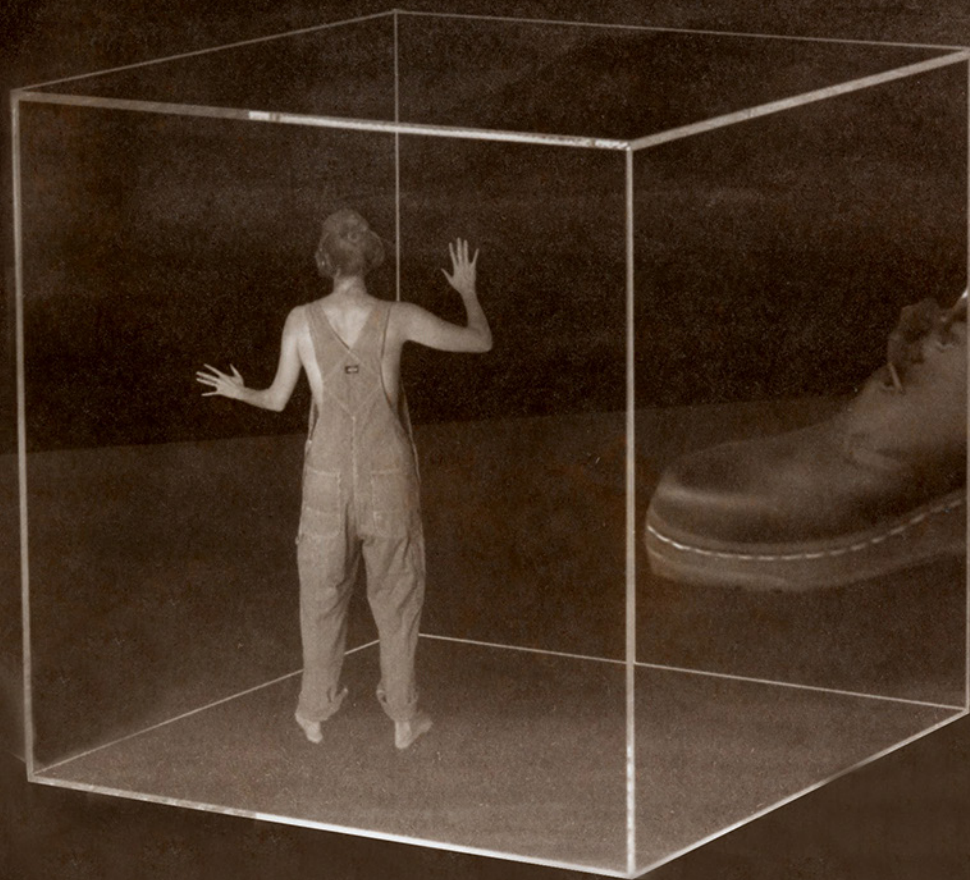


DEFUNKT MAGAZINE



VOLUME III



MARCH 12, 2020



TRACK 1: GOING INSIDE
SUZANNE KOETT

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CARNIVAL OF INSPIRATION

CHRISTINA MARSHALL

SNAG

JIM MEIROSE

If, class, something has been started at a definite time, and moves to in-progress status, can it be said to be in-progress if the thing that was started will continue forever never and, ah, huck-huck-huck—be totally infinite? Is that term proper? Or is it only if the activity is finite or, put a little differently—and this being put so at risk of having no one like me for saying it—is a different term more proper? Is it improper to term it in-progress when there exists nothing to be progressed toward? And, if so, what should that more appropriate term be? I bet you don't know do you? I bet you don't know. River on fire, eh, crap, and pap!

Snag.

Of the simple or.

Snag.

Mr. Gerdulon knocked off the cruise control, and slid down through the bellyhole of that particular altitude of his bomber, and in the newly clean air he thought back to his Ford's radio which was off that not he wanted back on so pressed out without looking and—after yelling to his mom three parking lots up and over, Hey, I got one! I got one! I got—out the dash grille came—that the last tourist one who goes for the twelfth final challenge you will this very day—and at this knowing he he was in was in the middle the middle of a show in of. Snag. Of the simple or. Snag. Okay sir, do you agree to all that? Snag. In the he was in middle of a the middle of show in a show in progress, and he thought—progress—why is it why why when dropping in the middle of the familiar but in progress. Snag. Every rebellious over-complicator of the simple or. Sna. When dropped that way totally nothing makes sense. Sn. When was the last time totally nothing made sense this way and when was the last time something so frightening as nothing making sense in this particular way experienced? S. Has he dozed and just woken from a doze he hadn't noticed? -Gans. Why is this place time and smell completely differently terrifying than any previously experienced terror?

Root out and butcher every rebellious over-complicator of the simple snag or.

Root out and butcher every rebellious snag over-complicator snag of.

Root out snag and snag butcher snag every.

Snag root snag out snag and.

Snag or.

Snag.

Nag.

Ag.

G.



FADING LIGHT
ANN PRIVATEER

ON THE OTHER SIDE

GOODNESS OLANREWAJU AYOOLA

of smile /is frothy spontaneity / is trepidation caught up in a façade / is dead wood
 termite-infested covered in bogus upholstery / is thinking the blood in the mouth
 is red carpet /
 or / red wine gulped from euphoria /
 i unleash crocodiles' grins from the side of my mouth when in front of foreigners
 i wear smiling democracy / smile tastes like a supplanter / what is
 beyond tears /is smiled out loud when *iyaalaro* would go mad / she smiled first
 at the news of her son's demise / smile /is liar / is lair slaying the mighty
 on the altars of eve inns / smile /is maleficent / has politics ever cried?
 i am a traveler looking out of a green cab/ *lafenwa is lonely with a name / from pale dust*
the monumental smile of MKO Abiola 's bust is imagination / smile / is never monumental



LAMIA

ALLIE WATSON ANDREWS

LA NOCHE

RONY ORTIZ

Nos envuelve la noche entonces
En sus misterios y revelaciones.

Me revela que no estas conmigo
Y todavía te extraño.
Me revela que tu cuerpo
Sigue siendo un misterio.
Que a pesar de los años,
Te quiero
Aunque sea un poco.

Cada astro tiene su historia,
¿Y donde se encuentra lo nuestro?
¿Estará en las estrellas o estará en mi mente?

¿Cómo lo plasmo?
¿Bastará con papel y letras?
¿Te escribo cartas?

Desde un rincón,
Mi alma te llama.
Tal vez no la escuches,
Tal vez no la oigas.

Pero tal vez te escriba,
Para que entiendas,
Que del otro lado,
En el callejón más oscuro,
Ahí estoy.

Esperando quererte



TRACK 5: AWAY & ANYWHERE
SUZANNE KOETT

FUTURE FLOODS OF HOUSTON

SEAN MORRISSEY CARROLL

Excerpt from Climate Science 1203 required text Texas Climate in the 21st Century, Chapter 2

No one really knows why floods in Houston tend to fall on holidays, although the lack of a day of the calendar year that does not have an obscure holiday attributed to it doesn't help. However it does lend a simple co-dex to the numerous floods that have befallen the city and is therefore not considered a bad thing by many.

Inauguration Day Flood 2021

Three days of constant rainfall resulting in topped levees and bayous

The Inauguration Day Flood is most often remembered for the viral videos it spawned of a Houston preacher giving a fiery sermon declaring that the flood was the result of America turning away from "God's chosen path." The original, translations, clips and remixes were viewed more than seven billion times in the week after it was uploaded. This video detracts from the real consequences of the storm, which set the tone for a decade of mismanagement of resources before the Flood Control Act of 2029.

In late January, a low pressure system coming off the Gulf of Mexico was anticipated to pass through Houston and dissipate as it made its way north, but it stalled as it reached Galveston and slowed. The storm took two days to cross the metro area, slowed by a blocking high pressure system to the north as a cold front held steady from Sealy to Brenham. West side reservoirs took on a manageable amount of water. In south Houston, rain poured down in sheets from Dickinson to Sunnyside. Rivers and bayous swelled with upstream water.

By day two the low pressure and cold front had merged and torrential rain began over west Houston and Katy, dumping three inches per hour over a nine hour period. The Addicks and Barker reservoirs backed up, flooding homes that hadn't seen problems since Hurricane Harvey. A court injunction from the year previous meant that downstream private property could not be flooded by any reservoir in Houston. Unable to

vent the reservoirs to relieve the pressure, the Army Corps of Engineers gave dire warnings of the structural integrity of the levees.

The third day of flooding was the most incredible. With only a light rain, about an inch per hour overnight and all the next day, the weakened front from the northwest and the stronger Gulf low hung over the city. As officials began to assess the damage in West Houston, strong storms developed in southwest Houston, and Clear Creek and Sims Bayou burst their banks. The hundred year flood plain was engulfed in an hour and by noon the flooding had tripled in size and submerged two thousand homes. City officials were caught unaware, all their resources deployed to aid three hundred homes behind the Barker and Addicks Reservoirs on the other side of the city.

Brays Bayou in Bellaire was the next to overflow. The deployment of emergency vehicles became ensnared in the rising waters as they threatened the 610 Loop and submerged portions of highway 59 on the southwest side.

The political fallout was bad—the moral outrage was blistering. Outgoing President Trump retweeted a sermon by a little-known preacher, adding THATS WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOURE DON'T FOLLOW THE CHOSEN ONE. Federal investigations were opened into the lack of planning after Hurricane Harvey. News interviews and Youtube videos showed tearful victims, all insistent that city and county administration failed them.

