

# horizon

LITERATURE

art

photography

Carla Parcianello, *Dizzy Dancer* ■ HYPERSPACE, Nguyễn Phúc Hiền + Mercedes Segade, *Considered Apart from Concrete Existence* + Megan Powell, *Timelines* ● MY PPL, Rukan Saif + Jamie Valentine, *Procession* ● VENICE, Martha Aroha Челок + Sanne van Gent, *The mountain is a cloud in the shape of the sky* ● MONUMENT EMITTER, Ruiqi Zhang ●● IT'S YOUR FINAL DAY ON EARTH SO YOU DROP EVERYTHING AND GO BACK TO BIRMINGHAM FOR ONE MORE EID, Zain Rishi + Faisal Channa, *User Busy* ● WHAT SHAPES A HAUNTING, Georgia Riordan + Micheal Brown, *wish you were here* ● Hester Chatterton, *On Grief and Hope* ■ BEATS BY DRE, Ruth Boon + Helena Melin, *Flesh + Machine + Divine* + James Frew, *Habit and Convention* ●●● MOST ELEGANT, R. P. Singletary + Ana Pedrera, *Melancholia* ●●● Li Xin Li, *Tale of an Accident* ■ Megan Powell, *Echolalia* ■ THE LONGING REBORE ITSELF, Carys Mahoney + Marc Allgaier, *Neue Technik 4/1* ● SOOTHSAYER, Heather Chapman + Mingyue Liu, *Shetland Tangwick* + ● ZODIAC, Gabriel Dunsmith + Teeratada Jungpol, *Nomad Person* ● VAMPALAŠ, Daria Gnatchenko ●● MOTORWAY TRIGONOMETRY, Peter J. King + Ella du Gay, *Untitled + Documenti* + Charlotte Eta Mumm, *leaving the peak where it is* ● PEBBLEDASH, Daragh Fleming + Ella du Gay, *Terribilita* ● Li Xin Li, *Pelican Delivery, Not Crane + Spare me* ■ JANUARY, Alysha Hobson + Ieuan Holt, *Mariner* ● READER, I'M BACK, Penelope Ioannou + Marc Allgaier, *Neue Technik 5/4* ● UNDER, Tomi Adegbayibi + Naoual Peleau, *Dead Leaves* ● Carla Parcianello, *Dizzy Dancers Blooming* ■ Megan Powell, *Mimesis* ■

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# This is *The Horizon Magazine*.

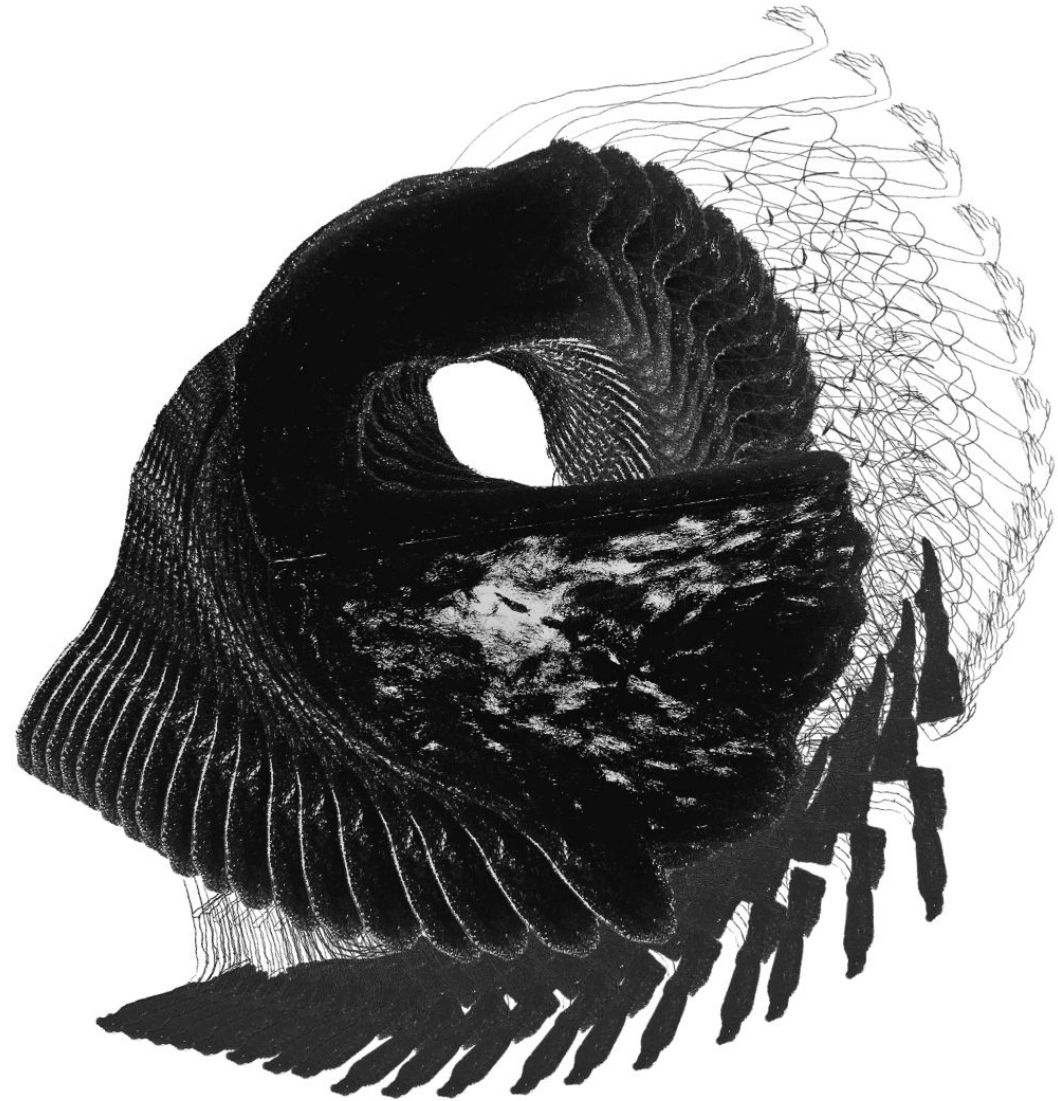
WE ARE A SPACE DEDICATED TO THE CULTIVATION OF  
NEW VOICES AND BOLD WORK. WE AIM TO SHARE ART AND LITERATURE  
THAT PUSHES BOUNDARIES, CHALLENGES AUDIENCES, AND IS POWERFULLY  
EXPRESSIVE.

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*







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## FROM EUROPE II

Since the 1920s, the landscape of Malta has served as a stage for the fantasies of foreign film productions of the global north. Landscapes on film occupy a curious position in narratology, facilitating at once *diegesis* and *mimesis* by the Grecian understanding of the terms. Whilst most obviously providing a mimetic representation of setting for a text's narrative, it is also invested with the director's own symbology, and thusly colludes with the audience in a conspiracy of *epos*. The director maintains fascist control over the viewer's gaze through cinematographic framing and editing, and so our subject relation to cinematic space is non-negotiable. Both audience and landscape are betrayed from the onset. It is generally accepted on behalf of the audience, passively or actively, that the landscape lies to us. But when the film stock rattles to an end, and the lights come up, what happens to this lie? Free from the process of representation, will the landscape thousands of miles away return to being honest? In the

case of Malta, the lie endures and is ingrained into the very rock itself. It is, in fact, this fantastic lie which attracts so many holidaymakers from the greyer corners of the world on a programme of film tourism. Audiences temporarily set loose from their auditoriums of cinematic *eposes*, yet still guided by the *diegesis* of some phantom, composite director. Malta's own palimpsestic history of empires and language is overwritten by a new one of fictive representations. A neo-palimpsest which stands as a useful case study for the very material role art plays for a global spectatorship, and the custodianship both audiences and producers maintain over the sites of aesthetic invention.

An island nation on island time, Malta entices tourists by means of dual identities. A history of destruction and construction, at once ancient, colonial, and independent. A milieu which reaches back to a religious antiquity whilst still reeking of sex and sun. These are characteristic contradictions which have been noted with particular

glee by resident alien writers. In his indulgently snide and openly offensive "Letter from Europe" (1969) written for the *American Scholar*, Anthony Burgess contends that "Not even Ireland or South Lancashire can touch Malta for iconic manifestations of piety," before offering the reader a delineation of the culture of sex in Valletta. "No Southern Catholic city provides an exception to the Great Anomaly: keep your daughters safe from sin by driving some of them into brothels," he concludes. This is an intersection forever immortalised in Pynchon's novel *V.* (1963), in which the brothels of Strait Street (sometimes charmingly referred to as 'the Gut' in fiction and reality) serve as nexus points between Malta and the contemporary empires of the world through the patronage of their servicemen (namely the British and the Americans). Of course, these perceptions are dated by the better part of a century, and the memory of that time is yet contested by the Maltese; whether the extent of the whoring was confined to Strait Street, or if the majority of it took place in the surrounding alleyways. These perceptions become further spectral traces on the neo-palimpsest of representations: "Malta never showed me anything. Anywhere you care to go in the Med there is a Strait Street, a Gut." — Benny Profane.

