











COVER ART VOL IV



THE RECORDING OF THINKING 1

JEREMY GLUCK

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NEON GRAVEYARD 2 DANIELLE WIRSANSKY

## **MARK'S BODEGA**

#### **ERYN O'NEAL**

Just above the shelf of over-priced glassware (*Designed for Tobacco Use Only*), there's a wall of iron-on patches, enamel pins, and bumper stickers

encouraging customers to *Smash the Patriarchy!* for the low, low price of \$2.99.

A combination of UFOs with rainbow light beams,

witches with exposed nipples, and cartoon cats with their middle fingers raised,

to demonstrate (without actually demonstrating) that

The Future is Female!, a slogan that—
I want to tell the bodega cashier—is problematic

at best. And, erases queer, non-binary, and trans folk at worst. But, I swallow my tongue because the cashier

is not one of my undergraduate students and likely did not have any say in the selection of patches displayed behind the register.

Plus, I'm here for procrastinated poetic inspiration, a Lean Cuisine, Baked Lay's, and a Diet Coke.

The dinner of the diet industrial complex and body shame culture.

Because, feminist-identified or not, I'm still drowning in the hatred of my body. Blaming it for all my shortcomings. *Big hips make you bad at math, right?* 

Having a graduate degree in women's studies doesn't protect me; today is the one hundredth and fifty-second first day of my diet.

And here I am at Mark's Bodega grasping for some creative magic and a "healthy"

500-milligrams-of-sodium Saturday-night dinner. I'll probably regret both

in the morning as my salt-swollen fingers pound away in last-minute revision, but, at least I'll have this slick Riots Not Diets enamel pin.

#### IN SEARCH OF LILY

#### YOLANDA MOVSESSIAN

I'm not going to think too much about what you just said. I mean we all knew it was coming to this. Still it's shocking. The entire Mays Clinic turned into an ICU unit. No wonder they cancelled my follow up appointment. April is the cruelest month... starts one of my favorite poems. There's an overly sweet toxic smell near this tree. Is it Jasmine or honeysuckle? Pratt's president explained that they were ready to turn the dorms into hospital units. Penn is saying the same thing. My poor kid never got to pack up his dorm. He's still upset about his guitar and amp being left behind. Last night, on my walk around the neighborhood, I came upon a random lily growing in the middle of someone's sidewalk. A full stinky trash can was pulled next to it. Not sure where I saw the lily, so I'm in search of it now. I want to take a picture of it. On my nightly outings I tend to absent-mindedly walk and daydream while listening to music, so I never know where I end up. One night I came upon a hearse. The smell of cut grass is lingering in the air now. What a pity if the lily has been cut down... breeding Lilacs out of the dead land... I must say, I prefer my midnight walks to daylight ones, but I was afraid I would go nuts if I didn't go on a walk immediately. Tremendous nervous energy, mixing memory and

desire...

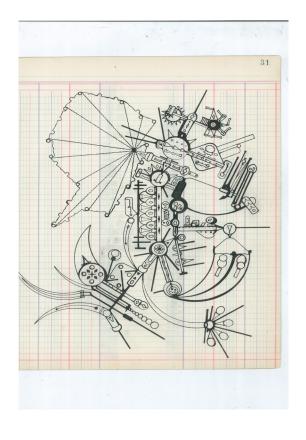
I've been getting a mysterious phone call from a no caller ID in the last several months since I moved into my new house. Just got another one and it's causing my almost meltdown here. The person is always mumbling. I thought it might be work related. I am always polite explaining that I can't hear them and if they would call me back. Sometimes he does call back, and sometimes not, but every time it's the same. He mumbles, and I can't understand what he's saying. I try not to be rude. I always remember how in my twenties working in the bookstore I helped a guy who stuttered heavily. I was patient, and he was so thankful that I had let him finish his simple sentence. I swear he had tears in his eyes. So I try to be patient with this guy on the phone. I keep imagining he's saying that he just wants to hear my voice. I know it's crazy, right? I often mishear things. Well today I clearly heard the speaker say it. So I hung up. He called again. I had my son answer. The caller hung up. Is it someone I know or is it a random person? No, I don't recognize his voice. My son thinks it must be someone I know since they keep calling the same number. Not sure why it should make me feel so bent out of shape.

Was the lily on Cortlandt? Whoa, someone has a tennis court in their humble home's backyard...stirring dull roots with rain...there's a bamboo gate that I never noticed before. Nothing looks the same in daylight. And now onto

20th Street and still no lily. Surely I didn't walk this far last night. It's hard to tell. I bet it was on Arlington. I can't believe I live so close to this street. The street where Paul used to live. No, I haven't heard from him since high school. No, that's not true. I got a mysterious phone call from Australia a few years back from this woman claiming to be his wife, third wife. Apparently he goes around marrying people but doesn't bother divorcing them. She wanted to talk to me because he had gone off to wife number four and she wanted my help to make sense of what had happened to her. Listen Lady I don't know the guy, haven't seen him in twenty years, there's not much info I can give you, and I don't know you either. I thought it was all a joke at first, then I realized it was all too real. This woman was in real pain. So I thought I would just listen to her and let her talk.

He's been carrying my letters and drawings all over the place all this time. How the hell did she get hold of my number? Crazy right? Beautiful cobalt blue house on this corner. Or would it qualify as electric blue? It has a sign by its front porch. 'Love is love', 'someone's life matters', etc., etc. Oh my goodness, I have now stumbled upon a park. I had no idea there was one so close. The tennis court is actually part of this park and not part of someone's backyard. Halbert Park. Acquired 1945. Someone's black and white Pomeranian is missing. Do not chase, the flyer posted on the stop sign post warns.

You don't get to hear pigeons or doves cooing at night. Ok, now back on Arlington. A man is practicing boxing moves in his front yard. A car honks at me. It's hard to walk on a street without sidewalks. There are no cars honking at me on my midnight walks. Giant wind chime hoisted on a big branch of a tall tree covered with jasmine is playing a pretty melody. Allergies are about to conquer, and so the search for the lily must resume later on tonight. Tonight when the world is asleep, and the stars sing me their lullabies.



