

SAGE



SPRING 2024 * KINSHIP
YALE SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Julia Jacobson

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

McKenzie Blaine

MANAGING EDITOR

Elisabeth Schreiber

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Katie Davis

DESIGNERS

Kate Johnson

Neeta Patel

PRINTER

GHP Media

TYPEFACES

ATF Garamond

Faune

COVER

Horse Meadows Below Sneffels

Kathleen Frank





FROM THE EDITOR

IN THE HEAT of a midsummer day, I wade into the glacial waters of my favorite alpine lake. I've been swimming here for as long as I can remember. Floating on my back, I look up at the open sky, which is framed by the silhouettes of spruce and pine. The world seems as small as it does infinite. I stretch out my left arm, reaching for the fingertips of a friend floating beside me. Like otters, we lock hands and drift further into the center. The sun warms our bellies, and I let the feeling sink in: I am not discrete.

We exist in a world of entangled relations. That is to say, we are not self-enclosed individuals. In every exchange among humans and across species, we are transformed—and actively transform the world around us. We emerge from, and are contingent on, more-than-human relationships that shape existence in unfathomable ways and at innumerable scales. In the reciprocity of self-and-other transformations, kinship takes root.

This year's edition of *SAGE* is dedicated to imagining and re-imagining kinship. In an era of climate crisis, political division, enduring colonialism, and genocide, we call on kinship as

a reminder that environmental justice is social justice. From algae blooms of the Barents Sea to the olive trees of Gaza, the contributors to this magazine challenge us to reflect on our own understandings of kinship. These stories explore multicultural, multispecies, often magical kinships. And they don't shy from the complexities of interdependency either. As our contributors acknowledge, kinship can be messy, muddled, and mournful. Yet it is simultaneously healing and generative. We envision a future of flourishing kin relations—one where family takes many forms. As such, we resist defining kinship. Each contributor shows us what it means to them, and we only hope it spurs self-reflection among our readers.

The production of this magazine has been an act of making kin. I have the utmost gratitude for the editors, designers, and contributors who have given their time, energy, vulnerability, and love to *SAGE*. This magazine, and all of its devotees, have transformed me. And now, I invite you too, to be transformed.

Julia Jacobson
SAGE Editor in Chief

POETRY

COULD WE TALK THE WAY TREES DO? Claire Trochu	8
HOLY BIRDS Katherine Colvin	9
BACKYARD AS UNIVERSE Diana Woodcock	23
EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR GAZA Hamsa Fae	28
TO THOSE WHO CHOSE THE SEA Nyami Aghedo*	40
TO THE WHALES OF THE BARENTS SEA Kaitlyn Harris	43
KIKO Steven Ring	68
BUTTERFLY EXHIBIT Summer LoPriore	69
THE JETTY Hadley Tallackson	74
MOTHER'S DAUGHTER Rosalie Ortiz	85
I PLANTED SOME LAVENDER IN MY FRONT YARD SATURDAY MORNING xochi-maría ramos-lara	90

PROSE

WING Mattie Ford	18
THE CABIN Linea Jantz	36
PLASTIC DREAMSCAPES AND OTHER PANDEMIC ENCOUNTERS Athena Sofides*	46
FLORA OF THE MATRIARCHS Alex Weyerhaeuser	76
A PUFFIN'S ROLE IN A CRABBER'S LIFE Josh Kelsing	86
DRENTHE Jorrit Becking	93

VISUAL ART

TIME SENSITIVE I & II Betty Kovacic	25
TOWARDS HOME Eliza Strauss-Jenkins	38
FROM STARS TO SOIL AND BACK Niara van Gaalen†	53
PORTRAIT OF A ROCK WITH LICHEN & CHISMES Pamela Acoŝta	60
THE OLD HACIENDA Kathleen Frank	63
WITHIN THE ICEBERG WILDERNESS Kathleen Frank	66
COLORING PAGE Connor Hanson	70
DEUS EX PORCO Raty Syka	72
REST Stephania Prieto*	88
BIRTH ON OBITUARIES Eliza Strauss-Jenkins	96

PHOTOGRAPHY

WORM TEA Gunilla Öberg*	12
BOUND: THE GREAT BANYAN Lee Chang Ming	30
ELK MOUNTAINS TRIBUTARY Alaina Geibig	44
ROBERT SMITHSON'S SPIRAL JETTY Conrad Tallackson	75
KINSHIP IN MEXICO CITY Claudia Excaret Santos Campusados	80

* Contest category winners
† Overall contest winner

*COULD WE TALK
THE WAY TREES DO?*

Could we talk the way trees do?
you stand there watching me
waiting for my vibration-song to echo
against the shell of your ear
but i don't know how to sing this pain to you

i am anchored to this earth, my toes dive down
down past the concrete, sending tendrils
in the soil searching for yours
imagine our roots tangled up in each other
like lovers
sending information in taps and pulses
but i can't find you beneath the soil.

your eyes condemn my silence
but i am speaking
if only you knew how to listen

— *Claire Trucho*

HOLY BIRDS

Take me to Living Waters
Where I might be bathed
But first, the Beetle in my mother's Limoges box,
Now her daughter's

Warm bodies on pavement, just us two
The skin on our elbows barely holds the bone
I knew what was coming, but I was waiting with You
And, like a Bird to nest, over the Beetle flew

Pretty black thing, and, really, so small
It was dead before it landed
The sting before the understanding
To grasp that: the garland outside my hall

It was plastic, parent-store-bought
A wreath of oranges; shadows of Passover
Where the Robin laid four Eggs at the start of summer
What praying for Holy Birds begot

First, it was the lonely Hawk
Then it was the skinny four Foxes
Maybe I was begging
But, soon, I found the Blue Eggs to watch

I closed the door more gently than normal
And daily, I saw the mother flying by
This time, my Belovedness invited inside
My bidding for Blessing made formal

So I knocked on the door
Rapping below the nest: rejection coming quick
My plea for holiness: ugly and ignored
It hit me once, but wanted more

Stung below my pinky and on the web of my thumb
My door of divinity: a wasps' nest
I realized this time, I might have to kneel
To think goodness came easy... how dumb

When I returned, the wreath destroyed,
Littered on pavement, shells empty
The blue was rotting—the yolks festering
My good omen, my Robin's Eggs, now void

What remained of my Holy Birds?
My Robin was gone, and the Hawk unhappy
I was begging... I was begging
I was not a shepherd, and they were not my herds

But something new flew to greet
Not a Bird but a Beetle
I couldn't find the scripture in that
Not a Bird, but a Talking Beast

I let it lay on the pavement with us
But it was dead, and I was lying
Yet, You were next to me... It was still us

I can't remember what left me first
Was it the Eggs, or was it You
I don't know

I lost a lot of what I used to worship

Back from the place where I left You,
The Beetle was still waiting for me
A black inkling on warm pavement
It's fragile body became my pew

I took it to my room, and I hid it
With it, I had a lot of You
I wanted more of it and more of You
But, You were gone

I used to lean my forehead to Yours
You submitting to me, me to You
I still know it as the greatest way to show love
Through and by being weak

I found holy love between Your eyes
Four Foxes, Holy Birds, and Blue Eggs didn't have it
Your amber eyes closed against mine—

That was something to worship

You bowed with me every time
The last time our foreheads met, You were dead
But I felt your touch
Holy, soft love pressed up to mine

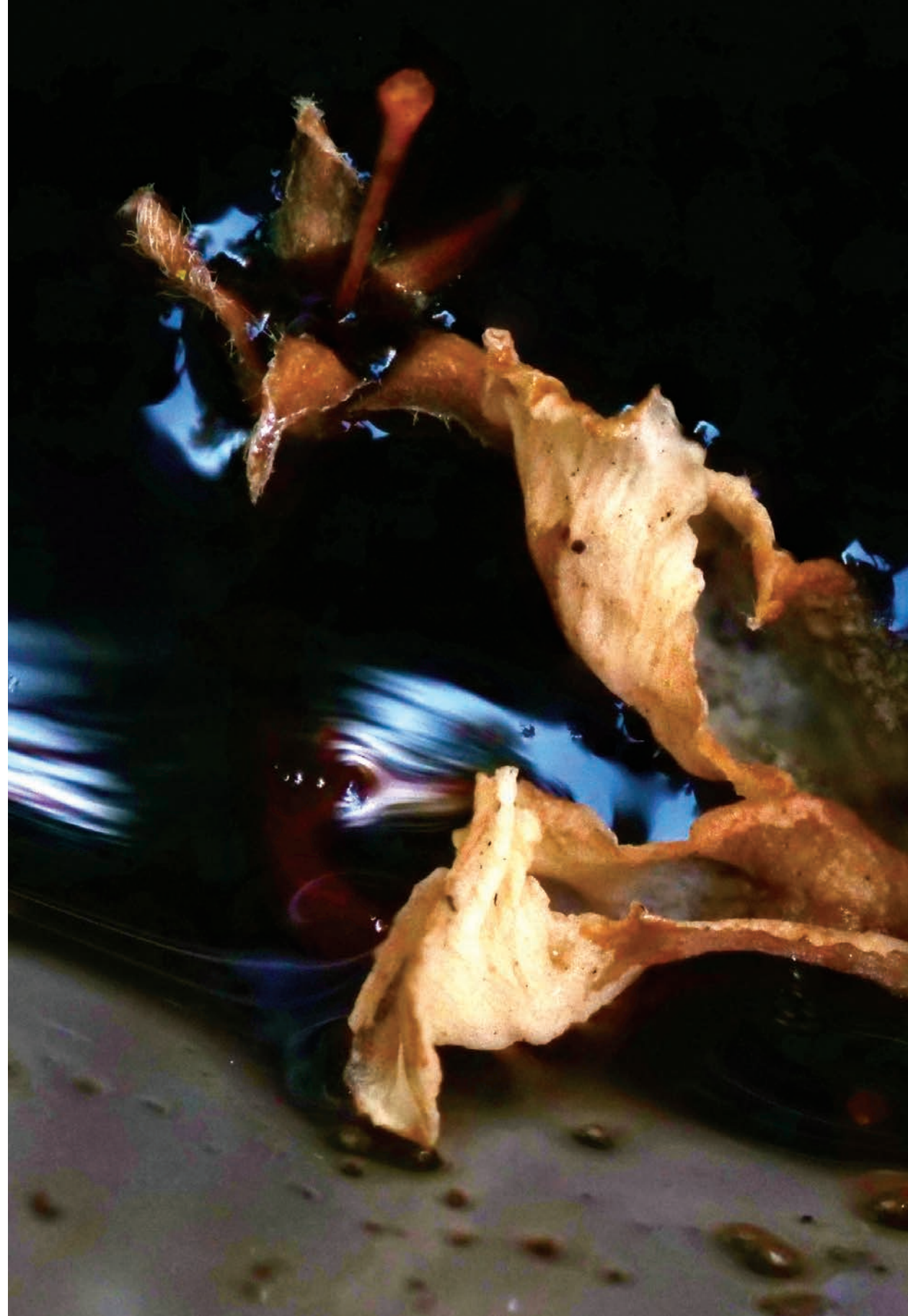
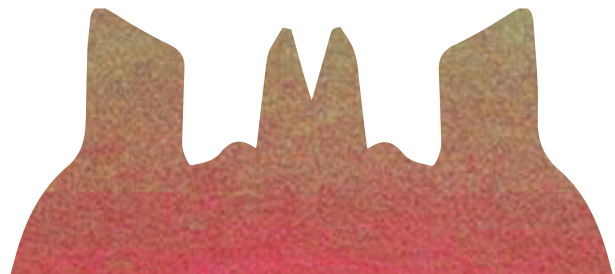
I don't know what died first
If it was the Beetle, the Eggs, or You
I know my prayers sound like begging
I know I've had to beg for a lot of love

I know You willingly gave it

—*Katherine Colvin*

WORM TEA

GUNILLA ÖBERG





I photograph things that can
only be seen if one slows down.

decaying matter
reminds me that life is
circular
floating in the blackness
the dead and the living

kinship.





WING

MATTIE FORD

WHEN I WAS A CHILD and my grandmother came upon something she found remarkable — the light in the trees, horses grazing elegantly in a pasture, a glittering, draping chandelier — she would stop on a dime and tell us, the grandchildren, to “ooh ahh.” We’d gather around her, three mousy heads with hair haphazardly tamed, and follow her line of sight, doing our best to emulate the wonder she was asking for. “Oooooooooooh,” we’d crone in our play tones. “Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.”

Most of my stories, and the stories of my mother, my father, my grandparents, and their parents before them, play out against the soft green rolls and deep muddy plush of the West Tennessee landscape. I come from a lot of people — many of them farmers and teachers and avid tennis players and even more avid football fans and long-time city council members and religious duck hunters and people so deeply from a place, it does not exist without them. We are bound here. It is something like the first time you stick your tiny toes into the cold, rich mud of the bottomland hardwoods. It envelops you. It is like the quickness with which your foot disappears, the sound that comes from the muck once you pry

yourself out — a cry of grief from a landscape that thought finally, finally, you are fully mine again. Something barely two becoming something almost one.

