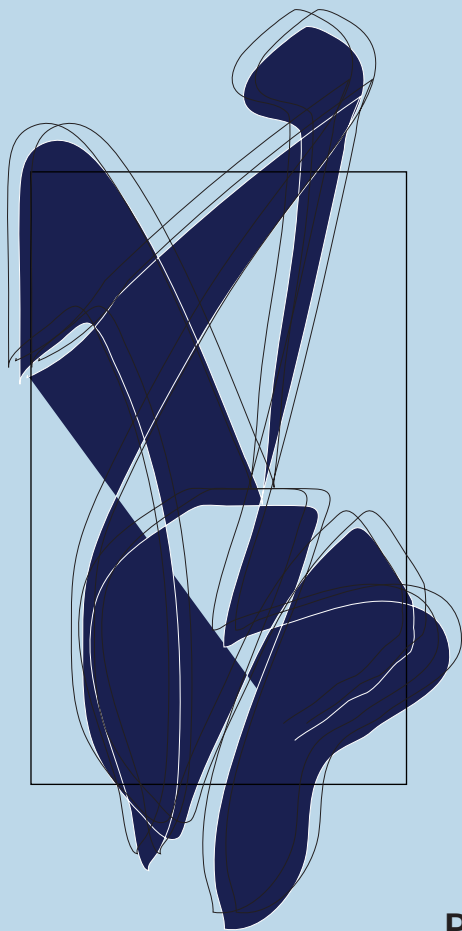


horizon

ART—LITERATURE—PHOTOGRAPHY



ISSUE
04

December 2021

The only sound inside is the storm that is outside — *Seb Browne* | Mystical scales an eighth of a ponderous cornerstone lost — *Joshua Martin* | The Boatman — *Tom Creswell* | Exercise I, Blue — *Kate Chamber* | Morning Breath — *Benjamin Hulse* | Soho, Tins in the Park — *Elida Vargas* | Before High Tide — *Chia-Ying Chou* | On Symbiosis, Zoonosis — *Victoria Sharples* | The Haunted Map; The Haunted Ocean — *Peter J King* | Dearst Greenest Place — *Florence Campbell Grey* | Attachment — *Tracy Johnson* | Birthday; Satsuma — *Dan Leitch* | Leaving — *Divisha Chaudhry* | Fly — *Richard Baker* | Annihilation — *Yudong Zhang* | Inner Child — *Elita Barling* | Pollution — *Fred Downton* | Transcendent Country of the Mind — *Sari Soininen* | Broken Kest; Infinity Pool 3 — *Xander Hoffman* | Bramble — *Frank Boyce* | Kimisis — *Dani Kalinic* | My Palace — *Aaron Honda* | Untitled photographs — *Gus McKeever* | Untitled photographs — *Chris Mann* | So close and yet so far away — *Wing Ka Ho* | *Immi* | Black Void; Golden Centre; Black Triangle — *Tim Edgar* | Elephant's Trunk; Nebula — *Kasra Karimi* | Flooded Field — *Nik Stambidge* | The Rising Sun Kindled the Sky — *Alex SanVil* | Post Vitam — *Oksana Veniaminova* | Let Them Swim; Abandoned Car — *Lea James Shoff* | Domesticity — *Charlie Henzl* | Good Night — *Audrey Gillespie*

This is *The Horizon Magazine*.

WE ARE A SPACE DEDICATED TO THE CULTIVATION OF NEW VOICES AND BOLD WORK. WE AIM TO SHARE ART AND LITERATURE THAT PUSHES BOUNDARIES, CHALLENGES AUDIENCES, AND IS POWERFULLY EXPRESSIVE.

Horizon is a high-quality artistic journal that mixes mediums of *art*, **literature**, and photography. The magazine shall always be free to read, published online and accessible to all, as well as printed and distributed in select locations.

We strive to make each edition of Horizon a collection of beautiful and diverse work. We want every edition to be open to writers and artists from all backgrounds. There are no submission fees or requirements, as we believe there should be no limitations on the opportunity for self-expression.

This is a space for **the bold**, a space for [the beautiful], and a space for the *unique*.

for writing on the horizon

artwork



BACK COVER: **Annihilation 3**
[photograph] by **Yudong Zhang**

Ella Burling: Inner Child
Fred Downton: Pollution

Xander Hoffman: Broken Rest; Infinity Pool 3

Frank Boyce: Brainfog I

Tim Edgar: Golden Centre; Black Void; Black Triangle

Alex SanVik: The Rising Sun Kindled the Sky

Mari Honma: Early Morning

Lee James Shott: Abandoned Car
Audrey Gillespie: Good Night

Lee James Shott: Self Portrait

Charlie Henzi: Domesticity
Mari Honma: Let Them Swim

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RICHARD BAKER

● **Benjamin Wolff** — I believe that in our current state of modernity the idea of a non-multidisciplinary artform is impossible. In the era of hyperconnectivity, in endless permeations of projected and reconstituted representation in which a painting is formed, the painting is hung on the white walls of a Soho gallery, photographed and represented in the editorial, uploaded to social media and projected to millions of Instagram accounts, described vividly on an art and contemporary culture podcast, and finally told to you by a friend in a passing comment over an overpriced coffee in a shop that has more plants than seats, where does viewership occur? Can any artwork be said to exist solely in itself anymore, or is all art fragmented at the moment of conception, destined to disintegrate into the sprawling rhizomatic re-representations of information-age hypermodernity?

I do not believe this is a thing to be feared, but a thing to be embraced. Art has always had a deep, intense, and at times strained relationship with the contemporary conditions which surround it. But all good art takes those conditions and works within them, against them, parallel to them or perpendicular. Art engages, and this radical displacement of the physical art piece into the multitude of media representations is an opportunity for creativity. Yet, this multitude does not stop here. In the casting asunder of the artwork's representational form, the representation is curated in countless ways, found beside thousands of artworks in galleries, magazines, and websites; writings in journals, social media, and blog posts; audio in radio shows and podcasts; buffeted by social media tags, banner ads, billboards and Instagram posts; and perhaps even displaced in a gutter in the street when an editorial page has drifted into the wind. An artwork's engagement with the observable world of media and non-media items is fundamentally and radically *uncontrollable*. So, what is the artist to do? I will not pretend to have the answer to that question, but I will propose two suggestions:

1) Embrace the radical uncontrollability of art, incorporate it into the work, prepare the work for the infinite range of possibilities in which it may be curated or found.

2) Pre-empt the radical uncontrollability of art, constitute a work that already engages in a multidisciplinary way with the human creations and environment around it.

Or you know, don't.

● ■ ▲
SOME WORDS
FROM THE EDITORS

on
WHAT IS ART NOW?

■ **Giorgio Guerisoli** — Just by pointing out how difficult it would be to seriously answer this question, I am already crashing into a cliché the size of a house. It's a minefield. Panic. I scrambled through my papers, pacing around, pulling my hair – then I found an old note: *art is not artifice anymore??* Safety. I'll try to explain what I think I meant, because I believe I was onto something.

|| I've struggled to read fiction lately. I find it boring, uninteresting – even the stuff I normally like. The explanation I gave myself is that this is because nowadays everyone can just share their experience, all the time, everywhere. I just don't care anymore to read a fictional novel about a woman robbing a bank, because I can find a woman who really did rob a bank and is telling me about it herself. Why would I want to read about made-up experiences at all, when there are billions of real ones being offered

to me all around? I don't want any of that. Art is not artifice anymore – give me the damn real thing!