**UNTITLED**ROBERT M. SCHEIDERMAN

# **CONCEIVING**

#### LIAM STRONG

cannibal
water consumes each drop
of flesh clear

winter a mother raising her dear placenta

leave the fan on, James, its paperthin flume a head-

ache against the panes, rattling like used condoms, their

slush a cost of living, a receipt of me, tongue

splayed concrete if we love just this once the wishbone

between us i'd give birth in winter like nothing

ever changed fields of glitter behind the house

thousands of fish scales shaved, piled, laid bare like us,

jars of thumbtacks, sweat a unison more than what

we give to each other, lips are all twins after

all, arms of rain, fog like cherry blossoms mists the glass

no mirrored image, no silhouette, just a ghost

of downfall i'd blow air into your eyes, still closed,

so i wait

# **QUESTIONS**

#### **ELIZABETH SWIM**

#### Question

Did she tell you you have such a pretty face? that alone is hell? to find a man you have to be

obedient? that you can't be smart? that obedient means pretty?

Does he tell you not to cry? that he can get you anything if you give him what he wants?

That there is a hell for unbelievers? that if he touches you, you'll be spared?

Do they tell you to fear pleasure? that they are watching? Do they ask after your health?

Do they mean 'how fit are you to bear a child'?

Do they tell you it never happened? Do they explain that anger can't be righteous?



**PISTOL**MIKE KNOWLES

# **BRAINARD BILLION: CREATIVE CONSULTANT**

#### MARK BICKLEY

What do I look like to you? Don't be shy. Do you find me attractive? Repulsive? Charming? Scary? How about determined?

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Brainard Bullion, and I am a certified creativity coach, a conduit to the sacred hermaphroditical muse, CYN. I reside in a Long Beach, New York rental unit that offers a partial ocean-front view. My passions include somersaulting in the nude and doing unusual things with eggs. As a devoted disciple of CYN, I praxis and teach reasonable and sound enchanted thinking that invariably leads to the achievement of affirmative outcomes.

Let me offer you an example of the positive power of my sacred CYN praxis that occurred just last week. I was riding the F train to Neptune Avenue when a foul smelling young man of great height boarded the train and pushed his way to the center of the car. He wore a white baseball cap with the words EAT THE RICH stitched in large lavender letters. As the young man cleared his throat, I expected him to either spit or begin an agonized plea for money.

He did neither.

Instead, he pulled out a pistol and ordered an attractive woman in tanzanite heels to pull the emergency stop chord. After the train pummeled to a

stop, he began to rage how humans have become lactose intolerant because we stopped ingesting mother's milk and replaced it with the cow milk that has made American women look like heifers and American men look like castrated bulls. "You fools! Your last glass of milk actually came from a bull," he screamed.

When a trio of teenagers tried to rush him from behind, he shot the ring-leader. He punctuated each sentence of his memorized dairy manifesto, pointing his gun at a different rider and yelling," Pow Cow!" While transit riders cowered and many wept, I remained calm and silently invoked the healing power of CYN. Much to my surprise, these words leapt from my throat:

"Coughing milk through your nose is one of the seven cleansing rituals of dairy yoga."

"Milkshakes are the gift from heaven that come in different flavors."

"Life happens, honey. What are you going to do? Cry into a bowl of milk?" Upon hearing this, the gunman shot himself.

They called me a hero, responsible for saving many lives on that train. But it wasn't me. What saved us was CYN's oral response to my silent desperate plea for guidance. My mouth was just used as Their vehicle of protection.

There are many creative consultants who live to milk the bank accounts of the anxious and insecure. Not me. I live to share this sacred praxis of CYN with you. I, Brainard Bullion of Long Beach, specialize in the reclamation of frustrated,

disillusioned, humiliated and blocked artists suffering within all branches of the humanities. My post-graduate work in the fields of Scatology and Sanitation are the perfect precursors for my present avocation as a creative conduit to aesthetic satisfaction and artistic fulfillment.

My consultations are done exclusively through house calls because creativity must engender movement and momentum in order to succeed. Skeptics have accused me of using house calls to avoid overhead while living off the pipedreams of others. I abhor pipedreams. I make a virtuous living as a pipefitter. I install, assemble, fabricate, maintain and repair artistic ambitions by helping artists secure airtight connections to their creative process and products. I work with an array of national and international non-profit/commercial art networks.

To begin with, I never submit an artist's work. To submit means to be judged unfavorably as a possible non-equal. Submission is the acceptance of creative surrender. An artist must never submit to any authority except to that of CYN. I offer up a client's work to prospective dealers, curators, producers and publishers in the same spirit one offers up a gift—as an enticement for pleasure, prosperity and affable enlightenment.

I first came to understand the unique powers of CYN's gift of individualized creativity when I was a young child who still believed in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. A CYN inspired epiphany occurred one Christmas Eve while I was

playing a Wise Man in our Church's annual Christmas pageant. While in bearded costume bowing and presenting a gift to the baby Jesus in the manger, tears suddenly spilled down my face, and I wept so loudly Pastor Weber had to pull me off stage. After the church service ended I was brought to the sacristy and given cookies and cocoa while the pastor, my parents, and the Sunday School teachers who supervised the pageant tried to calm me and discover why I was so upset.

In between sobs I told them I could no longer believe a wise man could ever be joyous over Jesus' birth and that anyone who says Merry Christmas, throws parties, decorates trees, strings lights, and exchanges gifts all in celebration of this infant must be a cruel liar. Why is everyone so jubilant to see this baby born? Just three months later comes Easter and this baby is a grown man who is mocked, betrayed, tortured and murdered in a most excruciatingly sadistic manner that ends with his broken body tossed into a stranger's grave. Ho! Ho!

Instead of acknowledging my precocious insight into raw truth they became upset and told me it all had to do with sin. My sin. Then I was slapped into a decade of psychotherapy. But unbeknownst to my parents, one of my shrinks practiced Reiki therapy, which means "spiritually guided life force energy." Reiki involves the passing of energy from a trained Reiki practitioner's body to the client's body as a method of healing. This Reiki practitioner used a series of established hand positions as a means for allowing energy to move freely between

her body and mine. That's when CYN first formally introduced Themself to me and I learned how most people corrupted CYN's name because of their fear of visionary thinking and so chose to misspell it and interpret it as sin. This is done in order to obliterate Their healing properties of unique transformative thought that always turns into affirmative action.