Despite the undeniable taint of Pynchon's own lived experience on the island (knowing the precise locations of public latrines and whorehouses long since closed by the novel's time of writing), there are structural reasons for his preoccupation with Malta. Valletta constitutes one of the novel's possible Vs and, reflecting the letter itself, marks the convergence of its dual

narrative strands. Notably, Malta is an apt fulcrum for leveraging Pynchon's meditations on destruction, sandwiched between the unprecedented bombing campaign it endured throughout the Second World War and a military buildup on the archipelago during the Suez War. The landscape is able to entertain a plurality of representations, a quality which industrialised art would soon take notice of. It was the 1960s, the same decade in which Pynchon published *V.*, when international film productions would first seize upon the Maltese landscape. Initially, it was employed as a substitute for its big brother macronations of Southern Europe. Spain at a discount! A friend's rate for France! Italy for less *babki*! But its true potential as a neo-palimpsest of representations would be realised at the turn of the 21st century. Architecturally, Valletta is theatrically plastic to mimetic mythmaking. Norwegians have incorporated the landscape into their own national myths, painting Malta as Peru in *Kon-tiki* (2012). For American audiences, it masquerades as Jerusalem in *World War Z* (2013). In *Munich* (2005), Spielberg saw fit for it to stand as two palimpsests of antiquity from whence the West charts its benighted past, both Rome and Athens. In that same film, Malta more broadly actions the tantalisingly tense dual representation of both Israel and the West Bank.

Reflecting its domination by colonial powers, it is thus fitting that its post-colonial topology has been most consistently leased in service to the representation of empires on screen, viz., the imperia of Greeks and Romans. *Gladiator* (2000), *Troy* (2004), *Alexandra* (2004), *Agora* (2009) exemplify some of

the recent entries into contemporary global consciousness, informing the vague, mushy collective memory of European antiquity. To our memory, Malta in the 21st century recalls the popular Spiritualist movement of the 19th of 20th centuries. Instead of a bored bourgeoisie organising seances in response to the spiritually empty agony of mundanity, these new labour seances are organised by the producers of consumer art for a vulgar audience employing a Spiritualism of aesthetics. Such seances configure geography into a ghostscape, conjuring recursive cycles of masquerading bodies in period dress, circling the same haunted locations at the behest of capital. Rome, Greece, or Egypt, these same filming locations within Malta (Fort Ricasoli, Renella, Mdina, etc.) erect sets as unreal signifiers for every pop obelisk of civilisation. It is our intention here that the invoking of the ‘unreal’ brings to mind Strindberg faster than it does Eliot. This is how capital dreams. Not reality, but more than reality. Pictures of humanity and tracings of history distilled in a dream image. A constant recycling of antiquated idols and values over a landscape of modernity, which struggle to speak to anything. Returning to Pynchon, Malta is a grand convergence of history and investment enabling this process, “where all history seemed simultaneously present, where all streets were strait with ghosts.”

This use of the *land* can only succeed in summoning ghosts, and not the living *volk*. International industry finds that the nation itself lacks the requisite skilled labour base. These productions import their own home teams. Just as Burgess sardonically quipped, “Malta, rightly, wants

money. One way of getting money is to encourage people who, like myself, earn their money anywhere except in Malta, to come and settle on the island.” By far the most famous example of the cinematic settling of the Maltese landscape (which has since become its most prominent tourist attraction) is the so-called *Popeye* Village in Anchor Bay at Mellieħa. In 1979, a team of 165 foreign workers spent seven months forever reshaping the northern Maltese coastline to found a fishing village for the 1980 Robin Williams vehicle *Popeye* (1980). Construction of the *Popeye* set imported lumber from the Netherlands, shingles from Canada, and a vast amount of American cocaine smuggled into the country in film canisters. The film itself is rarely mentioned outside of posthumous acclaim for Williams’ performance or morose reflections on the life of Shelley Duvall, but the set has long outlived the memory of the art object, attracting 100,000 yearly visitors to the now permanent tourist colony. A comic strip, to a cartoon, to a motion picture, to a tangible work of urban planning. This is the neo-palimpsest at work. But what is the kernel of deep memory that attracts these countless bodies each year? Can it recall the Crusader romances of the Knights Hospitalier like Fort Ricasoli? What about the maritime odysseys of the ancient Phoenician colonists like the walls of Mdina? Is it truly out of a sincere nostalgia or appreciation for Popeye the Sailor Man? Or simply because it is there, built over the ruins of empire after empire after empire, signposting nothing. Representing too much and so nothing at all. Too real for the real.

If you’d asked us five years ago, we likely would have told you that Horizon constitutes such an island. Or even a *Popeye* Village! A blip on the radar of postmodernity drawing in an ever-revolving residency of strange artists. We welcomed such colonisation as at our core was a ringing nothing. No one had scraped the palimpsest clean more than us. The general consensus now is that Horizon is a bloated whale fall. Each edition waxes larger, swollen with chattering paps of ideology. It has become a site for scavenger cannibals and vampires to present their teeth and beaks, completely unobserved on the sightless, soundless blackness of the frozen ocean floor (vampires I mean in a strictly Strindbergian sense [again] rather than the more fanciful Anglo-Irish conception). Readership falls; submission rates rise. The editorship of late has begun to question the viability and value of continuing the project. There is an incipient sense of remembrance developing in our hearts. What this memory is, we fortunately cannot yet agree upon, but its presence does seem to indicate that something has passed. The Italian Marxist architect, Manfredo Tafuri, once wrote that “The whole phenomenology of bourgeois anguish lies in the ‘free’ contemplation of destiny.” Though we have never claimed to be a revolutionary press (and would not have been believed had we done so), we are still struck by the positively bourgeois quality of anxiety we face in passing out of the present. Where now do we go? We never once knew. Only now does this prove an issue.

With a tangible history now piggybacking on us, we are presented with a ‘Tafuri’s Choice’: to push on regardless of this added weight to a point unknown deriving significance from a future utopianism, or to a point informed

by a codified past in which the weight of memory dissipates over the surface of the present; to our own Valletta (or *Popeye* Village). “One-way and ongoing. Monuments, buildings, plaques were remembrances only; but in Valletta remembrances seemed almost to live.” Having converted to Christianity for professional reasons in 1825, Heinrich Heine began to recirculate *topoi* stemming from his Jewish origins in the poetry of his final years. His genius as a national poet for Germany was once described to me as “a poet who could write German like a Frenchman.” These marks of alienation; his linguistic cosmopolitanism and foreign origins (to the 19th century European mind), established Heine as one of the few men capable of rendering the German language fit for poetry. From his *Matratzengruft*, Heine composed the three Hebrew Melodies. The concluding poem of the sequence, “Disputation,” exhibits for the reader a theological dialectic between a Rabbi and a Priest on the condition that the loser is baptised or circumcised respectively. The disputation, which is conducted under the gaze of the King and Queen of Toledo, almost immediately erupts into a passionate flurry of vulgar insults and divine threats. After twelve hours, the King asks his young bride which side has had the better of the other. She replies thusly:

Welcher recht hat, weiß ich nicht —  
Doch es will mich schier bedünken,  
Daß der Rabbi und der Mönch,  
Daß sie alle beide stinken.

