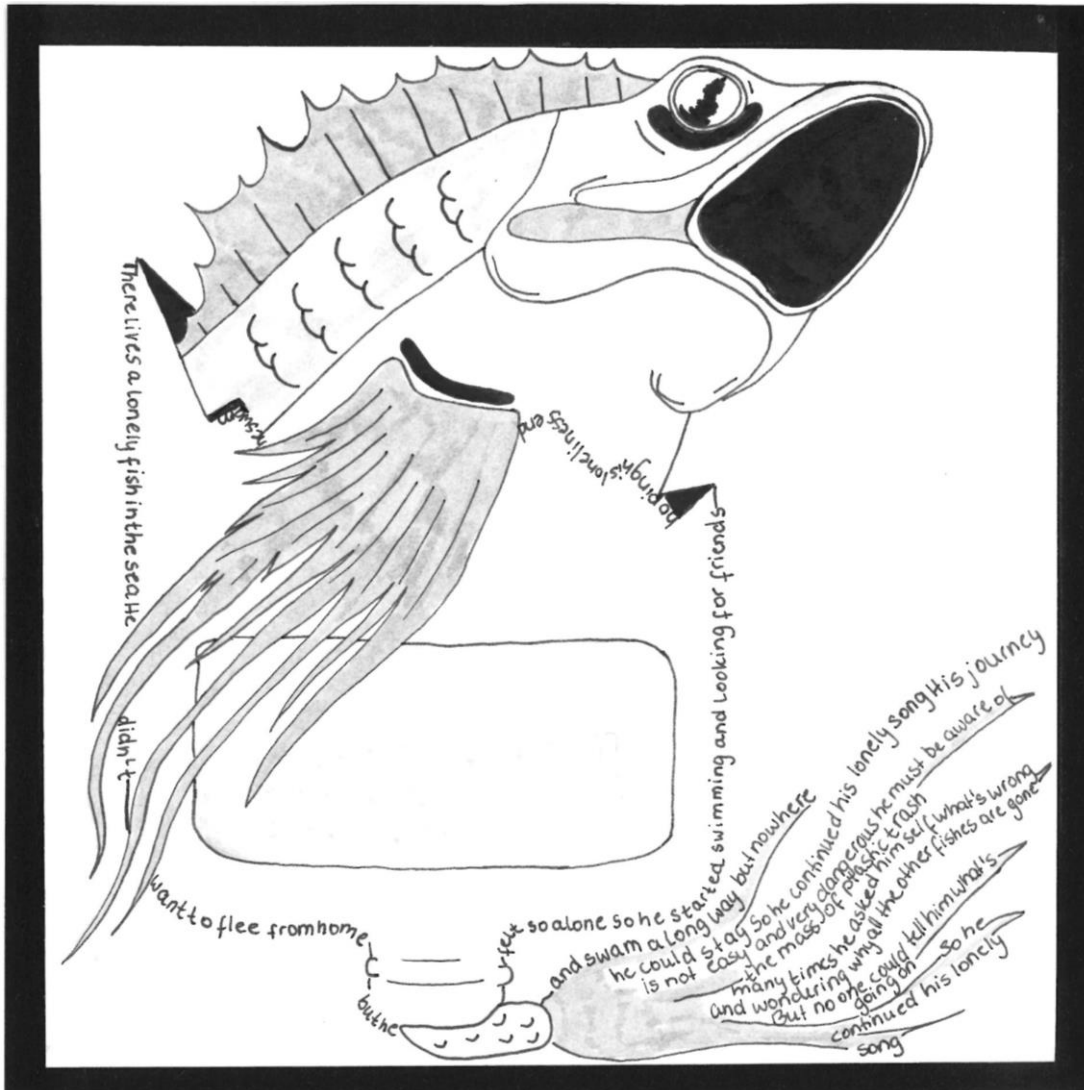
His right instep comes forward.