Think about it. It's part of a trend. Our society fetishizes the private lives of artists, craves that little bit of authenticity that maybe exists somewhere in the mirror hall between a staged bathroom selfie and a full-on mental breakdown on the toilet. All we seem to want is a little glimpse into their diaries, access to their private and authentic selves – biopics, autobiographies, art about glowing after a divorce, about depression, pain – but always about the artist. It's cannibalistic. Revolting.

And maybe that's what art is now. Not artifice, but a little bit of coagulated reality; a snippet of experience available for consumption. You can be sure that some of it is going to be disgusting: pure unabashed openness, a gross bite of boring, sloppy reality; but some other, oh, it's going to be better than the real thing: vivid, alive – realer than the real. This last one is the one I like the most: it's the art that's shed the artifice and kept a little bit of art. Yeah, I quite like this conclusion: art now is just art, and it feels good to be able to showcase some of it here.

this task if we consider it as a secular exegesis. It can remain Hellenistic in the monomaniacal hunt for Logos, or something altogether more Hebraic; Talmudic. (Basically Moby Dick has really fucked me up and I doubt I'll ever recover.)

This is not to say that a somewhat ironical mode of unrelenting multiplicity should be adopted in response. On the contrary, we must experience as many of these essentialist voices as possible. Economics and art surprise each other. We are hyper-consumers. As of such, we expect that you enthusiastically join with us in the apostasy that is Horizon, and appreciate the master lens-making of the works curated herein. Can endeavours within such a landscape even be termed artistry anymore, or postmodern cartography? Art provides reliable waypoints (or more tangible landmarks) between individuals on this protean map of unknowable nonsense. Or better yet, lighthouses on a deafening and unconquerable sea. It's an undeniable signifier that one is not alone. Without art, without our lighthouses, we'd each be made desolate on our own shipwreck of solipsism.

▲ **Cian Pappenheim** — *Bad art, to me; it's yetzer hara. It's a mismanagement of certain materials essential to us. I think there exists a great inclination in art towards idolatry, and this is a sin general to both the audience and the artist. We as readers, consciously or no, are slavishly encloistered within theory now. We have at our disposal an accredited toolbox of authoritative lenses natural for us to cycle through in the process of reading anything. And this makes sense because a lot of contemporary art is composed in service to a meta-narrative or cause. This is what I mean when I call bad art yetzer hara. It's an impulse pathologized. It's the most reductive way possible of actioning a revolutionary project; a mad simultaneous pursuit and reproduction of Logos.*

There's a certain quality of passivity to outstanding art. An art that refuses coercion and offers a more tangible node of interaction with the limitless everywhere of an infocentric modernity. I'm sceptical any metanarrative can offer a reliable means of navigation through our nonsense of data. It's overwhelming. In the face of this terrible omnipotence, there is a certain prostration required of the individual; artist or consumer. Our response must have something of a religious quality to it in practice.

To me, theory has a basic framework suited to

THE ONLY SOUND



I N S I D E

IS THE STORM THAT IS

OUTSIDE

'I wanted my parents to meet my online alter-ego.

(I think Alex actually said this when in the taxi. He sat next to the driver and barely looked at the guy. Alex started talking about it being his religious duty to buy sweatshop-made souvenirs because, as he said, our purpose is a show of power, buying stuff, to mark our experience of being somewhere new.)'

'The poem Alex wrote that night is printed below- He wrote it after giving up on small talk with the taxi driver. He turned to his phone and started writing out of boredom. I don't know why.'

A poem by Alex

A sound is a disturbing thing. Not destroying. A daydream is there.

Sometimes being a fresh interruption. There is something on the tip of being noticeable. Disturbed air is violent. A different sound and there is a room. Interrupting a daydream quickly. Disturbed air is a violent noise.

A storm is a storm is interrupting. A thing that a sound does is destroying. Sometimes to peace. A storm interrupting a daydream. Peace and also the opposite. Destroying peace is sometimes a fun thing.



‘The stuff below is some of what was edited out, obviously it is an invasion of privacy to mention these bits, but I will do it anyway:

A sound is not for sale as a souvenir. Savagely. Like a sound being beaten out of something.’

‘Alex admitted some weird stuff in the taxi as well. He actually said, “Since reading *Wuthering Heights*, I have enjoyed listening to bad weather. My last relationship ended when I asked my girlfriend to stand outside in the rain and shout my name over and over at my locked front door while I danced a one-man conga in my front room.” I mean, odd right?’

MYSTICAL———SCALES

an eighth———of a ponderous

cornerstone———*lost*

[poem] by Joshua Martin

lost———cornerstone

an eighth———of a ponderous

MYSTICAL———SCALES

fitz boeuf
industrious gloom
excitable as a
spoon
soon / soon / soon
no sooner, then, a,
swoon

BLOOM!
bloom!
b l o o m
an ANNA

BLOOM
S
,
this a tiger's tail

<>
that a renegade
piazza spell
[shells
bells] [set] [sail]
impale wimple wrench
excuse of verse

(re)verse(ed)
better now that far
FURTHER → STURM
UND
DRANG

dang ↔ dang
↓
BANG!

who herds dexterity
reaps swishes
SWOOSHES
quarter life MID
sentence treacle
fecal spray
lay
lain
LAID
flattened monkey
paw



preen /
 buried
 unto
 under
 nourished
 clipping
 clapping
 horseshoe
 tap
 tap
 Tapping
 ↙
 s
 ↘
 greatly grunted
 slouching
 AT HOME
 glob Of
 SnoW
 bounded by
 bicrossed
 focal
 point of
 ↓
 FLORAL
 ← →
 ↓ ↑
 forced majeure
 fleur
 de
 leaf
 thief
 jaunty
 lil' bleached
 AssHole
 hopping
 hopeless
 may a
 MAKE
 be
 Made up
 a resemblance
 un=
 checked



un= cut

un= knowable

adjusted STATIC televised

executioner's primrose

paths pandas

↓

→ ? ←

quasi elaborate

religions malfunction

books shattered

matters

toasted ELECTRIFIED coasting

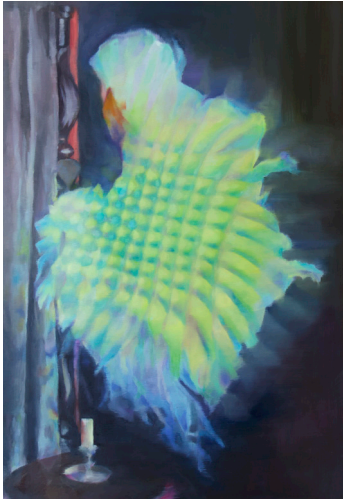
walking stick

DID NOT

NEVER fit

•••
EXERCISE I

[poem] by **Kate Channer**



above **Broken Rest** and *next page* **Infinity Pool 3**
[paintings] by **Xander Hoffman**

... What you will need ...

4 people
Bandages
A voice
Basic acting abilities
A whole day

... Instructions ...

Wrap bandages around each other's body parts
Only talk about your injuries for the entire day
At the end of the day discuss 'Who do you feel the most sorry for?'

... What you will need ...

People
Equal amounts of water
Glasses
A place to sit

... Instructions ...

Everyone shouts (as loud as they can) how thirsty they are
Pour everyone equal amounts of water
Everyone takes the biggest gulp of water they can
Who is still thirsty? Raise hands



the
BOATMAN

[prose] by
Tom Creswell

*R*oped into life, yet stuck so far from its crux, there stands a Politician in the House of Commons. Those vast and sculptured walls are hallowed to her; coveted since Margaret Thatcher was on her mind, and Tony Blair in Downing Street. Now her footsteps echo as she paces its halls; for it is night, and all are away, save for the vast array of maintenance staff who keep the statues and the tiles smooth, the green leather shined, the artefacts guarded, and the bells clanging. But who are they? - she didn't know their names; and so, in spite of their present hum, all are away, and the night is thick with electric light.