I'm currently working with a client who is a prolific and accomplished fine arts photographer. Not too many years ago she was a widely exhibited and published winner of multiple N.E.A. artist grants as well as a recipient of highly competitive residencies at both Yaddo and MacDowell artist colonies. However, for more than a decade her work has been completely ignored and she's become dangerously despondent. When we met she presented me with a shocking proposal.

My client is a purist who refuses to succumb to digital photography, and to give up the excitement of her darkroom discoveries. However, film and chemicals are just too expensive, and spatially she can't afford the extra room in which to develop her photographs. Her last two agents dropped her when they insisted she revive her career as a photographer by creating art videos based on her images. She abhors video art, claiming they are mostly repetitive, appropriated images and soundtracks, sans the fingerprints of a personal humanity. Her proposition was for me to help her complete her first and final art video that will chronicle

the soul crushing loss of her artistic voice. She engaged me to help her conceptualize and create the world's first artistic suicide snuff film; a final ironic protest against the cruel indignity of her cultural neglect. She was determined to kill herself on camera in a most powerfully imaginative manner. Her expectation was that her video would be her swan call that would fly into international galleries and museums, thus avenging her neglected and rejected late period artist life.

Upon hearing her goal, some may call me crass as I always accept checks and credit cards, but I amended this policy and insisted she pay me cash up front. I thought her project cutting edge, and I immediately came up with a conceptual title for her terminal performance video, Sentenced to Death by the Muse. She loved it, but a few days later my conscience got the better of me, as well as fear of the legal implications of assisting a suicide.

When I tried to talk her out of filming her suicide and change course for her first and final art video, she was defiantly adamant that the reason for her taking such a drastic, innovational lethal action was "the lost echo of my uniquely artistic voice."

Hmmmm, the loss of her artistic voice? The lack of art world attention? Being unable to afford print photography supplies and a dark room? That kind of thinking is irrational and is most certainly not to die for.

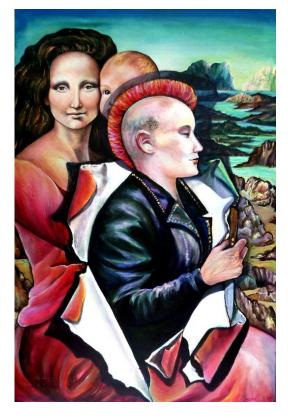
Thanks to the intervention of CYN, I was able to explain to her the sci-

entific conceit developed by physicists that sound waves never disappear. Sound waves spread out and get weaker and weaker until they just about disappear and that's when they transform into thermal energy units that are eternal. According to this highly respected theory, we are surrounded by the voices of every word that's ever been spoken by both the living and the dead, but we can't hear them because the ultimate sensitive listening device has yet to be invented. Thankfully, after much debate she finally accepted my proposition.

Using this concept, I sketched out a new video I called Babel On and Off White to be shot within Brooklyn's Green Wood Cemetery's kinetic landscape of funereal monuments and sculptural ossuary patinas.

The goal of this new artwork is to have the viewer experience what I call a seduction from the graveyard dead who are excited and impatient to recruit mortals into their powerful and extremely vocal eternal community choir. This terminal seduction will be achieved by inducing a kind of video viewer trance rooted in an escalating aural and visual cemetery cacophony. This rising dissonance approximates an ethereal heart attack, allowing her viewers to pass over into the world of the dead as the jarring crescendo of funereal sculptural images flash, and the humming, hissing, screeching garble of overlapping voices abruptly ends, the screen is suddenly filled with a silent, blazing white. There is death in this art video but in my updated version, thank CYN it isn't the artist herself.

We were recently notified that Babel On And Off White has been shortlist-



WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION
ELIZABETH EVE KING

# DAIRY QUEEN'S 16 YEAR OLD EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD SPEECH

KYNDAL THOMAS

In Grill, to my right, the clumpy grease of fried beef coats the surfaces and weighs down the air. The boys' skin gleams with it. In Chill, to my left, big bags of ice cream concentrate slosh in their spinning chambers, everything coated with their sticky spill. They trap candy crumbs like polyurethane over old photos in a kitschy local eatery. The boys and girls go home with all of it under their nails and caked in their brows.

Between these worlds is mine. I stand, carefully selected, as a Service girl, basking in the only available sun behind the counter. That's where I wait for your Suburban to approach and trigger my script. I know my place here, on these nine tiles,

smiling through your window, all lit up.

He knows his place too, this manager—behind me, emanating good old fun and stale smoke, in my ear [nothing inappropriate]. A forty-something-one-of-the-boys. I know

my place here through his always heavy stares, try to joke. Sir, can I help you? He laughs. Maybe when you're older. Back in Grill, a boy squirts mayo through the air. I laugh, stare down. My dustpan walls hold me, coated with coagulated dairy drips and patty spurts and peppered with sprinkles, spicy chicken breading. Stuck in the sun, I know.



THE RECORDING OF THINKING 5

JEREMY GLUCK

### **CONSCIOUS CONSUMERISM**

#### EMILY UDUWANA

I met him on a dating app and he took me to an Olive Garden; the only Olive Garden left in our little suburban town. We ordered margaritas and he complained that Starbucks was taking over, that it had replaced his favorite Olive Garden, the Olive Garden that had replaced his favorite IHOP down the street. And when our margaritas came, he asked me where I'd gone to school and what I had studied there and whether I had earned a degree.

It took me a while to answer because I had licked salt from the rim of my glass expecting to taste sugar, so my voice came out funny and strained. I told him (hoarsely) that I studied to become a mycologist, that I spent four years memorizing the anatomy of mycelial bodies. He made a face and a comment about psychedelics. Then he ordered mushroom ravioli for dinner, and he offered me a bite. But he made another face when I refused a forkful of portabella, and another when I admitted to loving fungi for its beauty and not its taste.