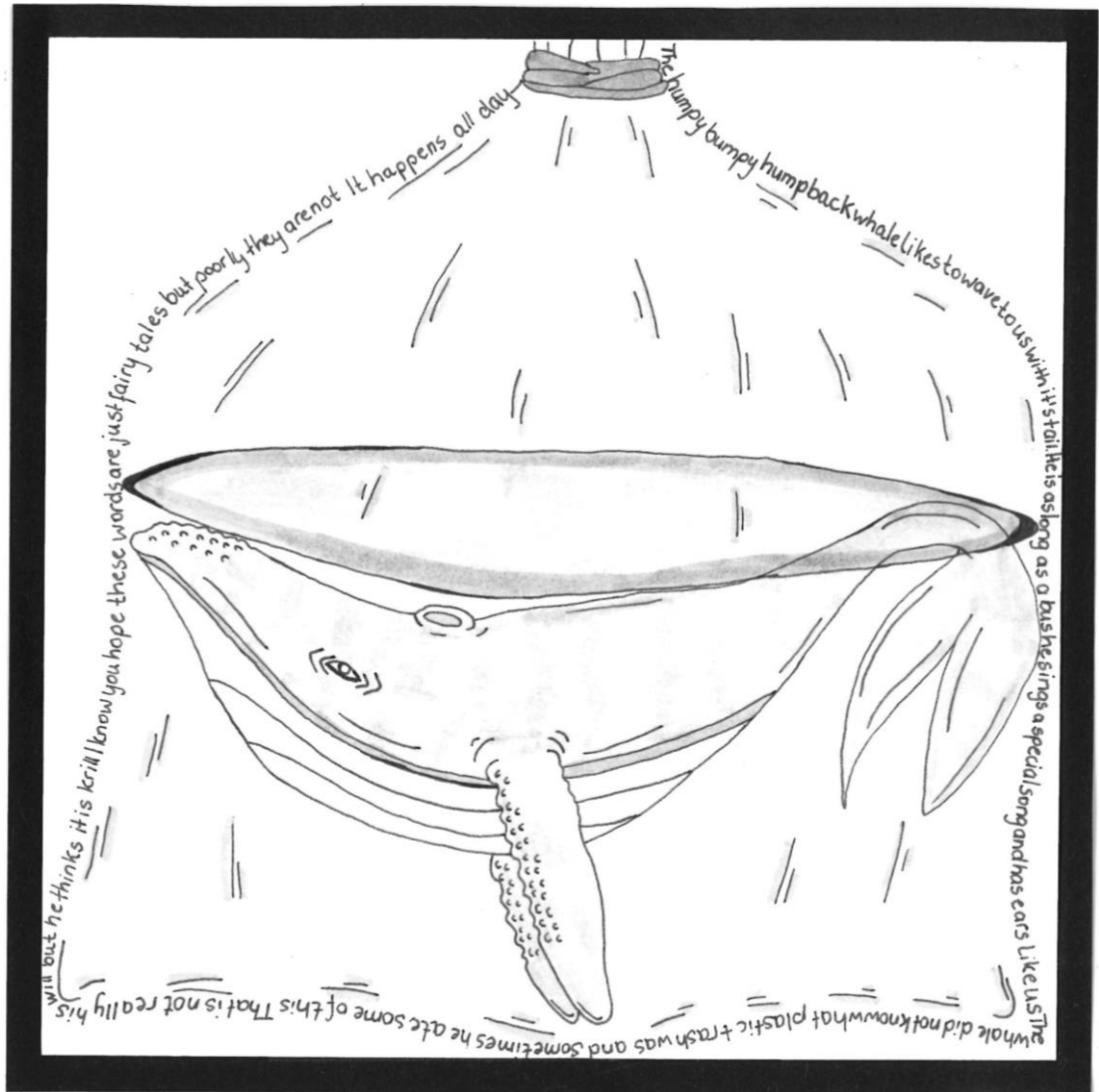
I heave with thoughts of pasts and futures. Sometimes they do battle, laying opposing claims to the scorched earth of me. Sometimes they call truces, but always out of bleak fatalism and never too much hope. It has always approached at uncountable different angles and it will forever require an unknowable variety of new trajectories. We've never really met before. Not exactly here, not exactly now, not exactly this way. How should I know what to do when it has never been done before? Every new contact is a fresh world born out of chaos, with no rules or laws to follow, so I await yet another painful birth with baited breath.