My grandmother has always been able to find something to “ooh ahh,” no matter where she is, for my grandmother has always loved the beautiful. She is a woman who drapes herself in it, surrounds herself with it. She spritzes herself every morning with Shalimar perfume, despite having lost her sense of smell decades ago — once on each wrist before meeting them together, smooth skin to smooth skin, and then bringing each to the soft curve of her neck. She wears jewelry — most of it real — like she is a boat out to sea and it is her anchor: big, elaborate pieces keeping her tiny body from floating away. A couple times a year, she’ll request that we go to happy hour at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, an hour from our small town, just to see the grandeur.

In childhood, each time I met someone new, I would wait, breath bated, for my favorite question to come. “My father is an orn-i-tho-lo-gist,” I would say, precocious and knowing. He studies birds for the government, I’d explain, blurry on the details but thrilled that whoever I was speaking

to — some fellow eight-year-old, perhaps — didn't know what that word meant. It made me feel like he (and, by extension, I) knew something the rest of the world didn't, that there were secrets waiting to be discovered. Something held only in the brambly enclaves where we'd birdwatch together on Saturday mornings — I, largely with my nose in a book, along for the ride. Maybe it was hidden somewhere along the county roads we'd prowl through, miles below the speed limit, ready to draw our binoculars like pistols in a showdown. Maybe somewhere along Sugar Creek, or out near the town dump, or across the county line, where the land drops off into the river below. My dad taught me there was a world to discover, rich and complex, big enough to spend all day, every day devoted to the cause of figuring it out, and still not know it all.

Time with my grandmother, on the other hand, was in large part about practicing femininity. My sister and I would play dress up in her furs and her jewelry and, before going to bed, we'd sit in her big bathroom and watch her "take her face off," scrubbing off layers of makeup and putting in their place creams and oils and potions of all types. She'd remove the dirt from under our nails with the sharp end

of a nail file, her fingers always cold and holding tightly to ours, attempting to keep them still. I'd watch her sit at her desk in front of a wall of windows and dial the phone numbers, one after another, of the people she checked on every day — her sister down the road, her friend across town, the lady from church whose husband had been in the hospital. We'd brush our hair before supper and hold hands in the kitchen while my grandfather prayed. We'd bring our china filled with appropriately-sized portions to the big dining room table in a room always too cold. We'd eat sitting in straight-back chairs. This was different from my normal life. Though we saw my grandparents every week, at home, we played outside more, watched tv more, ate Easy-Mac more. At Koko's, we were ladies.

My grandmother tells us of the time she would spend as a child walking the property with her father in the evenings. She was the favorite daughter of a man quiet and proud. It was an experience that shaped her, she who still loves the vast and the quiet. She'll do the same now — go out to their plot of land by the river and sit in the stillness of it. There is a scraggly cedar tree, no taller than an average-sized man, that marks

the path to the cabin on the river hidden in a thick brush of trees. That cedar tree is where she and my grandfather would go to sit on special occasions — anniversaries, birthdays, New Years Eves — and drink a bottle of something bubbly together. My father walks that path to turkey hunt, to deer hunt, to bird watch. The land beyond that path is a place my father has made a quiet vow to — that he will protect it but, more than that, that he will know it; that he will be both a mindful observer and a long-standing companion. This promise is palpable in the way he moves. He wades through the tall grasses, each step intentional as he scans the sky for birds, the ground for insects, hands poised on the binoculars ever-present around his neck. He walks quietly, and stops quickly to draw his binoculars before scribbling down notes on a piece of paper kept loose in his pocket. He watches closely as the seasons change and the number of species swells and shrinks. He knows what wildflowers will bloom next and what butterflies they will draw in, where the turkeys are likely to roost in the winter and how long it will take for the migratory birds to return from their trek south. He knows the most beautiful paths along the property, knows which

ponds we need to fish (to mitigate overpopulation but, really, to keep morale high among those of us with no luck at catching). He knows approximately how soon the little creek running through the middle of the land will reshape the landscape, knows the patterns of the floods and what the big sweeping crevasses unfamiliar in that part of the world tell us about erosion patterns. He knows just about everything.

As I've gotten older, I've thought more and more about what is mine to hold. The blue in my eyes is my grandfather's, along with — I think — the cadence of his voice, the desire to talk too long about things pretentious and unreachable. My middle name is my father's, and his father's, and his father's before him — these men of greenness and earnestness, these men in knee-high boots. I have the broad shoulders of my mother, the thick wavy hair of my father. The deep, rich floodplain soil is mine, whether I want it or not. The birds are too, though, and the oaks, and the butterflies, and maybe a shotgun, and at least one of the Andrew Wyeths, trees bare and stark, hanging perfectly straight in my grandmother's house, and I am all equally of theirs, clumsily sewn together from it all. The in-laws say

we're a scary family to marry into — tight-knit and loyal and too many of us to keep up with. I cannot help but swell a little with pride. There are some days that all I want in this world is for someone to see me and say, you have your grandmother's nose and your grandfather's wit, and the way you walk into a room, feet heavy no matter how softly you attempt to tread, is just like your grandmother used to. You are theirs, they'd say, do you know that?

This Thanksgiving, as I sat on the back porch of my childhood home keeping my dad company while he carved the turkey, my grandmother came toddling down the steps to say her pleasantries and steal a bite of meat. This year, my dad saved a pheasant to serve before lunch, a bird he and my sister shot in February and froze for this day or one like it. It is here he and my grandmother meet, this liminal space where fingers pull meat from bone and eyes flash in

delight with the taste. Her fingers are thin, each wrinkle etched as if in marble, her skin papery and soft, pinching, pulling; his fingers are short, thick, stubby, strong. As they always have been. Fingers that pull triggers and ruffle apart the feathers of a bird wing. Fingers that pick the strings of the banjo, the guitar, that hold the bow of a violin and play it roughly. The two of them are a world sunk deep inside my chest, are the winter layers that keep me warm. My stomach aches with the fullness of it.

It is simple, really. My grandmother is the only person I know who loves when the trees lose their leaves because only then can you see them best. My father knows our corner of the world better than anyone I know or could imagine, because he has been here to watch and to listen. I'm not sure my world will ever fully feel like mine. There is wonder written all over my face. *

BACKYARD AS UNIVERSE

After an all day-and-night-long rain,
the birds come out in force, like a
universal chorus, a cacophonous throng —
each voice raised in song. I sing along,

rejoicing the sun's return to spur
on each bud and blade, each baby bird
on the verge of fledging. Raindrops
still sparkle in treetops. A radiant day

to chase the blues away. I've whittled
my wants down to few: birdsong
and morning dew, day-long comings
and goings of feathered and furred kin

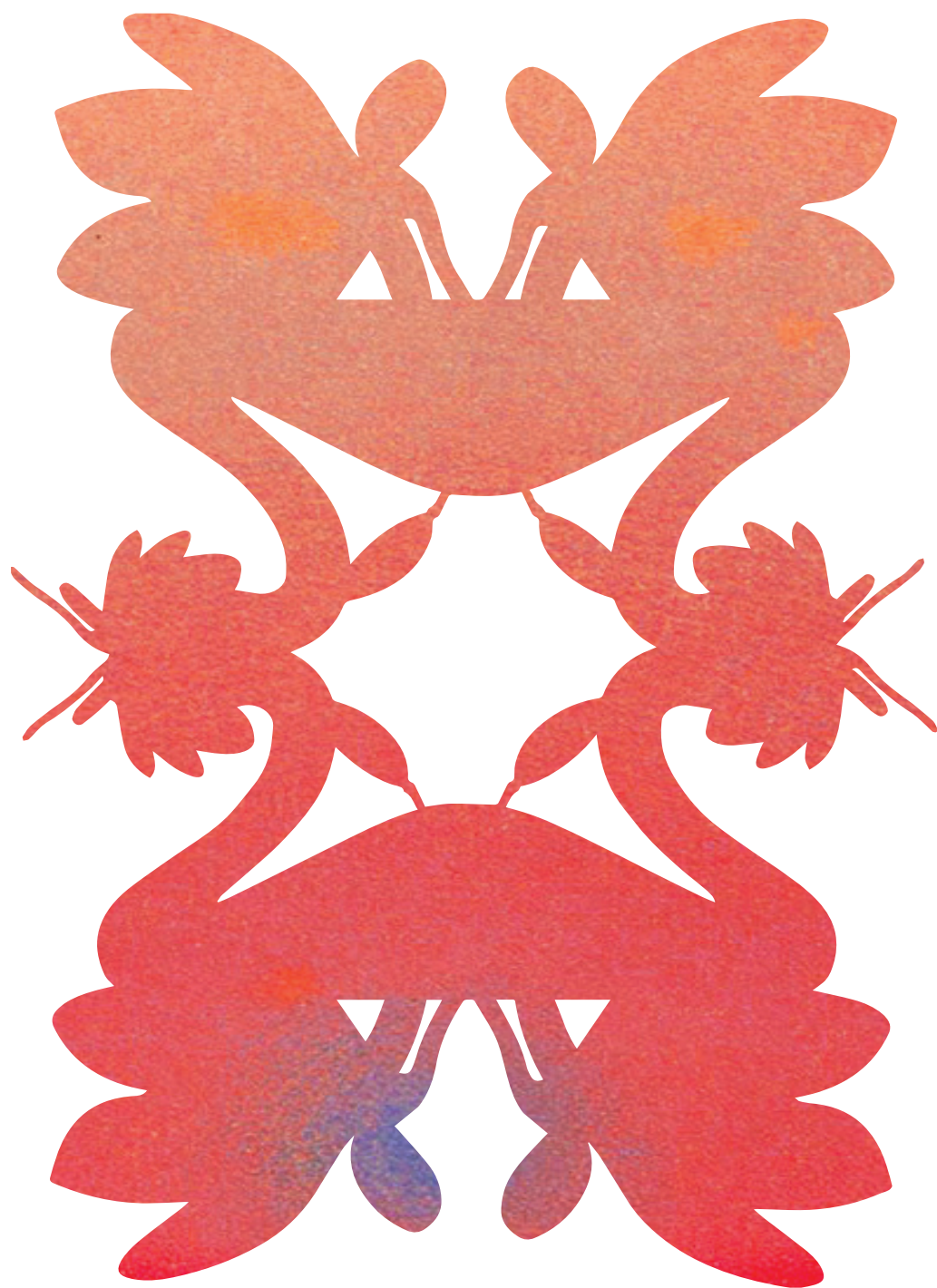
for seed and water — a sip, a bath.
And in the aftermath of day,
the aerial display of bats and
fireflies. These days and nights

my backyard is my universe. I refuse
to disregard even the weeds — look
how the clover, dandelions, and
alliums bloom to please the bees.

Just yesterday I was a young girl
reaching for the stars. Today I'm
an old woman holding on for dear,
fleeting life to the ground beneath me,

flora and fauna around me,
scent of honeysuckle fading
now from the woods enough
to cause me to tear up.

— *Diana Woodcock*



TIME SENSITIVE *I & II*

BETTY KOVACIC



The image of the hand in this artwork was derived from *The Economist* magazine, artist unknown. While the fair use law regarding copyright allows for the use of others' images when a social comment is expressed, we want to acknowledge that the "Time Sensitive" contains elements of collage.



EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR GAZA

I wonder how the olive trees are doing
the ones at his house don't even fruit
Our faces stay oily
between shared sweat and cigarettes
Cue the inhale,
air smells more like mint than ash
Exhale,
dried leaves form a cherry
like watching a nation aflame
O, why can't I pull out this weed
Roots resist when hands compete
The olive trees are still down there,
I can hear them humming.

—*Hamsa Fae*





BOUND: THE GREAT BANYAN

LEE CHANG MING



The Tongliang Great Banyan is located in front of Baoan Temple in Penghu, Taiwan. According to an inscription at the temple, the tree is about three-hundred years old. Its canopy spreads over 95 cubic feet, growing wide rather than tall due to the island's harsh winds.



This site is a remarkable entanglement of living and non-living: a composition of plant life, man-made structures, and the spiritual that have fused over many decades of growth and resilience. Inscribed at the temple are the names of multiple generations of Tongliang villagers, underscoring the community's long relationship with the sacred tree and the gods that reside in the temple. Here, kinship is both intergenerational and entwined with the earth.