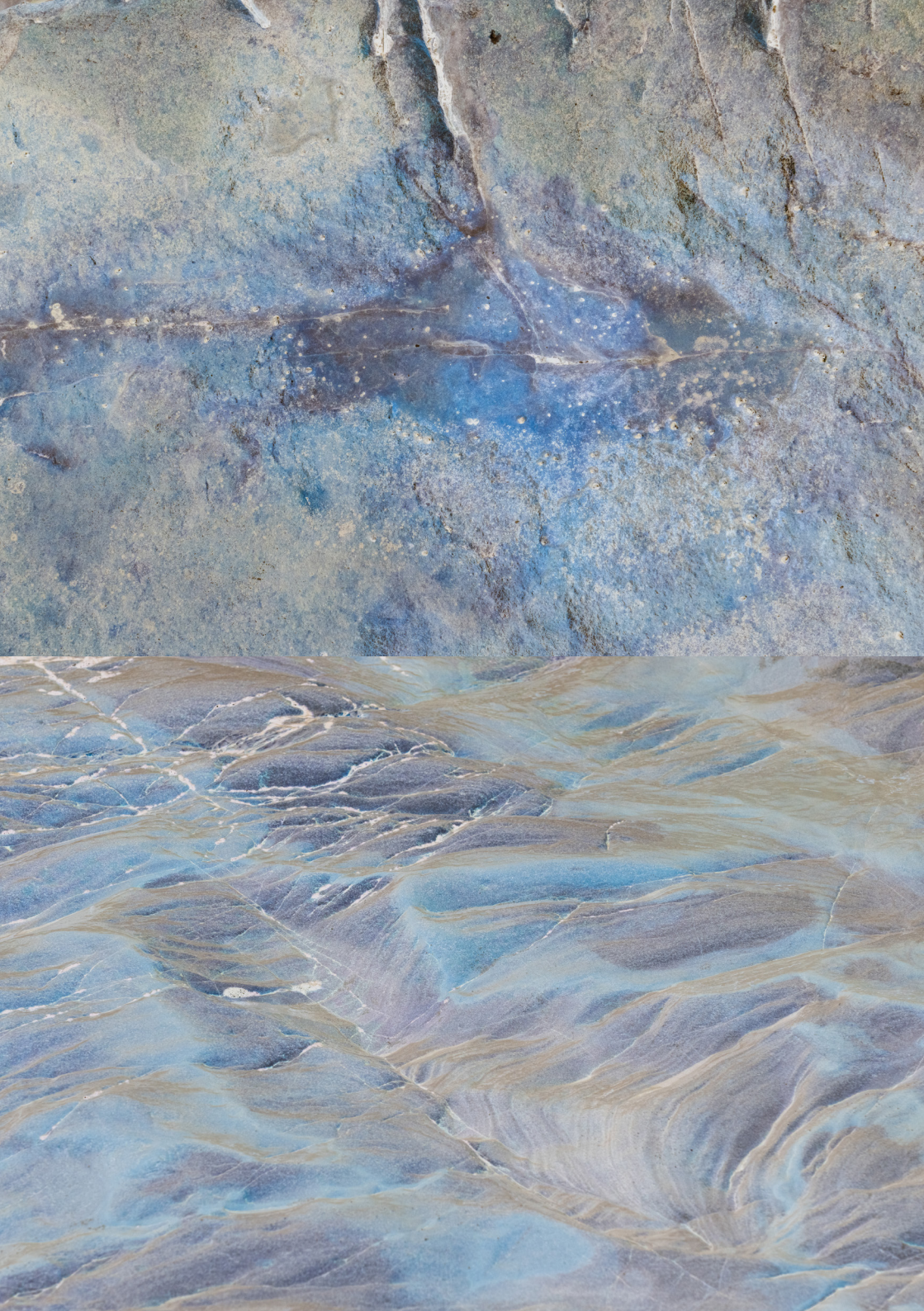
—H

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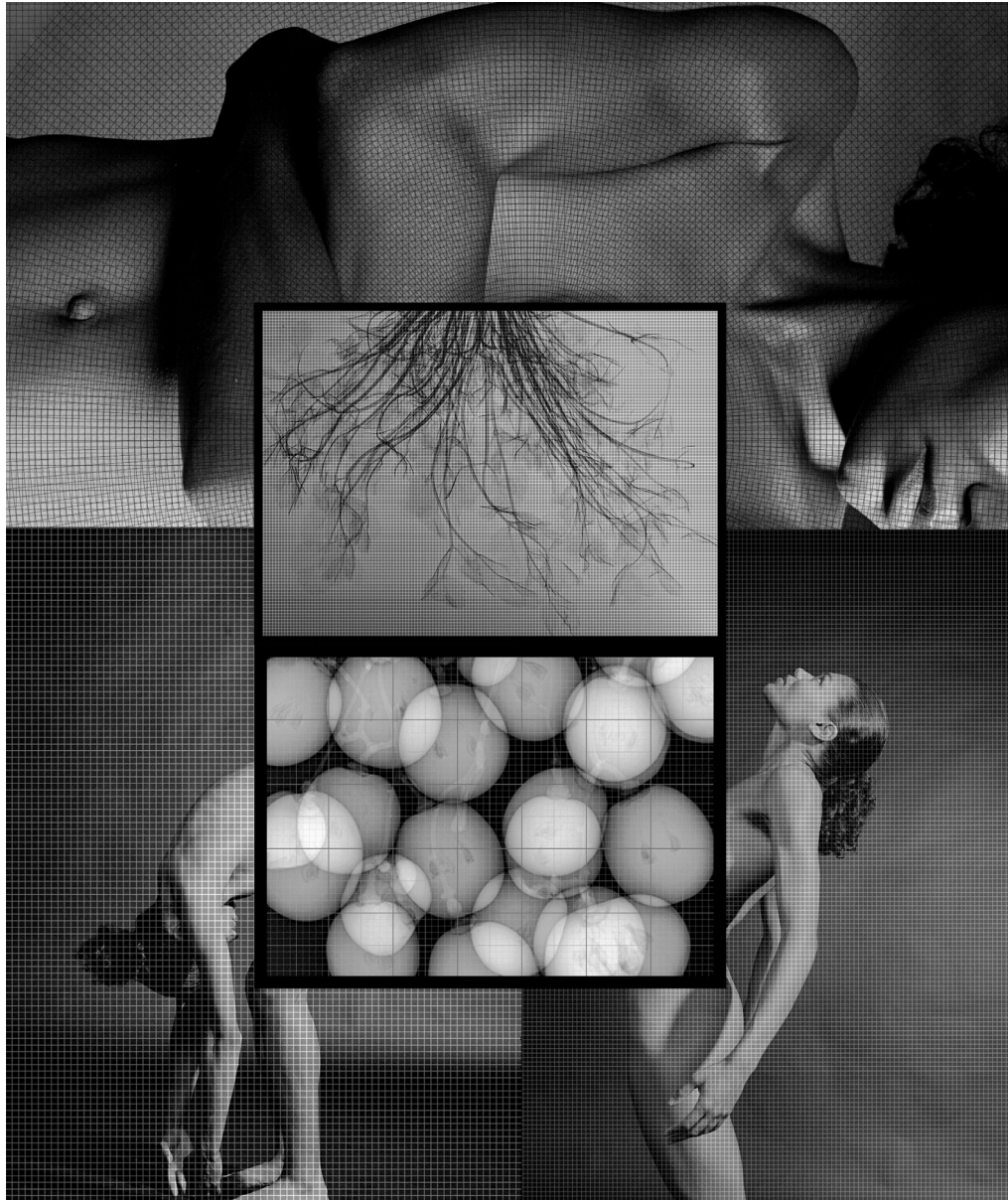






h y p e r h y p e r s  
p a c e s p a c e s p  
a c e h y p e r s p a  
c e h y p e r s p a c  
e *h y p e r s p a c e*  
s p a c e h y p e r h  
y p e r s p a c e h y  
p e r s p a c e h y p  
[poem] *by* **Nguyễn Phúc Hiến**  
e r s p a c e h y p e  
r s p a c e h y p e r  
s p a c e s p a c e →





Infinitesimally finite  
Is infinitely boundless  
In an infinite realm.

In Sun-owned continents of  
Renaissance, the sorcerers  
in radiant cassocks flew  
through the royal capital. As  
whirlwinds of cherry blossoms  
tenderly touched my cheeks,  
I stepped inside the arena—  
Eager to be a magic knight.

To conjure an ocean on  
highlands, to handle the  
Moirai destiny threads, to  
erase the lines of dreams  
and reality  
Within my brittle, slim pair  
of hands.

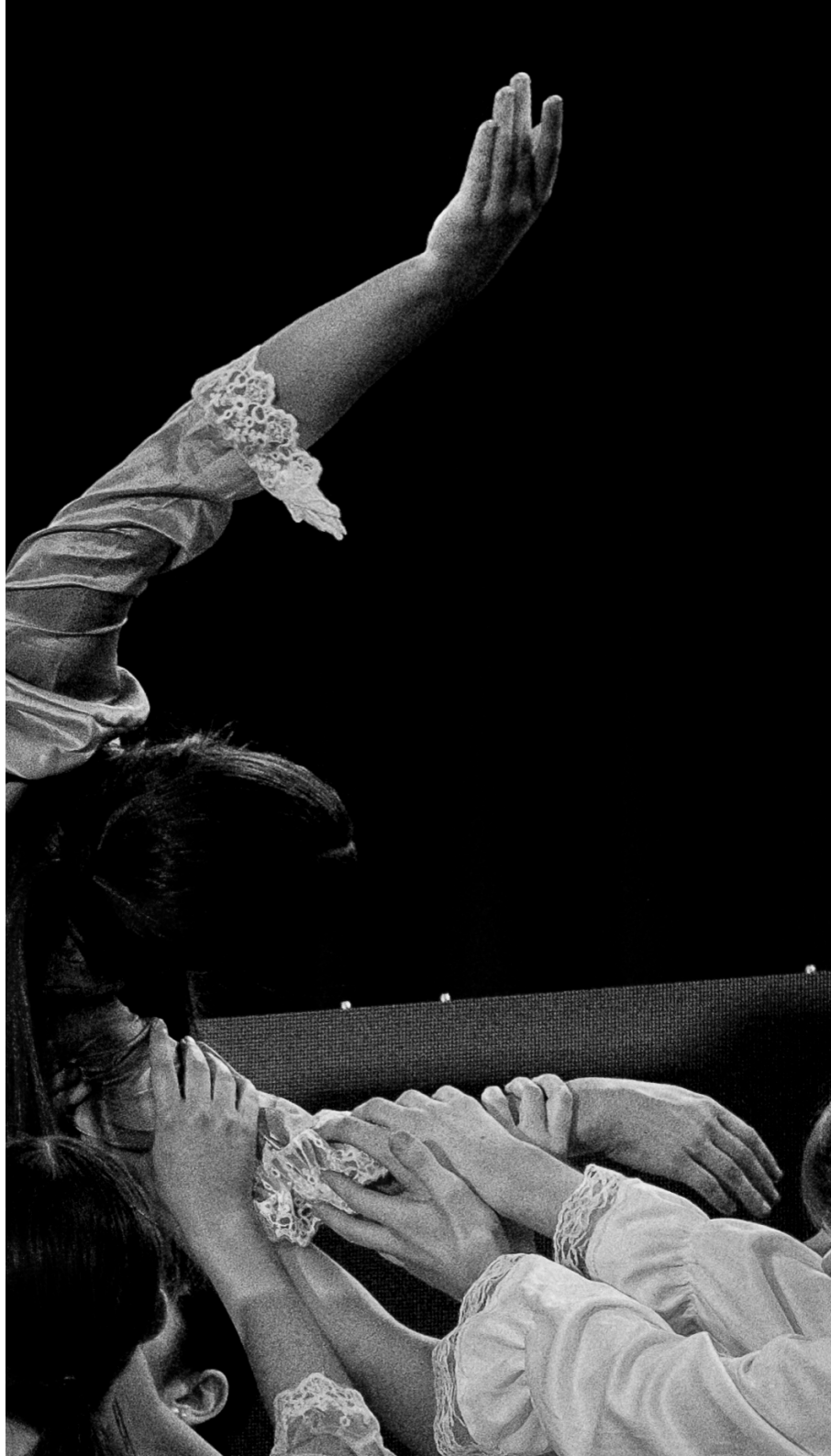
In Moon-haunted valleys, I  
Was chasing the hydrangeas  
drifting along the fluorescent  
creek. The notes of vanilla  
bourbon plagued the air,  
becoming stronger as I paced.  
I ended up stranded

In a vast violet grasslands,  
pitch black,  
Yet lit up by matrixes of  
fireflies; they glowed in blue.  
My legs could catch up with  
the water.

And I am here, with  
scarlet fingers shaped like  
electrocardiograms, trying  
to crawl out of the well. My  
legs are paralyzed by its cold  
liquid moon. The red neon  
light disseminates across  
the garden, reminding,  
reminiscing.