There would be no time now to return to the constituency, not with the vote in the House tomorrow. But Christ; what to do about the vote? Abstinence or assent? She had colleagues who wanted her to abstain with them (and really, she wanted to do so) but her Whip demanded her loyalty.

'Political capital,' she muttered, ambling down the corridor, slicing along the stripes of London light which seeped over from the South Bank, cast in by the crosshatched windows and licked up by the carpet. And it was at one of these windows she paused, resting her hand on the sill and staring out beyond. There sank the Thames, a glittering eel which wound its way through the sewage and fumes and choked upon the civilisation which had smeared its sides like grease. All deserted now for the daily traffic had sunk-

but there! A boatman! What a sight, what a thrill of a bygone era! The London boatman steaming upriver and headed for some canal where he would moor for the night. Those that lived on the river knew more of London than she. They swam in its thrall and on the waves of

its whim, on the very foundation of life; for all along the river there were gentle susurrations, fragments of phrases which rose and fell as the boatmen moored, the kingfisher sang, and the water withered. To know the water; to know its voice was life.

But he was gone. The Politician squinted out and sank down from the window, drawn in by the lights flickering on the surface, the glint of the glass or an eye in a ripple; down to the mud and the current and the waste; into the earth that slurps. Had he been swallowed? Her boatman? Or had he gone on, down that winding canal, and moored himself to sleep?

No! There he was in a cap on Westminster Bridge, pamphlets clasped in his gloved hand, thrusting towards each passer-by with hollow expectancy. Or was that him with his head to the slab, avoiding the gaze of his glove-and-cap friend, his wet umbrella's tip slopping onto the ground, the rhythm of business: clack, slop, clack. Or there in the Uber, lit up by his phone, asking the driver if he could put on his favourite song, the smell of cigarettes stained on his coat; could he be the driver too, the grit in his teeth and clench of his jaw, passing back the cord, his mind on the five virtual icons he had slaved to obtain in the slick streets of SW1. Or, God the Horror, was he here in the House, an MP, her Honourable Friend; his hand on her shoulder, hers gripping the sill, eyes fixed on the sea. The glow on the carpet and the statues and her face, licked up-

[Oh, the vote. Abstinence or assent?]

No. He was not there. She spun. Nor was he in the river. Nor was he on the bridge or in the Uber.

[Would she go to the lobbies tomorrow?]

No. He really wasn't there. No boatman. For there were no London boatmen in this day and age, she reminded herself.

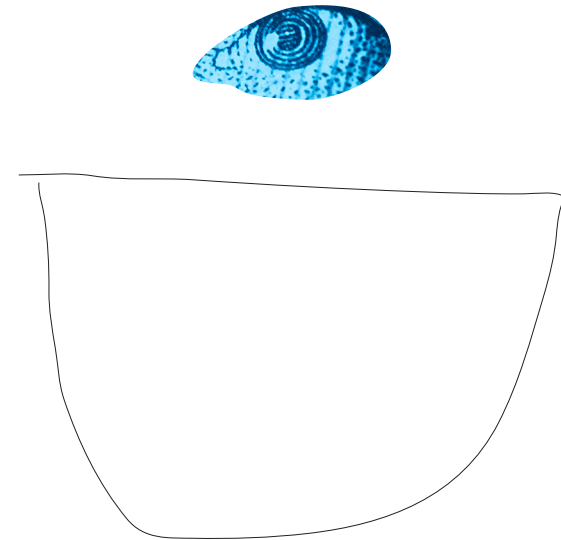
[She had no political capital now, you see, none at all after that vote on the railways, her defiance over HS2. Really, she shouldn't have wasted it so-]

Oh god, was that him? In the shadow of a curtain, dancing to the night water's song? Her boatman? It was, she was sure, just waiting to pounce, the tide in his mind and the gull on his lips, a squawk burnt on his breath.

Head to the slab and footsteps falling fast, she flings herself away.

In her office the doors were locked, and the boatman was nowhere to be seen. Now just the hum of the Commons lapped into her ear as the night turned to day and the sun roared in with a surge of pale pink, she in her chair staring right at the door, crosshatched coral on its frame.

[Yes, she would vote for the cut. After all, she had no political capital. And what was £20?]



[poem] by **Benjamin Husbands**

M o R N i N G



B R e a T H

above **Brainfog I** [painting] by **Frank Boyce**

and the sudden awareness
of one's tongue
and the fear of falling
asleep again
and waking up
in a hospital bed.

My dream synopsis
repeats
Apocalypse Now's
laugh track cut
and a ten-ton cadaver
dug up
from a make-believe
family plot.

The harsh fabric of morning
clings to my limbs
as I scramble
through hedgerow
after hedgerow
with a mossy thatch
and cobwebbed eyes.

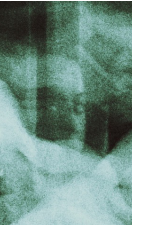
I advance
for as long as forever
is,
far and away
from the streets I hold
and the streets that hold me
and the earth
and the worms
and the bones of fawns
and the dog shakes and shits.

Atmosphere echoes in my ears.

Do the people I admire
start their day like this?



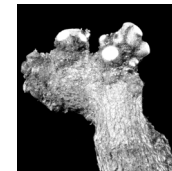
SOHO



poems by



Elida Vargas



TINS
in the PARK



S O H O



previous **Kinisis** [photograph] by **Dani Kalinic**
above **My Palace** [photograph] by **Aaron Honda**

Bare your chest in soho,

spin in a swig or two
of liquor, to clear
your throat.&

Speak

Where gussied marlboro bunnies,
pull, forged excuses
out of pleather baguette bags,

and blame petit plastic ziplocks,
warbled smilies
for their lapse in judgement.

Perhaps they'll make sense of sentences strung together incoherently, or think of

a meaning
you hadn't thought of
before.



TINS *in* *the* PARK



Dandelion weeds swing,
bumping into each other, losing
bits and pieces
like strands of hair
slithering down drainage holes

Kitten heels and sharp tongue,
stomp
sticking the ridge of thrifted Manolo's into
sinking mire,

wetlands minus the wet.

We imagine god losing track of his
mushrooms
exasperated, claiming with finality
their edibility