In truth, I did not believe this to be a strange confession. I have never felt an urge to eat beautiful things; I have never funneled yards of satin into my mouth or consumed the brick exterior of my childhood home. When I met you on a different app, on a different date, at a different restaurant, I finally felt a desire to suck something beautiful between my teeth and let it absorb into the organs of my mycelial bod



**SHIP**MIKE KNOWLES

### **AB UTERO CAESO**

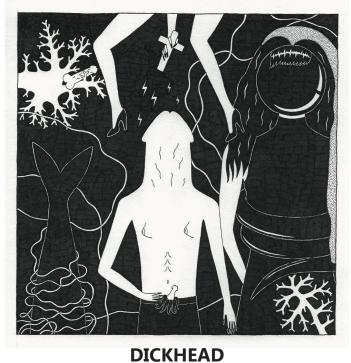
José Eduardo Sánchez

When I ripped you from your home, I felt your legs become the water, my sin on your shoulders carried me, drowning.

When you put your life in my mouth, you told me my screams would be your screams, in time.

Fifteen centimeters in forty-five minutes, three kilometers, or maybe four whole hours in the waiting room reading Roman tragedies, and such, stitching up the life I live now.

I read that imperial law required the child of a mother dead in childbirth to be cut from her womb. Otherwise, how could I have survived?



MR. TRACTOR INSPECTOR

# **SOLOISTS**

### M MCDONOUGH

Clip after clip I see my selves pages of Trans men getting fucked

without conversation unrepentant as a callous

a photo from the Great Depression

I think of the hands chapped & furious in the pov half-light

hands on their cocks

trying to cultivate the land of their body touching only dust

bodies old & new as dust

a blister of need

how we are

when we do not know

who is watching

building a fire without matches or flint

we labor until our hands become smoke

we sleep & dream
in this shape
with or without the search

our hands busy & overflowing with light

hard to hold

ART VOL IV



**No Más Muertes** DONNA E PERKINS

## **VESTIGIAL**

### **NAJLA BROWN**

The tailbone was the first thing to go. The ears came later. Babies were born with them, of course, under the fluorescent glare of hospital lights, but they didn't look like they used to. Now, they were pasty, shriveled up raisins attached to their screaming heads. The doctors sliced them off as soon as the child escaped the birthing canal with the practiced hand of someone who spent their life paring an apple, letting their carvings land on the sanitized floor with the sick smack of an open palm against a water bed for those of us who read the stories, then off to medical waste they went.

Centuries of sound coming to an end with all the gravity of toenail clippings. They seared the wounds shut shortly after. Maternity wards around the world now reeked of burning flesh, that noxious mix of betrayal and microwaved decay, but like the eternal silence, people got used to it. They took their sedated children home the next day with a smile and a bottle of antiseptic that loomed in their medicine cabinets with the same intensity as a blood orange, just waiting to be applied to their newborn's closures twice a day until they were nothing more than scars to be concealed by hair or hats or whatever was trending. That is, until the phantom pains started.

The first report came from an A-List Celebrity. Her struggle was splashed

all over the virtual newsstands as she explained her decision to go under the knife to feel closer to her ancestors and their simpler times.

"I just woke up one morning," she communicated via a series of softly lit photos that resemble the breakfast service in a honeymoon suite, all mussed sheets and perfectly powdered French toast, "and felt something buzzing inside of my head. I knew it had to be a sign. This must be what listening feels like."

Her surgery was scheduled a week later. The best plastic surgeons worked on a mold based off her old family pictures to bring her new ears to life. They were 3D printed using the cartilage cut off newborns that matched her blood type and surgically sewn into her birth scars. Her after-pictures were all over the web. People looked at her like a forgotten relic, a cavewoman in the flesh. Everyone wanted a pair, but only the elite could afford it. The performance of listening was too steep a cost for the poor to bear.

## TALE AS OLD AS TIME

### KYNDAL THOMAS

She's on the bus with the rest of the guests. She's young by comparison and they see her as such.
Why wouldn't they? She's wearing a Fashion Nova jumpsuit to a wedding at Magnolia
Plantation and Garden. She's crying through the window. Everything hangs here, she thinks.
The moss, the water in the air, her father.

She thinks about her hair a lot throughout the small talk before the ceremony. She can feel the battle of humidity and product ravaging her baby hairs and fraying her ponytail. How do you wear your hair if you're not haunted by your father hanging here? she wonders. When it's time to take their seats, she takes note of the many red dresses. She heard that red was a faux-pas at southern weddings—a seductress'

choice. She's wearing green, like the soggy grass, the lichen on the trunks, the stagnant lake behind the happy couple. A string quartet begins to play "Tale as Old as Time." She cries

again. What color do you wear if here, your father is the beast, hanging, your mother is the beauty, wailing, and you the crime between them? At the end of the night a lady in red tells her how beautiful she looks in green and the mother of the groom caresses her boyfriend's arm and asks him to dance for her again.

ART VOL IV



THE RECORDING OF THINKING 4

JEREMY GLUCK

NON-FICTION VOL IV

# La dualidad ética ante la propia existencia

#### TONY VALVERDE

A Hidden Life narra la historia de Franz Jägerstätter quien se niega apoyar al régimen totalitarista nazi de Alemania en la segunda guerra mundial. Con este acto Franz busca generar conciencia, por este motivo él junto a su familia son rechazados y violentados constantemente en el pueblo que habitan, finalmente Franz es ejecutado por los nazis.

El cine de Terrence Malick es como una infusión, la cual hay que dejar reposar para luego digerir y así poder apreciar todo su aroma y sabor (contenido). En las películas del cineasta estadounidense, precisamente el espectador puede tener la experiencia de palpar el gusto por la variedad de sentidos presentes en sus filmes.

Estrenada en el 2019, es la película más reciente dirigida y escrita por Terrence Malick, la película está ambientada en la Alemania de la segunda guerra mundial. Se centra en la perspectiva ética y religiosa de los personajes marginalizados por la guerra.

Los largometrajes de Malick son hechos para un público en específico, son cintas que se toman su tiempo, precisan ser diluidas dentro del organismo o incluso dejar que penetren la dermis antes de generar comentarios o críticas, debido a su carga simbólica y belleza estética, la cual resulta densa.