Machines — extraordinary. My  
eyes were telescopes. I gazed  
towards the neighboring  
stars, and found mechanical  
Ophanims  
ablaze. Space oscillated as I  
paced  
through serpentine  
skyscrapers. I submerged  
myself in the chiaroscuro of  
red neon lights.

Every cyborg was a god.  
Algorithms deciphering  
apophenia, demystifying the  
forest of symbols.



↑ **Procession** *by* **Jamie Valentine**

When my people hold a mirror up to their beloved,  
they bind sky to mantle and pull  
to steady the earth. They drunk themselves  
on ghazals and match eyes of peacock feathers  
to cheekbones. I remember another word for rusmat is painting—  
to look at one for the first time & birth lingua franca:  
a hanging night, the word of God.

They know poetry better than I ever will.

Things that have been named for my people:

tiger bay liberation famine sultanate  
My people have lived long enough to separate blood  
from aalta. That they have been partitioned thrice.  
That they have been pressed & parted like a wound,  
and each time, spilled water lilies.

My people are experts in translation. They will

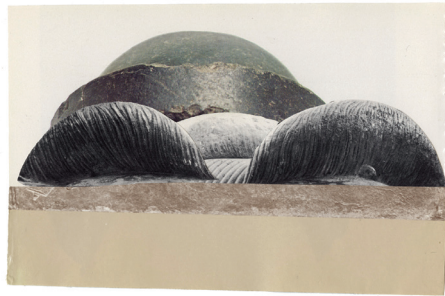
Arabic letters to change eastward & squeeze  
& stretch syllables past their zenith:

When did I learn romjaan was trisyllabic?  
That calques burrow into language like locusts searching  
for woven air? Sometimes I chase this  
land-dervished thread until I am knotted  
in jamdani & cry because the fabric is rough  
against my thighs,  
that I translate everything three times over,  
that more meaning vanishes every time I do.  
Languages like ours were built on thirst.

my  
ppl

[poem] *by* **Rukan Saif**





## VENICE

[poem] by **Martha Aroha Челок**

*An ekphrastic poem after Dane Mitchell's 'Post-hoc'*

After love *ridiculous*  
I put on gloves *fingerless* & it's  
nice to remember that [ ] does not exist there is  
no such thing as [ ] just chopped off  
like a clitoris

I am reading you this  
as the anaesthetic slips into your blood  
I traced it in volcanic ash  
whispered anti-matter  
in a sea cave

Another species  
booed off the stage  
Someone reclaims indigenous language to  
insert themselves in the narrative

& love profits from forgetfulness  
like a child's plate of  
[ ], [ ],  
[ ], & [ ],  
it is  
half-chewed peas  
[& broccoli]

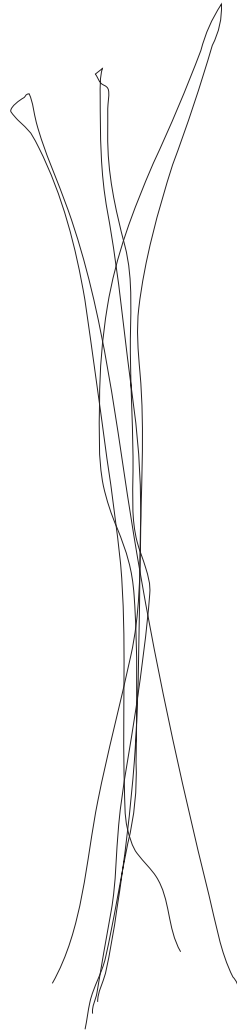
Clearly, when you invented cartography,  
you were trying to keep yourself on the map

The return of fascism in Europe  
The foreskin of *Jesus Christ* you  
are just so *possible* I  
wield my pencil:

scribble out  
crashed markets and  
superseded science  
Conduct a post-hoc  
assessment of the chaos: next?

I'll resurrect Venice  
from the waves

# MONUMENT EMITTER



[film] by **Ruiqi Zhang**

*“When they trumpeted the meliorative power of beauty, they were stating the belief in its capacity to shape human thought and behavior” (William H. Wilson, 1989). This quotation is from the book *The City Beautiful Movement*, which introduced an urban planning movement in the United States from the 1890s to the 1920s. Richmond is one of the earliest cities to adopt a proposal to build a broad avenue with monuments in the *City Beautiful* manner.*

[scan page opposite to watch the film](#)

‘Monument Emitter’ recreates some representative monument bases in 3D software and serves as a prompt to review the entrenched narratives related to monuments and the sanitized community consciousness. As the animation evolves, the empty base models are converted into lawn sprinklers, emitting water droplets that expand the scope of these revered objects. The animation is designed as a desktop screensaver that offers a meditative space to reconsider the historical heritage as catalysts for prompting social justice discourse and engagement.







↑ User Busy by Faisal Channa

It's  
Your  
Final Day on  
Earth  
*So You Drop Everything*  
and  
Go  
Back  
to  
Birmingham  
*for One More Eid*

[poem] by **Zain Rishi**

because not even the apocalypse could get Nana to take peppercorns out of the biryani but it's just how you like it everyone around the table yapping over each other banter like a birdcage is Abdullah still coming yes he's always on the way but never quite through the door you know last time Hajrah did a quiz we argued about Corbyn we don't put carrots in keema and we're not starting now but if I had told you I can't believe in Allah would you still want me this house has good bones we just keep breaking them look at the children drawing hands on the wall just like the wall you and Falak hung pages of Scribbler thinking maybe one day we'll be poets Abujan says that in our dreams we see prophets but you saw Rushdie and Roy atop the mountain why can't that be religion why can't home be something found and yes it's your final day on Earth so you look at the sky at the moon that will be your final rest when HQ lifts up your soul you wave at the pale blue marble when you land among the stars isn't it marvellous to see it at a distance isn't it hard to let this all go yes it's true that faith left you stranded like a moon but somehow you knew you'd return you'd find your way to the home which found you first the faces who didn't need to ask for your love all the doors you never had keys for but still opened they are still open so let in the light don't forget the light every day we stray from Allah's light every day  
she turns on another.





*what shapes a haunting*

sometimes your house is haunted because there is a ghost between you and the hallway's end.

sometimes your house is haunted because you miss your grandfather  
and your sister misses him even more  
and the two of you try to conjure him with recipes you can't quite remember.

sometimes your house is haunted by the ugly coat of green paint  
the landlord forgot that peeks out from behind the baseboards.

sometimes your house is haunted by the scratches on the floor  
from moving all your mother's furniture out and the four-spotted-stains  
where the ottoman's feet stood for fifteen years.

sometimes your house is haunted because of a carbon monoxide leak  
and it takes two uniformed strangers to tell you that there's no ghost there.

and sometimes your house is haunted because you        refuse to leave.

[poem] by **Georgia Riordan**





ON

Wanting a baby

– the verb: to ‘desire’, to want a baby. become pregnant  
some by design –

GRIEF

Subfertile heterosexual couples low sperm count is an issue,  
conceive now? need IVF IVF. *In vitro* fertilisation  
medical investigations medicalised world,

AND

Offer some sympathy! Learn how  
gynaecological rollercoaster  
that doesn’t mean you never will.

HOPE

you  
pregnant. This is  
empowering. in a petri dish,  
trapped  
emotionally





# BEATS

By Dre

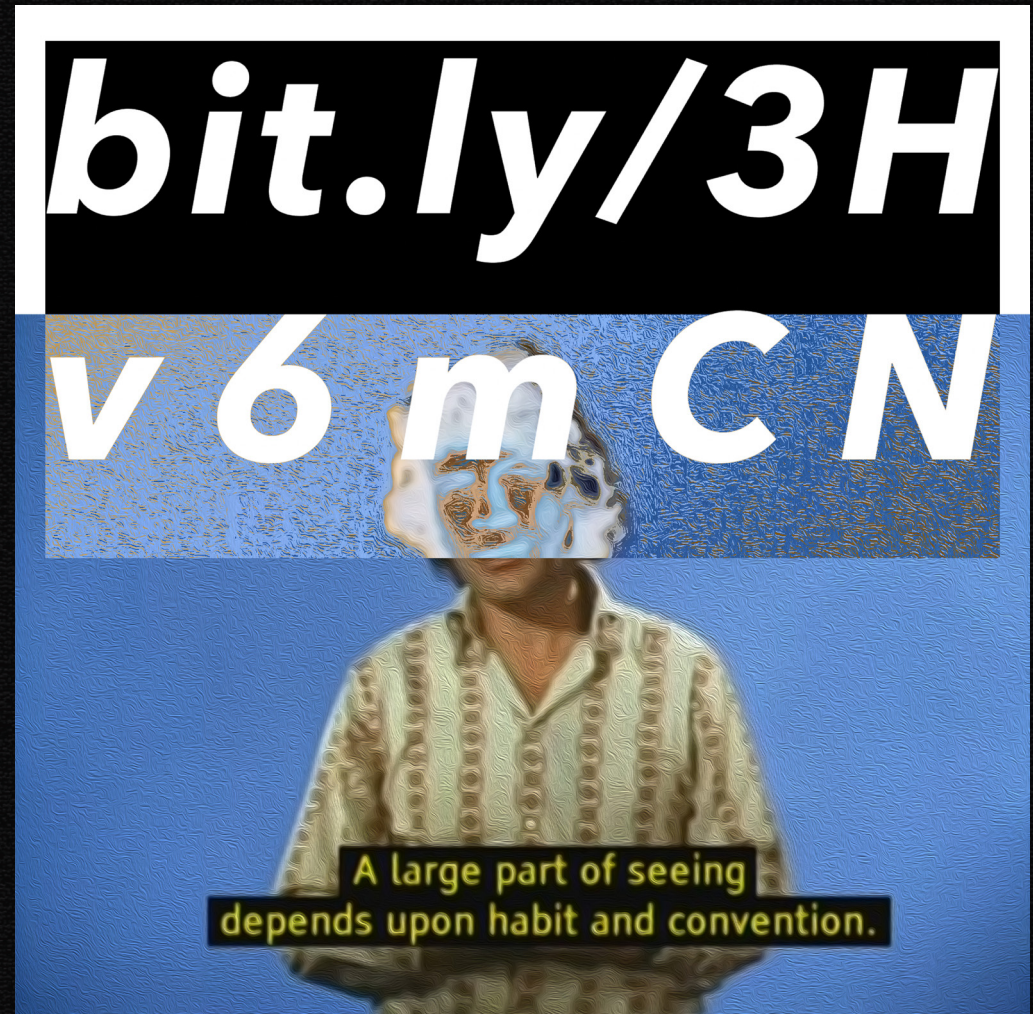
by  
Ruth Boon

*Sistering* to 'In Da Club' on my Beats by Dre. Would Dre be proud of himself? They're selling Beats by Dre in the Apple Store now. I think in a capitalist society, that's probably seen as a good thing. Something to make Dre think 'I might have made it.' He probably doesn't think he's made it though. Even the ones who've made it don't seem to think that they've made 'it'.