Thump! It's coming.

Suddenly I hate it. It threatens me and taunts me viciously as it gathers pace. The vultures close in from all directions, their shadows darkening the green around me. I hear their panting and they smell my terror, but it has never been about them. It's the rolling, ticking time bomb that has me in its grip. The only thing that matters, so viscerally real that it makes me cower from its possibilities. I could do anything with it. I could go anywhere with it. I could be everything with it by my side. And as the last degrees of separation dissolve, an ember of love pricks my skin for just that reason.

I'm on the left wing, yet I'm right footed. There's a legion's worth of opponents in front of me. The grass has been trampled into mud and there's nowhere to run. I have the ball.







Linda Peilicke, Today's Special Offer: Frutti di Mare with a Durable Side Dish

S. Anisha Biala

Where Waves Wash

Cool breeze invites
With salty odour
Lifts me up
To fly within
Ecstasy fills my heart
With cheerful footsteps
I make my way
Through the chaotic crowd
Every pace I make
Gives a clear bliss.
Vision of the distant wide blue ocean
Triggers pleasure in me.
The dry feet touch the soft sand
Making a mark.
Softness of the sand
Grows and grows
The furious waves
Prostrate with shame
The roaring waves approach us
And kiss our feet
Giving pleasures unlimited –
A priceless gift of God.
The voice of the roaring sea
Soothes our pain
We wish it would linger forever
The beauty of the ocean
Is understood
Where the three seas meet.

G. Vignesh

Baptism

Although the bottom is cold and dark,
My entire body is hot like I'm on fire.
A burbling sound bubbles up as I sink,
I shake the hand, off the icy coldness,
That is trying to drag me over the edge of death,
I push myself forward with a single thrust.
A fountain of bubbles shatters the light-speckled surface.
I cough and gasp, unyielding to the watery grave,
Take a deep breath and enter again,
To brush off the bother of apparent danger,
To survive, to persevere,
To be alive, never felt more real,
I enter the water,
With a heart stronger than it was,
Not to become a better swimmer,
But to be a better survivor.

Marvin Bergt

Cat Lover

As I'm dunking
my cookie into my coffee
I realise that it wasn't a cookie
it was my cat
that is now upset

I get the sponge to clean
as I hear it scream
it – again – was my cat
that is now even more upset

You may wonder now
What's going on? And how?
I have to say that I was lying

It wasn't about my cat
It was my girlfriend's cat
and now you're upset

Julia Walter

I'm not Ready for Children yet

Today my neighbour knocked on my door and handed me a basket of kittens. I looked at Pablo on the couch, the laziest cat in the world. He did not even care enough to lift his head. "This was the third time already!" His life seems more exciting than mine.

Raziye Memiş

Mourning

She had a rather distant relationship with her mother, but her sudden death left her in agony. The tears wouldn't stop. He hugged her. All these years her friend never left her. He came right over to share her grief. She patted his head. He responded by wagging his tail.

Julia Walter

The Evil Witch

"I would rather sell my second-born to an evil witch than actually work out."

"You mean your firstborn."

"No. I sold my firstborn for luscious hair."

She went silent for a moment as she seemed to think. She looked over to her three children.

"Could you give me her number?"

Dariia Horobchenko

Good Morning

I woke up.
Brushed my teeth.
Put on my clothes.
Went to work.
Got a message from my dad.
Ambulance took mom away.
My wife called.
She was leaving with our daughter.
I rushed to the car.
Stepped on the pedal.
I ran over a kid.
I woke up again.

Julia Walter

For Sale: Baby Shoes

So, they were never worn? Do you still have the receipt? You see, you are part of our over-consuming society – if you don't need it, just don't buy it! I bet you only bought them because they looked cute. Yeah, I'll take them. What can we do about the price?