THE CABIN

LINEA JANTZ

TIRES CRACKLE on frozen gravel. Headlights search the forest. The cabin is alive, though it does not breathe. We have been told that in the morning wild turkeys will approach over the snow. For now, the windows, opaque, black rectangles, reveal nothing but our faces. I flick the light on. Elk battle above the dining table, antlers low and locked. A wolf snarls in warning over the easy chair, crouched in a forest of firs floored with snow. By a cubic lamp, a fur trader crouches to puff his pipe, furrowed face thoughtful. A clock half as tall as I am stares me down, pointing a massive hand towards the kitchen. At the first hint of morning, while the snow languishes blue, I strap a pair of found snowshoes to my feet. I am surprised to see a neighbor's dog waiting by the door, tail swooshing. His eager whine encourages me on my way. I tell him *I don't know if you're supposed to be here ... but you're welcome to come along*. Maybe he

is telling me the same thing. The dog and I climb through the cedar forest, following tracks of turkey and deer. The snow drifts are a good ten inches deep. Deer tracks, now frozen, sink to varying depths in snow occasionally gouged with their clambering. I can spot the occasional dragging of their bellies. A small pond has frozen to cloudy glass. The dog and I crisscross a slender stream, creek murmuring of higher mountains we will not reach, mountains that rise to the east, blue with spruce, powdered white. Above the trees the sun climbs the range's outstretched arm. I try not to encourage the dog. He does the same with me. He has a perfectly good human back home. Yet for this one morning, we walk together — as homo sapiens and canines have walked for thousands of years. At times, in unspoken agreement, we stand quiet, listening to the sigh of the wind in the lodgepole pines. They sway like ocean waves among the peaks. *

TOWARDS HOME

ELIZA STRAUSS-JENKINS



TO THOSE WHO CHOSE THE SEA

1

I see people, living, long before now, speaking in languages
I cannot name, unbelonging to me, taken from home

with hair reaching up to sky or curled sea bound or stretched
humid and bouncy
together, alive, soon to know the mark of blackness

momentarily, with bodies swayed to beats like dna-bind and
soul-tied memories
that coil up roots in me I thought died alongside the slaves of
my mother,

roots I supposed wilted in the homeland my father
left behind to grant me some white man's fever dream.

2

I've never been
stupid
sounded like ma's broken english, her
ebonics
served as punchlines never spoken in
school
gave me numbers that proved stupid skipped
generations
of my family fought for this, can't pass up a
gift
-ed means you'll make it to the top, you're destined.

3

I want america acceptance like payday, like first check shop-
ping spree, like new shoes
new weave new nails like what did all the kids at school say?
They loved it mama. I
wish for america home like homegrown, like anne's lace,
queen of conquest
rooted so deep that no one remembers what the landscape
looked like before she came.

4

Dad says I've got
good things coming
because of my good talk,
because I have his
blood in my veins
which means I'm lineage
bound. So no slave shackle
holds me back, I've
iv-dripped blood
wept from motherland
back into arteries,
cistern of overcoming,
no history whips, no dna tainted,
I drink from ancestor well
and never run out,
I'm mother-scrubbed
away whiteness and
native land ties, I'm fully
blackened by him.

In choir we'd sing old negro spirituals
 calling some swing low sweet chariot,
 calling
 carry me home, over jordan, Jesus wash my sins away
 and good teacher (miss sarah muller)
 told us to feel the words
 said to feel the folklore
 goaded us into the sway of the music
 pressed deep and demonstrated throat sounds
 then uncocked her jaw, frustrated, stretched fingers
 into corner sides of lips and pulled them taut started
 moaning for a band of angels
 and commanded us to copy, to wail out the words
 along with her, knowing the soul of this song
 only comes out when agonized
 she reveled in the secondhand agony produced
 as soon as the room erupted into sweet-chariot-cries
 pleading to be taken back home.

—*Nyami Aghedo*

This poem was inspired by Jana Winderen's "Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone"—a four-channel audio installation exhibited by the University of Toronto's Blackwood Gallery. I first encountered these recordings on the banks of the Missinnihe River, on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations. There, the sounds of forest and sea merged to form a palimpsest of time and place. I hope that wherever they find you, the songs of the Barents Sea invite you into conversation with the lands and waters that hold us all in kinship with one another.

TO THE WHALES OF THE BARENTS SEA

spring blooms in November here
 and in every month and season
 where the daylight flows in fours
 we float between winds and channels
 cracking ice and maple by turns

while

your body of water lies
 beached on the subarctic continental
 in voiceless form and formless voice
 double-crossed by bears and turtles
 scribbled over someone else's margins

together

in this place our borders bleed
 through maps written and overwritten
 by inked fingers moving in melody
 with the wild strain of salmon and cod
 caught in the slipstream of a dying fall

we

dissolve and resolve our displaced voices
 under fallen leaves and distant waters
 your words and our songs
 find their winter on Winderen waves
 yet always the spring blooms

exhale

—*Kaitlyn Harris*

A red, wavy, decorative shape on the left side of the page.

ELK MOUNTAINS TRIBUTARY

ALAINA GEIBIG





PLASTIC DREAMSCAPES

& OTHER PANDEMIC ENCOUNTERS

ATHENA SOFIDES

SOMEWHERE

Maybe my world was flipped over. At first, I thought it could have happened overnight. But upon further inspection of the pieces I was able to find, it seemed that maybe this shit had been unfurling for years. I had just been too naïve to have seen it until I was actively on the floor, mouth pried open to gasp for a breath and in so doing, creating a vacuum into which all of the scraps of my hippocampus, the painting's of my heart's walls, and the colors and textures of my mind's eye, were sucked and pulled. Pursued lips made to stay "no" unmoored from each other into a gaping collapsed star, till you could see too many teeth, till the jaw seemed to have cracked off its hinges, and all the memories and believed-to-be-truths, the untreated mechanical errors etched into my immune system since at least Smyrna burnt, fell in. And when there was nothing else to go in, out it came — a siren's song for a brief moment before it became a howl that emanated from the capillaries in my toes, the marrow in my bones, the meaty pulsations of my diaphragm that forgot for a few seconds how to facilitate my breath. I screamed and howled and things crawled out of my throat, and I just couldn't stop.

SOMEWHERE ELSE

I looked in the mirror yesterday, and someone else looked back at me. A future iteration, liberated from this body but also so real even my current infrastructure was stunned that we were not in fact one. They lowered their head, earnest and frank, in a nod of acknowledgment. We held eye contact for a long time, as my present self searched hungrily for meaning in their eyes. The honey in their cheeks, I wanted it, so I reached out. My hand struck the glass. They lifted theirs to feel mine. They were me, and also you, and I saw the viscous lifeblood infuse, from your fingertips to the glass and up my arms, through the venous networks, to my brain and heart. Convulsions brightened. I broke eye contact to really feel the suffusion. You were gone when I looked back. I pet my shoulder to remind myself of your softness, to cap the animacy of you that you'd allowed to trickle in. For a while it was sufficient, this glitching normal-abnormal body with pieces I don't want and important other ones missing. For a moment, and for many to come, your memory carried me.

THE AEGEAN SEA

The sea has melted into the sky, all deep blues and blacks and grays. Like they say in that book you love, “things go missing in the night”^{*}—including the horizon line that separates water and air, and other bifurcations that we’re told make sense in the light. I can’t see the waves anymore but I feel them in my stomach turning, I see them in my hair flying around my headphones when I stand out by the water, I taste them in the tiny airborne particles cast skyward by the metallic clinks of the ferry. Through and into the night we travel—from Athens to Chios, meet me in the sea or sky?

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

The days fade into nights. I dream about the stock market and see spirits around my desk at work.

I step out of the bathroom, walk into my room, and curl into bed. I look at the floor and across the room, avoiding the mirrors—that’s where my ghosts play at night, and I prefer to leave them to themselves when I’m trying to sleep.

In other words, I have accepted the fact that there is something else inside me at all times, and others pass through me occasionally. It was awful at first to realize, but now we’ve reached a quiet symbiosis. Everything I am ashamed of has conjured itself into a little being that flutters through me several times a day.

Goodnight, love, my ghost affects. It takes up so much of my energy—I’m always thinking of it, so I don’t even bother replying with words.

The next day, I wake up and spend hours on my phone to try to forget what I saw in the mirrors and across the room, but forgetting and remembering are not always fit for something that is stitched to you as a shadow. My stomach turns with hunger and disgust, and I smell rot from within. I take a shower and drink black coffee no sugar to drown it out, but I still feel like my every step is preceded by decay. My mind is in a fog, the binds of my phone and ghost, playing me like an instrument.

Those entities of petrochemical origin... the oil and epoxy, solid and liquid resin, micro and macro, I take their intoxicating life-medicine, I eat their plastic

food. It makes my chest swell, from xenoestrogen, not pride.

I pass the river and peer into some eyes just over the railing. We smile and show off our pristine teeth. We have been using an electric toothbrush and flossing. I put on lipstick only to smudge it across my face. I trim my hair and flush the little pieces down the toilet.

CHIOS, GREECE

They asked me to come out and find them. At the beach, I located the shadows and crept inside. The stones shifted under my feet. I adjusted my eyes to the darkness—they were already swollen from the tears I’d excised, so I didn’t have to do much to keep them just closed enough. I trudged through the cool pebbles, gray and some with white stripes or x-es, and turned whenever I saw something scurry or heard a voice in the distance. I sat and looked for meaning in the sea and stars, caught a shooting star or visual snow or meteor fall around the corner of my peripheral vision. Then I realized I didn’t know what I needed to see, so I left.

I arrived at the mountain base. Once they’d requested I walk into the mouth of the stony trail from

whose zenith flows the town’s freshwater, I entered, navigating the pebbles and concrete slabs overlaying them. Next to the road, facing the rocks, there was a priest. He saw me, or maybe he didn’t, then crossed himself and bowed three times. Turned to the street, with his long beard and black robe, then back to the rocks before the mountain. Crossed himself again. Then returned to his car, drove away. I left the trail and headed towards the motel, arriving just past midnight. Connected my phone to their wifi signal, back where the cats and mosquitos roost, to call you and tell you I was safe.

EVERYWHERE

I’ve been noting my encounters with you—that you, the one who speaks through my bones, whose eyes catch my tiny bodily discomforts, who looks like me if I could really be. That you who scans and clocks and scoffs. I don’t know if you even really do those things, actually, or if I just feel so seen by you that I can tell you know how much of a performance I’m leading all the time. Maybe it was me, but maybe that was also just you.

^{*}from *Everything Under* by Daisy Johnson

*BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
& SOMEWHERE ELSE*

Sometimes it's like I'm crawling along the edge of consciousness, two or three missed thumps of hemoglobin and oxygen away from transcending this realm, and that's when my body forces my face to the ground.

When I'm lucky my tongue falls out first and lands in the dirt, where it can lick up the sustenance in between the arsenic and broken promises. and raise my blood pressure like my mother raised me, with strength and discernment and something scathing, undergirded by a brittle sharpness — all ready to crack once the humidity goes or comes too heavily like the nails on my fingers in November — and splinter sanguine shapes. The ancient breaths of our people materialize in the camel's hump-curves of a nose, dark brows arched like a thick and startled cat, gold leaf adorning crowns of laurel or olive lining the insides of the black eyes, but that's the part you just can't see.

If you look more closely, you also can't see the blood and secrets and ghouls that crawl just behind what you think is art, what you think is inanimate, but really is just immobilized, monsters

poising as stillness to reel you in and consume you from the outside in, weeping and screaming and cannibalizing because the secret is, my dear, that nothing will ever be okay or safe, and I lick their tears from the dirt in the ground to raise my low blood pressure so I can pass triage at the clinic so I can keep them and me and you upright.

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

When I think about who or what is heaven, I see your face. Even when I can't see it, I try to remember. The moon has been resting on its belly these days, big and warm like a yolk. I see you in it, in the licks of the wave, the spray of salt in my eye in a playful kiss from the sea, the way the moonlight pools within the curves of my fingernails, I see you in the food I taste that brings peace to my soul while it nourishes my body, when I look at a friend and see love in their eyes and animating their being. You are the honey for my soul, your sweetness literally powers and reminds me how connected our bodies and minds and the threads holding them together are, how they hum and shake quietly, sometimes in mourning and sometimes in laughter, often both at once, and like magnets draw out the tears

from sea to eye to skin to air, sparkling and crawling along boldly and slowly, soft and sticky like honey — captivating, like you, and embodies particles that make their journey back to sea more challenging. Stone, dirt, pieces of plastic, glitter, glass. It, you, we, a world vibrating with the past and future, petrochemical and blood plasma, become even more of an ensemble. But it becomes part of the river and mellifluously carries on. And then I remember we have always been

non-singular. Part of the honeyness of it all. It is in those things and the worlds of communion they elucidate that I see heaven, and you, and remember why and for what.