How many leaves does a mature Oak Tree have? Quora says two hundred thousand leaves. Jane Simon (teacher) says mature oak trees can shed three thousand six hundred pounds of leaves in their sixty-year lifetime. I wonder, what constitutes an oak tree's maturity? I wonder if Dre is ever thinking about the way an oak tree sheds itself every year, how it reconstructs itself over and over again, anew once more. I wonder if Dre minds that I'm not referring to him with his correct title, Dr. Dre. I suppose he must have considered oak trees at some point, and if not the oak tree, some other tree. Perhaps in his childhood garden, or yard (as they call it in America) he had a tree of his own, perhaps he used to go there and write rap music, or poetry, or whatever you want to call it.



Now he's probably lying about in a pink flamingo pool float in his super yard. He's got to have a super yard at least, a man with headphones that aren't Apple headphones being sold in the Apple store has got to have some kind of pool, or at least a pool float. Perhaps Dre takes his pool float to a quiet beach at seven pm when nearly everyone has packed up and decided to go home because it's not cold but it's not as hot as it was in the sun. Perhaps he puts his feet into the sea, feels the cold saltiness around his toes, pool float tucked under his arm. And then he wades out. Sort of slow because he's looking at the sky and the way that the blue turns into something else, kind of orange but maybe something more important than that. He gets all the way, nearly up to the tops of his thighs. As the water touches his balls he leans onto his tiptoes a bit but then he slowly accepts the cold. It is at this point that he decides to climb onto the float. He's not too far out. He doesn't want to go too far out either because he wants to lie in the quiet bit of the sea and maybe there are some kids playing in a faraway part of the beach and maybe someone is swimming somewhere in the ocean nearby but Dre is in the silver-blue orange and it is calm and he closes his eyes and feels his chest move up and feels his chest move down and it's almost enough to make Dre let go of three thousand six hundred pounds of leaves, almost.



# MOST ELEGANT

Words by R.P. Singletary

Triggers and please do not delete; this is the pull of strengthly recollect, perhaps a most-important > > > sex, gender, stereotypes,

- >>>high school trauma of team sport?
- >>>(chosen last? A Good book sayeth: thou shalt be 1st), etc., etc.

SOME GRAVITY OF NO MATTER unMANLY, but not the words his noggin bore: To sleep on *widearsewake* them drained eyes poured out this old man me, years ago that chil'...chill turn a season autumn sport me!, me ageless in my Bauhaus building *cccrumbling*, and I saw a most elegant — you see where this is headed — visitor at the call box, fiddling with the thing, out on the lush-side entrance. Leaves of peach trees and swamp pine needles glued to the sticky black pumps as though a rus-rusty-rusted nail hanging in some boarded-up old corner store of consequence miles away, the same force fast gathering commerce, paid and unpaid, the nature like invoices dancing a fit to better count or strike out the wishful doldrums cleaving, striking. *Tap, tap, tap*. Nailed upon some cross. A debt, the time. She either had the name or number wrong or the digit off by one or more, or someone did not want to be disturbed or was fast realizing, this not what he, she, they done ordered online, earlier in the haze of hour of horniness well before a coffee at dawn. (I confess, my own shipments strange, not that I find this creature odd, good God man, I'd tried every model in someone else's borrowed book, and generally sized them up as same did me, a good-time house always in my place residing before I left the city for better or worse.)

Upon closer examination, I noticed it was indeed a man at least back then we called them such. Forgive my antiquated ways, I apologize, I have little judgment outside a Church that wouldn't expel me, never did, and that long gone with the fleet of hair products, combs, and stamina of this former self. I needed my wants met in more-lasting ways to linger long, quitting quilting when my fingers hurt! It took me longer, with or without any color of pill. That nether region.

The door buzzed untimely, the clock pulled, no thanks to me, and I walked back to the pharmacy. "The second 'script not ready 'til 8, don't come back, sir, not meanin' to be rude, but you wastin' your time, were I to say any different, not 'til ten minutes after we open up, for your own sake, thank you sir," the sweet words from the young boy in training, nervous, thinking I so old on yesterday's evening. I turned back. The boulevard a-bustle. Had she left, or been let in? I was always curious which of my neighbors was paying on days when I'd run out. My ex-, the most recent one, a French woman of



sturdy stock, elegant in her way, satin nylons, I had called them that, but met with riotous chuckles; I sat up in the bed that day. “Either one or the other,” she chortled in between sips of more wine, the most expensive in the shop from three blocks over. “Satin. Or. Nylons.” I rolled over. She fingered my torso; it jumped in delight. “Panty’ouse, you call them.” Now the laugh from out of my face, into the pillows, feathers in the air, I grabbed her wrists so I would not fall out the bed. “Panty-hose,” I said. She freed, slapping me in the nose, which hurt. “We have trouble with our h’s, us Frenchies,” she said. “But not with fashion, take your pick.” “I prefer you without,” and the rest of the morning fell into the rest of the day and week, orders-in but of food alone ‘til Sunday and weeks later, we’d almost married, but she needed to return to Europe, something about funds or fun, I could never fully understand her English accent in or out of the sheets with me or others along for the ride. We had great fun, two or more. In table, at bed, out and about the city, I thought we’d stay together at least another six weeks.

I passed the aisle with panty’ouse, manmade, handmade? For women. Panty-hose in a sidekick display. Next to green garden hoses too lengthy for a city waterin’. In a pharmacy? Next to condoms appropriately by the endcap unit, four levels, three carousels, spin spin ‘round ‘round she goes where she stops....

The man. The woman. The person. Drag, trans, transaction assumed. Shame on me. *Who my diddy now?* The way, well, I’m a man of a certain age myself. “We see ourselves in other people,” a wise woman long ago knocked into my noggin. “Don’t you understand? What bothers us the most? Intrigues us the most? It’s a click. Why do you think cliques exist? The sheep baah-baah-blacksheeping all the way back to pasture?” I told her I never thought of it that way. You should, she said, you should be ashamed.

As I eased home from the pharmacy, my hands overflowing with blessings of largesse and gimme greed as though amid a pandemic or yet another cold-come-to-stay, the South sore man out and region prone to store-runs galore, on TP bread and milk, when temps tip tiny below 50F. Elbows and neck full of paper bag from druggist, prophylactics legal. Of plastic bag, “double-double, please double, I bought too much, I’m sorry for trouble, I usually bring my own canvas carrier, *ecce ecce*: eco! eco!” (of my own echo, but a lie to a new sales clerk, who based on the store’s routine, I knew what they paid by the hour, soon to be gone with the wind of winter),

before I added, “next time, next time, tallyho.” The double needed trebling, sad sacks sagging. I bent over and almost felt ground. The rush of post-holiday traffic, everyone mad Santa up and gone and the cold come back to stay. “That’s what y’all get for fake celebratin’ Christmas ‘fore Hallowe’en, summer’s gone! I’d be depressed too,” but I didn’t shout it or even mumble. No foolin’, no word to the culturally illiterate.

“Oh, excuse me ma’am, excuse me, ma’am,” I said, back erect prompting bags to tumble in the street. A car fled, gone with one of the cheapest concerns of my life. I shrugged. The lady too. Big-shouldered a heave, waving off the robbers with a whiff of Chanel, “better luck next time, the kids these days, are you OK, sir?” Her long arms led to longer fingers, red red red to match my blood all-American. “I’m fine, I’m ‘fraid of bein’ punctured after a cat-fight squabble in the New Orleans of my youth. Everybody downthere want some of this.” She saw me, the distance I kept from her pointy shards of red paint. “Too much whiskey on Bourbon Street,” we said together.

“Nice to know, *Russ*, a gentleman left in the big, bad city,” the rough-hawed voice reminiscent of high-school football, the one-syllable go-to endearment an always. I swear I could’ve heard it carrying a flea-kicker foul. A fair catch kick? Tall and lean, a curve or two up or down, the long stride of straddle, wobbling in heels too high and needing athletic boy cleats to catch and grind the grime upon the street awash in latest filth of smeary newsprint, doughnut wrapped chocolaty, condoms. I knew those big feet.

“At least we know they usin’ ‘em!” she said, wide mouthed and glossy lipped. “Me? I take my own precautions.” She rattled a pill box from her handbag. I jerked up my pharmacy plastic. She pulled my arm, torso, legs, then feet around the baby-saver in the streetly roux.

“Thank you, ma’am.” I saw close up the shadow. It still morning, so I mean on her face.