Kyra-Noreen Zuschke

The Elder Tree and its Reflection

elder tree
up the hill
the sun is rising
twigs and branches
leaves are definitely green
constant and steady
bark
bark
bark
grey water is curling in the wind, dragonflies are looking for a new home
bark
bark
bark
unstable and restless
the leaves seem to be blue
twigs and branches
the moon is fading
in the pond
reflection

Kyra-Noreen Zuschke

Teatime

Photographs at the table of this old-fashioned living room – black and white – forever.
take me back fifty years ago. Porcelain figures in the cabinets of this door silently -
old-fashioned living room – white and golden – take me back eighty close the
years ago. Suddenly, I want to have some tea – black and white – behind, and
black tea with some milk. Suddenly, I want one of these stupid memories
dresses – white and golden – brocade with some silk. I'd of those
love you to teach me how to speak like fifty years ago. to leave all
I'd love you to teach me how to move like eighty have to go,
years ago. But you are not here anymore... and I

Freya Hinke

All Eyes on you

They see you

They really see you

They really **see you**, but don't

They really see you

They don't

Chelsea Burris

German Kezboard

I can't communicate

in mz second language.

I'm chattz in English

and silent in German.

Like the kezs on mz German kezboard

The same, but somehow switched.



Natalie Bleyl, Arriving



Natalie Bleyl, Weinholdbau on Film

Andreas Gloge

Inside the white cubic monolith there was nothing to hunt for anymore, nothing to learn, nothing to gain... Therefore, he was told by the old and forgotten librarians to remain still and in silence in the corner of nowhere and to wait there for the return of his long gone shadow that once escaped in the hidden white corridors while searching for all the names of all things that ever were...



Julia Walter

Self-Isolation Day??

Changed my night-pyjamas for my day-pyjamas. Take-out boxes are now part of my furniture. Don't know how it feels to be around another human being anymore. Today I found out there is a global pandemic, some new virus. The neighbour's kids are home more often than usually. My plant died.

Romea Frank

Culmination

He has been trying to save the world for twenty years already. For as long as he can remember, he has been someone who has appreciated nature and has hated people who carelessly leave their trash behind. Where he lives, the residents just dump their trash in lakes and rivers. As a matter of fact, almost eighty percent of the groundwater in his area is polluted. Unfortunately, it is none the better in other parts of the world. The year started with big unsettling headlines announcing bushfires in several parts of Australia. Thousands of wildlife animals died. It is assumed that humans were responsible for the fire to break out. He was devastated.

He has been thinking about a plan of how to teach people to stop destroying planet earth: On his tours through nature he got carried away by the wind. While the wind guided him, he felt small yet invincible. People acted towards him as if he was dangerous and they avoided him. Yet, all he ever wanted was to call attention to the respectful treatment of the environment. Hence, when years ago his first attempt had failed and only a few people got infected by his desire to save the environment, he had thought about a more drastic way to make people care about the earth.

Today, he is different, stronger than ever, but his core has remained. He still cares for the environment, but since humans are too reckless they really need to learn a lesson. So, he has transformed.

The next day the news reported that the coronavirus had come back.

Cecile Sandten

Frozen in Time and Space

You are
all of a sudden
frozen in time
 and space,
your face and
expression
the same for
minutes on end
like a film still
not like a photograph
because you were
just about to say something
gesture something.
You didn't pose,
frozen in time and
 space
on my computer screen,
ending the conversation abruptly on
"ah...ah...ah..." and: *freeze*.

It is quite bewildering
to learn
how each communication
becomes a performance
on screen
that is so dependent
on the technological
equipment on both sides.
After the release of being
frozen in time and space
we start all over again
say "hello" and "can you hear me"
and "can you see me"
and try to pick up on
where
we were
before
we were
interrupted
by some unexpected

power
break
between
here
and
there
and
you
me.