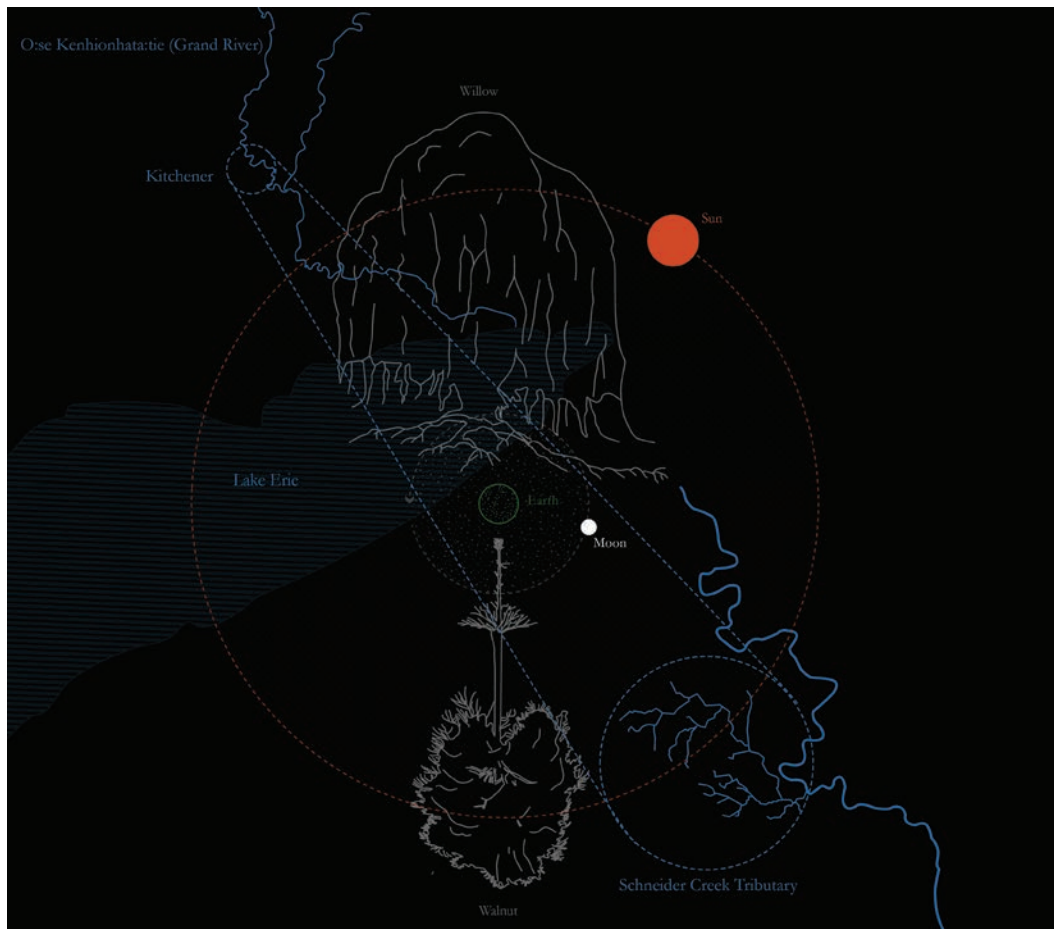
FLORENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

You are the home made unfamiliar, the fear made recognizable, the fog-turned-lucid, the memory of peace. The honey, the lifeblood, my heart, I love you, and I need you. *



FROM STARS TO SOIL AND BACK

NIARA VAN GAALEN

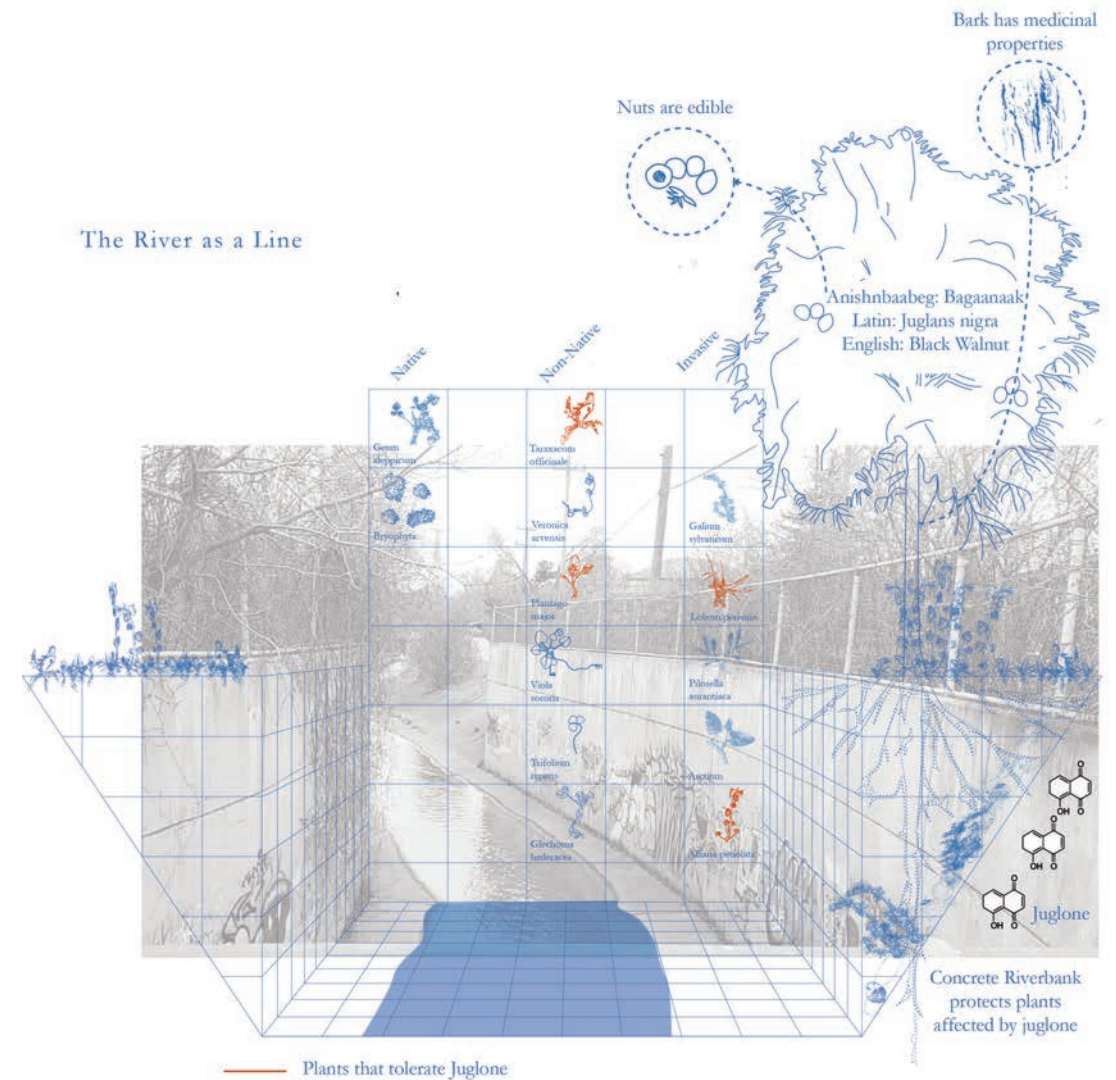


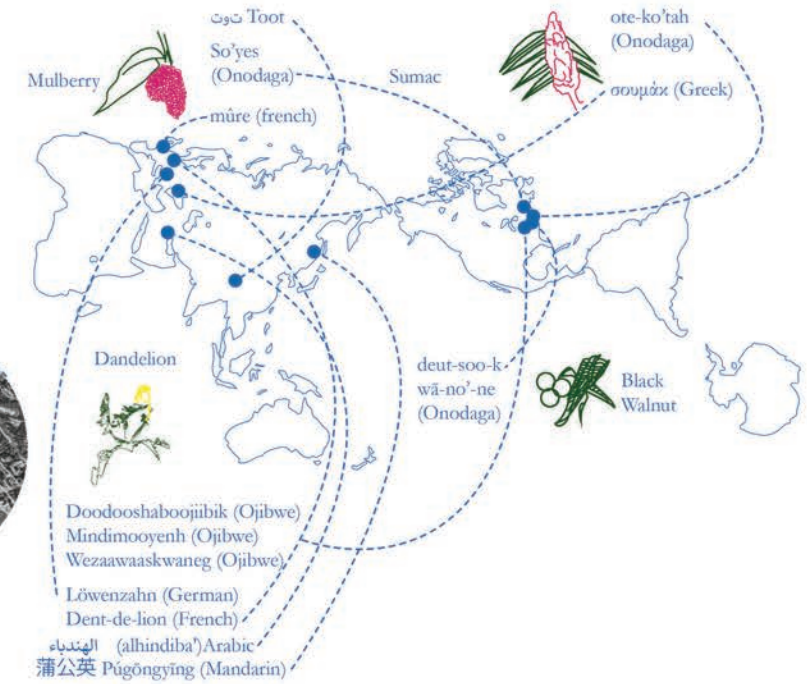
LOCATION
Willow River, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

O:se Kenhionhata:tie, meaning Willow River, is the watershed that grounds this land. I grew up along the branch of Schneider Creek named Henry Sturm Creek that runs through the Victoria Hills area in Kitchener, ON. This creek has been channelized as it flows towards the O:se Kenhionhata:tie, and I became interested in the creek, its plants, and their relationship to colonialism. Clearing Indigenous vegetation and planting gardens with European species was part of the process of “taming” the land,

as was channeling the creek with concrete banks in the 1970s. It is not until much more recently that the value of the natural creek bed and its native, bio-diverse species has been recognized more widely. Of the plants I was able to identify, only two were native. The parallels between human and botanical settlers are undeniable. Thus our weeds tell a quiet tale of encroachment on land that is not ours. The Black Walnut tree is a native, characteristic species of this watershed. It produces a natural toxin called

juglone in its roots, leaves, nuts, shells and bark. This toxin leaches into the soil and causes irreversible damage to the cells of certain plants. It takes over when there is a lack of biodiversity because it is very hardy and can compete with invasive species. Although it too is part of nature, if all trees used this strategy to survive, there would be few of the other species that are needed in the ecosystem. It is a good metaphor to help us think about what kind of species we want to be.





the presence of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee created an existing economic hub, and the black walnut trees indicated fertile soil for farming. The settlers cut down 90% of the trees to make room for single-family farms. After the Second World War, small bungalows extended the city boundaries, and in the 1970s, the City paved the creek and turned it into an open storm-water sewer. The fish are long gone. With many new waves of immigration, new people are foraging and growing small gardens in the neighborhood. The most common languages outside of English have become Arabic and Mandarin Chinese. The concrete riverbanks are now overgrown by mosses and graffiti. I started wondering how plants might tell a story of

migration, and wondering in what other ways the many different groups of people that call this land home might find common ground through plants. I discovered that most pre-industrial societies, including the Haudenosaunee, Germanic peoples, Ancient Egyptians, and Medieval Islamic empires, used astrology to determine crop planting dates. Just as the moon controls the tides, many concluded that it also impacts groundwater and surface water. Planting at the appropriate moon time would then ensure that the new seeds have adequate moisture available to them. Plants sown during the correct phase would grow stronger and bear more fruit, and those planted at the incorrect time would be prone to weakness and infestation.

The Region of Waterloo is looking at naturalizing the creek, meaning removing the concrete river banks. This would improve flood resiliency in the region. What opportunities are created by this?

Simon Schama, in *Landscape and Memory*, says, "Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from the strata of memory as from layers of rock."

The problem with the landscape around Schneider Creek is that we have forgotten its histories. The diverse group of people living around it today have no idea of the rich agro-forest that once existed here, and their relationship to the water is mediated by the concrete riverbank. We also don't hear about the self-liberated Black settlers who migrated here from the United States in the 1800s, or learn how Sumac, commonly used in middle-eastern cuisine, is also found locally. Another untaught part of knowing a landscape is being able to name and recognize plants instead of loosely categorizing them as tree or bush. The landscape is rich with stories and relationships, but none of this is visible.

Many families in the neighborhood struggle to access affordable produce, and forage or grow some food if they have the time and knowledge. However, many people in the Victoria Hills area also do not have the ability to supplement their diet in this way because the knowledge has not been passed on to them, and they do not have access to land for gardening.

My dream is that the naturalization of the creek would be the beginning of an urban agroforest that draws on and highlights the many histories of this land. I can imagine a place that teaches people about plants and the many ways we can use them, learn from them, and connect through them. I hope that over time, all people in this community can build stronger relationships with the many beings on this land, from the stars to the soil and back.