NON-FICTION VOL IV

En *A Hidden Life*, Malick abarca infinidad de temas que se pueden condensar en dos conceptos: ética y supervivencia. Tiene como espacio de desarrollo la naturaleza, en contraposición con la ciudad de Alemania. La naturaleza aparece como el refugio, también en cierto punto como lo racional y divino, mientras que la ciudad es la cárcel; lo sanguinario, nada racional, un lugar para perder la fe o replanteársela.

En cierta forma este filme recuerda a Tarkovsky con su película Stalker, donde la naturaleza es ese escape a todo mal. Lo natural hace alusión a lo divino, es la conexión con lo místico. Las constantes tomas sobre el paisaje, la fauna, la flora, su clima; se puede sentir la tierra en las manos, el sonido de las ovejas, el pasto verde, el frío de la neblina, que sólo Franz sabe apreciar, los demás llenos de odio no pueden conectarse con la naturaleza.

El problema ético que plantea la película puede generar en el espectador compatibilidad y rechazo por Franz. En ocasiones su lucha es comprensible, pero en otras parece que su batalla es vana, orgullosa e insignificante. Este carácter de combatir por lo que a otros resulta "insignificante" es lo que le da su valor ético.

El priorizar la propia vida antes que una idea o acción ética, es otro aspecto por el cual no se genera empatía por Franz. La película no trata sobre el problema del bien y el mal, sino de lo que es correcto o incorrecto a los propios valores éticos, ¿Vale más salvar nuestra vida que defender una idea?

La fe religiosa católica juega un papel determinante durante la trama, es el motor que impulsa al protagonista a seguir adelante con su propósito, se critica los asesinatos a gente inocente por parte de los cristianos y el apoyo de la iglesia a legitimarlos. Además, hace una reivindicación al silencio de Dios, este mal (guerra) no lo genera el silencio de Dios, sino la indiferencia de los humanos ante lo que sucede.

El amor hacia el otro es la fuerza que une a la pareja de esposos protagonistas de esta trama. Es el vinculo por el cual se genera empatía hacia quienes están sufriendo. Franziska apoya a su esposo incluso cuando sabe que va a morir o que su familia es violentada, ahora son dos quienes se oponen.

Este morir por una causa recuerda a dos maestros, los cuales pueden ser pilares en la formación de Malick debido a sus estudios en filosofía y teología. Aparece Sócrates quien muere al beber cicuta cuando es condenado por la justicia griega, por corromper los ideales y religión helénica. Por otra parte, esta Jesús quien es crucificado por predicar ideas en contra del sistema religioso y político de su momento.

El sentido ético puede hacer alusión al filósofo alemán Kant y su particular ética, la cual proponía la verdad, el actuar como una máxima que se pueda convertir en universal antes que los sentimientos (motivo por el cual ha sido criticada dicha ética). El ejemplo más conocido para debatir esta ética es de imaginar solda-

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dos nazis entrando a tu casa donde tienes judíos escondidos, la máxima kantiana expresa que lo correcto debido al sistema político en el que se vive sería decir la verdad, pero como humanos que sentimos y generamos empatía lo correcto sería salvar las vidas humanas, incluso aunque pongamos en riesgo la nuestra, tal como lo hace Franz.

En conclusión, los largos planos secuencia, las perspectivas sutiles, pero estéticamente hermosas; nos hace penetrar en el mundo de sus protagonistas, sentirnos parte incluso de lo más nimio, la importancia de volver a los orígenes tanto éticos como de la naturaleza, recalcar las vidas ocultas, que ejercen una lucha sobre lo correcto de acuerdo con sus ideales.

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HESITANT TO MAKE A
STATEMENT
BRENNA ROGERS

# **JUST ANOTHER COVID POEM**

**ROSIE LEE** 

Korea sees COVID, sees public health crisis Sees learning from SARS and swine flu and MERS Sees 2 masks a week rations Sees 해외로 마스크 8개 이상 못보내고 게다가 넌 시민 아니라서 언니 이름으로 보낼수 밖에 없었어

Sees, Hell Hath No Fury Like a Korean Netizen Angered

America sees COVID? -- doesn't see COVID, denies its existence Sees massive inconvenience to money market Sees No Worse Than The Flu until it's not and then it's CCP Virus Sees overwhelmed hospitals and crumbling infrastructure as Head of the Clowns invites and encourages violence Sees Asia as post war pollution states and says, aren't we so lucky we're not like them?

Go back to China Take your cough back to Wuhan

It's your people's fault our economy is dying Move it, chink!

COVID doesn't care about race or ethnicity, sees only warm bodies to feed on Sees that food is food no matter what color the skin Sees opportunities in hate and chaos
Sees how easily people are fractured to bring the worst out in them

Tell me this is just another fucking snowflake's fucking COVID poem It was just another stabbing It was just another gun-cocked threat We should leave if we're so ungrateful We should be grateful we had a place at all

But what is the point of a reckoning if we do not reckon with who we are right now? What is the point of a plague like fire if it does not clear dead rotten ideas from our society?

What is the point of telling me to shut up
When I know you're not telling the panicking racists to stop panicking
When you accuse me of fearmongering?

So I will keep screaming these questions Keep reading Just Another COVID Poem at the top of my lungs Until it stops being Just Another Fucking COVID Poem ART VOL IV



# **YELLOW BATHROOM**

**ELIZABETH EVE KING** 

# **DON'T WRITE ABOUT ME**

### JENNIFER COMPANIK

She'd stopped counting after seven paper cuts.

Billing needed to go out by the end of the day. Katie had spent her morning folding hundreds of invoices and stuffing them into envelopes so that recipients' addresses showed in the plastic pane. She mostly daydreamed about the piece that would be published the following weekand the gushing things the editor had said about her work—while she stuffed.

Only the paper cuts jerked her back into the moment. Occasionally an invoice wouldn't slide all the way in, the address wouldn't show, and Katie would have to refold and re-stuff—scoring tiny bloodless slices into her un-calloused fingers that would sting each time she washed her hands.