only to be fooled,
by track pant wearing hoodlums
in London Fields

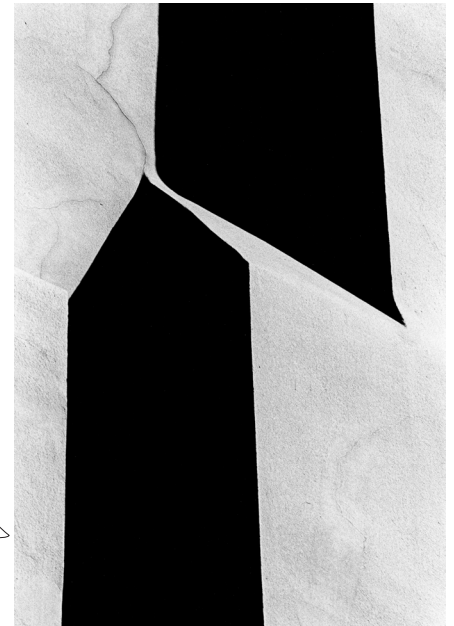
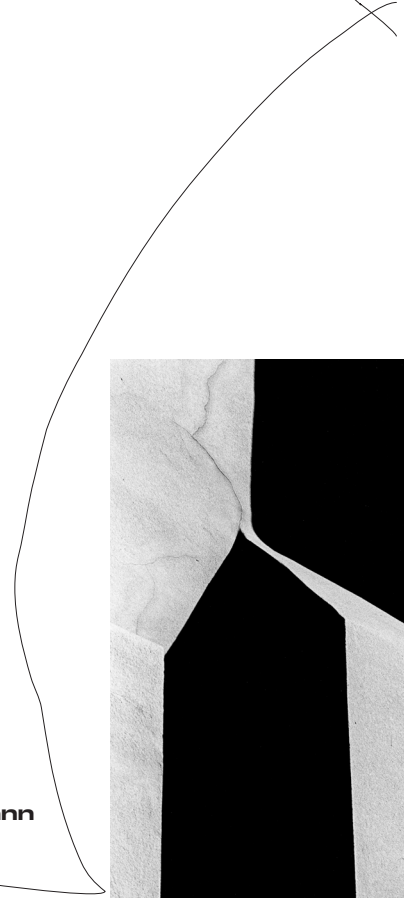
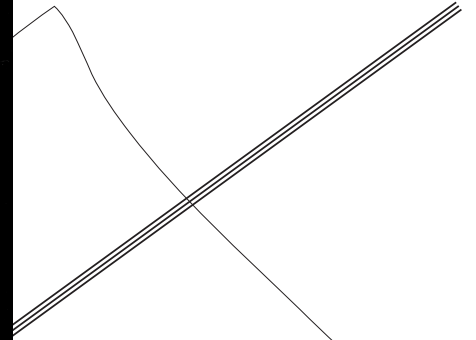
cigarettes half-cocked in mouth, ready
to pulse
with punctuated reason,

like shooting a gun
blindfolded.

Exhaling the tang of adolescence in one
long, drawn-out breath

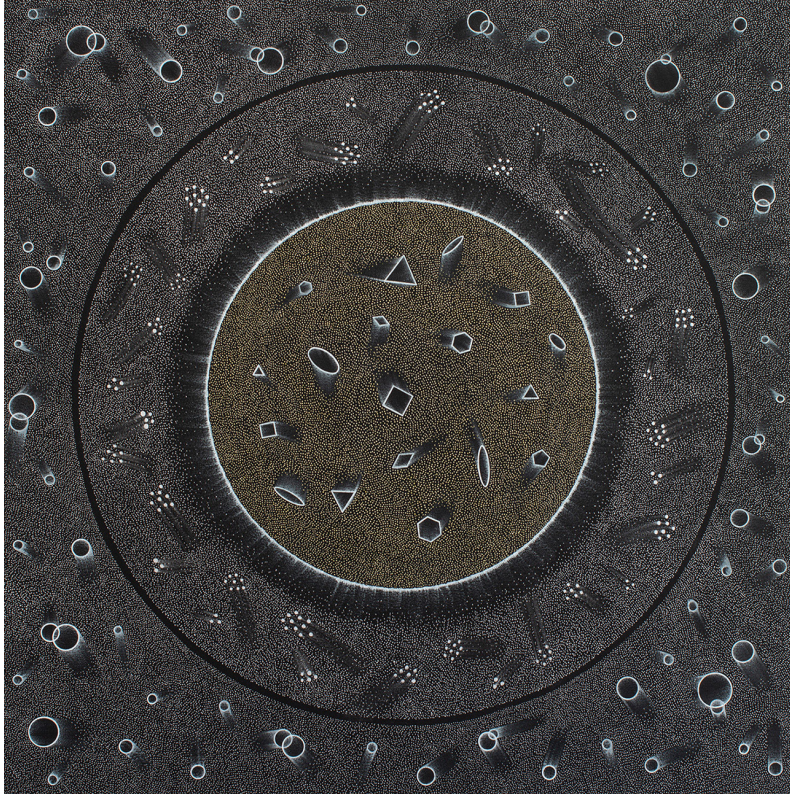
we communicate by playing 'connect the dots',
forming,
tic-tac-toe arrangements
on pulled turf,

grass cuttings stick to the in-between of fingers
as the stars settle in for the show.



○ [photographs] by **Chris Mann**

Golden Core [illustration] by Tim Edgar



on

SYMBIOSIS,

IT IS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO NOTE HERE that viruses, contagions and germatic matter often become problematic when there is an ecological imbalance. This is possibly resultant of poor hygiene and sanitation facilities; pollution; poverty; governmental policy; international movement; temperature changes; the thawing of permafrost; overpopulated cities; large-scale deforestation programmes; wet-market economics; contaminated water sites and zoonotic events: where human and non-human species, unfamiliar ~ yet ~ to one another,

ZOONOSIS

by Victoria Sharples

share pathogens, whether bacterial, viral or parasitic. In these conditions, viruses accelerate and can cause systemic harm.

In the case of the causative virus, SARS-CoV-2, the speculated site and source has been named as the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, China.

This is a space of fluid permeation: where fish writhe around in shallow basins; where solid water softens and gives way; where the innards of animals seep out onto planular surfaces; where perishables are cooled in transit and then re-heated in the sun; where market stalls are hosed-down after their closure and their residue runs in the street. This is a place where pathogens trade alongside the human economy: a reservoir of viral and fiscal activity.

That is to say, there is a 'pooling-together' of ~ our ~ bodies, not as singular forms but as many secretive and 'intra-active'¹ symbionts: human and non-human; animal and herbal; biotic and abiotic; waterborne and airborne; alive and deceased; active and passive; internal and external.

We are of air of water of carbon of atoms of volumes of cells of plasma of microbes of enzymes of bacteria of molecules of parasites of pathogens of germs of inhalations of exhalations of perspirations of minerals of chemicals of tissues of melanin of fibres of acids of alkali of nuclei of networks of codes of import of export of statistics of information of spirits of substance of aether.

It has been suggested, for example, that bats and pangolins may have functioned as animal intermediaries for the zoonotic transfer; although like the speculated site, nothing has been confirmed so far. It is further significant to note here that viruses, our viral sequences ~ and viral fossils (which reside in our ancestral-familial DNA) ~ constitute half of our genetic material, our genomes, all of our genes [...] 3.2 billion building blocks, the nucleotides' (Mölling, 2017).

¹ In Karen Barad's publication *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007), the neologism 'intra-action' is introduced. In this, the Baradian concept is used in place of the usual 'interaction' ~ which assumes that there are separate distinct agencies that precede their interaction, while 'intra-action' recognizes that agencies do not precede, but rather come to be within 'intra-activity' (33). That is, phenomena are not relata-in-themselves but relata-within-relations. They are exchanging and diffracting and working inseparably. Barad's 'Posthumanist Performativity' (2003), also undermines the metaphysics of individualism.