Chelsea Burris

Not Covid-19

I know it's a cold
because I can't taste my lemon tea
because I've blown my nose raw

because my throat hurts

because I'm twenty-eight
and I've had a cold before



parasitic

i won't be safe even
if i try

14 Apr, 7:15 pm

it has once again infected every inch of my body
but mostly my mind, it makes it rotten and foul,
this parasite, this special kind of virus,
spreading like wildfire and unable to be tamed.
first it got my hands, i touched it and didn't even
pull away
it bit me and i screamed, but i just let it grow

my mind was second, as soon as it reached it i
knew it was off
as soon as it formed one with my flesh i saw there
was no way out,
my brain making it easy to crawl into my limbs and
down my sides
down to my toes and up my back, making my skin
grow pale and sallow
but what was i going to do?

a deadly disease born from a thought of not being
enough
the expanse unbearably selfish and yet my hands
were tied
all the other poisoned welcomed me into their
empty arms
and i gave in, it felt like home,
but before i knew better
it pulled me out.

the vaccine so strong it ripped me apart
i gasped for air and looked around
my hands snapped back and my fingers curled up
i knew i would take a step back
to forever become immune,
maybe.



Share




Favourite




Delete




Print

15 % 6:50



is anyone listening?


 i miss that ▼Today 6:48 pm


are you there?
i have often asked myself - is anyone listening?
to me, thinking lonely thoughts at night?
to him missing her, whenever he puts the glass up
to his lips to get a glimpse of the poison, light and
sweet?
to them, not knowing where to go when they feel
this way?


is anyone listening, is anyone there?
even though i know the answer, i just keep asking, a
question over and over again,
are you there?
keep imagining someone saying "yes, i'm here."
and keeping me safe in bittersweet promises and
softly-whispered nothings.


is anyone there?
is anyone listening?


the silent screams and swallowed cries are heard
by no one but the steady sound
of silence