“I’m not a natural,” she began, “*blonde*.” Impressing me with her enunciation. Hard d on the end. She proud of being a female, knowin’ her feminine fixes, blonds are men, and now not she

The protective cup removed, its compression short and supportive, her pillowed haunches tamed bumping into my own narrowing hips. Coach could call her name as his

\* [Note: football here refers to the U.S. American pastime.]



“I remember you,”

“Oh, Rusty!

She clutched her pearls, nape vacant, vapid illusion of silly dumb play.  
She gripped my forearm, sweet somethin’s across my pinna, deep tongue  
throbbing the temporal bone...of my left ear, left. I winked instinctive. “I  
always wanted you.” Right eye, right. Long the make short. Mate too. Life.

...your secret or mine, kind sir?” met with my own “your place or mine.”

I patted her arm, comforting her fingers, avoiding them fierce nails.  
She towered over my 5’10”, the height of shoes rendering our duo’s duenna  
an oddity among the rest of us freaks drawn to the South’s gloryholeland in  
a newer (old) world (colonized) wanting to ban, book, tame, talk, and debar  
downtrodden. All illicit illegals. Alien to some constitution.

Furtively, she passed me her purse, the size of a ripe pigskin  
pumpkin. It slid right in. And felt so good, the memory muscle. “Run for the  
win.” Jocular said. The goal afield, cast not out— I did not know where I was,  
in church or youth, Heaven!

“I knew the first I saw you at the box,” her brows furrowed, “temptin’  
the door with your goodies,” her lips smiled wet, “but that gait, that gait, the  
wide hips luscious

“I had forgotten that.” She, as a he, back then couldn’t fit in our  
regulars of padding athletic, too broad the pounding received many of a  
Carolina chick from that gamecock groin straight.

“*Wide hips luscious*, how you been

All business but between old friends (minus the red Raider jerseys, paired  
jocks socks soiled put-aways sweaty), she took back her pocketbook, opened  
counted closed, and while we drove on-on-foot dove through dog sh\*t the  
next block on, we occasionally halted

“Rusty! Rusty!” calling me like times before “coach? my Daddy late...

“These bunions, Rus? Rus? you wouldn’t believe how these pricey  
shoes the men love as she exchanged black leather for soft canvas, **left**

“The corns on the right— near busted  
**right**, careening, me stabilizing; as many years back to seal a verdant deal  
*come august?*

“not out of any field and into boiling pot the cobs of May, but ready  
to be shucked, guffaw...

the season. Who?

Us all in time

*IN THE NAME*

in the name of,  
why

a most-elegant  
sport  
uniting.

*Finally*

(“All things of utmost [the word or two here slurred\*\*\*]

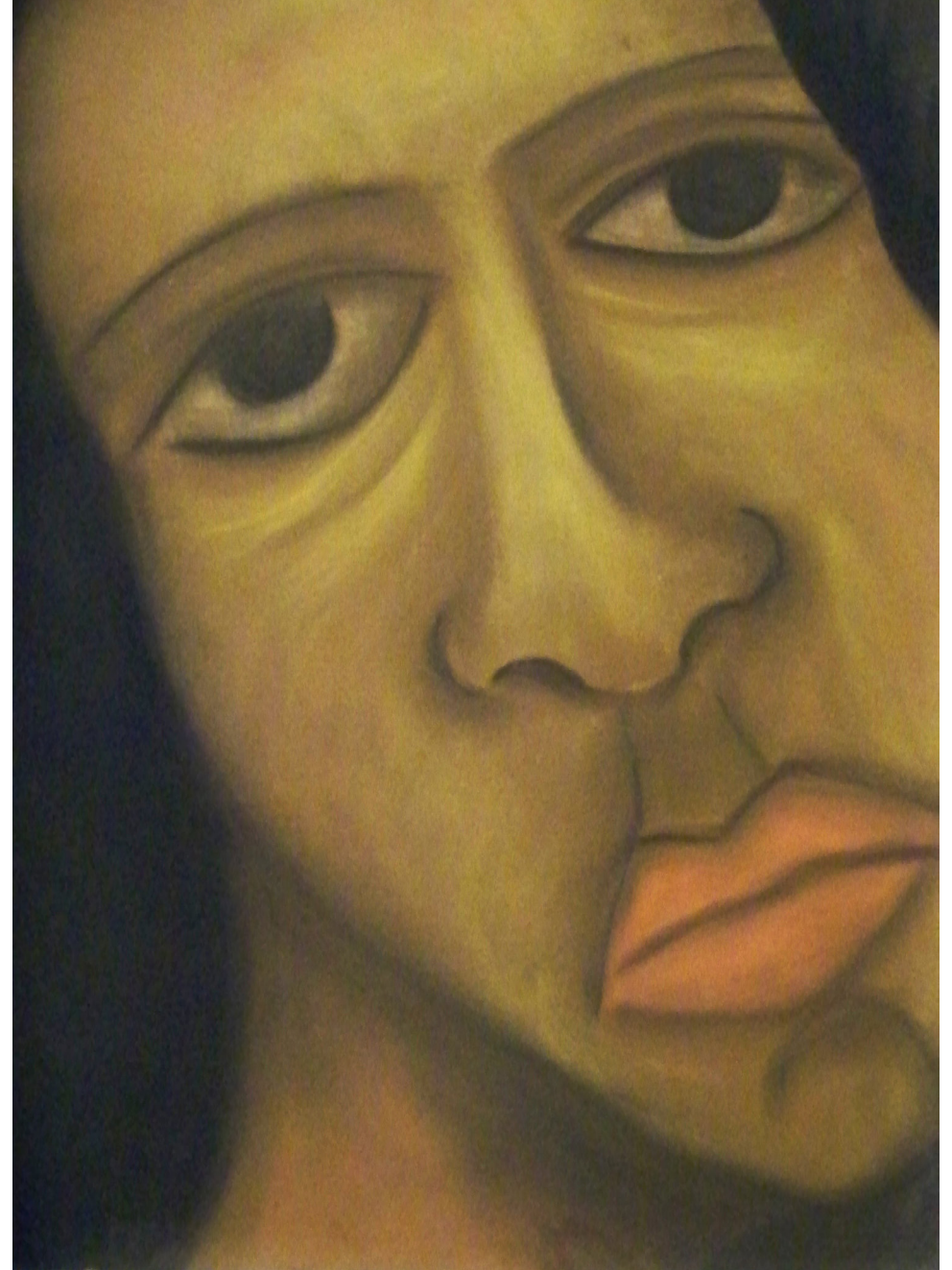
fall into place,” she said. “Ultimately, regardless of our team.”

“Or quarter,” a second-stringer shoved in.

A ragged—)

\*\*\*from nerves or  
pharmaceutical, streetwise?

# the end



↑ **Melancholia**  
*by* **Ana Pedrera**









The motif of *now* is all of my *before-s*

← Echolalia *by* Megan Powell

Words from 'Under' by Tomi Adegbayibi





THE LONGING REBORE ITSELF  
AS A NUCLEAR URGENCY—SO POTENT  
IT BORDERED ON THE VIOLENT—  
SHAKING MY SOUL BY THE SHOULDERS  
ANY ILLUSION OF CHOICE OBLITERATED  
FOR BETTER AND FOR GOOD—  
NO QUESTIONS ASKED  
I RESOLVED TO LET IT POWER MY LIFE  
VANDAL VIOLENT VITALITY  
I'M ON AUTOPILOT I'M JUST ALONG  
FOR THE RIDE—  
IT IS A FLOWERING OF MY FATE  
A REFRAIN IN MY CHEST SCREAMING

NOW NOW NOW

[poem] by Carys Maloney



*Now, the soothsayer folds  
dots the dead's i's.*

now the sound was  
receding

NOW





# *Soothsayer*

[poem] *by* **Heather Chapman**

←↑ **Shetland Tangwick** *by* **Mingyue Liu**





*After Sinéad Morrissey's 'Post Mortem'*

We found his body the day of the eclipse.  
The soothsayer called this uncharted:  
the body's missing front tooth was prophetic. His knife  
made a horizon line between the ribs, impastoed  
the violet lungs, their bouquets of alveoli. Handling  
the spools of throat, the soothsayer found nostalgia —

a hush of lemongrass or humming luminosity.  
The specimen of a verb clung to his lower lip  
like lichen. The pearled knuckles on his offhand  
foreshadowed plague: devastating and cathartic,  
all the birds bulleted out the air. The mosquito  
bite at his cheek — a rabid red sky; his eyelashes,

a cluster of wishes. The indigo mist at his irises,  
spreading under the scalpel — an easy diagnosis  
for colour-blindness. We'd never known something so total.  
So the departed didn't see the bloodshot dawn, the cowslips  
crackling blond. The toothy red, fine and hearty.  
He was autocratic: his heart had a handmade

quality, the sprint of veins down his arm freehanded.  
We hummed. Didn't say he plucked out my 'I' —  
didn't reveal our shared symptoms (our heartbeats'  
mechanical clutches and gasps; our breath, unknowingly  
synched). Nothing was close enough. A slip  
of skin between brooding muscles kept heart's manifesto

strictly single-sense. I wanted his autograph  
of veins, indigo and sweet, first hand.  
His features lulled out of joint, a landslip  
at his jaw. His temper thorned and oxidising,  
his crystallised voice, his broken nose.  
I could've turned relic-maker and kept his calcified heart

under my bed, his name on my charter  
of caught saints. Could carve out the hag stone,  
whistling its thin note — a postmortem hypnosis.  
His kindness static and rattling in my hands.  
He says summer will come late, the tulips

rotting underground. Later, I cross the toadstool  
ring, time slippery as a nosebleed. The iris-white fields  
he'd handsewn stand heartsick, so absent of omen.





## *Zodiac*

[poem] *by* **Gabriel Dunsmith**

In the morning sky  
Mars smoulders. Somewhere unseen,  
a shrew scurries home.