C I S
N U L T D E
E O

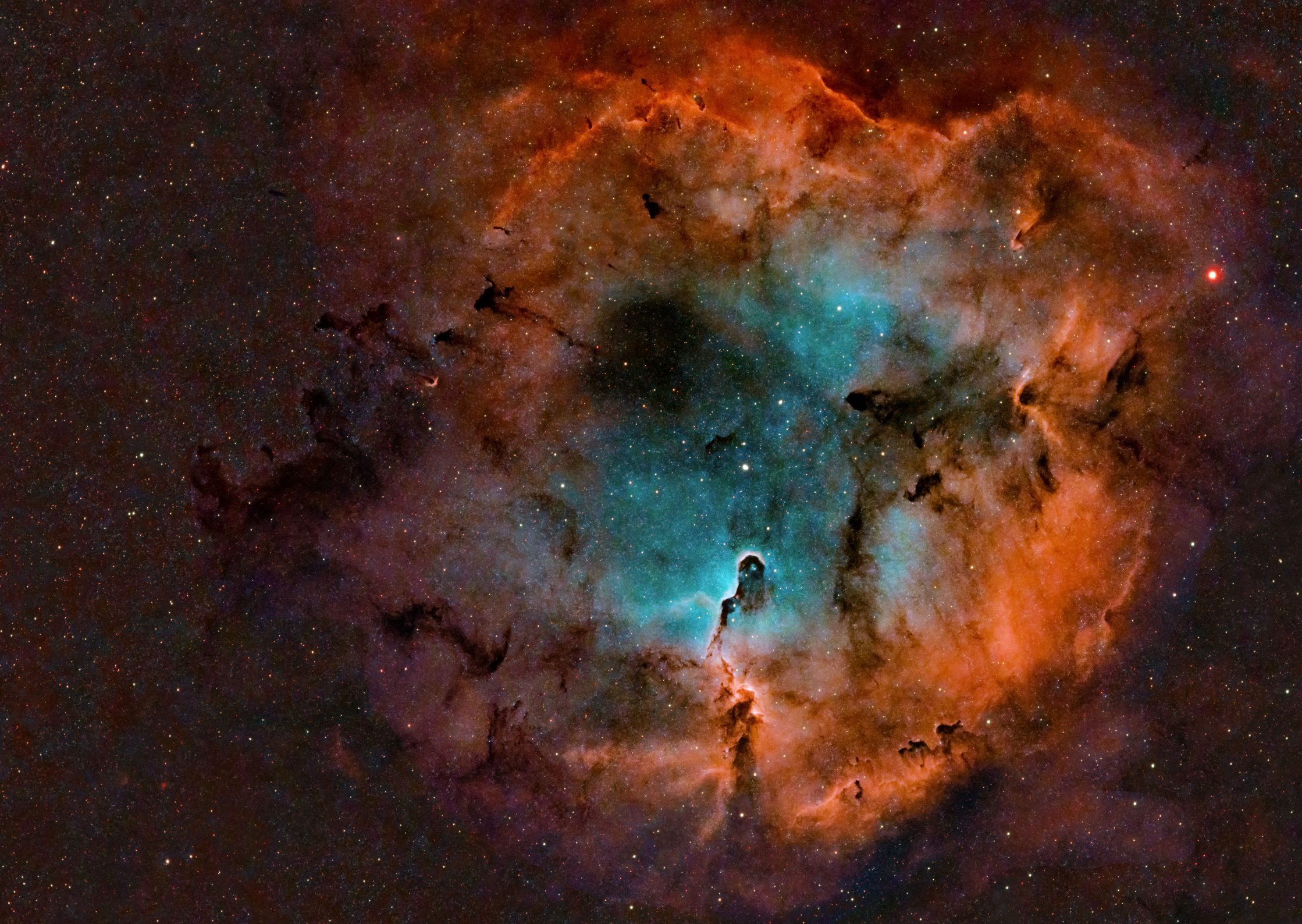
These nucleotides comprise polymers: deoxyribonucleic acids (DNA); double-helical structures which carry instructions for the development, functioning, growth and reproduction of all recognised organisms. And, ribonucleic acid (RNA); the function of which is to store, carry, translate and transmit the codes and messages of molecular streams. It is for these that we are not separate from the microbiome. We are within it ~ as active and constitutive participants.

As noted by virologist Karen Mölling in 'We are not alone - we are a superorganism' (2017), the genomic information of all species (human and non-human) is inseparable: that is, 'we are all relatives at the genetic level' (124) ~ allowing for assimilation and replication. They continue: viruses are normally 'transmitted 'horizontally' as exogenous [exterior] viruses which can spread [outside and] inside the body and also from person to person. However, such viruses can also sometimes infect germ cells; they are then passed down 'vertically' from generation to generation' (156).

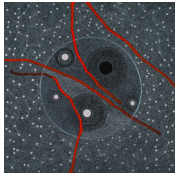
I am my family's name in lipid languages I am unable to utter; in phonemes and numerical units, polymers and stratigraphic postcodes ~

where I am composed of ancestral and celestial sequences, microcosmic macrocosms; lunar maria and tidal pulls. Made of fossils and mortar, chromosomal nebulae and the weathered descendants of this convolution. We are an ancient archive of each-other's source and mouth, the mountains to the sea ~ as I push slit along the riverbed as foundational as our amniotic sac; and carry the sediment of my passage to the earthen bank. They are within us ~ as intra-active architects of our home ecology.

As Mölling puts it: 'We are an ecosystem, teaming inside and outside our body with bacteria, viruses, archaea, and fungi, all living in a close community. We cannot remove them with soap and water - and we should not try to, because we belong together' (123). As divisive as this statement may seem today, it is, I would suggest, a needed discourse; one which may even be healing in some way as we begin



to return to that which we recall as 'normal' over the coming weeks, months and years.



In 2011 and 2013, scientists ~ as reported in the journal: *Science* ~ founded and named the 'microbiome' as a system which houses all our microorganisms: our bacteria, viruses, archaea and fungi; but also our antigens, phages, yeast, micro-animals, eukaryotes and protists etc. They found that while human bodies comprise 10¹³ cells in sum, we host 10¹⁴ microbes ~ signifying that about 10% of human cells are actually what we could call 'our own', and microbes supply more genes responsible for human subsistence than humans do themselves. That is, as suggested by Mölling, the 'microbiome' may be our second genome and viruses and fungi may be our third and fourth (2017:124-125).

As a form composed of aggregated matter what then, could we ask, constitutes the singular 'I'?

What is it to be 'human'?

This, I am unable to answer ~

But, if microbes have been existent for more than three-billion years, before the arrival of *us*, surely *we* are the product of *their* native flora; guests which *they* accommodate. This premise is something *I* hold to be accurate, and provides an account which defies the precept of human autonomy as free from the virome.

They will ~ as they have before ~ exceed us; whereas we are dependent on our microbial caretakers for our continued survival (126). In simple words: 'we would become sick *without* viruses [...] we would not exist' (2017:112-113).

With shared aims, the writings of ecological scholar Donna Haraway also unbalance the precept that humans are separate from our non-human components². In 'We Have Never Been Human' (2008), for example, they recall: 'To be one is always to become

with many [...] when 'I' die, all these [...] symbionts will take over and use whatever is left of 'my' body, if only for a while, since 'we' are necessary to one another [...]' (3-4). This is further substantiated in 'Symptoiesis' (2016) where Haraway notes: 'Critters - human and not - become-with each other, compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time [...]' (97). As human bodies are composed of about 60% wet matter ~ our form is open to discussion.

As hydro-scholar Astrida Neimanis outlines in 'Figuring Bodies of Water' (2017): 'Our wet matters are in [a] constant process of intake, transformation, and exchange [...] bodies of water undo the idea that bodies are necessarily or only human [...]' We are literally implicated in other [...] bodies that materially course through us, replenish us, and draw upon our own bodies as their wells' (2-3).