Share

Favourite


Delete

Print





15 % 6:50



pink, like your brain

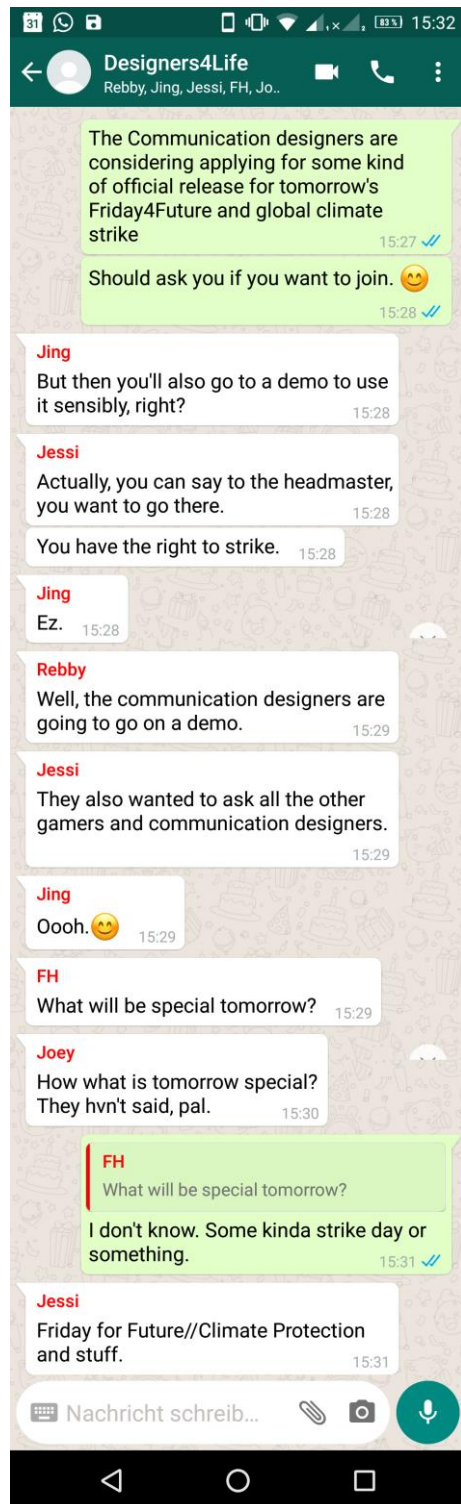
 i feel strange ▾ Today 6:50 pm

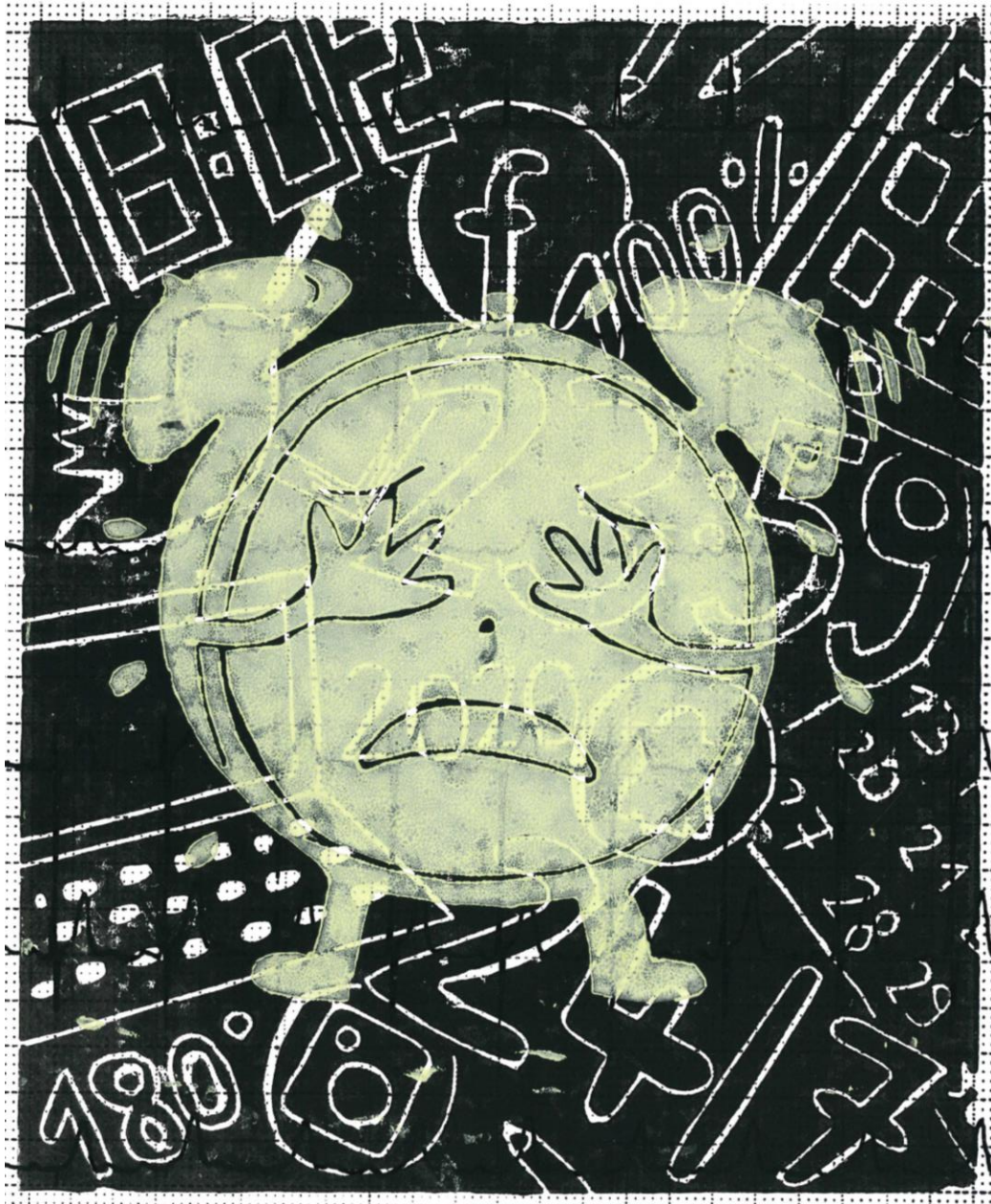
what a strange and unusual matter,
almost like the cherry blossoms outside, sharing a
colour,
they're pink, like your brain, what a fluke!
i like the colour and i like how it makes you think,
flowers make me think of the most curious things,
like how the roses in the yard look just like your
blood,
the deepest shade of crimson red,
how pretty they look in that vase!
i don't like the thorns though,
they make me bleed, what a coincidence!
my blood is lighter than yours, i wonder what this
means,
but not as light as white, like those lilies you
brought,
white, just like your bones!
not as clean and pure as lilies, but they look almost
alike!
i love how your insides remind me of flowers
certainly just as delightful!