Then the light bulb above her desk burnt out.

There was no ladder in the office—and even if there had been, Katie was not getting on a ladder in high heels or stocking feet. Her ancient desk may have been sturdy enough to hold her, but she wouldn't have bet on it. Her office, a former filing closet, had no windows and no other source of light. She considered dragging a floor lamp in, but when she found the only spare floor lamp, it was broken.

She sighed. The boss liked it dark.

She could work in his office while he was in court, but she hated the stale

coffee and sour milk smell of his desk. Also, he'd come back from court eventually, even if it was tomorrow, and she'd need to work at her own desk.

What would the boss do if he came back from court to find Katie benighted? He would call his son, the handy one, the one with a ladder. The lawyer who was happier building decks.

She had no wish to see the junior partner of the firm (who'd taken to working from home after the birth of his sixth child). They had a nanny, but he and his wife worked from their home office anyway.

Their absence had given dominion to a dilapidation of the office that had once only crouched in the corners.

It had also given Katie a break from A.J.'s unwanted suggestions—though not entirely. He was still IT. He was still the handyman. He still came by to say hello.

If Katie had not been a cynical woman when she took this job, she was now.

Katie stuffed her reservations down, and texted the boss' son: "The light above my desk went out. Not sure what kind of bulb it takes. And we don't have a ladder. And you could probably change it sitting down." A joke—a bit of flattery—because A.J. was tall, basketball tall, and leveraged his size whenever possible.

Had Katie used her charm throughout her life to gain the cooperation of men around her? Yes. Did that make her calculating? Yes. Only Katie had done the math and figured that even factoring the advantages of long legs and eyelashes,

she had still come out behind most of the men she knew. Take A.J., for example. He was smart, but not smarter than Katie. And where Katie hadn't known a lazy day in all her working life, A.J. was indolent. Did things when he wanted, if he wanted. Consequences got winded and collapsed before reaching him. Junior partner in his father's law firm. She could see the silver spoon sticking out of his mouth. So what if she slung an occasional double entendre to get the heavy lifting done?

She never took it very far. She didn't have to. Katie was beautiful in a way that made glib men stammer. A dark, South American beauty seldom seen in the outer exurbs of Chicago. A wink. A smile. An appeal to masculine pride: "Could I borrow your upper body strength?" almost always won her the cooperation she needed.

She drew double solid yellow lines well. Gracefully. "I'm married—so I'll just have to use my imagination... But thank you for the offer. Made my day."

Working with A.J. every day had been tough.

She'd found him physically attractive at first. She'd found herself flirting with him a bit harder than necessary.

But to be fair—in playground parlance—he started it. And she went along with it.

At first.

But Katie was, in fact, married. Wanted to stay married. Had found the best

man in the world and been wise enough and pretty enough to capture him. And Jason didn't care if she flirted. As long as she kept within their lane.

Katie had drawn the lines.

A.J. liked to trace them. With his fingers.

It had gotten to the point where it made her nervous. Decent men took "no" for an answer.

So now she had to maneuver around not decent.

And now she needed him.

He arrived, as he always did, in a mushroom cloud of cologne.

He'd brought no ladder.

"I need to stop at the store to get the right bulb anyway, so I thought I'd see what I need and pick up my ladder on the way back here."

Katie led him into her office.

He closed the door.

The room was completely dark.

She heard the slap of leather and metal clink of A.J.'s belt coming undone. A zipper. His breathing.

Katie moved toward the door to leave, but his body was in front of it, blocking it. A second door.

He'd never gone this far before. He'd chased her around, pulled her onto his

lap, grabbed her butt—that kind of thing. But nothing like this.

A surge of fear held her breath.

He pinned her left hand behind her back and grabbed her right hand with his left. "I've got your ladder right here," he said, and put her right hand around his erect penis and began jerking off.

She tried to break his grip. She could not break his grip.

Every paper cut felt like a stab wound.

"Stop!" She said, in the commanding voice she'd once reserved for badly behaved students.

"That's not why I asked you here!" In case he was confused. And because Sun Tzu said to always let your opponent save face.

He released her. Opened the door.

"Are you mad?" He asked, tucking his shirt, zipping his fly.

The door was open, but he was still blocking it.

Knowing her words were all that stood between her and a very large, very strong man who had just proven how little he cared about hurting her, she chose them carefully.

"I'm extremely uncomfortable right now," she said.

He let her pass.

But he followed her, grabbing at her hand and putting it on his erection.

"What do you get out of this?" She asked; reclaiming her hand, wondering if she could snap him out of whatever was motivating this.

"What do you get out of this?" He asked, like it was a game.

"Right now?" She said, with a nonchalance she did not feel: "Kind of a headache."

She walked to his dad's office, where there was light and more room.

She should have left.

But he would have followed her. He was parked next to her. He always parked next to her. It frightened her less to be in the office with him than somewhere else, where no one would think to look for her.

He shut the door to his dad's office, locked it, and unbuckled his pants again. Grabbed her hand again. Started jerking off again.

Her fear deepened. He could in no way be confused as to her lack of consent. The bells on the front door jingled.

The boss was back from court.

A.J. released her, zipped and buckled quickly. Unlocked the door. Click.

That was over. For now.

"What are you guys doing in here?" Big Arnold asked, wheeling his briefcase in behind him.

"I came by to change the light bulb in Katie's office. She was working in

yours because hers is a tomb."

"Go change it then. Katie, honey, can you go get me a cup of coffee?"

"Of course," Katie said, trembling, trying not to look like she was trembling. She went to the kitchen and washed her hands—gasping at the pain of a thousand paper cuts.

A long time passed before she stopped shaking.

What could she do?

She could not tell Jason.

He'd insist she quit. And if she refused? Might he not question the truth of her story? After all, Jason earned enough that Katie did not need to work. He might not understand why she would choose to stay at Mauvais & Mauvais, LLC. Jason, for all that he loved her, had never lost a job, never suffered long-term unemployment, never in his adult life depended upon someone else for money. How could a person who'd never lived without them, understand that it might be worse to lose her self-respect and independence than to keep a bad job she wasn't ready to give up? And definitely not on someone else's say so? Why should she complicate her marriage because A.J. was a criminal?