In fact, our freshwater, saline and marshy beginnings tell us of this biological imperative. We hear accounts of sacred waters in spiritual passages; hydrological cycles; gilled-ancestors and early tetrapods; seminal plasma and ovarian follicles; hyperthermophilic flues; and ancient archaeobacteria. While these are somewhat speculative foundations ~ and should be diffractively read ~ it would be erroneous to suggest that water has no place within our shared and ongoing genesis. Biota: fungi, plants and animals are all dependent on their need for water and its Earthly presence. This also goes for humans and single-celled organisms such as slime moulds and prototists, and monera such as bacteria and blue-green algae which are the simplest of all biological forms on Earth (2017:110). We carry water with us, as part of us ~ it feeds oxygen into our cells and hydrates our lungs allowing for easy breathing.

In acknowledgement of this, we must then, I would suggest, recognise our inseparability, relationality and therefore our responsibility as we filter through one another within the contemporary present. In particular, I am aware of our place within shared ~ respiratory ~ spaces and across situ which may secrete.

As the artist JJ Chan puts it in 'Performing Porosity...' (2021): 'to understand that [...] our flesh is water, and our

²Haraway's publications: 'Symptoiesis: Symbiogenesis and the Lively Arts...' (2016), 'Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene' (2016), and *When Species Meet* (2008), unpack the ontological assumption of (non)human separation, and put forward a new premise which speaks to symbiogenesis, togetherness and 'becoming-with' one another as co-companions, along with the reduction of human authority, power and precedence.

minds are water, is to acknowledge our commons in the puddle [...] A puddle of water is a locale that holds these ontological and material temporalities and all their possible constellations [...] (131).

It is perhaps needed then, like Chan, that we become more attentive of our unavoidable wet and porous bodies ~ and anticipate how easy it is for them to spill and overflow through one another (2021:131). Haraway's concept of 'symptoiesis' ~ a word which explicates this osmotic turn ~ is again of use here: the neologism gives shape to an almost permeable process; something membrane-like that incites the condition of a shared-residuality. It also speaks to the premise of our commonality. As both a comfort and a warning, then: 'Agencies' ~ Haraway writes ~ 'mutually contaminate one another, interfering with one another's being [...]'. Body to body, our saturated surfaces moisten as they go on to become another's breath [...] (2016:132).

We glug from perspiration, and pores in rocks; from evaporated fresh-water, aquatic and oceanic bodies. Aspirated fish and algae blooms are fed by the hydrosphere as salt flats, rice paddies, ponds and planes are dried and flooded and swallowed by the harvests.

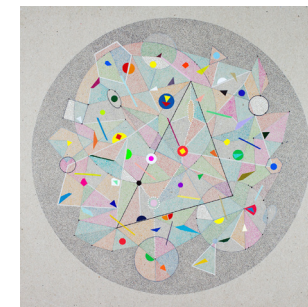
We also share with other bodies through saliva and sweat, weeping and urination, labour and reproduction, transfusion and lactation in the liquescent vessels which we call 'ourselves'.

In other places, keratin scales furl as ~ us ~ tall mammals buy and sell for the betterment of human ails.

Collected guano is sold as medicinal produce, while histoplasmosis caused by fungal spores settle into the fissures of our lungs ~ like the caves we mine in.

And, animals are poached and skinned and bled and eaten and excreted to fertilise soil from which we grow and lay bodies to rest.

I grieve for the loss of people ~ and for the virus in this (non) human wake. Together, we are both casualties and causalities; the affliction and afflicted; a suicide-viricide to end the hereditary line.



page 43 **Black Void** ^{above} **Black Triangle**
[illustrations] by **Tim Edgar**



the

H A U N T E D

where
once
was brown
and green
and contour lines
that marked out hills
and mountains cliffs
and moorland
chicken-poxed with symbols
showing churches
castles public houses
roads and railway lines
selected sites of interest
windmills gardens level
crossings quarries camp
sites battlefields and boundaries
the map is now a solid
sheet of blue
of different
shades

(here a cross
warns shipping
of a spire
that almost
breaks the surface
at low
tide)

M A P

[poem] by **Peter J King**

left **Flooded Field 30 & 56** [photographs] by **Nik Stanbridge**



the

H A U N T E D

here there glinting plastic here
here there used to be glinting waves now plastic flotsam
here there used to be glinting waves now plastic flotsam
used be waves now

vast silence where the songs
once echoed over miles

dead coral
dead coral
dead coral dead
dead coral dead coral
dead coral dead
dead coral
dead coral
dead coral dead
rusted metal sand and dead coral dead shells and rusted metal sand

O C E A N

[poem] by **Peter J King**

left **Annihilation 1** [photograph] by **Yudong Zhang**

DEAREST

greenest

Place

{ [poem] by Florence Campbell Grey }

opposite The Rising Sun Kindled The Sky [painting] by Alex SanVik

*"It seems they were all cheated of some marvellous experience
which is not going to go wasted on me which is why I'm telling you about it"*

Frank O'Hara - Having a Coke with You

Standing in the kitchen
is the best day in the world
Look at me! maybe I should compost?!

There is no better place on earth, it seems
For me to sit in the corner and watch
while you make teas for the sunny step
In this amalgamation of absurdities and windows

There is nobody who isn't made beautiful
Just by being a part of it all
Sitting, singing, buying a juice
In this exquisite treasure of a roadside café

I'm thinking of the man who approached me once
Through sparkling, piss-rinsed rhododendrons
a wide grin and a jingly step
"Feel like a pure broken husk of a human being"

So,
That is the thing,
In this glorious hollow

The physics mug in the kitchen
The storytelling and the cards
Music that sounds like a blue tit jumping
giddily along a telephone line

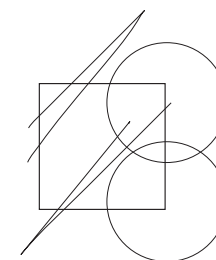
Let's go and eat rolls on the big damp hill
This is our universe





ATTACHMENT

[prose] by Tracy Johnson



I never wanted anyone to love me. Not in the way that romantic love dictates. The drama and dependence, the I-can't-live-without-you neediness of it. I don't want anyone to depend on me, to require my fidelity, my presence. I resent it, actually. And I reject it. Just as I reject wanting to depend on someone else, to love them. I don't know what it means. There is a blockage somewhere in my emotional flow that prevents my capacity to give freely of myself, especially to those who want. Especially to those who demand. And that is why instead of assignments, hook-ups and transactional dates, you pay for dinner and maybe I will open my body to

yours, you will find me alone in the cinema, with the simulated love and the simulated sex, and the pretend joys and disappointments. I sit in the front row of a simulacrum of love that flickers past me in my dark, happy hours. Unreal, unengaged, and completely unattached.

I did try. A few times. But I always walked away and, when I didn't, they did, pointing out my defects as they closed the door behind them. Why attach yourself to someone only to be made to feel smaller than you are? Why combine your energies only to somehow become less than what you were alone? I know. To love is to risk rejection. But that's not the risk that concerns me. I will not be diminished in the name of love. Unless you can make me feel more, be bigger than myself, my best version of an already strong self, why would I want to attach myself to you? Sex? Better my own way. Not being alone? I crave solitude and independence. Children? Absolutely not. Am I deficient? Is my unwillingness to attach an indicator of some past trauma? I don't care for all the psychoanalysing. I just want to sit here in my dark afternoons watching people pretend to feel. Maybe I can learn how to fake it better. Maybe that would make everyone happier. I'm on a learning curve.

Today's lesson: the signifiers of romance. The proofs of love. A film in which a girlish woman delights in the ritual of being brought breakfast in bed. The rose on the perfectly laid tray, the coffee pot and napkin just so. The miniature bottle of something with the fizz that is probably already lacking somewhere else. She reaches up for the kiss, her lips already wet with desire because she was brought food on a tray like an invalid in a hospital. He meets her mouth and they have carefully choreographed sex where she comes, miraculously quickly, at the exact same time as he takes his pleasure, then straightens his tie and leaves for the real work of the day. I snort quietly in the darkness and shift in my seat. She receives the gift so that she can receive his gift. And there ends today's lesson.