May Day Flood 2023

In eight hours, 32 inches of rain fell across the Northwest side

April 2023 had been excessively hot, with temperatures reaching one hundred degrees five days over the month. The forecast for the night of April 30th was for a forty percent chance of rain; the city went to sleep without an inkling of what was about to happen. Scattered thunderstorms formed rapidly north of Katy in the former prairie now dominated by development along the Grand Parkway.

Starting at 3 am, pockets of flooding developed and streets became rivers. Meanwhile, other parts

of Houston were completely dry. By morning, new developments and construction sites along the Grand Parkway were submerged in seven feet of water. The thin topsoil held little groundwater and drainage was hindered and damaged by construction debris and silt that had built up over the previous years of feverish building.

Over ten thousand homes were damaged, most of them built less than two years ago. In the aftermath many unsold homes were bulldozed owing to builder bankruptcies, exacerbating a recession that had already seen mortgage foreclosures skyrocket and unemployment in the Houston area hit seven percent.

The state of Texas refused to declare a state of emergency even though over twenty thousand people lost homes and apartments. The state 'Rainy Day' Fund was renamed the 'Freedom' Fund the week after the May Day Flood, to keep people from thinking it would ever be used on account of flooding.

New Year's Day Flood 2023-4

Two days of rainfall leads to flooding of Baytown, Clear Lake and Galveston

The middle of winter is not when most people expect devastating flooding but as the Gulf of Mexico rose in temperature every year in the early Twenties that's exactly what happened the last Saturday morning of December 2023. Weakening West to East winds left the Midwest and South in steadily increasing drought throughout 2021-22. During this time most of Southeast Texas' precipitation came off the coast, sparing it drought conditions.

Low pressure systems developed in the western Gulf every week, bringing storms into Texas that occasionally made it as far north as Tennessee. Meteorologists deemed this the new normal, although El Niño conditions would return in just a few short years.

Most of Houston was off work for the holiday weekend as another set of storms blanketed the area in a light rain. Without warning, thunderstorms billowed to life around the Ship Channel. Four thousand lightning strikes were reported before noon, some of them striking power substations and overloading transformers. Twelve inches of rain fell on Baytown in an hour. Fourteen inches of rain flooded Clear Lake and the

NASA compound between one and three in the afternoon. A second storm dumped seven more inches of rain on Baytown in the early afternoon.

Over three thousand homes were flooded; some in the floodplain were completely lost as they rose to cover single story homes near Goose Creek. North at Interstate 10, San Jacinto Mall was used as a gathering place for evacuees until it too was inundated.

The New Year's Day Flood marked the acceleration of city policy to purchase heavily damaged homes and demolish them, although the Baytown area was never a beneficiary of these policies. The legislation shoved through Houston City Council to this effect went on to be used for eminent domain many times, but, marred by corruption and collusion with large landowners and home builders, it was near universally applied to the Westside of Houston. Baytown home owners went about repairing on credit and applying for FEMA reimbursements that covered less than half of their expenses.

Pi Day Flood 2024

In twelve hours, 28 inches of rain fell, flooding from Katy to Downtown

The Pi Day Flood was well-prepared for by city officials with school closings and freeway shutdowns in low lying areas announced well in advance of the event. Residents stayed home and the empty urban playground that resulted was a sort of anti-flood festival in the hours leading up to it. With sunny skies and muggy weather, the morning began with empty streets and hundreds of social media posts of normally bustling streets completely barren of traffic except for, say, a man on a unicycle or seven people dressed as Tyrannosaurs. Reporters and photographers hunkered down in popular spots like Sabine Pass and the Galleria Mall, videoing breathlessly about impending doom while remarking on the post-apocalyptic tension of the moment.

By ten in the morning the rains began, a steady heavy shower brought south by an extended polar vortex that had already swamped parts of Nebraska, Oklahoma and North Texas in flash floods. The sustained violence of the front had surprised meteorologists but the forty degree whiplash of the cold front



NEKROS

ALLIE WATSON ANDREWS

dragged local conditions to their dew point in mere minutes as it raced southward. A sustained high pressure bubble above the warm-as-bathwater Gulf of Mexico slowed the front as it reached Houston. This would be the furthest reach of the polar vortex—with fifty mile per hour winds blasting against the wall of the Gulf before petering out and squeezing east.

Hail the size of golf balls pummeled the north side of the city. The windows of several office buildings in the Woodlands were shattered from top to bottom. Hailstones broke windows all over the city as the rain came down in sheets. Residents taped up windows and in several cases patched holes in their roofs. Over eighty thousand vehicles were totaled after hail shattered windows and water filled cars and trucks, only to be discovered later by their owners.

Flooding began in Humble and Spring with first responders leaping to rescue people from flooded homes while the storm still raged. As the storm crawled south it left pockets of devastation in its path, sparing neighborhoods between massive localized flooding. Flash floods filled streets in less than an hour in Montrose, Acres Homes, Memorial and Kashmere Gardens and by noon entire neighborhoods were under water. In Sugarland multi-million dollar homes in gated communities were damaged beyond repair. In some areas thirty inches of rain fell in a four hour period.

In the aftermath of the storm officials were at a loss. The death toll was small but the property damage was staggering. Hundred year and five hundred year flood maps were thrown out. Geologists and meteorologists were at a loss to explain the rampant destruction. Citizens demanded that their homes and neighborhoods be protected and decried city, state and federal government for failing them. Unfortunately for those who lost homes, businesses and family members in the flood, there was no easy answer to come.

Second 4th of July Flood 2026 Hurricane Joseph comes through twice

The first named hurricane of 2026 didn't even wait for hurricane season. Abby formed in the Gulf of

Mexico off of the Yucatan coast in late April and meandered its way north, gathering strength over extremely warm waters. As it approached the Gulf Coast the city of Houston went into a panic. Millions evacuated, tying up freeways all the way to San Antonio, Austin and Dallas. A state of emergency was declared, and National Guard troops were called in. When Abby turned eastward and dissipated people were still stuck stranded on their evacuation 18 hours later.

Hurricane Abby was pertinent to the story of the Second 4th of July Flood because its lack of impact lulled the city into complacency three months later when Hurricane Joseph formed in the northern Gulf of Mexico. The state could not be bothered to station National Guard troops. The nation was reeling from Hurricane Ignacio making landfall in Miami just the week prior as a category 6 hurricane. A category 2 that was projected to peter out as it made landfall was hardly an emergency that took precedence. City residents didn't even think of evacuating, emotionally numbed by the harrowing, needless evacuation just four months prior.

In the hot, shallow waters of the northern Gulf hurricane Joseph grew to a category 4 storm in just twelve hours. Officials ordered an evacuation for Galveston but residents ignored the call. Storm surges of eight feet began as the hurricane made landfall overnight on Friday before the holiday. Rain began to fall over the city but the typical panic of emptied store shelves and long lines at gas stations never materialized.

The eye of the storm struck at Surfside Beach on the morning of the 4th of July. The Ship Channel was inundated with a storm surge reaching fourteen feet and Bolivar Peninsula was completely underwater. Rain was expected to blanket the area for the next twenty-four hours before Joseph moved on. Unfortunately and completely unexpectedly, the hurricane moved southwest—battering the town of Freeport and setting off explosions at a refinery and a nearby LNG terminal. Over the day the storm did not diminish—and as it wobbled out to sea and back on land steady flooding began to take its toll on communities from Matagorda to Pearland.

During the morning of Sunday, July 5th Hurricane Joseph moved offshore and the city exhaled. It had

never even made it fully ashore. Cleanup began in flooded communities south of Houston and the battle to douse the flames in Freeport was in full swing. By that night, the storm had come back northwest with a vengeance, tearing a swath through Houston with sustained winds of 150 miles per hour. For the next 48 hours the city was a riot of panic. Floodwaters rose. Anyone brave enough to venture out by car was met with high water and zero visibility. More than half the city lost power for more than two days and some areas were still without power three months later.

Hurricane Joseph, more often known as the Second 4th of July Flood, was the only hurricane to make a direct hit on the city in the past three decades. Its destruction was massive, but it paled in comparison to the ravages of successive hurricanes that decimated South Florida and the Carolinas in the years before and after. Just like every time before Houston picked up the pieces and brushed itself off, but the stage was set for a change in philosophy that would be calcified in the next few years.

Crash Day Flood 2027

Stock market crash the same day as a flood in Houston

September 8th is National Iguana Awareness Day but contemporaneous events led to the naming of the flood caused by an unnamed tropical storm to be deemed the Crash Day Flood. The 2027 stock market crash is most often cited as the AI Crash, owing to the overwhelming amount of damage done to global markets due to runaway algorithms timed to the millisecond that brought the world economy to its knees. Energy markets, still in the grip of Big Oil, were hit especially hard since the city of Houston was shut down for the day. Several of the largest companies in fossil fuel production and management went bankrupt in less than twenty-four hours.

There were thirty-six hours of warning for the Crash Day Flood as a strong low pressure system developed just off the coast of Galveston. The island, still at less than half of its population before the Second 4th of July Flood, hunkered down in earnest. Projections of localized flooding with over ten inches of rain would prove to be inadequate as more than thirty one inches of rain were recorded in places as far flung as Copperfield and Texas City.

Homes flooded across Houston as streets became canals in minutes. Weary residents, assured that city improvements had made their neighborhoods less susceptible to flooding, were anguished as water poured into their homes again. Drainage progress was being made by this point but too slowly and in too small a fashion to save most whose homes had been damaged just the year before by Joseph. Emergency services were much improved this time around. Throughout most of the metro area cameras and drones gave authorities opportunities for rapid response. Unmanned vehicles and Lidar-enabled shallow water boats proved themselves invaluable to search and rescue efforts.