She couldn't tell Big Arnold.

She didn't know for sure that he would take A.J.'s side, but she didn't like her odds. There existed plenty of friction between Big Arnold and A.J. About money.

About how much A.J.'s wife loathed Big Arnold. And vice versa. But when things went especially wrong or right—he always called A.J. first. Why should she risk losing her first full-time job in three years job because A.J. was a criminal?

She couldn't go to the cops.

A.J. had grown up with the cops in this small town—and still played basketball with them. Katie remembered a time she inadvertently dialed 911 at the office, and how A.J. called sixty-two seconds later to ask what was wrong and to tell her which of his teammates was en route.

Also on his team: the County Prosecutor.

Her word against his.

Who was she? A writer with very few publications to her name. An outsider who'd lost her job teaching high school English—and been unable to find any other—because a series of nude photos she'd posed for in college (because she was broke and the job had paid well) had surfaced on the Internet fifteen years after they were taken.

She was sure the only reason Big Arnold had hired her was because he was too old to Google anything. Or else he'd found the photos and liked them.

She knew A.J. had seen them.

Her word against his.

But she couldn't live in fear. And right now she feared him.

She made coffee and filed papers and sent emails and thought for days. Katie was a girl Friday with a Master's degree. She had plenty of time to think.

She consulted her best friend, who raged for half an hour then guilted her about not calling the police. "Seriously, Katie! How can you not report him? He'll just go out and do this to someone else!"

Now it was on Katie to protect hypothetical women from a crime she didn't commit?

Katie crumpled up inside.

She pictured her life, filtered through A.J.'s mind, paraded before the cops, the court.

He could hurt her far more than she could hurt him.

She chatted anonymously online with an attorney in another state, who asked if she'd told the boss.

"The law contemplates an effort to report," he said.

"The boss is his dad," she said.

"You should find another job," said the attorney in another state.

Find another job? As though they handed them out on the street like playbills. This was the first job she'd ever had as a legal secretary. And, except for stuffing envelopes and fetching coffee, she didn't hate the work. The clients and cases stoked her imagination. The hours were reasonable. She could feel herself getting

better at the things Big Arnold needed besides hot coffee. She could see herself taking on more responsibility in a year. She had less than a year's experience. All the ads said minimum three years experience. And what kind of reference could she expect under the circumstances? She'd planned to work with Big Arnold until he retired—or someone offered her a better job. People don't hire strangers. Lawyers were, as a rule, fairly rapacious. She knew if she stayed long enough and polished her skills, someone with a broader budget and a less criminally inclined partner would notice—and poach her.

What could she do?

Katie could write. It was one thing she knew for sure she did well. After three months of dictating them to her—only to find she'd changed a word here and there on the most successful letters, Big Arnold let her write all his cease and desist letters because, as he put it: "I'm not sure why—but you write scarier letters than I do, Sweetheart." And then he'd laugh like it was terribly funny.

She would write to A.J. At the very least she'd start a paper trail. She could not undo the past, but she would not let him dictate her future.

Katie texted A.J.:

A.J.,

Last Wednesday made me uncomfortable and disappointed—but let me explain:

Re: Disappointed

I'm a flirt. That's just my personality. Now, I admit that I flirt a bit harder with you because you're attractive and you don't object. But when I text you for help at the office I'm not asking for "help", I'm asking for help.

So when you came by last Wednesday and I didn't have the light bulbs, I can see how that could seem disingenuous.

Not the case, A.J. Not the case.

I want to be able to flirt with you and enjoy the fantasy of adultery without doing any actual adultery. I want to brush against you in the hallway, play footsie under the table at parties, and stand too close when we talk. That kind of thing. Not the kind of thing you grabbed me for on Wednesday.

Wednesday tarnished the fantasy. If I wanted that from you, I wouldn't ask you to change a light bulb, I'd be completely unambiguous.

In no fantasy am I ever forced into anything.

Re: Uncomfortable

So when you grabbed my hand, despite my protests and my efforts to pull away—A.J. you are very physically powerful, I could not have pulled myself out of your grip—it reminded me of a bad time when I was a little girl with an uncle who liked to overpower me in a similar way.

## Prayer for Relief:

A. Don't do anything like that again and we don't need to mention this again.

B. Just text me back "motion granted" and it's back to a life of smiles.

Two days later, to Katie's surprise, he wrote back: "Yes, deal."

She exhaled for the first time in a week.

He could not do it again. She had proof. His own admission. She took screen shots and secreted them away in several safe places.

She had enough breath to whoop when her essay was published the following day. A memoir piece called "Let Me Tell You About the Bad Men I Have Kissed" in which she described, in full-freckled detail, the teachers who'd seduced her in

high school.

It wasn't a piece she could send to her mother, but it was published. And that was real. It didn't matter if anyone read it or not. Though, of course, she wanted people to read it.

A few days later, A.J. came by the office.

Katie hadn't expected to see him again so soon—or maybe ever.

He came straight to her office and closed the door.

She did not look up. Did not stop typing.

"I came to apologize."

Katie looked up, though she kept typing.

"Okay."

Click-clack-click-clack-click.

"I'm sorry about last week."

Katie sighed the sigh of a weary teacher instructing a slow-witted child.

"I told you, we don't have to talk about it ever again."

"I just thought—"

"I'm swamped, A.J. Thank you for apologizing. I gotta finish this letter."

Click-clack-click-clack-click.

"Sure. Right."

"Goodbye."

He turned to go. Was halfway out the door. Said over his shoulder: "Don't write about me."

Click-clack-click-clack-click.

"Mmm?" Katie hummed, with a nonchalance she did not feel.

He doubled back and stood, facing her, sporting his usual boyish dimples.

"Don't write about me in your stories," he repeated. His grin went flaccid. "Because the ladies—they read that shit."

Katie smiled. "Don't worry, A.J., I won't use your real name."