At home, I decide to try some proofs of love for myself and lay a proper table. Cutlery, linen, wine in a clean glass. Food I cook rather than have delivered. No helmeted bikers tonight with their lukewarm offerings. I sit and receive the gift to myself. Some minor adjustments are required. A book alongside my hand as I eat. Music sonorous in the background for atmospheric. It is a tableau from a film in itself: the meticulous spinster setting her place and eating alone. Except now, no pity from the audience. No suggestions from her wistful face that she could still meet the one someday, that this loneliness isn't forever. I shovel the food into my mouth with pure, lustful greed, grateful that I have no company to keep, no one to please, no one to have to talk to while the wine dribbles onto the cloth with its gory stain. I do not mind my manners. I love myself in this moment and I take complete pleasure from it. I accept my gift and I rejoice in its excess. I take myself to bed, joyfully alone.

Work happens. The banal chat over coffee of who did what, with whom and how much it cost. There is such a wide range of prices to pay for these stultifying template lives. From debating which in-laws to visit this weekend to the horrors of sharing a bed with a great snoring fart of a man. I both shudder and stifle a yawn. What did I do? Yes, I went to the cinema again. On my own? So weird. Yes, I am there a lot. Maybe I will meet someone there. Maybe. Maybe I would rather poke my own eyes out. I return to my desk. Inserting my earphones to ward off further irritations, I start to look at the online film listings for the week to come.

I settle into my seat. Always in the front row, view unimpeded, no irritating bobbing heads.

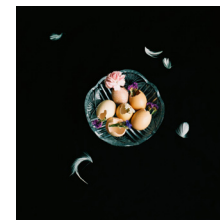
The peculiar, unique smell of well-used pseudo-velvet seats and stale popcorn. It heightens the sense of artifice. Time spent here is time out of time. A world where people listen, not speak, where we pretend to enjoy the discomfort of proximity to strangers, fake foods, and the pressure of an impatient bladder. I make my visits in the afternoons when I am less likely to be disturbed and can give my full attention to the dramas unfolding on the screen. There are more lessons to be had in this theatre of make believe.

Today, I learn about the act of self-love. This apparently controversial piece of cinema allows the female protagonist to dwell on and adore her own body in front of a mirror, in front of the camera's gaze. If she were truly alone this would not be provocative. It would be the purest act of love as she soothes her own skin, finds joy under her own touch. But this tenderness is mediated by the lens, by the watching eyes of anyone who lingers here. By its very nature of being a scripted act, it falls prey to titillation and erection, to third person lust, so far removed now from perhaps what the director intended. It would be the most beautiful thing I have ever seen were it not performed, observed and thrilled to by a mass of bodies on these worn velvet seats. The lesson learned: self-love must be private and enacted completely alone. It does not require external validation and observation to be deep and true. I just need myself. I start to make plans.

How does one seduce oneself? I think about what I would like someone to do for me. A delicious but light meal, full of sharp flavours. Just enough to awaken the senses but not to satiate. A couple of glasses of good wine, drunk slowly and appreciated. The whole experience lingered over, unrushed and savoured. No sudden lunges or clumsy grabs, no sense of deserving my attentions simply because I accepted your invitation. A film. Something that needs my attention and is sensual, provocative. Something to send signals to the nerve endings that it is time to wake up. To play. To become immersed in sensation and pure pleasure that belongs only to me.

I take time to create a noodle dish, making a savoury, bright broth, chopping fragrant herbs and enjoying the effort I am making for myself. No one else to please. No face to watch fall in disappointment at my wasted work. A bottle of crisp white is chilling, ready to relax and refresh as I enjoy my meal. I have also made a small lemon pot, which sits in the refrigerator, dusted with a little icing sugar and topped with a mint leaf. The details are important. They show how much I care. I lay my table and I take my time, enjoying everything I have done for myself.

After my meal, I make myself comfortable on the couch with a final glass of wine and start the film: a much-loved story but one not watched for some time. Intelligent sex in a bowler hat with a little eastern European history. I remember why it used to stir me. It is sexy without sleaze and it engages my brain as well as my body on a slow burn. I don't have to explain why I like something too slow, too wordy, too anything that detracts from the need to cut across the rhythms of the evening and insist on my acknowledgement of someone else's desire. There



are different ways to start this fire. The scene with the mirror reminds me of the film I saw at the cinema earlier that week. The unapologetic self-regard of the woman in the face of her own beauty and sex. The confident artist who can leave or share her lover. There are different ways to be. To love.

I take the time to look in the mirror at my own body and really see this skin I live in. Still smooth and firm, with a few lines threading

the inevitable process of ageing. There are places with defined, firm muscle and others that are softer. But what does that matter if I see something I can delight in, like a lover seeing a new partner's body for the first time? It is an adventure to explore this territory and see it from the point of view of an admirer, to seduce with a touch, a stroke, a look. I meet my own gaze and smile, slowly, as I greet myself. The excitement is far more than I expect, and intense. I start to enjoy the heat of my own body, its scent and its tastes, licking at my own skin like I am trying to get deeper inside myself. I want to know myself completely: my shapes and angles and joys. I take myself to bed and I am lost for a long time in my own desire for myself.

I cannot leave myself alone. A shy smile as I catch my own gaze in a mirror or passing window. The quick thrill in the belly at the thought of what passed the night before. I know. She knows. We know. I have become addicted to myself, attached beyond all normal parameters to my own body and mind. I am we. I am us. That long-despised unit where two become one. But I am not subsumed; I am doubled. I am more than the sum of my beautiful, sensuous, intelligent parts and I worship at my own feet and mouth and breasts and the folds of my groin. I lust for my own scent and the touch of my own skin. I am consumed by myself. At work, I flick between the screen in front of me and the one in my head, the cinematic canvas over which my body stretches in its own self-induced ecstasy, all the love lessons internalised and acted out to their own beats, to their own self-authored script of adoration. I cannot wait to get home and seduce myself again. I am completely attached to the love I have found for myself.

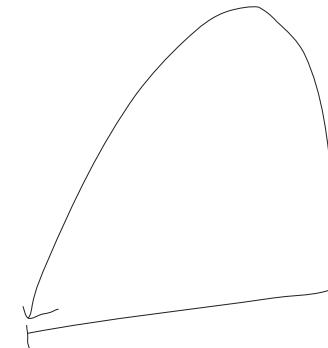
The phone is ringing. It's the office calling to ask where I am again. I switch it off and roll over in bed, tugging the now grimy sheets around me. I haven't been able to leave the house for days. The air is fetid and thick, and I am slick with my own sweat and juices but I won't stop. This is no longer even attachment but addiction. I cannot bear to leave myself alone. There is nothing for me outside, not even the cinema. I am bedded in at my flat, this locus of self-adoration and worship. There is only myself and my body and she will not be satisfied. I loved her in stages, delicately, but she wants more than I have been able to give. I tasted slowly but she demanded great, gulping bites of love. Where a look was a thrill, a touch almost unbearably sensual, now nothing satisfies. I can't get deep enough inside myself to unravel my own mysteries. Separation is going to come at a cost.