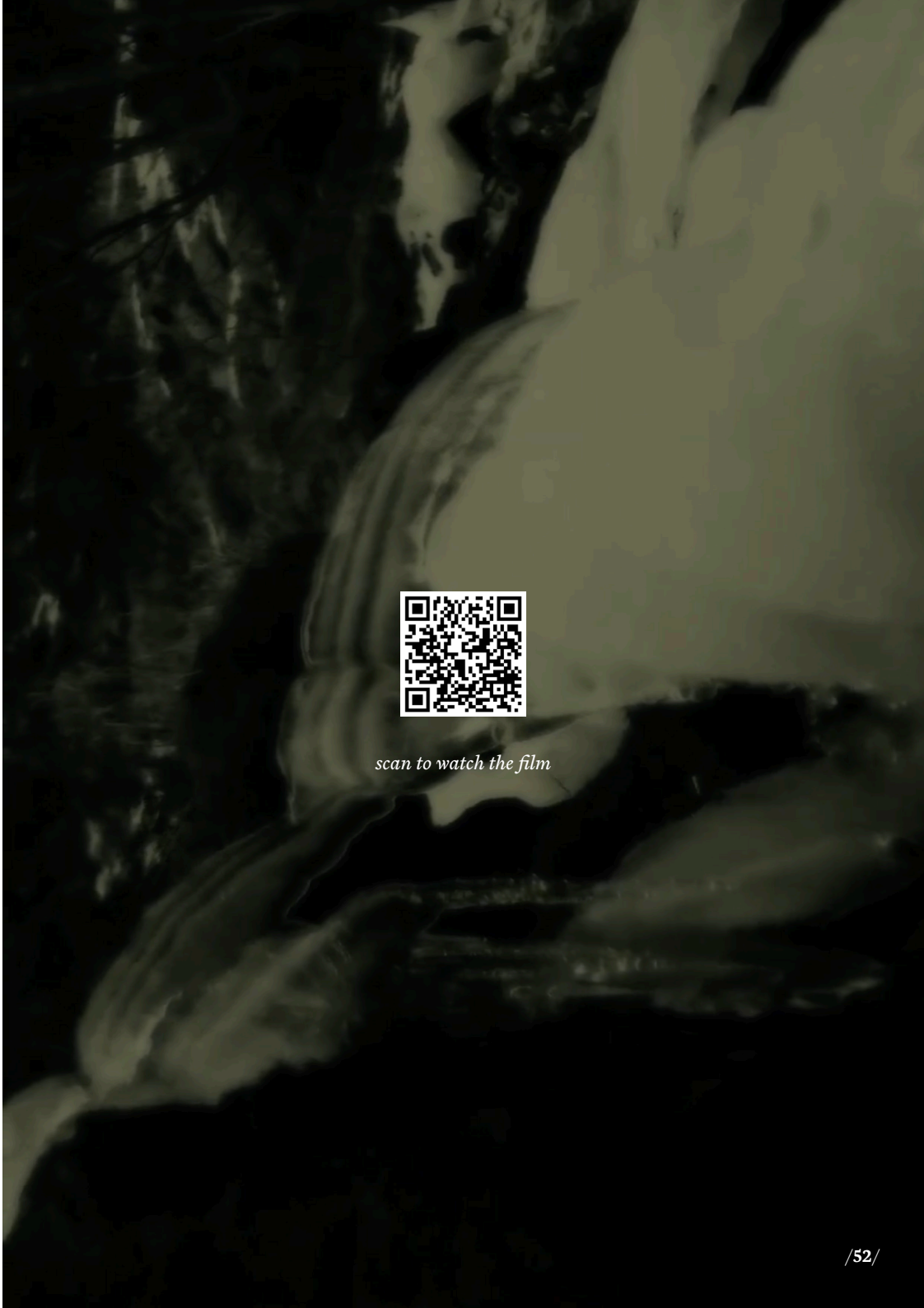


**Daria Gnatchenko**

*A film by*

The movie “Vampalaš” is based on the Nart epic, the cultural heritage of the peoples of the North Caucasus. The video essay reflects the condition observed during an expedition to Ingushetia, where the past and Nart tales are fading into oblivion.

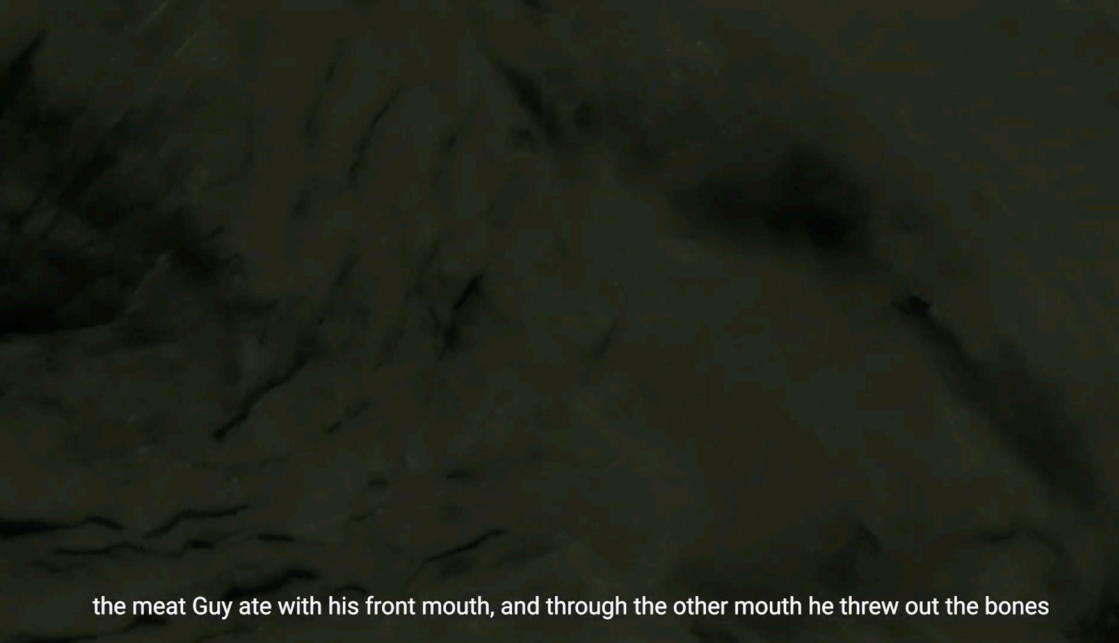
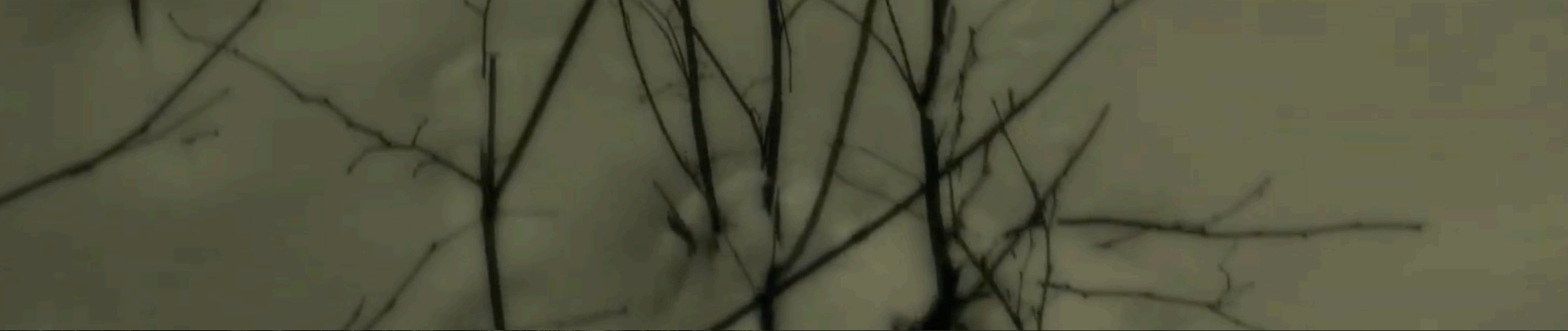
# VAMPALAS



*scan to watch the film*







the meat Guy ate with his front mouth, and through the other mouth he threw out the bones







*M O T O R W Δ Y*  
*T R I G O N O M Σ T R Y*

[poem] by **Peter J. King**







↑ leaving the peak where it is by Charlotte Eta Mumm

I'm aquaplaning on the M11  
 forty-five degrees — and I'm the hard hypotenuse  
 of an uncontrolled right triangle  
 my panic  
 sums the squares  
 of two imaginary sides

I'm a whimpering Pythagoras  
 sent skimming down the carriageway  
 other drivers  
 gaping horror  
 glimpsed through sheets  
 of muddy spray  
 the brakes and steering  
 make no difference  
 to my frantic glide past Junction ten

I'm fine as long as everything  
 continues straight  
 but here's a curve come into sight  
 and I foresee  
 a nasty change  
 to my car's  $\frac{1}{2}(bh)^*$