Gardens of Time

Indigenous



German Settler



Self-Liberated African



Recent Immigrant



Wild Cherry

Mulberries

Hazelnuts

Huckleberries

Butternuts

Sugar Maples

Wild Plums

Okra

Sunflowers

Tomato

Deer

Staghorn Sumac

Potato

Kale

Gourds

Corn

Squash

Beans

Cabbage

Cauliflower

Green Onions

Raspberry

Eggplant

Dandelion

Carrots

Cattail

Burdock Root

Garlic Mustard

Trout

The Unknown Future in all its messiness and vibrancy

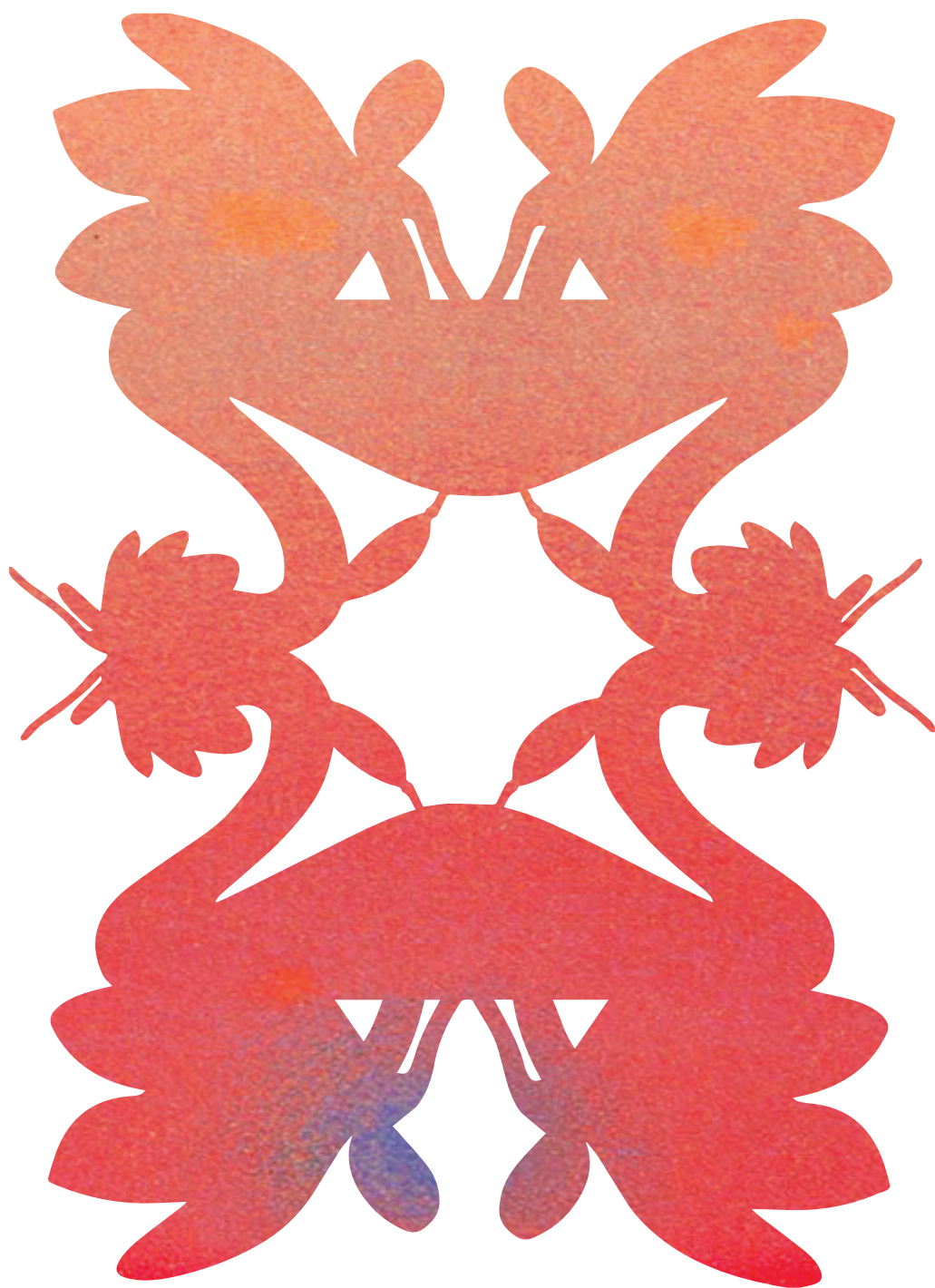


PORTRAIT OF A ROCK

WITH LICHEN & CHISMES

PAMELA ACOSTA





THE OLD HACIENDA

KATHLEEN FRANK



WITHIN THE ICEBERG WILDERNESS

KATHLEEN FRANK



KIKO

Oh Queen of the Goats
Wee-Snaw-Bah you said to me
Bucket on your head

—*Steven Ring*

BUTTERFLY EXHIBIT

I watch my mother ring bells underwater in hazy summer,
the bells' tongues slipping, always slipping,
into silence. When my mother dies
she will die a thousand times for all the lives she keeps alive,
her chest cavity grotesque and fluttering with them,

like a thousand butterflies —
four daughters, one half-husband, the lady at the grocery store,
the man in the alleyway, one nephew, two sisters, one brother —
half-gone mother to all.
Butterflies hold her but to the ground.

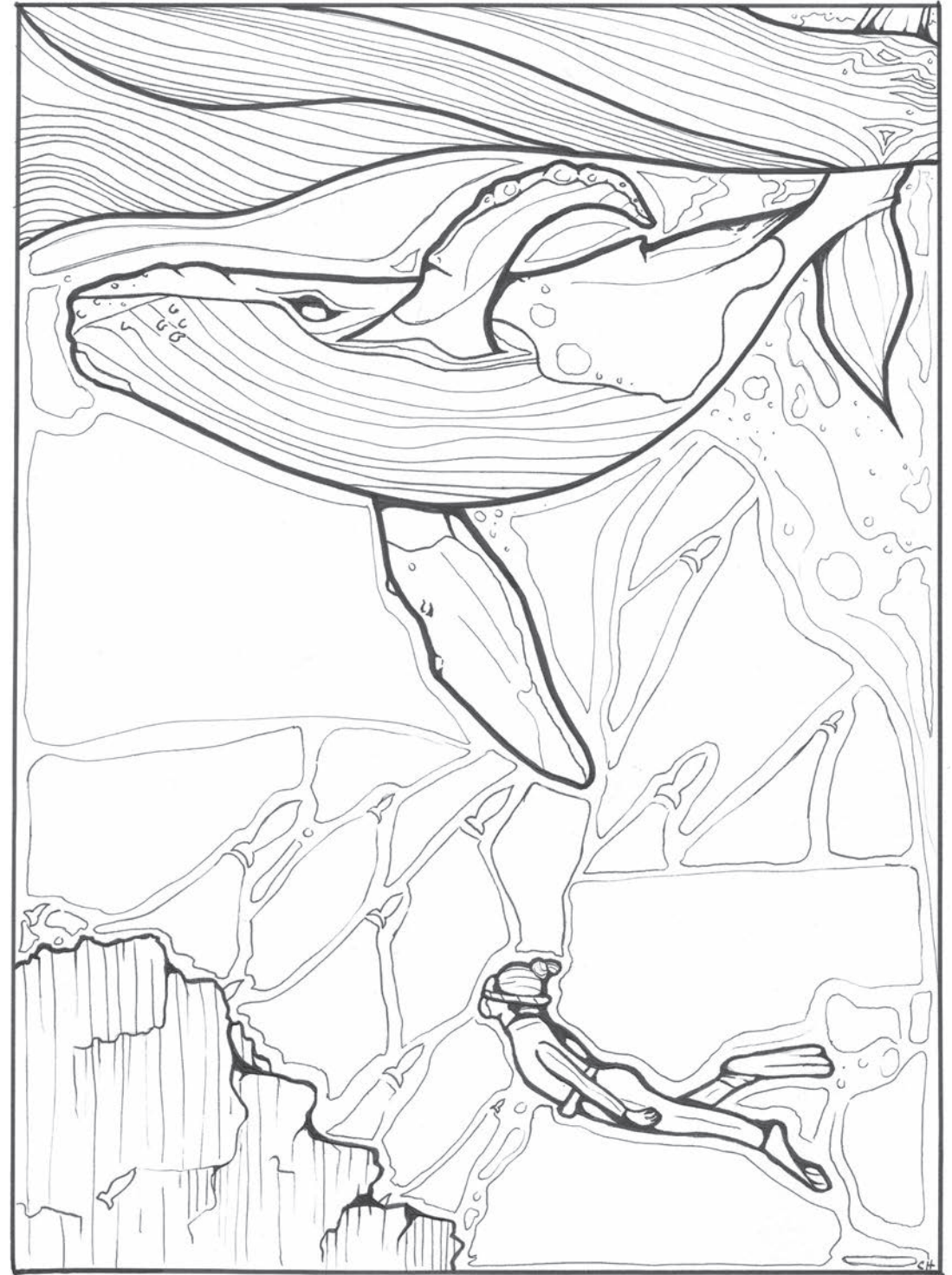
She is heavy with their flight like weights tied to ankles,
so watch her drown, subsumed under wings beating,
always beating, asking
How do I live, mom? And can you help me?
And she will help, of course,

even while the butterflies strip her blood, heartbeat,
and breath, while she splinters into a thousand butterfly bodies
caked like maggots and tongueless bells
at the bottom of a pool. My mother can no longer ask
How do I live, mom? And can you help me?

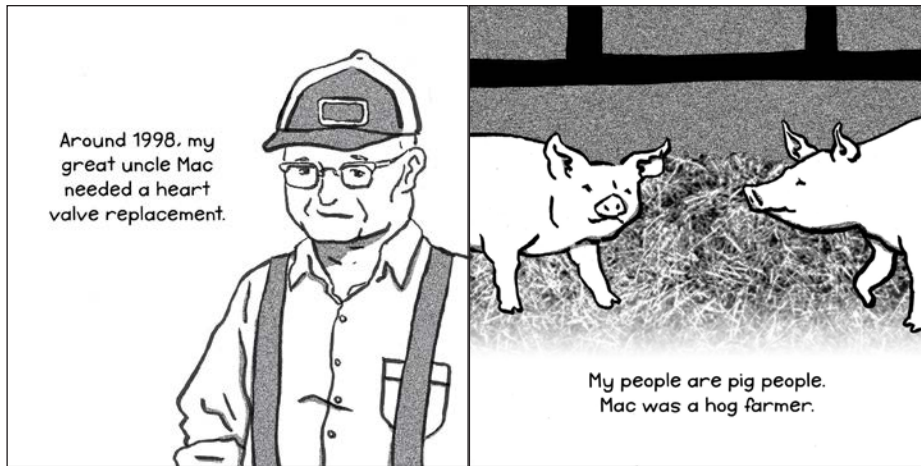
—*Summer LoPriore*

COLORING PAGE

CONNOR HANSON

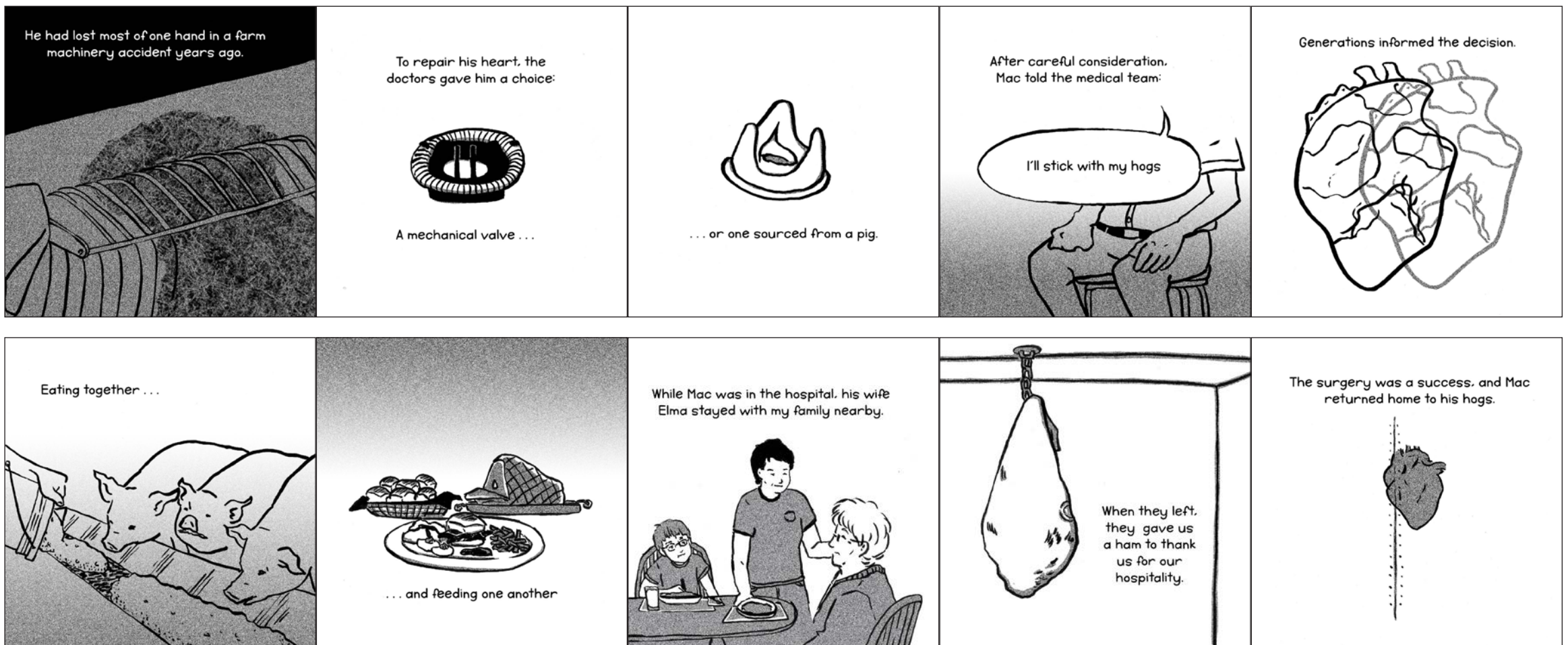


In the spirit of kinship, SAGE invites you to participate in the creation of the magazine by adding your own color to the artwork above.