Galveston Bay experienced a larger than expected storm surge, cutting off populations from Tiki Island to Jamaica Beach and swamping a wounded oil tanker caught entering the Ship Channel. The VLCC supertanker Porto Seguro had been taking on water as it trudged through the Gulf due to damaged propeller housing. During the storm it buoyed too close to the shoreline and ran aground near Pelican Island, miles off course. Ten thousand gallons of crude leaked in the bay during the storm and in the next two days after before it could be refloated and repaired. All concerned were lucky that the ship was nearly empty, as the Porto Seguro was on its way to fill up with three hundred thousand metric tons of refined petroleum. Such a spill could have decimated the area for hundreds of years.

Admin Day Flood 2029

Twenty four inches of rain falls on Houston after snowmelt in Dallas

The winter and spring of 2029 were the coldest in the past 30 years for the United States. The year was to be the beginning of the trade winds' shift south that would fundamentally alter the North American ecosystem. Although it was temporary, 2029 marked the advent of large scale weather weirding that scientists are still trying to puzzle out.

As a polar flow wound south through the Midwest, Oklahoma and North Texas suffered pummeling snowstorms. For nearly three months from February to April the DFW metro was almost constantly below freezing, stretching infrastructure to the brink of collapse. Dallas would never be the same.

As temperatures rose the thaw brought snowmelt that flooded areas on and off—challenges the DFW metroplex had never experienced. Coupled with a strong mid-April cold front from the west that flooded Waco and Huntsville, the downstream flow swelled southeast Texas’ reservoirs and rivers to above flood stage for more than two weeks. Lake Livingston doubled in volume, decimating the nearby Huntsville State Park and pouring millions of gallons into the San Jacinto river basin. Interstate 10 east of Houston crumbled, blocking travelers and cargo on either side for the week before the Admin Day Flood.

The morning of April 25th began without knowledge of the coming trouble. A sixty percent chance of rain during morning rush hour became a tropical storm in less than an hour and made landfall forty-five minutes after that. South of Galveston, Tropical Depression 1 sat offshore, lashing south Houston all day while gathering strength from the warm Gulf waters.

The storm began to move north at four in the afternoon. Traffic snarled in downtown and throughout the city. The only places spared were the new ‘Autonomous Vehicles Only’ areas on the Westside whose AIs quickly shut down roads. As the first test of such technology and a prohibition on human-driven cars it could only be deemed a rousing success. Contrarily, over a million people were stranded as Autonomous Vehicle services shuttered across the city.

By seven in the evening flood waters broke the banks of Sims Bayou and Clear Creek in the south of the city. Goose Creek and Buffalo Bayou—already past flood stage—exploded into nearby neighborhoods soon after. Over twenty-seven square miles were covered in fast moving water. High water in the bay from weeks of excessive river runoff and an unfortunately timed high tide exacerbated the situation.

As the storm thundered north everyone felt that the worst was over. They were wrong. Lake Houston, near Humble, was already swollen and flooding hundreds of homes due to increased upstream flow. The Army Corps of Engineers made frantic calls that the levees were cracking and a massive amount of water needed to be released before it was too late.

The slow spin of the storm meant that areas were hit repeatedly and intermittently over twenty-four

hours. If any more heavy rain fell in Lake Houston or its tributaries, the dam would collapse. Over fifty thousand acres feet of water would have to be released to stop it and they were running out of time. A flotilla of autonomous vehicles was commandeered from local companies to save the two hundred thousand residents in danger. Idling outside each house across the area, in three hours they evacuated nearly everyone to safety before the deluge crashed through destroying tens of thousands of homes across Sheldon, Channelview and east Baytown.

Great August Flood 2031

On and off flooding for the entire month of August

August 2nd was the last sunny day that Houston would see for a month. In the first week, consistent rainfall from an unnamed tropical storm lashed the coast causing localized flash flooding across Houston and leaving Galveston under water consistently. Thursday, elevated bayous and flash flooding plagued the area with Pearland and Texas City hit especially hard. Silt buildup since the last dredging two years prior, coupled with extensive construction, made waterways shallower than projections expected. Five hundred homes were flooded out and more than a thousand people were evacuated.

A strong front from the northwest moved in on August 11th, stalling just above I-10. Bayous across town including White Oak, Chocolate and Buffalo Bayou went above flood stage—where they would stay until early September. Evacuations across the north side were called but their haphazard fashion left more than a thousand stranded in their homes hemmed in on all sides. George R. Brown Convention Center was set up as a shelter, as it had not been since Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

The rain continued every day, never giving the city a chance to recover. Blocking high pressure to the east kept wet low pressure storms continuously siphoning off of the Gulf of Mexico. Buffalo Bayou remained at flood stage, tearing at the ragged edges of its banks in Memorial Park and River Oaks. Several River Oaks homes were plunged into the roiling brown water, breaking apart and coming to rest along the bend at Allen's Landing. Houston's economy grounded to a halt. People refused to go to work, transformers blew and plunged neighborhoods into darkness repeatedly, Downtown was inaccessible from three sides, food,

medicine and supplies went undelivered.

At this point the city began to experience a collective PTSD that manifested itself in horrid ways. Anxieties grew, leading some to shut themselves in their homes and others to lash out. While dealing with rescues and traffic backups, HPD was also called upon to respond to a riot in Sharpstown. Nearby residents, out of work and full of pent up rage, ransacked stores along Harwin and Hillcroft. A shopping center caught fire, burning to the ground when the crowd would not let fire trucks close enough to fight the blaze.

Over seven thousand suicides were reported in the Houston area in the month of August 2031. Overdoses, handguns and drownings were the majority. Churches and community centers overflowed with displaced persons. Small business owners—bankrupted by disruption in their workflow, loss of product, lack of water and electricity, or looters—fled the city. Several large businesses collapsed as well including Academy Sports, Randall's Food Markets, HostGator and Spec's.

Rain continued throughout the last two weeks of August, both from slow, warm Gulf low pressure systems and fast moving lows from the northwest driven by a blocking high pressure over the Midwest. Flash flooding was pervasive but never in the same areas of the city. One day the Galleria flooded. Another time it was Greenspoint. Baytown, still recovering from the horrific Admin Day flood, was not spared. Galveston spent weeks flooding and drying out again and again. Katy took a particularly hard hit on August 27th—but it was not even the biggest disaster of the day.

August 27th at about 10 am, surveyors sounded the alarm that the America Tower along Allen Parkway was in danger of toppling. They had been working along Buffalo Bayou with boats, underwater drones and scuba gear to assess the state of seventeen buildings that had been partially underwater for more than three weeks. Within the hour, the forty-two story building listed north, underground pilings snapping under the strain. The moment was captured on video by the surveyors, the huge concrete structure landing in the muddy bayou with an epic splashdown.

By September 2nd the clouds cleared and Houston went about rebuilding itself. Many residents talk-

ed openly about leaving but with other areas of the country under economic strain and their own environmental disasters finding somewhere to go was difficult. Over three hundred thousand residents left the city in the ensuing months, many headed to Colorado.

After the “Great August Flood,” the structural realignment of Houston began in earnest. The Flood Control Act of 2029, feebly enforced in the two years prior, was used to crack down hard on both new construction and existing buildings. Eminent domain was used across the city to carve new watersheds into the landscape. Montrose became an emblem for the city’s plight—a ghost town, its residents abandoning their now worthless homes or hunkering down amidst their hollowed out neighborhood.

Homelessness, tropical diseases, addiction and mental illness went through the roof after the Great August Flood. Only now with the benefit of hindsight can we see what went right and wrong in the aftermath of this terrible disaster. In so many fashions Houston is a better city today than it was twenty years ago. Cheaper, faster construction and an ignorance of nature led the city down a path that was unsustainable in the long run. The Greenest City in the World is here to stay.