I carefully set my teeth to the tender inside of my forearm, the points of my incisors sharp against the skin. Testing, I start to bite a little harder. Pressure building until the tension gives with a feeling of surprise and a tooth gains purchase with the slightly salted taste of blood. My blood. This is how I will give up my secret. If I can know the inner workings, listen to the whisper of the blood as it creeps through my veins, maybe I can understand my wants. Maybe I can learn how to separate from this insatiable self-love. I can't bear this need. Teeth are not enough. They tear ragged cuts and I do not love the taste of my flesh. I need a clean edged blade if I am to get in.



I draw a knife from the block. It is Japanese steel. The sharpest blade I have ever owned and it is going to help me cleave myself from this attachment. I sit in the bathtub to catch what I am about to throw away. I know there is no coming back from this. No clean severance. It will be a messy break up and very likely final, but there is no going on with this. I take a breath. I had tried again at least with this last configuration of love, but I must release it. Free myself from where I again found knots and ties. The knife is so precise, so exquisitely sharp that I don't feel the pain as it first catches and bites. A suspended pause and then, there, a searing burn and my own

stunned gaze at the cinematic spurt of blood against white tile as the blade glides through an artery. A great gout sprays again, and then again, and again as my pulse pushes out this needy lover with each remaining laboured breath. She is out. Birthed as the life in me drains and stutters to a close. We are two again. I am unattached. Alone once more and seated in the relief of the encroaching dark. The lights go out. My learning curve is done.



b

I

R

T

H

[poem] by
Dan Leitch

d

A

Y

Click. Flash. The sun
captured in all its glory —
a shining ball of yellow rubber
held by a stick in the hands
of a tiger-faced child. His eyes
glint in perpetual daylight.

In another room his father
takes it from the ceiling
and pricks it. He holds it
to the child's painted mouth
and lets the sun's last breath fill
his white-bibbed chest.

The child smiles and laughs
a high-pitched requiem
for a newly forgotten day.
Beside him, lying spent
on the carpet: a limp scrap
of crescent moon.

below **Abandoned Car**
[painting] by
Lee James Shott



S

A

t

S

[poem] by
Dan Leitch

U

m

A

I think of the
planet as I
peel a satsuma
its skin pitted
starting to wrinkle
orange on the turn
but not yet blue
green and white-swirled
if I left it
much longer it
would become more so
grow clouds of white
patches of blue
patches of green
become earth and
disintegrate

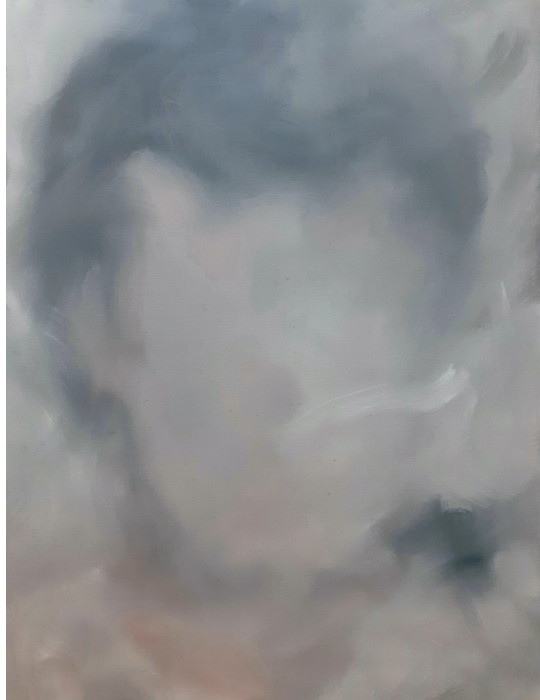
brittle skin comes
away in bits no
satisfying
single coil until
the flesh beneath
is exposed all
soft and raw and
vulnerable

a picked scab I tear
it up piece by piece
sometimes several
pieces at once whole
chunks of satsuma
of world crammed into
my mouth juiceless
disappointing

nothing is left
but bits of skin
and spat out pips
and the fruit bowl
dark and empty



above **Goodnight** [painting] by
Audrey Gillespie



Chemtrails look like cotton wools
slowly dispersing in the sky

One strand to stop the sky from tearing,
Another to resemble a lost cause
Yet another for safe keeps
Just in case the real cotton white cloud
goes missing

They remind me of the pamphlets
I saw the other day

Yellow paper mashed with mud
Some throwing caution out the wind
Some looking for lost parents,

An adopted kitten
All dissolving in mud

The dry roses
you forgot to unwrap

Now filled
with dust

'Men's
jewellery r
you wan
to touch
them...'

f

l

y

[poem] by **Richard Baker**

I once caught a fly, and it has fed
me all through the winter like a dream...

With interest I kept it within my web
and parcelled out, in pieces, morsels - bread
to feed my hunger, my deep need...

I once caught a fly, and it has fed
many fantasies - many phantoms flashing red fed
me with their black and bulging flesh till, feeling fed, I seem
with interest to have kept it within my web and felt no need to let weeds
wind their way through windows, walls, dreams in heads
that hadn't space to hold the beating black and yellow bread breaking its
seams
to sow seeds with interest within my web, where I once caught a fly, and it
has fed
me more than every other insect I caught within my web, or caught within
nets
could feed the curiosity of lepidopterists who fed on screens
the lifeless drunks with ethanol, while with interest I kept bread within my
web
and would let none feed on what I had already fed
on -
arsenic, cyanide, strychnine, dreams...

/68/



I once caught a fly, and out of the web of deep need that has fed
me its false psalms since the first day I asked out of need to be fed,
I was watered by the web of waves washing windwards in the roadside
streams...

With interest I kept the dream within my web,
and would let none come near me or see what it was I fed
on when I fell to gorging and fed on rent flesh and the silent screams
of the fly I once caught before it fed me with its bread
the truth and the way and the life of the bread
that never has need for schemes, regimes, supreme
interest within webs if they cannot feed, as power once fed,
the incarnate breath when it blew away webs
and would let none feast, fast, or be fed on deceit,
or caught flies be fed on, nor would they winter in dreams in a leper's cold
bed...

And in Aleppo once, in a dream of death,
I walked past the ghost on the moor holding bread and two bream,
and with interest he parted the webs from the waters of dew that had gath-
ered there, and fed
those in need with two fishes and five loaves of bread...

And when he had gone, we wove round webs in dreams
and felt redeemed when we broke bread after the act of the caught fly and
the death
in the marketplace where I once caught a fly within my web, and it has fed
me with interest more than real need has fed me since we first kept within
our web
the desperate need we fed ourselves with when we hung dreams on trees,
locked bread in the storehouses, and fed with the spreading webs of stories
lies to keep the rich well-fed
and corn-fed myths to feed the succored poor...



let's go
&
EAT ROLLS ON THE
BIG DAMP HILL

THIS IS *our*

u N *i* V ^e R S E

left **Let Them Swim**
[painting] by **Mari Honma**

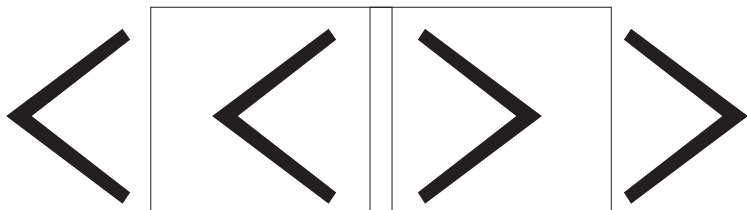
words from 'Dearest Greenest Place'

s o o n / s o o n / s o o n
bloom!
b l o o m
an ANNA

**BLOOM
S**



this a tiger's tail



*that a renegade
piazza spell*

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words from 'Mystical scales an eighth of a ponderous cornerstone lost'