*\*half times (breadth times height)*

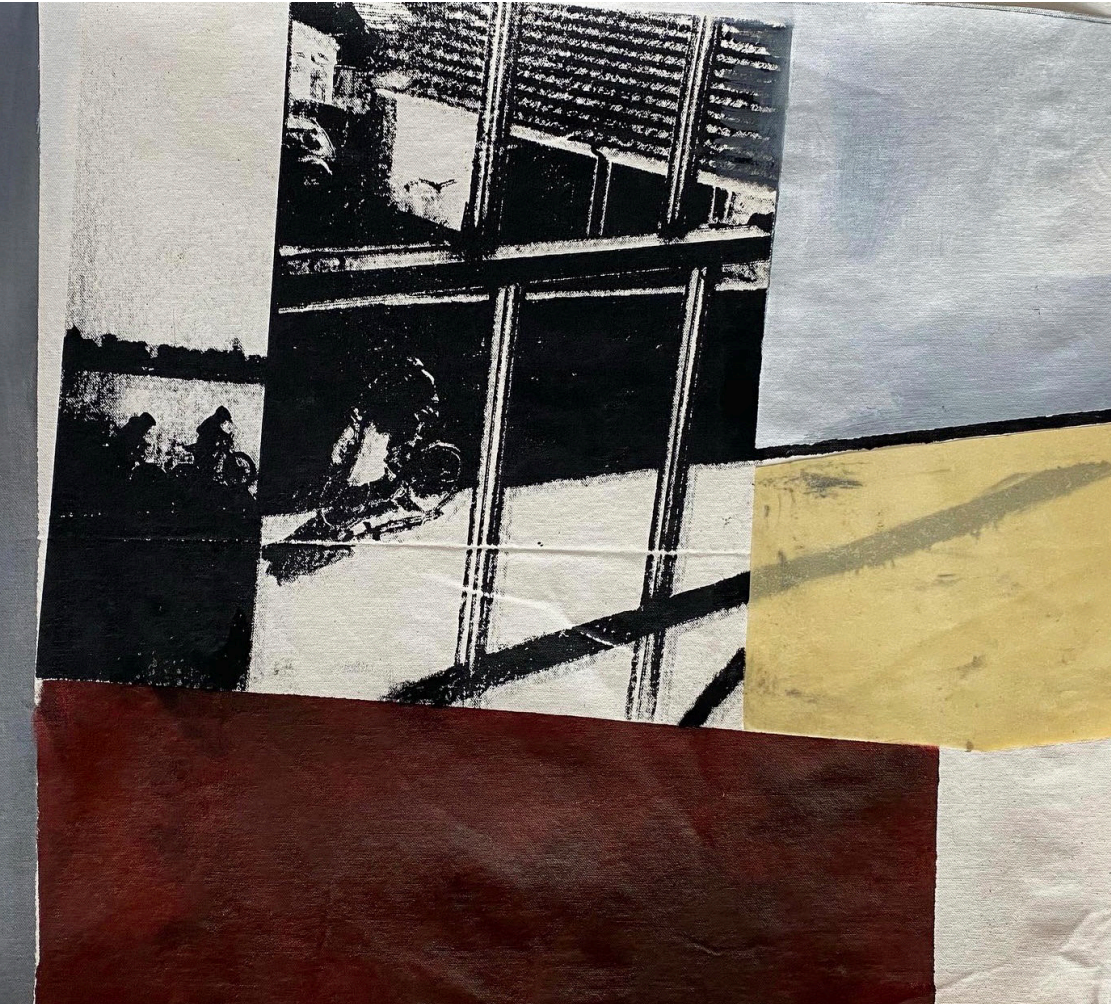


## *Pebbledash*

Once when I was seven I ran head-first into a pebbledash wall and split a seam in the tender spot below my temple. I didn't even catch the fucker I was chasing either. I picked myself up like a toy pretending to be lifeless, my palm was already instinctively pressed against my ruptured skull before I even knew I was bleeding. The yard had been full of noise, a pandemonium of children, but now the sound was receding, everyone was staring like something stark and sinister had dropped from the clouds and was perched upon my head, a deathly bird come to claim the tax of a child's life pruned accidentally. The sort of thing that's concluded as a tragic affair, but there I was clueless walking in the general direction of someone I could look up to for help. The face of each boy I passed was stretched into hyperbole. *Why are you staring at me?*

Teacher spotted round the bend of a steep corner, face as pale as paleness goes, and my hand was getting warm, and I didn't know why, and I lifted my hand from my face, slippery as fuck, and the noise suddenly unmuted, and it was me doing the screaming, and my hand was painted the type of red that makes you light-headed, and the teacher was running towards me saying words we weren't allowed to say, but it actually turned out to be something that looked worse than it was.

[poem] by **Daragh Fleming**



↑ **Terribilita** by **Ella du Gay**







Burning air runs wet,  
 Foxes forget warm  
 basements they once ran  
 to, seasonal changes  
 demand you adjust  
 the heating, but the radiator  
 won't reach your cold, dry  
 liver. That needs hot cider  
 through the lines to drive  
 out the shiver, preparation  
 for self-improvement  
 masks the hardwood floor  
 like litter, philosophy  
 and art history books,  
 Spines still in unread  
 condition. There are only  
 so many times you  
 can masturbate, laid  
 On this literary slag heap  
 before your left hand  
 becomes bitter, and some  
 Perverted form of  
 Arthritis sets in.  
 Carpel tunnel syndrome,  
 Amazon wrist splint.  
 Can't foot the bill because  
 you've spent the remnants  
 of your rent, paying back  
 British Gas for your  
 indulgent 24-degree past.  
 Summering in December,  
 Morning laps of hot baths.  
 The walls are more porous  
 this time of year, commuters  
 glance through drafty glory holes  
 as I sleep morning into aft,  
 Pry myself from an electric

blanket made of glass,  
 Put my ass to the mirror,  
 pull the shards out my back,  
 Sunlight, not so yellow,  
 more a harsh, revealing white,  
 Domesticated house cat  
 marred my heels with bloody bites,  
 I stretch the tearing tendons  
 on a Christmas yoga mat,  
 Puppy pose and the leather  
 paddle sticking out  
 of my wardrobe remind me  
 Of unhealthy sex once had.  
 My coffee machine sits  
 unused, the 'on' light winks,  
 I'm out of the pods  
 that came with the box,  
 My pallid face stares  
 back from the sink.

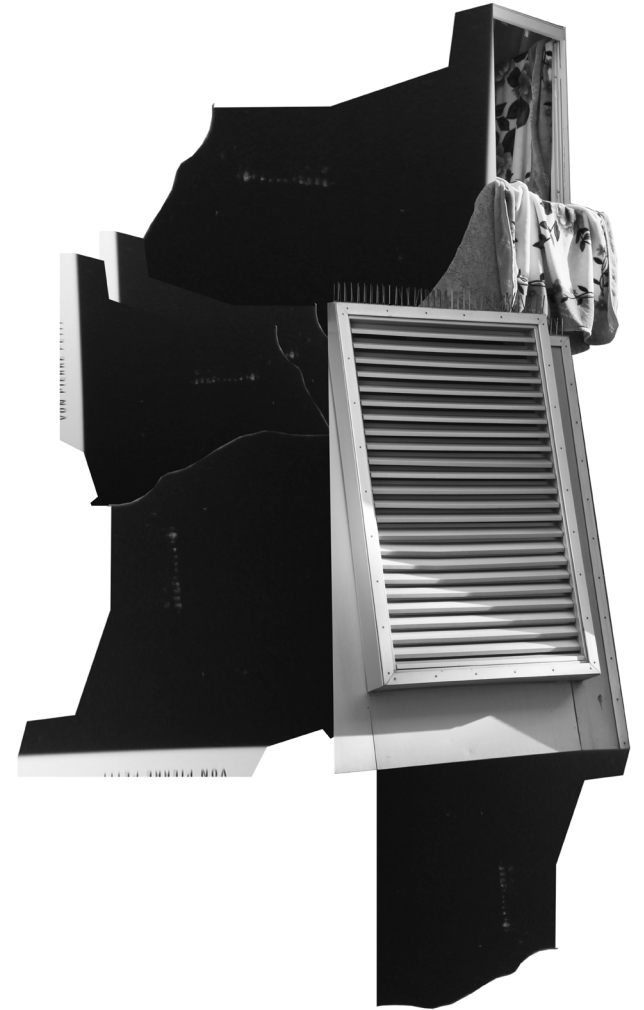


# *Reader, I'm back*

and I'm obsessed.  
I've got a new  
word I need to  
put in a poem:  
'Anfractuous.'  
The night outside  
is fatter than it is  
in here and the  
arms on the guy  
serving us is  
really the pinnacle  
of this fat night  
and as I force this  
basket of a poem to  
gradually acquire  
weight I really  
have a longing  
for New York  
when the rain only  
came to clean when  
I had some deference  
for loneliness  
and I was kind of  
formidable pretending  
to be doing lines  
when showing  
forgiveness for  
erasing my accent  
was easier and I

just had so  
many friendships  
to destroy  
so many fantasies  
to parachute  
so much Goethe  
to shit on and  
porn, so much porn  
to join on its quick  
slip into despair  
MY GOD the torture,  
the essays, the  
sickness, the  
oven, the blue snow  
and my thigh in your  
hand which thawed  
anfractuous  
in a single night.

[poem] by **Penelope Ioannou**







Time is turning slowly. It is a cat. & I have no food to give it. The world inside my liver tilts too far left on its axis. I build a wall to hold it in place. Spread Bougainvillea trellises across its bricks to hide the shame of my body's falling; use the wax from its flowers to feed the cat. It screams. I open my eyes for my retina to swallow the dark. My cat is striated moonlight. The prelude to my lungs is my spleen wrapped in fur. The motif of *now* is all of my *before* — s. The melody of *here* is a wine glass singing to a thorn bush. It sings incessant — rubs its voice on the upper far left side of my abdomen. The cat purrs — does not turn.

I taste my living in my mouth, I wish to peel it from my tongue.

[poem] *by* **Tomi Adegbayibi**

Under



The specimen of *a verb* clung to his lower lip

We'd never known something so total

so absent of omen

*of* *a* *verb*

*so* *total* *a*

*verb* *so*

Languages  
like ours  
were built  
on thirst.

*absent* *a* *verb*

*so* *total* *so*

*absent* *of* *omen*





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← **Dizzy Dancers Blooming**  
from **D.raw Journal** by **Carla Parcianello**

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