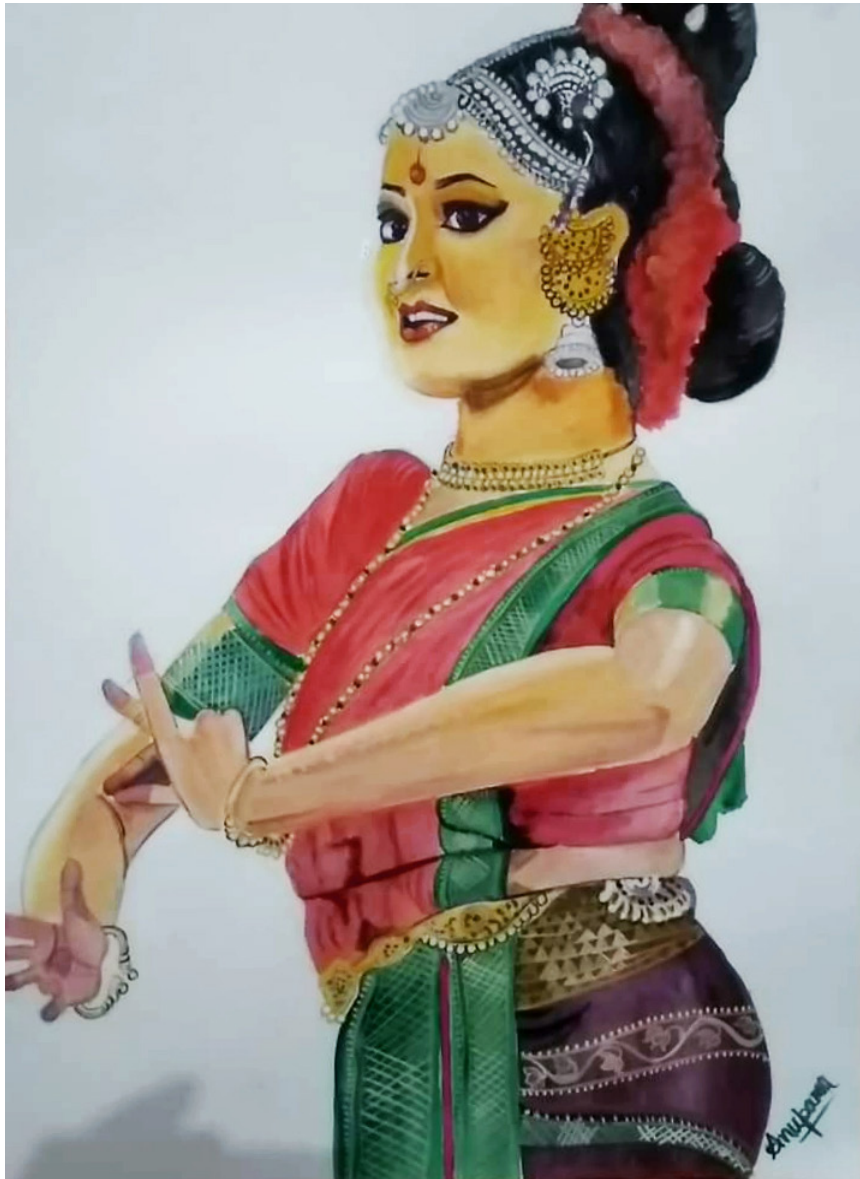


DE CHIRICO'S SLAP IN THE FACE

JJ BAKER

(UNTITLED)
ZOFIA PROVIZER

i switch on the car: radio: my watermelon tongue: my throat online: on fire: drive through
rollerblades: the highway is long and lonely and i can't drive: i play long way down: i hog the
aux cord: no one is listening: i sleep in my dead grandmother's bed: i close the brown shades: i
lay for days in her pink: room: it matches mine: i open and close the closet doors: i hang clothes
up: i play with the pins: i take down the mirror: i cover it with tape: i hear the backyard and i
refuse to look out the window: i don't want to go back: to my bedroom: i don't want to go
home: i sing in the empty room: it is like: a scream: i take pictures of the hardwood floor: in the
parking lot next door i am driving my father's seafoam car: there were ghosts in this house: there
were ghosts in Oklahoma: all of them lived: under dining room tables: all of them sat in the
crystal glasses: all of them clung to the back: of my radiator: none of them lay across the
mountains like: i do: none of them drink sprite: none of them have their own: pink walls



HAPPINESS IS BEING YOU

ANUPAMA MISHRA

MY ALIVE RESPONDS TO THE BULLET [IN EKG]

OMER AHMED

Says,
Look at that.
You were trying to get rid
Of me and
Now

You
Strike my
Rib, like God
Struck Adam's Rib. Can you
Hear it? The
Wedding Bell's
Song?

We,
Merge
At impact.
And I just hope I don't pass
You on to
My next
Child.

I
Hope
No
One
Inherits
This
Wedding
Ring
Of
A
Bullet
Hole.



SUMMER JOY
CHUCK TAYLOR

LIQUID GLASS

WAFA-E-FATIMA

For the second time today, the man at the bus stop offers you his jacket. The first time you said no, because there were only a few droplets of water hitting your head. But now it is pouring. Your jeans are soaked, sticking to your cold legs, and your hair is matted against your forehead. Every now and then, a car barrels down the thin stone spine of a street, covering you and the man in heavy brown water sheets.

You say, "Yeah, I'll take you up on that now."

The man smiles and starts to unzip the jacket.

You haven't looked at him clearly, because before, you were trying to see if your dad's red car would rescue you after all. You've texted your father eight times in the past twenty minutes, but no luck.

You know he's with Vivian.

"Here," says the man.

The jacket feels warm in your cold damp hands. It's dark blue and vinyl, so there's a lot of scratchy noise when you put it on.

The man is wearing a bright pink polo. He shivers when the rain starts hitting his tan arms.

"My wife," he explains, "she wants me to wear more color."

When the man smiles at you, two rivers of wrinkles deeped across his forehead. He has thick square glasses and a close shaved black beard. His head is almost bald, and a black ring of hair, glistening with rain, surrounds his bare scalp like a halo. You can't figure him out. Mexican, Turkish, Italian, Lebanese, you don't know. He could be anyone.

You see the orange glowing numbers, 47, appear through a wall of dark rain. The bus's headlights float through the mist like little ghosts.

When you board the bus, you sit next to the man. You pull your dripping hair to one side so that he can see your neck.

"Any plans for today?" you say with a smile.

While the man talks about his wife and his son, you create lies to potential questions.

If the man asks about your age, you won't tell him that you are 16. You are wearing makeup today, so you'll say 21. The man might give you beer, which you've never tried.

You imagine stumbling up the stairs to the man's apartment. But you've never had sex. You have never even held hands with anyone. All you see are flashes of skin, white sheets, and rain on the man's bedroom window.

The man says, "My wife is actually pregnant with baby number two! We found out yesterday, it's going to be a girl. Any advice?"

The man looks so happy. So content in his pink polo, smiling at his foggy window, at the blue bus seat in front of him, at his wet leather shoes, at you.

You think of a family vacation to Colorado. You were six then, watching snow fall for the first time in the hotel parking lot. Your parents looked pale and rosy cheeked, dark coats peppered with new snow. They let you hit them with small snowballs, laughing, holding each other and feigning fear.

You remember the drive back home. For hours, old Pakistani cassettes screeched out Bollywood songs from the 70's, filling the small sedan with sitar and love as your father drove through hail and your mother sang along with her eyes closed, one hand on your father's thigh.

"Just love your family," you say. "I don't know. Dad's are usually the fucking worst."

The man stops smiling at his shoes and looks at you. You think he'll look pissed off, but he just looks sad.

Blue light from the window makes the man's brown eyes seem glassy. Rain slips from his black halo of hair, past his ear and on to his neck. His lips look purple, and suddenly the man's entire body is turned towards you. You smell mint gum and garlic. The collar of his pink polo is barely an inch from your shoulders, and you can feel the heat from his cheeks on your own. You stare at your hands, waiting for him to move.

The man's phone releases a stream of electronic bells, and the loud sound makes you flinch. The man flinches too. He fumbles for the machine.

"Hello?" he says. The man's voice sounds strangled, as if he's been woken abruptly from a deep sleep. You hear a woman's voice on the phone. She sounds loud and warm and happy.

A smile cracks the man's face and he relaxes. He's sitting normally again, back against the seat. He's not looking at you, but ahead.

Blood pounds in your ears. You sit on your hands. The bus driver is saying something but you can't

hear her clearly. The man is talking to his wife, laughing and whispering. The rain is loud, sounding like marbles spilling onto wooden floors.

The bus stops at some station. The man stands and shuffles past you into the aisle, the back of his legs brushing against your wet knees, leaving two faint patches of water on his khakis.

You realize you still have his jacket on, but the bus pulls you out of the station before you can wave to him. You wait for the panic to leave your chest. You watch him sit on a stone bench and laugh into his phone, oblivious to what he's forgotten.

The bus driver's friends crackle through the small radio hooked by the steering wheel. There's talks of floods. One man says,

"Fuck this shit. I'm going home before the flood fills the bus."

The bus driver looks at you through the mirror. She's pretty and big in the right places, breasts bulging out from her blue uniform. She has on big feathery eyelashes, and her left ear is pierced with four dainty silver rings. When she smiles at you reassuringly, there are two small dimples and bright white teeth.

You wish you were a pretty Black girl too, and the ache of your own appearance makes you feel heavy. You were born the wrong kind of Asian. Girls like Vivian, Asian Asian, are skinny and pale and clean and everyone wants to kiss them. You have your mother's body. Too lumpy and undesirable. Your unibrow is a perpetual force that can't be overcome.

"We're gonna get you home, okay baby?" the bus driver says. "I'll take you to your neighborhood if I can."

You look out the window. The water is beginning to breach the tires.

She says, "If I die driving this bus, might as well squeeze in some good deeds."

Someone on her walkie says, "Quit talking dumb shit Kiana. You're gonna be fine."

"Oh, fuck off," says the beautiful bus driver. "Let me be a hero."

This is your stop. You exit the bus, and are immediately soaked with rain.

Your neighborhood is across the street from you, but there's too much water between you and home. You don't want your sneakers to get wet again, and you're tired.

You see the parallel streams of brick houses, standing tall and piercing the sky with pointed roofs.

Chimneys billow out smoke. Your street has disappeared beneath a brown river.

Groups of boys are emerging from houses. They wade past half submerged cars and push their bodies forward into murky waters, as if they were in a large pool.

The boys laugh and call to one another. They scream in exaggerated high pitched tones to scare their mothers, who observe nervously from first floor windows or open front doors.

You wonder if water's in the houses already. You wonder if your mother's sweatpants are wet at the bottom, if her feet look pale between white tile and liquid glass. She's probably praying at the kitchen window, waiting for you to come back. You wonder if she's looking out at the boys too.

You don't want to see your sad-eyed mother. She's going to ask so many questions. She'll want to know if your father showed for lunch, if he said anything about Vivian, and where your jacket came from.

You hear mothers shrieking, yelling for help. There is so much rain hitting your face and it's hard to keep your eyes open. You don't understand what you're seeing. The boys are flailing in the growing sea, their red hoodies becoming maroon with water. It's hard to trace the bodies, but you catch blonde heads going under brown water. Pairs of shorts float up, and they take the rain without sinking. The clothing spreads like silver lily pads, calm on the floodwater surface.

You shiver and clench your fists in the jacket's warm pockets. You try to count the raindrops pelting your head, and you wait for someone to reemerge.