DEUS EX PORCO

RATY SYKA @THENUMPIE



THE JETTY

Salt does strange things in a place like this

Land more reflective than water
warps itself around the edges of a dying basin

The sadness heaves, expanding to hold what it couldn't before,
a mountain,

I lay my body down on the earth's
and its weight holds mine

How do I tell you?

The moon rising over the mountain is unspeakable

Almost surprised at the debut
then looks me dead in the eye

I want to know what she sees

You are held on all sides

Sheer stone, a recognizable face;
Hard dirt, soft folds of laundry

Each as quick to hurt or heal

My shadow spun around me as I followed the spiral

I would go out to that pink water
where I could scoop salt crystals with my hand
and the slow waves can't bring themselves to break
held together by the tension of salinity

But I don't know if I'd make it back

—*Hadley Tallackson*



Photograph of Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty by Conrad Tallackson



FLORA OF THE MATRIARCHS

ALEX WEYERHAEUSER

A FEW AUGUSTS AGO, my mom and I walked around the pond near our house, stopping to pick wild blackberries on the side of the road like the ones that bramble over my grandparents' resting place in the Adirondack soil. We plucked and popped the berries into our mouths, while we philosophized if not-remembering is the same as forgetting.

I didn't know my grandmother Rosemary for long before she left us. It's humbling to know that a mere blood clot triggered a colossal stroke, snuffing out the brilliant philosopher, Ph.D., author, professor. Her body followed three years later, and we returned her to the patch of earth she cared for most deeply. There her ashes, alongside my grandfather's, mingle with the Adirondacks' glacial till, nourishing the Indian paintbrush, black-eyed Susans, rhubarb, lupines, and wild blackberries with which they share the soil. I think about her often: her unwavering values, staunch sense of justice, free spirit, sentimentalism towards lupines, her pointed nose and chin — which my mom and I inherited — and the example she set of what Plato might call the "good" life. She lived humbly, gratefully, kindly, and generously.

Healers traditionally used rosemary as a memory aid, and I do feel drawn to the herb, captivated by the witchy scent of my matriarchal line, the posthumous power of my grandmother and the name she gave herself. She announced her independence by softening her two given names, Rose and Mary, grafting them into one. I gave her a name too, "Mamoo" — a child's mashup of a name I couldn't pronounce and by which she was thereafter known in our home.

She was a complicated woman, as my mother recalls, controlling yet free spirited. As a novice nun, she was kicked out of the convent because the Mother Superior said she was too independent and questioned too many things. She won a prestigious scholarship to Oxford University to study British History, but then dropped out after a month to travel around Europe on the back of a motorcycle in attempt to convert a man she'd fallen madly in love with to Catholicism. Five years later, she left him at the altar to marry my grandfather — whom she'd only met twice in four years. She was raised with all the conventions of polite society — impeccable manners and all the right china — and yet gamely shoved

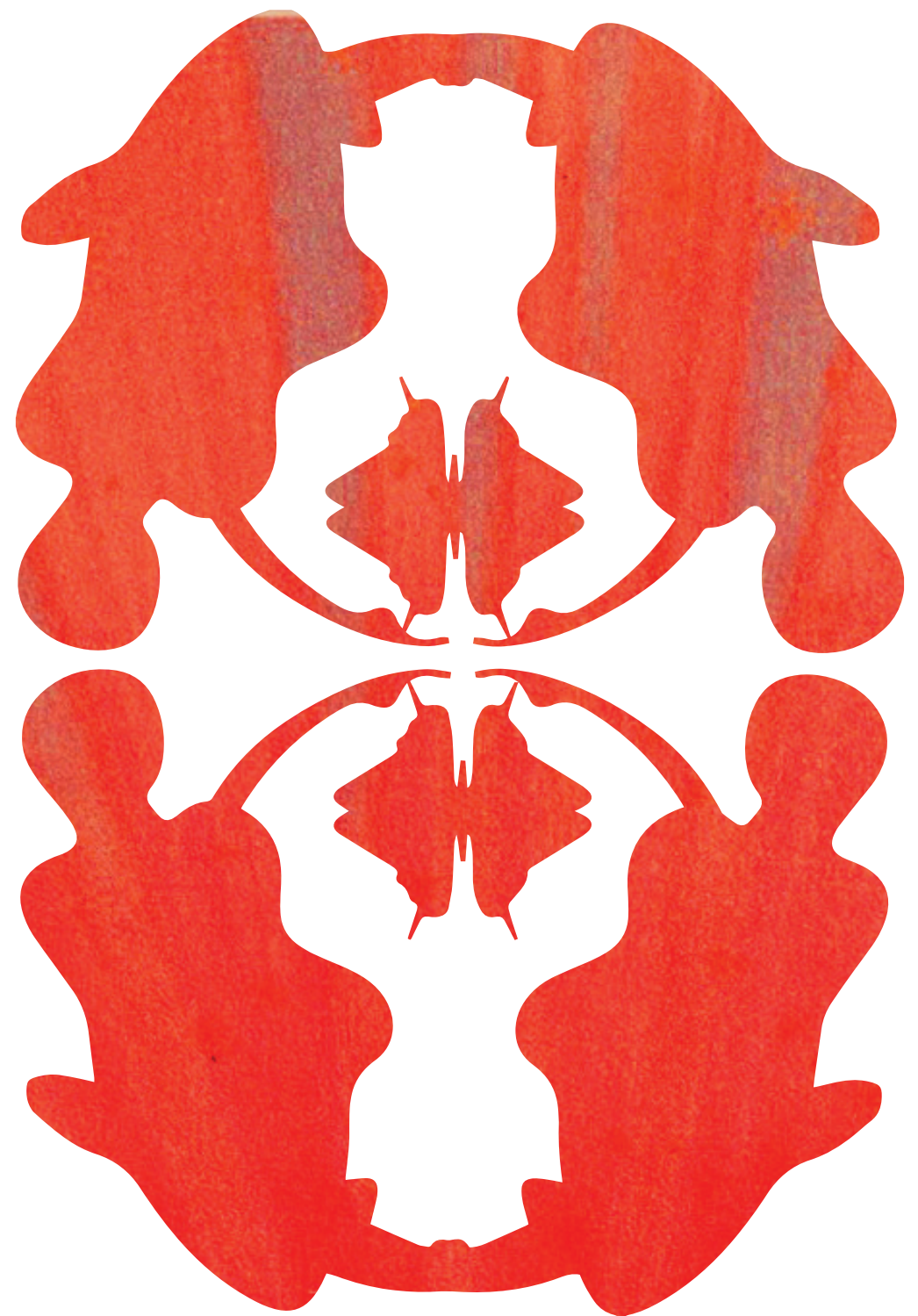
porcupine poop out of a collapsing outhouse and rotting potatoes out of a root cellar with my grandfather when building their house in the Adirondacks. As a mother, she brought her young children to numerous anti-war and Civil Rights protests. They lived in a cave on Santorini, attended school in Japan for a year, and lived in a 40-foot dugout canoe on the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea. In spite of, or perhaps because of, all this, she was a very strict mother.

Wild foraging nurtured her free spirit, and measured cooking her need for control. She foraged for mushrooms, edible ferns, choke-cherries, berries, grape leaves, lily flowers, squash blossoms, rhubarb, and pig-weed (which she called “wild spinach” when she served it at dinner). She grew vegetables in summer, herbs in winter, and cooked creatively on a rigidly tight budget all year round.

When I remember my grandmother, I think about the Lupine Lady: the protagonist of a story she read to me. After adventuring around the world for years, The Lupine Lady returns home to wander the countryside scattering lupine seeds, intent on leaving the world more beautiful. I envision my grandmother,

Rosemary, Mamoo, sprinkling her lupine seeds over the landscape. I imagine my mother following, her little legs striving to keep up in the tall grass and the heavy burlap seed sacks crossing their shoulders. Like the Lupine Lady, she left the world more beautiful than she found it, leaving my mom and me to sow her seeds.

I have an old photo that my grandmother took of my mom and me in a field of brilliant wildflowers. Lupines, daisies, Indian paintbrush, and black-eyed Susans come up to my chin. I remember running in that field and singing “The Hills are Alive” from *The Sound of Music* (which we would watch, laughing in recognition of Mamoo’s wild past when Maria’s free spirit gets her kicked out of the convent). My memories are rooted in lupines and rosemary, blackberries and wildflowers. I chose a lupine as my first tattoo. This floral scar is etched boldly, painfully, and permanently into the nervous skin between my ankle and Achilles. It’s a reminder of the sensory and intergenerational memories that connect my matriarchal line — even after our bodies have returned to the soil to be reborn as new life in which we inhale carbon dioxide, exhale oxygen, and leave the world more beautiful. *





KINSHIP IN MEXICO CITY

CLAUDIA EXCARET SANTOS CAMPUSANO







In my photography journey, I embrace the belief that digital photography is a medium of accessibility and artistic expression that transcends the limitations of the device itself. The images I present were captured using my iPhone XR, emphasizing that greatness in photography is not solely determined by the gear you possess. Instead, it is the unique moments and emotions encapsulated in each frame that truly define the art. Through this lens, I aim to illustrate that the essence of photography lies not in the equipment but in the ability to seize and immortalize meaningful moments.

MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

My tears pour out onto the paper and leak into the soil, seeping way down into the earth's center—I am my mother's daughter. I hold life gently in my hand and cradle it until it can create life of its own.

My mother is a descendent of warriors, of fishers, of healers, of inventors. You see, I was born with a fight burning deep within me, the flames whisper to me constantly that I am ready.

Ready to carry on what was left for me—just like my mother, I am a warrior.

Just like my mother, when I create, I heal my people and the village rejoices. Just like my mother, I stand on the front lines of war.

War for the liberation of our people: I stand in the middle of this battleground with my palms to the sky whispering a quiet prayer of strength. Just like my mother, with every breath I inhale and exhale, I invent.

I am my mother's daughter; I am my grandmother's granddaughter.

I am all the mothers before me and all the mothers after me
flowing like River Lea following the call of healing, of transformation,
of creation, of rest.

Just like my mother and her mother, my body is the temple; my body is the map; my body is the key to hidden passages of freedom buried deep beneath my skin, covered in scars, bruises, dirt, seeds, blood.

I am my mother's daughter.

—*Rosalie Ortiz*

A PUFFIN'S ROLE IN A CRABBER'S LIFE

JOSH KELSING

ENSCONCED WITHIN an oil-warmed cabin, where the walls sweat from the labored breaths of Graying fishermen and their disconcerted apprentices, a discolored image displays a bird. Like the Lionhearted extractors that envy the sea's living treasures, this sage puffin scans radars, waiting for the Perfect moment to assail fulsome resource pools.

The bird's broken neck gently falls upon its shoulder, eyes closed from a trek to mossy marbled cliffs. Cream feathers transition to a broken peppercorn, denoting life's end. A belt of dry blood, Crusted from changing winds — marks the bird's cheek. This stationary puffin will take flight again, Departing from expiration when the clementine-basalt matter recycles.

One by one, the men file into an Atlantic White Cedar booth, spongy and depressed from years of Exhausted use. A young man enters the quarters, depositing bowls of lukewarm Dungeness crab soup Piled with last year's oyster crackers onto a fissured table. Parcels of heat introduce the puffin to warmth it

hasn't felt since its youth. It recalls sitting on freshly pulled Marram grass, absorbing the Strength of the coast's sunlight.

Streaked iron spoons eventually hit ceramic bottoms, and the babbling wanes, begetting a rare Moment. Laconic remarks now dominate the confined soundscape. The youngest member of the Vessel, a child of ten, situates the yellowed image beneath his eyes, envisioning an animated colony of Puffins. They are pressing through windy scapes, dancing above eddies, and occasionally slicing into The churning Atlantic.

Weeks after the crabbing vessel returns to a Northern Maine harbor

Peppered with soft bronze cobblestones and affable lichens

The boy recognizes an individual with a tangerine beak and an onyx coat.

Looking at the child, the puffin curves its wing and nearly smiles.

Moments after taking flight, the creature pushes into the

Pelagic domain, and the boy's life changes. *



REST

STEPHANIA PRIETO



Most of my work is gouache and watercolor on paper. It reflects how I envision what life could be if we were more connected to nature, and if we were taught to embody our own magic. The childlike innocence in the images I create always brings me back to playtime in the garden. It's what I dreamed of when I was a young girl, and what I hunger for as an adult — a life where nature is not separate, but a part of my daily existence; a life where I can sing back to a bird what it chirped; where I can explore the forest and all of its mystery; a life where I can nest with foxes and howl at the moon.