 Share  Favourite  Delete  Print

Cecile Sandten

Going on Strike?





Stefanie Martin, ZeitDRUCK / *Time Pressure*

Özge Arslan

The Life of P

"One early morning at 2 am I fell down from the top of the bunk. The accident left some scars on my face. Afterwards, when someone wanted to talk to me or ask me a question, I answered a few seconds delayed, as if being frozen. Later, I hardly responded anymore. One day, I fell down again. But this time I fell into someone's hands. This was the person who I always trusted, the person who never let me down. He knew all my secrets and passwords. However, when by accident, he also let me fall on the ground, I completely lost my interest in life. I never responded again and closed my eyes. And an old man has since tried to repair me," concluded Siri.

Özge Arslan

Taxi!

It was a normal day. He was on his way as usual, when a woman stopped him: "Taxi!" She got in the car. She was beautiful.

On the next day at the same place and time, she shouted again "Taxi!" On another day, she brought snacks and asked him if also he wanted some. Still another time she took out a book and read some passages to him, which she thought he might like. After that, they had dinner together. It was more like a romantic date. Later their families met and they announced that they were engaged. They got married. It was like in a fairy tale. They didn't miss the after-party part. Everything was shining with the reflection of a disco ball. After a short time, they had a baby. He was frozen when he saw the baby for the first time. A young nurse tried to poke him out of his stupor.

Then he realised that the one who was nudging him was the beautiful woman in the taxi, sitting in the back seat. He had some snacks in the glove box and asked her if she wanted some. She thankfully rejected. He saw a book in her hand, a small toy disco ball and baby shoes on the cover. Eventually, they were at the destination point. She paid, tipped him and got off the taxi. As he drove off, a sweet enchanting smell still filled the car.

Bio Notes

Bassem Al Jogami is a former student of English and American Studies at Chemnitz University of Technology.

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Leoni Hager is a student of Teacher Training for Elementary Schools at Chemnitz University of Technology.

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Ogaga Ifowodo is a Nigerian lawyer, scholar, poet, columnist and human rights activist. He was awarded the 1998 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award, given to writers “anywhere in the world who have fought courageously in the face of adversity for the right to freedom of expression.” After an MFA and PhD from Cornell University, he taught in the Master of Fine Art programme at Texas State University until 2014 when he returned to Nigeria from the United States and sought a seat in the House of Representatives but only ended up proving Shelley right that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world”! A fellow of the Iowa International Writing programme, he has published four books of poetry, the most recent being *A Good Mourning*. He is currently working on *Augusta’s Poodle*, an attempt at a Rilke-an return to childhood, “that fabulously rich mine of memories.”

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Turning Pages is an annual journal of bright voices from all over the world in creative and original writing in English in short fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and drama, as well as in drawings, art projects and many other related genres by students, academics, and writers. It is a production of the Chair of English Literatures at the English Department at Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany, and the first journal of its kind at the university.

Turning Pages can be read in both ways, literally and metaphorically, implying that we need to turn the pages, that we need to demonstrate that literature has something to say and that it can also be interventionist as it shows how we can use our own imagination for the better. Therefore, *Turning Pages* will make readers not only literally browse through a variety of texts and turn pages, but it also seeks to reflect situations, events, experiences, or emotions that turn the page for individuals, or groups of people.

The second issue of *Turning Pages* includes a variety of foci, ranging from meta-poetic texts and stories, to graphic artworks and illustrations via themes of belonging in an ever-changing world, tracing one's origins, conquering personal struggles, or dealing with current incidents like COVID-19 and self-isolation. This issue combines students from diverse fields and backgrounds with professional writers from all over the world, such as Srishti Chaudhary, Andreas Gloge, Ogaga Ifowodo, Harald Linke, and Ian Watson.



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