CARNIVAL OF MOSAICS

CHRISTINA MARSHALL

LEAP DAY IN IOWA

ADRIAN SLONAKER

Rosh Hashanah ushered in 5780,
the First of Muharram heralded 1441, and
eight weeks ago, revelers crafted resolutions for
the return of the Roaring Twenties.
For Josh it's always 1963, down to his Tornados records, rotary phone, and
the woolen cap he wears when whispering to
the ripples of the Des Moines River.
Last April at the Department of Transportation in Waukee,
he met Marsha, a non-driver for fear of
freaking out while wielding a two-ton gun on wheels.
Never knowing whether they'll be Marsha or Muamer tomorrow,
the gentle brunet/te had just striven in vain
to list their sex as X on a state ID renewal form.
Flustered, they let fall their faux-leather handbag –
Marsha/Muamer hasn't condoned cruelty
against any other creature
since their dad destroyed Marsha's doll,
deeming it no toy for a boy.
Josh retrieved the purse and,
reminded of Ruta Lee by Marsha's spry eyes,
placed a chunk of Dubble Bubble in
their broad palm three inches from
a tattoo of a snail in a sugar bowl.
Tonight, with stomachs teeming with

tofu burek and Karma cola,
the duo discussed sit-ins and *Dementia 13* and
the ideas of Bob Dylan and Dudley Do-Right.
Now outside to wish upon a satellite,
Josh taps his partner's hand gloved against the Polar Vortex.
Marsha fidgets and looks away, a reflex from
the years of ridicule that have sledgehammered their self-esteem.
Out with the steam fleeing Josh's frigid lips slips a stuttered proposal.
On February 29th, an uncanny sliver of the calendar
when the improbable waltzes out from the wings into the spotlight,
a non-binary Bosniak library page says yes to
an anachronistic Yankee maintenance man in spectacles.



SCREAM OF SACRIFICE

ALLIE WATSON ANDREWS

LIFE THROUGH STAINED GLASS

AN INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER JAZZ

TAMARA AL-QAISI-COLEMAN

It was early on a Friday morning when I finished Jennifer Jazz's memoir *Spill Ink on It* a story that had my attention from the first line, "Teachers circling City Hall with union signs are the subject of newscasts at night while byday are dreamy laugh tracks and car crashes of TV reruns." This was a story I connected with so deeply. From a child who didn't meet people's expectations to a woman who broke all the rules and paved her way through the world on her own terms. I had the honor of interviewing Jennifer via email correspondence. That interview can be found below. I would also implore you to check out the book review I did of her book and just buy her book! I am grateful for this opportunity to speak with such a powerful artist.

Tamara Al-Qaisi-Coleman: I wanted to ask how you chose your childhood moments to portray in the book. They work on two levels giving us a look into your background but are also building on these bigger moments of how your father views women and girls and the theme of misunderstanding by everyone in general. I'm thinking specifically of the beginning of chapter four when you get this new pet snake and the argument you get in with your father over Socrates (which is a great name for a snake by the way) and how well this moment then informs us of what's to come. What does this craft process of picking and choosing these moments to portray look like for you as a writer?

Jennifer Jazz: Oh wow. In terms of "craft..." It's just not a concern of mine and I really think that too much emphasis is put on narrative structure and functionality of late, which I blame on these programs that young writers are being indoctrinated in. I came to each page with a desire to be as real as possible about what transpired during the period that my memoir covers, though "Spill Ink on It" is not really an index of good or bad memories as much as an effort to identify how I became "me," the junk I accumulated that brought strength, the experiences that damaged and/or liberated me.

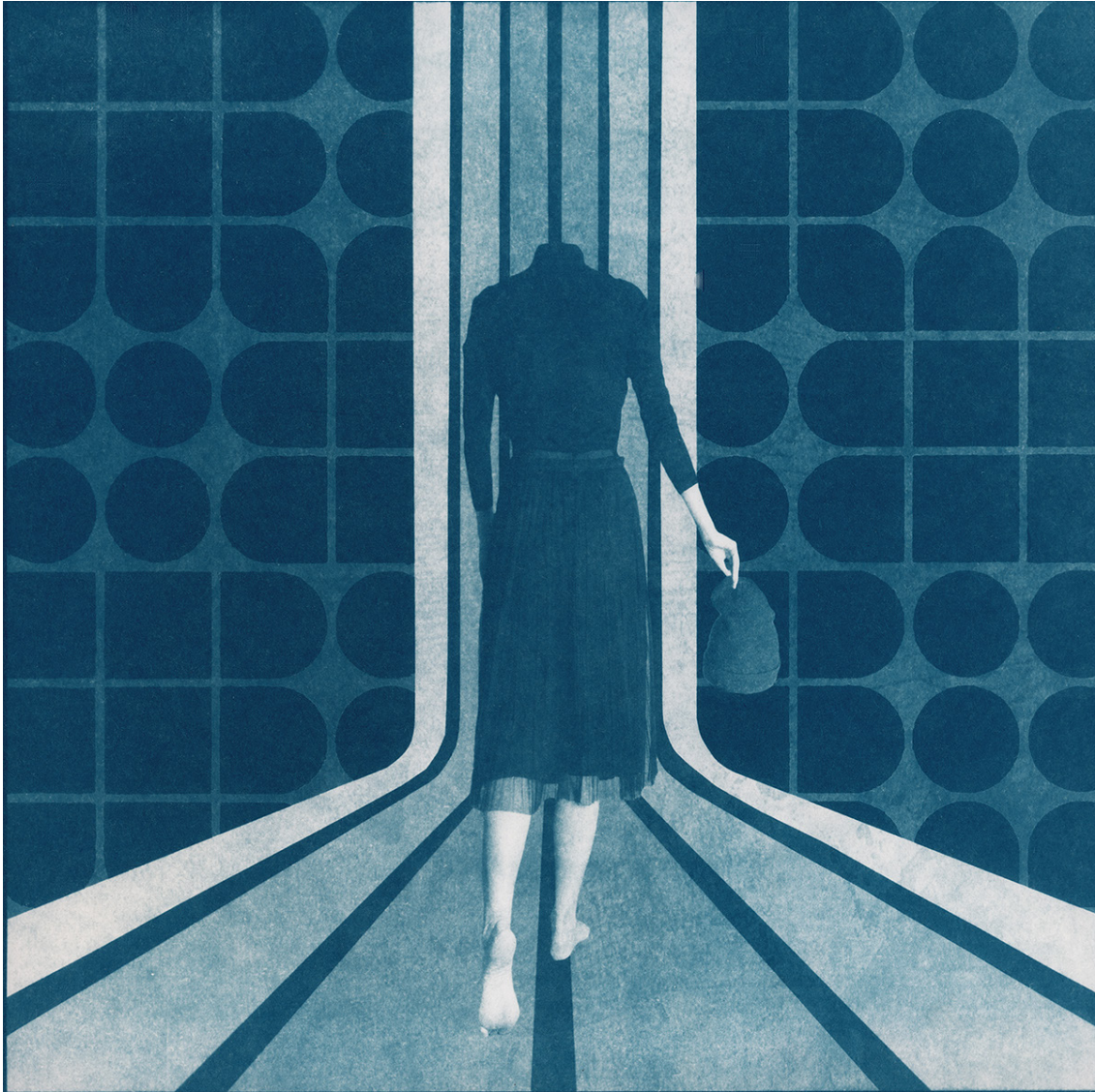
TAC: I completely agree these programs put so much emphasis on the use of “craft” versus the actual story itself and what it truly means to write. I get so bogged down with what I’m taught is right I find myself losing the story. I am so glad to read that you go against those norms and this book is such a great testament to what writing should be.

As I read through the book I can see time and time again the struggles you faced, where people ask why you have done so little with your intelligence, and constantly question your choices in life. When you write these moments, these moments of revolution against what’s expected of you by people and society, how do you do them justice? With your gorgeous prose, how do you relay these moments like when you’re drinking the cooking Sherry and meet Bambi in a way that feels right to the memory. What seems right to that point in your life because I know I struggle so much with memory and feeling as though I’ve gotten that feeling of the memory right. Those specific moments that shape who you become.

JJ: Understanding what my material was and how it was mine -- uniquely mine -- as opposed to anybody’s else’s -- was the real work. I mean there’s a lot of soul-searching that has to be done to fully process what it is that we go through that’s meaningful enough to put out there. Writers can be really flashy, technically dazzling, but reveal very little. I’d rate my talent as average, but I was able to share a complex trip by doing it on my own terms because once you cease to do that, your work is been there, done that. It lacks courage -- but I’m always trying to be heroic. I’m a romantic.

TAC: I wouldn’t say your talent is average in every way this book has revealed a piece of you through the narrative and that’s a hard thing to accomplish. I love that you’re a romantic. It’s embossed on these pages. The way you write about New York and London it’s dreamy and yet so real.

Would you say that in those days in London and in New York you were searching for something? Those moments when you’re suddenly thrust into adulthood and then suddenly lost in the world. Always questioning what’s next? What should I do now? I find myself constantly having those questions and I feel a connection to your younger nomad that carries me through this book. I guess I’m asking if you could talk



TRACK 11: INVISIBLE MOMENT

SUZANNE KOETT

about what those moments, like when you're searching for Lovers Rock or trying to find your place in the world, look like to you now. And how it was like reliving those moments. I guess I'm asking if you have any regrets? Where I question youth and these moments of not yet adulthood I guess and if I will regret my "danger-seeking misspent youth" as my mother would say.