*I PLANTED SOME LAVENDER
IN MY FRONT YARD SATURDAY MORNING*

i was born on may the fifth
to a mother just a child herself

out of her young pregnant stomach i came
into blood spilling from between her legs
almost enough to kill the poor girl

and yet i was born a healthy child

nothing was visibly wrong with me and somehow
years later i knew i had been lied to

i was everything but normal

i enjoyed hanging around my girl friends in school
because i knew
the boys who always kept their dark eyes on me would
see the effeminacy i had tattooed all over
and maybe i would be considered a girl instead

still i was wrong and i've known it all these years
since that saturday afternoon i was birthed
brought into this cruel world without wings
the kind normal children are gifted in heaven
before they fly down to the bosoms of their creators

a fairy is what i am or so i think
a small mythical being cast out of heaven due to
the tricks i played on my mother's body in my earliest
minutes

but i don't want to be a fairy
covered in the shimmer of a paradise built eons ago
that place that thing my family prays to find in death

i want to be a butterfly
yes a red-spotted purple admiral
fluttering and free to be myself as i wish

i see them occasionally flying past my living room window

to join them in their journey to a paradise they've made
it is but a dream to take charge of my physical form

in this life i love to imagine who and what i can be
beyond that child my mother forced to live

i want to be a butterfly

as i garden on the weekend i lay on the ground
and cover myself in soil
pulling my tiller close to me and blessing it

i scrape the metal alongside the ridges of my shoulders
placing a seed of lavender on top of every mark made
from a kiss for the tender skin of my back

i water myself and wait however long it takes
to sprout the wings of a purple flower and fly off into the
afternoon sky

—*xochi-maria ramos-lara*



DRENTHE

JORRIT BECKING

SILENCE, GRAYSCALES, peatlands, and giant stones. Things that come to mind when thinking about Drenthe. A province in the wild north of the Netherlands where poverty and rich cultural history coincide. My dreary mystic birth ground, steeped in sagas and stories from the heathlands and the bogs. On the family farm, I spent the summers running in the mud. The springs, cuddling the lambs. And the winters, ice skating through the frozen swamps. My siblings and I grew up with nature's loving touch and our parents' protective eyes always on us. When we returned home dirty, we only received smiles and hugs — a privileged childhood. Yet, when I reached adolescence, I fled the rural flatness and the flatness of the rural mind. I was eager to indulge myself in the joys of big-city life.

I spent years away in cities with endless noise and ever-lighted skies — places where people never really stop or listen to their hearts. I knew the dangers of boredom. But there is also danger in distraction. I now often miss the intricate beauty of the swamps where I started my life. I even bought a painting of a Dutch peat meadow

in summertime: A stunning green and open landscape, cows resting in the shade of a hedgerow, and a farm boy lounging on his wagon while his workhorse grazes on the pasture. Drenthe has a cultural richness characterized by simplicity, silence, and a solemn acceptance of the hardships of nature and life.

The province is famous for its archaeological wealth, characterized by the striking tombs or dolmens built by the Funnel Beaker Culture, some as old as 4000 BC. Enormous boulders — weighing over forty tons — stacked upon each other. In folklore, they are called “Hunebedden” — “beds of giants.” Imagine how astonishing these structures must have been to later inhabitants. Even today, we don't fully know why and how these giant boulders were transported in a completely rock-less land. But as kids, we had great fun climbing on them.

Given the natural beauty and the wealth of Drenthe's history, it's strange that Dutch city folks stereotype its people as grouchy, miserly, and provincial. The government often overlooks the province and ignores the issues of the rural. In fact, Drenthe has

often served as a solution to “problems” coming from the cities. In the 19th century, petty criminals, sex offenders, beggars, and orphans from the cities were deported to the swamps, en masse. To places called “unfree colonies of benevolence” — labor camps. One lived here under abysmal circumstances, forced to work in peat excavations. The salary was often paid in a currency that could only be spent in the company store. “Veenhuizen” — translating to bog houses — a town not far from where I grew up, is one of such former colonies. Mottos such as: “Work is Life,” “Resting Corrodes the Mind,” and “Law and Order” are still written in large white letters on the front of public buildings.

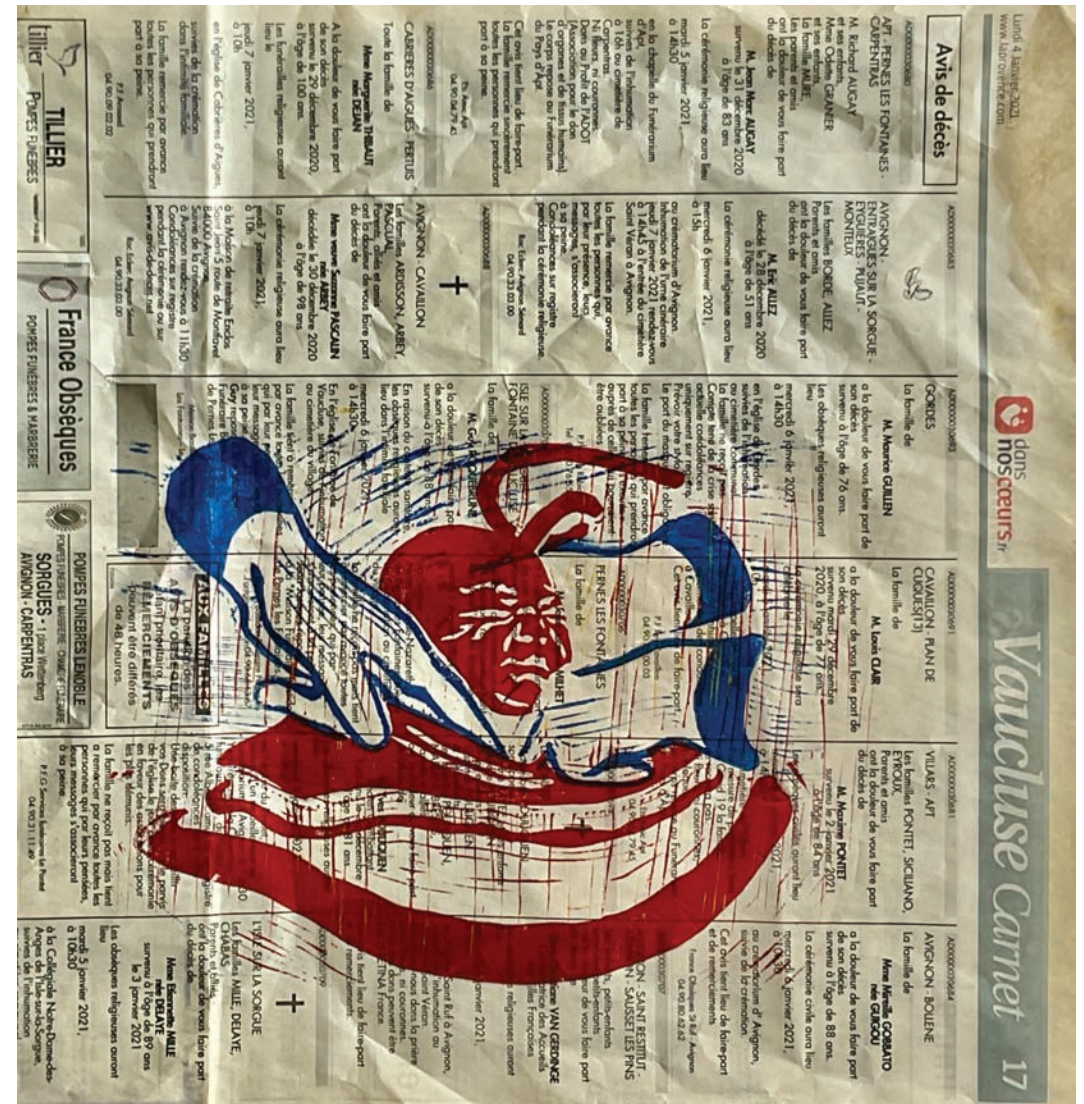
Even nowadays, these towns — built in strips along the canals — are depressing. They are plagued by poverty and illiteracy. The houses are small, made with colorless bricks, and there is little to no green. How strikingly different from the quaint towns in which the original inhabitants of Drenthe live. Characterized by majestic trees and monumental farms situated around a large village green. Herders used those greens to shelter livestock

for the night after grazing on the common lands. The historic farmhouses — still resemble those of the Funnel Beaker culture, with thatched roofs and thick walls. People from the big cities often fall in love with these towns, driving up the real estate. The locals call them “Import.” They'll begrudgingly greet them on the street with the classic upward but contemptuous head nod. They refer to themselves as Sand Drenth; because they tend to live on richer, dryer sandy soils. The descendants of the deported are called Peat Drenth, a slightly derogatory term nowadays.

It always intrigued me how soil can shape society. During my agricultural schooling, my soil science teacher used to say: “let me taste the soil, and I can predict the crime rate.” Jokingly, of course, but really, we are like plants growing from the soil. And even though I am a child of “import,” the brown-red water from the swamps will forever shape my character. And I will be forever grateful for the beauty of my childhood. To my friends, I say, next time you visit the Netherlands, go to the northern peatlands. Do not forget your raincoat and your gumboots. ✱

BIRTH ON OBITUARIES

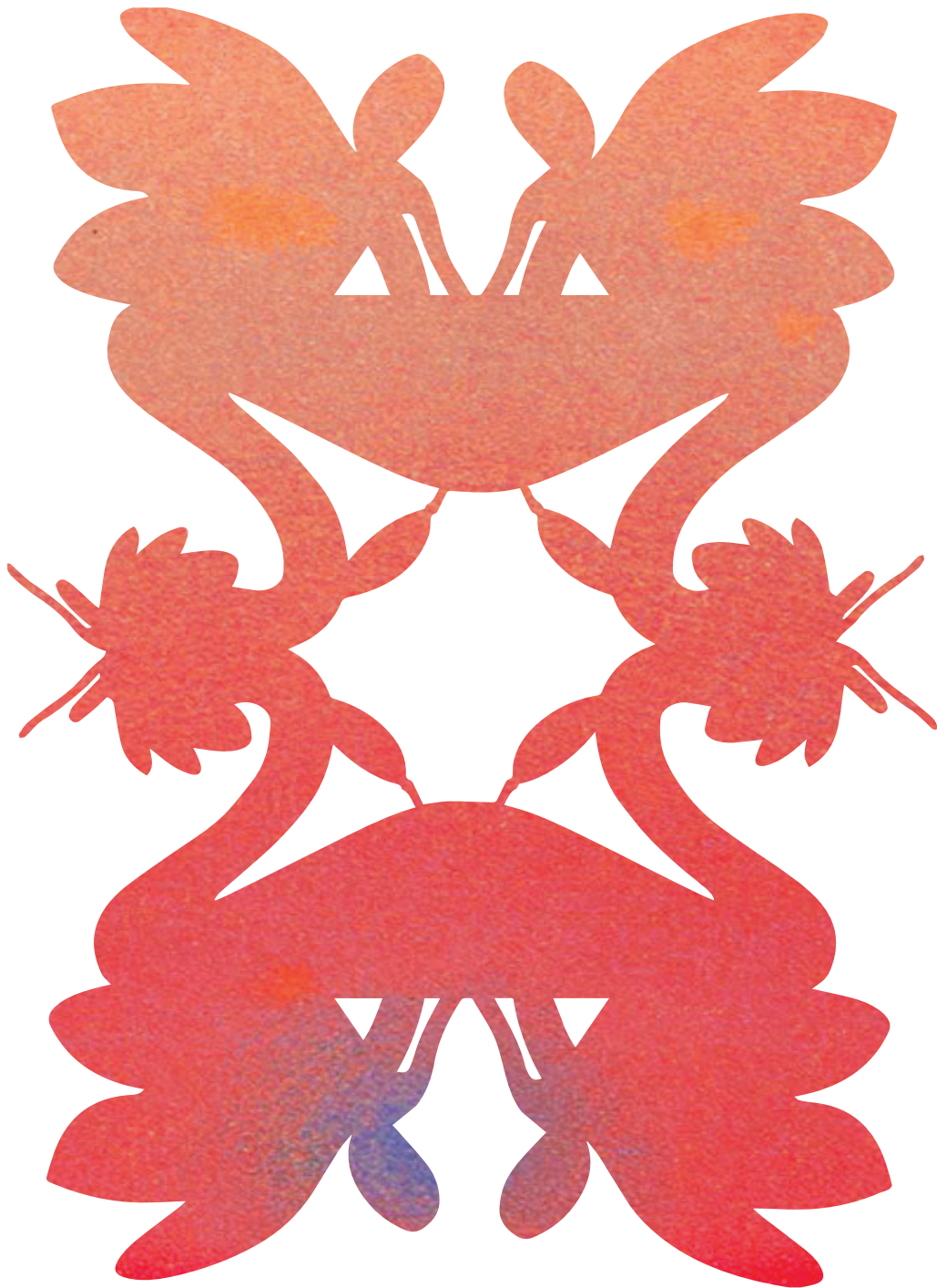
ELIZA STRAUSS-JENKINS



Birth on Obituaries is one of a series of linocut self-portraits that I created based on photographs my father took of me throughout my childhood. The original image of the c-section represents the joyous moment of my birth and alternatively, the somewhat grotesquely graphic portrayal of my initiation into life. At a young age, I moved to Provence, France where I spent the rest of my childhood. The region where I grew up is the largest producer of cherries in France. Over the past few years, farmers have begun digging up old cherry orchards and replacing them with olive trees because they can better survive the unpredictable winters and increasingly arid summers. As a young adult, I found refuge in my devotion and knowledge of

Provence's landscape and cherished the somatic love that I have for the food and culture that are rooted in the agriculture of this land. As I grew up, I began to time my life with the seasons of the cherry tree blossoms, the sprouting poppy fields, and the harvest of the grape vineyards. In doing so, I developed a sense of belonging to my adoptive culture. Over the years, I've begun to question my role within the community as I represent a wave of Anglo-Saxon expats who have gentrified and altered the culture of Provence. As an expat, I struggled with my sense of belonging and often felt like my identity was being tugged at by two home countries. During the spring that I was working on this series, the Vaucluse experienced a harsh frost that killed the cherry

blossoms. It was devastating to visit the remaining dozen orchards near my home, all of which were bare that spring, knowing they would most likely be dug up in the coming fall. As I witness the upheaval of a place with which I've grown to identify myself, I am confronted by the multiplicity of belonging and the effects of my existence on this land. I'm not connected by blood to the people whose obituaries my birth is stamped on, and yet I have grown to identify as belonging to them. In ways that feel beyond the grasp of my comprehension, I find myself identifying with the obstructive olive trees just as I mourn the cherries. What does it mean to be of a place which we are not from?