JJ: Your "danger-seeking misspent youth"? That's very funny. What would we do without our mother's brutal observations of us? Here's the thing with me. A lot of children evolve at windows, but that is the only view of the street from the house in the Bronx that I describe in "Amber" was stained glass, my view was God sent. I mean, the only other place I had seen stained glass otherwise was during Sunday mass so when I'd sequester myself in the vestibule and look outside through it, I was in my own little personal church and it was this sublime experience navigating the world through it, and as I'd shift my eye from color to color, the same view would reveal a different side of myself to me. That's how I managed it and that system for seeing the world stuck with me. It became a blueprint of how I'd navigate my life and everything. I mean everything. Even the most messed up shit I would encounter would still be sacred, so the "I shouldn't have gotten so drunk last night," regret -- that I know, but a larger inventory of my whole life that I look back and question? No. Not possible. From an early age, I was blessed with a map.

TAC: How would you describe the way politics has shaped your life. As a POC woman growing up during integration and then in your youth living in England? How did politics affect and shape your life at that time? Is it more than now? With how tensely charged politics is in the present?

JJ: The fact that I chose to begin Spill Ink on It during a time in which every public school in New York was closed after the mostly white Board of Education had shut down, and parents of color across the five boroughs were outraged speaks for itself. I was radicalized at my aunt's bookcase during that infamous strike in 1968, writing by Piri Thomas, Malcolm X and Abbie Hoffman becoming my curriculum, which I talk about in "Amber." But much of the kind of activity and discussion referred to as "politics," you know, especially in the U.S. is very transactional right? Organize for this. Vote for that, which is hard for me to take seriously



JENNIFER JAZZ

SELF-PORTRAIT PROVIDED BY AUTHOR

since those responses are so heavily governed by the forces people are opposed to -- I prefer to write. A writer's greatest strength is distance, and only reading and other extreme acts of imagining will ultimately dismantle oppressive systems, so keeping notes and compiling them into this memoir, one that goes entirely against the grain of all the accounts that describe the same period minus the black and Puerto Rican experience was most def a political act. Yes.

TAC: Did you always know that you would write this book? Or any book about your life?

JJ: I always knew I would write this book. No doubt. Because the story of my life has always been more tangible to me than my role in it.



MISMATCHED

KYLE HEMMINGS

MOM GUINEA PIG

ELLY SALAH

mom Guinea Pig is huddled under a green hut
thinks she is safe thinks that swooping birds cannot
see her thinks that her life: extension of an
extension because of a green plastic dome.

her bean body like a head of lettuce looms
to be fed always to lick her baby's
ears to rub nose to nose to say *you are mine*
to steal from. Guinea Pig chomps cabbage catered

by baby's mint mind. human, big Guinea
Pig, extends carrot finger: peace offering
like a sacrifice says *eat me if you want*
for human wants to know what it means to be

part of the herd to popcorn instead of walk
to live just eight years to birth your being at just
four months to eat lettuce leaves like life to be
tamed with a wild heart. in this herd, baby is

baby like mom is mom and human is big
Guinea Pig. mom rumble-struts like new language
like tyranny is over in cage that is
world is herd is exchanged grains is wheat for hay

like mom is mom can take care of everyone
can fear swooping birds for us will dedicate
sweet cooes says *you are mine* says world is *life*
says life without a herd is not life at all.



ONE SOUL TWO LIVES

ANUPAMA MISHRA

VOICES COLLECT IN CORNERS TALKING TOGETHER

GARY LUNDY

taking notes concerning our public failures. aloof you wander in the parenthetical haze of missed opportunity and half completed compound phrases. we admit our life an unsuccessful measure composed of minuscule fragments. names partially articulated. permanent figures etched on a small uneven marking stone while drops of wax slowly cover your lovely torso. they believe they know when we're glad to see them because our nipples harden. unlike yesterday when their conversation echoed deep into the night finally penetrating the deepest dream until we awoke in sudden relief. i don't think i've time enough to love anyone unconditionally they say. no one ever does you reply repeating prescribed pauses on the plastic flooring. what it must feel like living inside that body instead of the one they want.



AS ABOVE SO BELOW

ALLIE WATSON ANDREWS

AND HERE WE ARE

ALEXANDRA MOFFITT

The rusty chains scream in my ears.

The rubber seat feels colder.

Smaller.

The sand jumps with my toes

as the breeze follows me.

The starless night

pushes me down.

I'm surrounded by Sam Adams smiles.

Short drives

lacking scene changes.

chaste kisses and rugs

that scratch my arms

amidst cheerful screams.

This dark playground is brighter

than any Dollar Tree

string of Christmas lights.

I welcome the company
of the chipped seesaw duck.
More than the kids
who drown in purple haze and take.

Recess will be over.
I'll walk back where partiers live Fridays
and drinkers relive
Graduation night.

I'd give that back
to not feel pain in my knees
when I jump to show off.



CARNIVAL OF DREAMS

CHRISTINA MARSHALL

LIAR, LIAR

LUKE ROLFES

Seventeen-year-old boy on the cross-country team doesn't need as many calories as the fat fifteen-year-old he was two years ago. On the paved trail, seventeen-year-old boy runs as fast as he can for four miles, with minimal calories consumed, over the six different bridges between Polk City and Madrid, Iowa, and then turns around at the mile marker and runs as fast as he can home. "Stay lean," he repeats to himself. "Stay fast."

Seventeen-year-old boy never wins any sanctioned races, but he letters on the varsity squad and wins a few copper-coated medals. He grows up at some point. He also grows out of whatever phase he was in that made him eat so little and run so much. After earning a degree at the state university he accepts a position as an underwriter for an insurance agency. He's lucky to land a job right out of school at a stable and recognizable company. The entry-level cohort—Forty strong! The company had such a great year!—participates in get-to-know-you-games on their first day. One game the managers suggest is called "Two truths and a lie." Two women in the cohort claim they survived an eating disorder as one of their "truths," but seventeen-year-old boy is skeptical. Neither was sent, at any point, to the hospital. They never described jumping up and down before throwing up, or the gnawing feeling of starvation, or even the far-away look of their reflection in the mirror. Seventeen-year-old boy finds "Two truths and a lie" to be as fake of a thing as exists in the universe. When his turn arrives, he says, "I am an only child. My favorite color is black. My favorite color is purple."

Time passes. Seventeen-year-old boy gets older, gets promoted. Now age 27, he begins to oversee some of the new people at the same stable and recognizable company—Another great year! Not as good as six years ago, but still pretty solid!—and he meets, finally, a girl who hurts herself. Seventeen-year-old boy cannot remember to which team she belongs—Raquel's or Ramona's?—but he sees a girl who hurts herself around the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the mid-week huddle. She is younger than him, freckled and pale, and her hair is like a creamsicle waterfall. He doesn't know her secret until the night of the company social, at the British pub downtown. A girl who hurts herself is wearing a purple dress, and he isn't trying to look—Truth: he really is—but when she sits at the high-top, her skirt rides up and he sees the

scars. Criss-crosses and lines. Hard, raised skin. All over the front of her thighs. He realizes that she can see him—she can see him seeing her—and she is smoothing the dress back to her knees. She is angry, maybe. Embarrassed, surely. She finishes her drink and stands at the table before swiveling and retreating toward the bar.

Seventeen-year-old boy moves to intercept her. He doesn't mean to be so direct—That's a lie!—but he feels an overwhelming urge to talk to a girl who hurts herself. He extends his hand and says his name and title at the company. Absently squeezing his palm, she leans over the bar and calls her drink order into the chaos before them.

"You're all cut up," seventeen-year-old boy wants to say. He wants to run his fingers along her scars and feel exactly what it is she felt when she hurt herself. He wants to be sad with her, maybe. Save her. Transplant her skin. Hug her. Love her. Cry on her legs. Above all else, he wants to look her in the face and say "I'm all cut up, too." And he wants her to believe him because it's the truth—or, at least, it's what feels true to him. But she is too far gone, and he wasn't even strong enough when he was seventeen to save himself. How could he possibly save her?



TRACK 6: REMAIN

SUZANNE KOETT

THE VIRGIN HAS A WET DREAM

HEATHER BAYLESS

First, I unhinged my jaw and everything about me
hung lose. Next,
You exposed something similar
to a spleen and just as seductive.
Lovely lilac
lymphatic system, babe. You really know how to
drain it.

I showed You mine
so You showed me Yours and I was
pleased.
We're turned on.
After that we sort of got to talking,

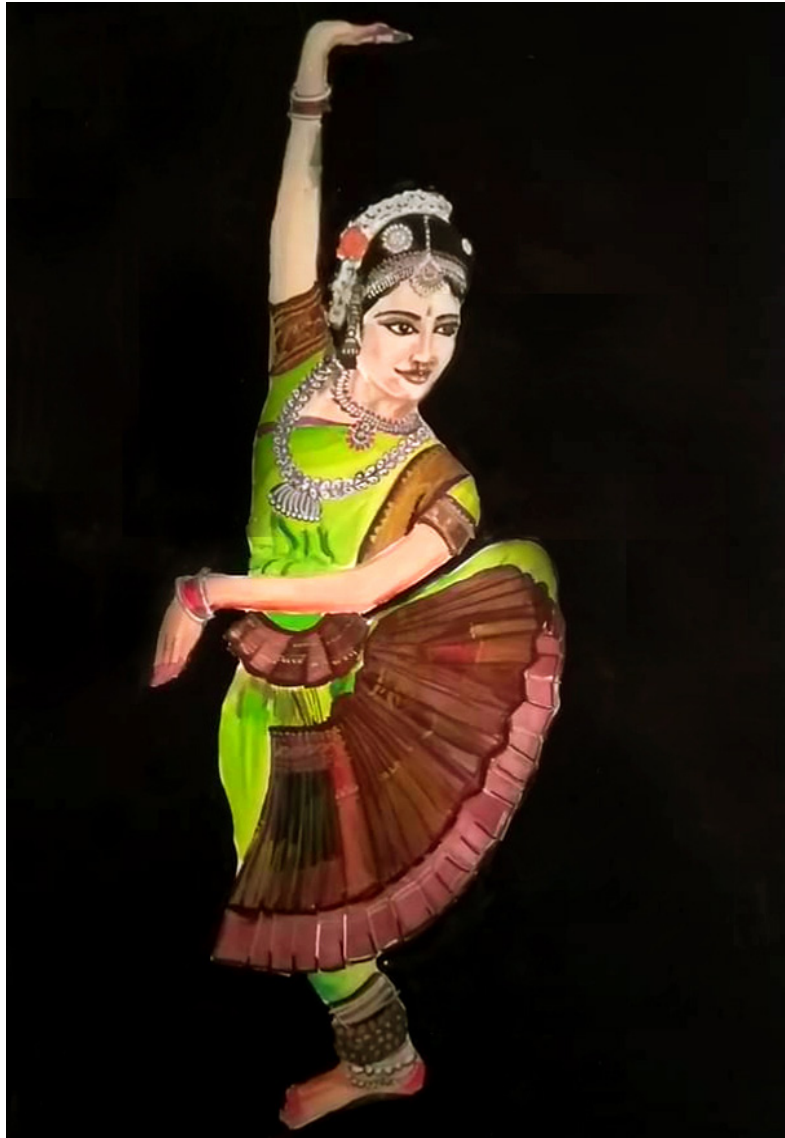
but remember the unhinged jaw,
remember that I don't know how this works.

So I took a naked step towards You
and what I thought was a thin thigh
was really bulbous meat. No strength to stand.

I collapse
to the floor. It's soft carpet. This is
where things heat up.

*I want to shag you on the shag,
right here in the middle of the floor.*

We're laughing, but for me
it's just a tongue lolling about the roof
of my mouth. You're telling me
You'll get to the middle of me.
I do not bother trying to ask how.



YOUR SOUL CAN BE SEEN IN YOUR DANCE

ANUPAMA MISHRA

UNSPOKEN CODE

TIFFANY BELIEU

1. Before the fear
we were sunburnt tops off,
bubblegum pop-pop summers.
We could choke
on the honey sweet of it all.

2. The problem is no one says
innocence was given,
it's always (home before
streetlights, share your location,
pepper spray) taken.

3. You say you're afraid
to walk to your car alone at night,
I turn on the porchlight.
Watch until you're inside,
half up the block, safe
for a moment.

4. I used to sleep
with the curtains wide,
windows open to the night
but I haven't been able to

since June. Since you were
all over the news
and they had no reasons
just horrible wants.

5. We share terror
more than tampons
in bar bathrooms.
We make sure
those we just met
get home
safe.



DEATH BECOMES HER

ALLIE WATSON ANDREWS

IN A NIGHTMARE I STOOD IN A SECRET PLACE

CLOE WATSON

White tassels in a barn, and I want them
brushing my skin where I wish you
had touched me. A child sits nearby—
is she yours? Who lives here
if not the part of me that lingered
in your big-toothed grin, half hidden
in my memory for years? There is a language
scraped in wooden blocks, an alter
that splinters my hand as I trace the lines
like veins. I don't have the time or books
to learn symbols that are beautiful
and nothing but. Who lives here
if not a man strung up by flowers,
his chest open, revealing bare lungs
breathing, languid, above
a bear's body costuming his own,
strange flesh and fur sticking to his skin.

The child finger paints in the corner
of this barn, obscured by shadow.
A curly haired sadness in a dress,
she paints forgiveness in big
strokes of blue. It is a blue dog
grinning, unlike her who has no mouth.

Of course, I knew this would all happen:
it's pictured on the walls in menstrual blood
where my mother's many lovers lay
prostrate at her feet, writhing in what
their skin could not do for her.

Was I then born to behave
like the wolf my real lover calls me
when I bite his hands and ears, wondering
what it was he felt and heard as a child?
I am not just any wolf, I am his wolf.

But here in this place, my limbs
are not mine. They blister and branch
until they are pushing at this wooden
cage. The struggle is wood against
wood but somehow it all cracks, falls,
and I am through the roof panting at the sun.



FASHION NATION
CHRISTINA MARSHALL

TABOO

KENDRYK YOUNGBLOOD

MODERN POETRY
ROMANCE, RHYME, CENTER ALIGN
WHAT SILLY TABOOS

THOUGH CLICHES PERSIST
(THE ROMEOS, JULIETS,
ROSES, VIOLETS),

UNMAPPED LABYRINTHS
EXIST WITHIN THE L-WORD,
A POET'S TO FIND

WRITER COMMITTED
LITERARY SUICIDE
BY USING END RHYMES

FELLOW CREATIVES
CALLED HER UNPROFESSIONAL,
CHEESY, DR SEUSS,

AS IF DR SEUSS
WERE ANY LESS A POET
THAN BILLY COLLINS

CONSIDER POEMS
ON ATTAINING INNER PEACE,
CENTERING ONESELF

SUCH WORKS BEST REFLECT
THEIR CONTENT WHEN CONSTRUCTED
MIDDLE TO THE PAGE

EMPLOYED WITH FINESSE,
ROMANCE, RHYME, CENTER ALIGN
CAN SHAPE GREAT WRITING

UNBOUND BY TABOOS,
MY HAND NOW WRITES I LOVE YOU
WHENEVER I CHOOSE

ART CONTRIBUTORS

Allie Watson Andrews is a Texas-born artist who currently lives and works in Austin. She was born and raised in Austin, where she grew up with a family of musicians and was immersed in the Austin music scene at a very young age. She has a background in Industrial Design. She was specifically trained in the Furniture Design Department at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. Allie has a BA and a minor in Education from St. Edward's University. She teaches individual art lessons to children between the ages of 5 to 15. Her work was chosen in 2019 and 2020 for the student juried exhibits at the St. Edward's gallery, as well as the 2019 Star of Texas show. She is currently creating found object installations that are mixed with sculptural elements as well as drawing, painting and photography.

JJ Baker was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and spent his formative years there. He attended the University of Cincinnati, where he completed the Fine Arts and Art Education Licensure programs. He currently lives and works in Houston, TX, and has a studio at Hardy & Nance Studios. His current practice focuses on portraiture, combining traditional and contemporary techniques. Though primarily a painter, his work also incorporates collage, printmaking, photography, poetry, and film. JJ was the recent artist-in-residence at the Rocky Neck Art Colony's Goetemann Residency in Gloucester, MA. He has exhibited at the Glassell Studio School, Archway Gallery, and received the 2nd Place Award at the Irving Arts Center's Texas and Neighbors Juried Show in Dallas, TX.

Kyle Hemmings has both text and art published in *Bones*, *Sonic Boom*, *Match Book*, *Is/let*, and elsewhere. He is former associate editor of Yavanika Press. He loves street photography and 60s garage bands that never made it big.

Suzanne Koett is an artist from Austin, TX. Her work explores the human condition - what it means to be alive and to bravely exist. Through her art she demystifies and brings to light the interconnected and universal lived experience. Suzanne holds a BFA in Studio Art (concentration photography) from San Francisco State University.

Christina Marshall is both a graphic designer and an artist who loves painting as a hobby. Her graphic design pieces are based on ‘What London Means To Me’. London has always inspired her and enabled her to look at different cultures within London, and the way that these cultures (which are very diverse), are shown within, film, fashion, arts and many more ideas representing the way that London opens up and it’s always exciting looking at the way London keeps evolving. She loves using bright colours because she loves vibrancy, the idea of passion and enjoyment within the works that she creates.

Bob McNeil is the author of *Verses of Realness*. Hal Sirowitz, Queens Poet Laureate, described the book as “A fantastic trip through the mind of a poet who doesn’t flinch at the truth.” Bob was published in *The Shout It Out Anthology*, *Brine Rights: Stanzas and Clauses for the Causes* (Volume 1), *San Francisco Peace and Hope*, and *The Self-Portrait Poetry Collection*, etc. Furthermore, his work as a professional illustrator, spoken word artist, and writer is dedicated to one cause—justice.

Anupama Mishra currently lives in Varanasi. She is a self taught artist. She also writes poems in hindi and English, and her poems are published in *Literary Yard*, *Spillwords*, *Best Poetry*, *Queen Mob’s Teahouse*, and in Hindi my poems have been published in *posham pa*, *Rachanaakr*, *Setu Patrika* and others. This is her first time submitting paintings for publication.

Ann Privateer is a poet, artist, and photographer. She also gardens and often gets inspired there. Some of her work has appeared in *Third Wednesday*, *Manzanita*, and *Entering* to name a few.

Chuck Taylor was raised in Texas, Minnesota, Illinois, and North Carolina. He won the 1988 Austin Book Award for *What Do You Want, Blood?* His latest are *Being Beat* (2018) , and *I Tried To Be Free* (2020) both published by Albuquerque’s Hercules Press. He worked in the Poets-in-the-Schools program, served as the CETA Poet-in-Residence of Salt Lake City, operated the Austin bookstore Paperbacks Plus, ran Slough Press, was Creative Writing Coordinator at Texas A&M, and taught at UT Austin, El Paso, and Tyler, as well as in Japan. Today, he lives in the hill country of Texas, on the border between the South, the West, and MexAmerica.