CONTRIBUTORS

Pamela Acosta is a Mexican artist from the borderlands along the Rio Grande Valley, currently living in Northampton, Massachusetts. She often finds inspiration in literature and nature. She draws on dreams of flourishing inner lives and creates visual narratives about a myriad of beings, quests and the symbiotic relationships formed between beings and their environments, exploring how we construct, transform and are transmuted by our surroundings. Her work is characterized by figurative narratives explored through visual poetry and magical realism.

Nyami Aghedo is a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill who is alive and loving every second of it. Nyami hopes to get better at loving Jesus, living meaningfully, and curating her laptop sticker collection.

Jorrit Becking is a master's student at the Yale School of Environment and has a background in agricultural sciences, environmental engineering, and international development. Growing up on a farm in a wetland ecosystem, Jorrit's writing is strongly characterized by the transient connection between life and death.

Katherine Colvin is a current sophomore at Mount Holyoke College. She is studying English and Religion and has a passion for creative writing.

Hamsa Fae (she/they) is a Vietnamese-French poet and performance artist who is native to Los Angeles. Hamsa's artistic practice uses memory as medium for contemplating the Asian American diaspora, ecological reverence, and trans-ness. Her poetry book, *Blood Frequency*, was awarded by C&R Press and the Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network in 2022.

Kathleen Frank is a Santa Fe-based artist who paints the Western landscape in vibrant hues, capturing light and pattern in complex terrains. Career highlights include: numerous museum and gallery exhibitions; High Desert Museum Curator's Choice Award; Art in Embassies/U.S. State Department selection Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; work in permanent collections; and features in numerous fine art publications.

Mattie Ford (she/her) is a graduate of the University of Mississippi's

Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College with a degree in Southern Studies and specialization in Environmental Studies. She now works as a routesetter at Memphis Rox, a nonprofit climbing gym in Memphis that works to make the sport of climbing more open and equitable. She is passionate about the outdoors and, with her writing, hopes to honor the complicated relationship between people and the places that shape them.

Niara van Gaalen is a writer, artist and activist who sees design as a tool for social and environmental justice. She has worked in urban design, architecture and sustainability consulting at firms from Vancouver to Amsterdam and has recently completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture. You can find her on Instagram @justkidstm.

Alaina Geibig is a Masters of Environmental Management student at Yale School of the Environment. Alaina has a deep appreciation for place, home being the mountain regions of Colorado. It is through observed social-ecological relationships that

she draws on inspiration for joy, creation, and connection.

Connor Hanson is a visual artist focusing on drawing, print-making, and painting. Born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona and currently based out of Gunnison, Colorado, he draws inspiration from the natural beauty of the mountain west, but also uses art as a way of trying to understand places and animals he is less familiar with. More of Connor's work can be found on Instagram @connorhansonart.

Kaitlyn Harris is a writer and editor based in Ontario, Canada. She holds an HBA in English from the University of Toronto, where she developed an interest in post-modern ecological poetry. Her work explores how ambiguity and contradiction can open up new channels of dialogue between human and nonhuman beings.

Linea Jantz lives in eastern Washington state, where most mornings she is out on the trails before the sun rises running, hiking with her dog, or riding her mountain bike. She has worked in a wide range of roles over the years including waste management,

medical records, paralegal, and teacher. Her writing is featured or forthcoming in publications including *The Dyrt Magazine*, *The Greyhound Journal*, *Beaver Magazine*, *Unbroken*, *Pamplermousse*, and *EcoTheo Collective*.

Joshua Kelsing studies and researches how to promote balanced ecological and social outcomes throughout diverse coastal and marine systems. As a Master of Environmental Management student at Yale, he broadly concentrates on ecosystem management, although places himself at the interdisciplinary nexus of conservation psychology, marine ecology, and sustainable development. Preceding Yale, he obtained his HBS in Natural Resources Conservation and Policy at Oregon State University. When the laptop closes, the academic mind wanes, and the desire to create subsides, Joshua spends time with his lovely partner, attempting to locate Connecticut's spirit within cedar forests and along rocky beachscapes.

Betty Kovacic is an award-winning Canadian artist and veteran of numerous solo, group and touring exhibitions. In addition to

celebrating all aspects of life, she explores the role of art in creating conversations essential to social change. An indigenous shaman once told Kovacic that through her art, she acts as a channel for voices unheard or worse, ignored. Kovacic's art can be found in many private and public collections.

Lee Chang Ming is an artist from Singapore working across photography, publishing, video, and writing, and is interested in themes of embodiment, environment, and the everyday. His practice contemplates the subjective act of looking and the photographic medium as a process, exploring ideas of optics and haptics. He runs Nope Fun, an independent publisher focusing on photography and contemporary image-making. He is currently completing an MFA in the Environmental Art & Social Practice program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. More info: leechangming.com.

Summer LoPriore is a poet from Connecticut, and a senior at Mount Holyoke, where she studies English and art history. She earned a scholarship from Trinity College to attend Poetry By The Sea in 2022 and received

an Honorable Mention from the 2022 Academy of American Poets Prize, sponsored by the Academy of American Poets. She currently works at Mount Holyoke College Art Museum as their Collections Intern, and hopes to spend her life caring for works of art.

Gunilla Öberg is an academic. In 2006, she moved from Sweden to Vancouver, Canada, with its familiar yet so different nature. Even the crows look and sound different here. With a background in environmental chemistry and soil science, her research deals with knowledge and expertise—what kind of knowledge is valued by whom, and how/why certain ways of knowledge are prioritized/excluded in chemical management. She has always had an artistic outlet in parallel with her academic work. She has no formal photography training but has been photographing throughout. A couple of years ago, she started exploring macro-photography.

Rosalie Ortiz is a Black-Indigenous singer, songwriter, poet and community organizer based in New Haven, Connecticut.

Stephania Prieto was born in Montana and grew up in Mexico,

she moved back to the mountains after graduating university and paints on a daily basis at her kitchen table.

Xochi-maria ramos-lara is a doctoral student in English studying queer Latinx poetics at UNC-Chapel Hill. Outside of the academy, she has a deep interest in community organizing, community education, and writing gay poetry.

Steven Ring has spent much of his life working in the mountains and deserts of California, often both confused and inspired. He feels kinship with vultures, junipers, hummus, and this one cactus he knows really well. Steven is currently pursuing a Master of Environmental Management at Yale School of Environment.

Claudia Santos (@claudiaex-caret) is a Mexican English major, poet, interpreter, translator, and emerging photographer. Her photos have been published at *Blue Mesa Review* and *L'Esprit Literary Review*.

Athena Sofides is a Master of Environmental Science candidate at the Yale School of the Environment, where they engage with advocacy, research, and

storytelling to understand the political economy of hormones, endocrine disruption, and embodied toxicity. Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, Athena has always been interested in what defines the environment, and how that impacts people's experiences of their health and wellbeing. Inspired by disability justice, environmental justice, and queer liberation, Athena dreams of accessible, autonomous, interdependent futures.

Eliza Strauss-Jenkins grew up in an artistic and multi-cultural family. She learned to cherish the role that creativity plays in building, nourishing, and healing community. Based in Philadelphia, Eliza is an assistant printmaking teacher at Fleisher's Saturday Young Artists Program and is a fellow at The Soapbox, a community printshop and zine library.

Raty Syha is an illustrator, comic artist, and printmaker based in Santa Cruz, CA, with an academic background in sociocultural anthropology. As a candidate in UC Santa Cruz's Environmental Art & Social Practice Program, Raty has been interested in creating visual media that conveys issues at the heart of agriculture

and sustainability in surprising ways. Current research interests surround sheep and goat grazing for wildfire prevention throughout the state of California.

Hadley Tallackson is an artist in several mediums, including printmaking and poetry. Mostly, though, she is a lover of the environment, seaweed, lichen, clouds, and rocks. She is a Master of Environmental Management candidate at Yale School of the Environment.

Claire Trucho is a senior majoring in English and Psychology at Mount Holyoke College. In their poetry, they use disabled poetics to explore how to voice the disconnect between the body and the mind.

Alex Weyerhaeuser is passionate about connecting individuals with the environment through writing, creativity, and movement. She graduated from the Yale School of the Environment in December, has worked in and studied food systems, and teaches yoga.

Diana Woodcock has authored seven chapbooks and six poetry collections, most recently *Heaven Underfoot* (2022 Codhill Press)

Pauline Uchmanowicz Poetry Award), *Holy Sparks* (2020 Paraclete Press Poetry Award finalist) and *Facing Aridity* (2020 Prism Prize for Climate Literature finalist). A three-time Pushcart Prize nominee and Best of the Net nominee, she received the 2011 Vernice Quebodeaux Pathways Poetry Prize for Women for her debut collection, *Swaying on the Elephant's Shoulders*. Currently teaching at VCUarts Qatar, she holds a PhD in Creative Writing from Lancaster University, where she researched poetry's role in the search for an environmental ethic.

EDITORS

Shaylyn Austin is a 2023 Master of Forestry graduate of the Yale School of the Environment. Shay works for the Yale Forest Maple Extension Program. She loves storytelling, hiking, and swimming off the coast of California, her home state.

McKenzie Blaine is a researcher, environmental and social advocate, and jeweler who currently studies at Yale School of the Environment. McKenzie values the way art can inspire change in

the world—recognizing the power it has to inform, shape, and change people's perspectives.

Katie Davis is a writer, student, and researcher whose work focuses on watershed restoration and ecospirituality. Born and raised in Mississippi, Katie has lived in Maine, Connecticut, and calls Washington, D.C., home (with an enduring love of the Mount Pleasant neighborhood). Before grad school, she worked for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and in local D.C. bicycle organizing. Katie is currently pursuing a Master of Environmental Management at the Yale School of Environment (YSE), following the currents of natural theology, animism, decolonial and queer ecologies, restoration ecology, and more-than-human ways of knowing. Katie finds joy in building community with other LGBTQ+ people, swimming, biking, white water kayaking, writing nonfiction and poetry, and finding wonder in the flows of life.

James Freeman is studying conflict resolution, energy justice, and Tribal sovereignty at Yale School of the Environment. They like warm soup when it's cold out,

running in East Rock Park, reading queer fantasy and science fiction, and trying in vain to improve their cooking.

Julia Jacobson is a writer and researcher passionate about the intersections of multispecies interactions, food, and community. She is a second-year Master of Environmental Science student at the Yale School of the Environment, where she studies more-than-human relationships in Colorado agriculture. Julia was born and raised on Colorado's western slope. She finds purpose in the power of storytelling, and braids narrative into her research.

Anna Lenaker is studying climate change science and environmental policy at Yale School of the Environment. She's the author of her memoir *Able to Be Otherwise* and one day hopes to know enough to be on Jeopardy!

Rosie Nagele is a first-year Master of Environmental Management at the Yale School of the Environment. She enjoys exploring the intersection of science and the humanities in climate change solutions through creative writing.

Elisabeth Schrieber is a Master in Environmental Management student at the Yale School of the Environment focusing on industrial ecology and green engineering. Outside of her professional interests, she is an avid enjoyer of literature and art of all forms.

Srishti Singh is an environmental economist from Delhi, India. At the Yale School of the Environment, she is a Master's of Environmental Management '25 student focusing on water and climate.



YALE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT
195 PROSPECT STREET
NEW HAVEN, CT 06511