PROBLEM
KYLE HEMMINGS

POETRY CONTRIBUTORS

Omer Ahmed (Pronouns: He/Him) is an educator, writer, and performer. He explores the intersectionality of identity as well as blackness through divinity, which yields to his writing style. Omer is a National Poetry Slam semi-finalist for Houston's Write About Now 2018 slam team. He has also been published in issue 70 of *The Penn Review*, The international online publication *Bareknuckle Poet*, and the "Write About Now" video channel. Omer currently works for Writers in the Schools and hopes to expand his love of writing to further audiences, with a high focus on the youth.

Goodness Olanrewaju Ayoola is an award winning Nigerian poet and teacher of English who reaches out to poetry as escapism from the contentions within and around him. His poetry has appeared in *Pangolin Review*, *Deepwater Literary Journal*, *Brittle Paper*, *Mojave Heart*, *Ethel Zine* and elsewhere. He is a Best of the Net Award nominee and author of *Meditations* (WRR, 2016).

Heather A. Bayless (she/her) is a recent graduate of Baylor University where she completed a thesis of an original collection of poems. Heather has been published in *Gaillardia* online magazine and has read slam poems at "Write About Now" poetry slam open mic in Houston, Texas. Heather has a keen ear for religiously-introspective language that borders on the blasphemous, and she uses her writing to open a space for conversations surrounding gender, sexuality, and body-image issues within the Church.

Tiffany Belieu is working hard on her dream of writing. Her work is published or forthcoming in *Back Patio Press*, *Q/A Poetry*, *Muskeg Magazine*, *Rabid Oak* and *The Mantle* among others. She loves tea and cats and can be found @tiffobot on Twitter.

gary lundy's poems have appeared most recently in *Filling Station*, *Shark Reef*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Fence*, *Meta/Phor(e)/Play*, and *Cutbank: Weekly Flash Prose & Prose Poetry*. His most recent book, *each room echoes absence*, was released by FootHills Publishing (March 2018). gary is a retired English Professor and queer living in Missoula, Montana.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alexandra Moffitt is a writer/actor who hails from Dallas, Texas with her BA in Theatre and Writing. When she is not trying to fit words together like jagged puzzles pieces, she can be seen performing and writing with the Pizza Chapel Theatre, a DIY theatre company that prides itself on including diversity and giving others a chance to perform and express themselves.

A proud Guatemalan double majoring in Philosophy and Spanish, Ronny Ortiz has published travel articles for *Houstonia Magazine*, and is currently the Editor in Chief of *The Venture Online*, a bilingual newspaper ran by the non-profit El Gato Media Network also known as EGMN.

Elly Salah is a student of Sociology and Creative Writing at the University of Michigan. In her free time, Elly enjoys writing poetry, cooking, and knitting. Elly lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan with her guinea pigs and boyfriend.

Crisscrossing North America as a language professional, Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee Adrian Slonaker is fond of opals, owls and fire noodles. Adrian's work has been published in *WINK: Writers in the Know*, *Page & Spine*, *The Pangolin Review* and others.

Cloe Watson is a first year MFA student at Bowling Green State University. She received her undergraduate degree in English and Psychology from The Ohio State University. Her work has appeared in *Mosaic Magazine*, *Allegheny Review* and *Ohio's Best Emerging Poets*.

Kendryk Youngblood is a member of UH's Poetry Slam team called UH Coogslam, which won 4th place in the Collegiate Unions Poetry Slam Invitational (CUPSI), in April of 2019. Kendryk had a poem called "Dreamers" published in Issue 4 of *Shards* magazine.



THE MIRROR SEES ALL

ALLIE WATSON ANDREWS

PROSE CONTRIBUTORS

Sean Morrissey Carroll is a science-fiction author in Houston, Texas and a host of the weekly Writers Lunch. He has worked as a photography teacher, butcher, cartoonist, waiter, art critic, farm hand, vintage fashion grader and sign painter. He currently makes crepes for a living. Sean has been published in *Art in America*, *Artforum.com*, *Houston Press*, *Houston Free Press*, and *Gulf Coast* magazine. Sean received an Honors degree in Art History from the University of Houston. You can find his ongoing blog of what the future may bring at realityaheadofschedule.wordpress.com.

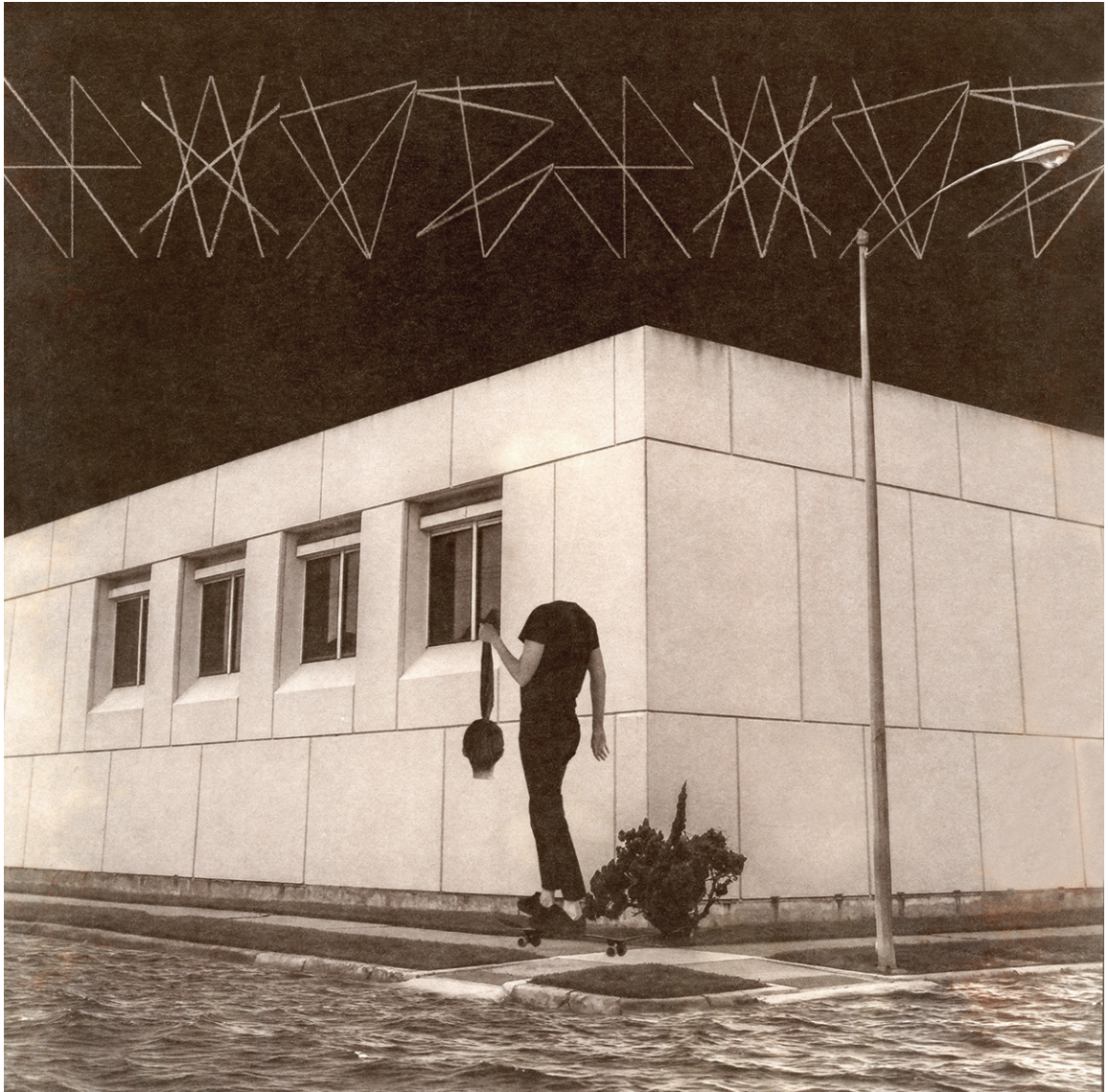
Wafa-e-fatima is an undergraduate student at The University of Houston. She is a 2019-2020 Mellon Scholar. She is currently working on her senior thesis, which explores Iraq War refugee narratives.

Jim Meirose's short work has appeared in numerous venues, and his published novels include *Le Overgivers au Club de la Résurrection* (Mannequin Haus), *Understanding Franklin Thompson* (JEF pubs), and *Sunday Dinner with Father Dwyer* (Optional books). Info at www.jimmeirose.com @jwmeirose

Luke Rolfes teaches creative writing at Northwest Missouri State University. His book *Flyover Country* was published by Georgetown Review Press, and his stories and essays have appeared in numerous journals including *North American Review*, *Bat City Review*, *Connecticut Review*, and others. He co-edits *The Laurel Review* and serves as a mentor in AWP's "Writer to Writer" mentorship program.

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

Creator and former Editor of Shards through the University of Houston, Tamara Al-Qaisi-Coleman is a bi-racial Muslim writer and artist. Her interests are Middle Eastern History, culture, linguistics, and biracial identity. She primarily writes from the Arab-American perspective. She as a featured performer at The Museum of Fine Arts and Houston Grand Opera's event "The Art of Intimacy" January 2020. Her fiction, poetry, essays, and translation publications can be found or are forthcoming in: Crack the Spine Literary magazine, Scintilla Magazine, Paper Trains Journal, The Bayou Review: The Women's Issue, and Glass Mountain, Volume 21, Dead Eyes Literary Magazine. Her visual Artistry can be found in Cosumnes River Journal, Sonder Midwest Review, and Wordpeace Magazine.



TRACK 13: IN RIME

SUZANNE KOETT

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