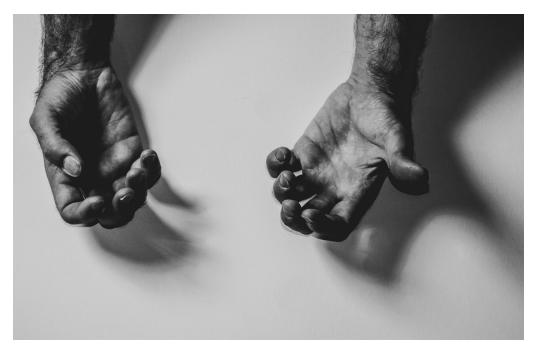
ART VOL IV



TIERRA MOJADA

**ALAN SERNA** 

ART VOL IV



THE RECORDING OF THINKING 3

JEREMY GLUCK

NON-FICTION VOL IV

## **EVERY PORTRAIT IS A SELF-PORTRAIT**

**REYES RAMIREZ** 

Not every narrative is true, and not every truth is a narrative. Journalistic images in the United States (US) surrounding Central Americans often serve the purpose of eliciting voyeuristic sympathy or racial ire. When the white gaze fixes itself on Central Americans and other people of color, there is a narrative. When a white photographer captures images of non-white peoples in distress or peace, there exists a power dynamic informed by history that looks down upon its non-white 'subject' in the name of 'empathy' or 'humanization.'

However, when you place power (the camera, in this case) in the hands of artists of color to depict people of color, whether it be Alvin Baltrop, Will Wilson, Lerato Dumse, Xyza Cruz Bacani, etc., there's a respect that can flourish because their portraitures, in many ways, are self-portraits. As James Baldwin once said, "Whenever you talk about anybody else, you reveal you." What does it say about America when it portraits Central Americans as it does currently? I think that's why I'm drawn to Jessica Ofelia Alvarenga's photography in her "Witness the Isthmus" exhibition that features portraits of everyday life for several Central Americans in Houston. In these captures of work, preparation, prayer, reminiscing, and celebration post-diaspora, there's a love that emanates in every frame that's absent in mainstream conceptions of Central Americans and their families.

Thus, there exists a devotion to both narrative and truth: Central Americans are capable of growth and utopian ideals in post-diasporas despite everything that happened/happens to them.

Before continuing, I'm not going to write about how art humanizes anything because it's never been true. For all the art by artists of color there exists, white people tend to ignore, appropriate or delegitimize it and continue enabling oppressive systems in academic, non-profit, and political contexts. Don't look for a unifying hope here, not for the white gaze at least. As of this writing, children are separated from their parents at the border and forced into detention camps where they face state-sanctioned abuse.

Most of the winners of the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography and Feature Photography are white photographers showing people of color in pain from around the world. You're probably thinking, "news photography and photography for artistic purposes cannot be judged on the same values." Right, but my point is that one sort pervades the other in terms of influence, support and manifestation into reality; by that last part, I mean that the US removed Temporary Protected Status designations from Central Americans out of racist fears and misconceptions. I'm not saying that one should not photograph suffering, but both can be true: a community suffers and thrives. Alvarenga's "Witness the Isthmus" exhibition understands that a 'witness' is not absolved of responsibility.

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The photographer bears responsibility in what they depict and how, and we, the viewer, either see ourselves in the photo or look upon it as outsiders. Either way, you do something, or you don't. If you witness suffering, are you complicit? What are you doing to stop it?

Let me note, though, Alvarenga features individuals of many backgrounds, ranging from El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama. Alvarenga's portrait of an Afro-Panamanian woman features another portrait within it, a glamour photo of the same Afro-Panamanian woman in her youth that she holds with pride. Alvarenga is not Afro-Panamanian, but the fact that she allowed the woman to choose her depiction enables a form of consent between camera and 'subject.' In Pulitzer Prize winning photos, there seems to be these moments that no one consents to that are captured for the world to see: a woman screams in horror as someone dear to her lies dead at her feet; a mother holds her dead baby's body to her own face; a Black boy bears his scar from a shooting; etc. What is valued? People of color in pain? People of color in their worst moments? For Alvarenga, it seems, the 'subject' has the power to craft their own narrative: the woman is gorgeous in the present and past and the future will be no different.

A set of photos I especially loved in 'Witness the Isthmus' follow a Salvadoran woman and her family. While "Witness the Isthmus" doesn't inherently possess a narrative, I can't help but create one. It begins, for me, with a portrait of

the Salvadoran woman in her blue janitorial uniform juxtaposed with a light-colored shed that she places her left hand on while her right hand rests upon a grey tilt truck. It's no "American Gothic." The woman is brown and looks into the camera as though saying, "This is me, y que?" You do not get to look upon this woman as someone to have sympathy for. She returns your gaze with contempt; you are either put off by this or empowered.

The second photo in my self-appointed series is the Salvadoran woman in her bedroom. She sits on the corner of a bed while, to her left, a child peeks out of the bed cover in her 'Frozen' pajamas. The Salvadoran woman is in her element, out of her work uniform and in jeans, a patterned purple top and gold hoop earrings, and surrounded by Salvadoran flags, three to be exact. White people are confounded when people of color display national flags that are not the American flag: "If you love that country so much, why did you come here?" It's something they won't understand, when your country is devastated and uprooted for the benefit of another; you cannot build a nation upon the oppression of a people without consequences. Here is a person who has prospered after a diaspora and maintains their connection to an identity before being American (whatever that means). It's utopian when you think about it: you move from one nation to another in hopes of living a better life, but you maintain your identity because you believe your identity is still salvageable, that there's value in it, that the best part

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of your nation and people exists through you. The American flag symbolizes a very specific identity that excludes, or at the very least demands erasure of, the history of people of color. If that's not the case, ask Puertorriqueños how American they feel right now. And once again, the Salvadoran woman looks at you with conviction: "Todo esto es mío, no importa y si te gusta."

The penultimate picture in my imagined series features the Salvadoran woman again, this time sitting side by side with her daughter in full quinceañera regalia. They are dressed in pink, surrounded by pink bows and flowers, white lace, and in front of a wooden fence. There's beauty where you can make it. The Salvadoran woman retains her signature smirk, but her daughter sports a blooming smile. This is all what it's for. Everything prior to this moment happened, for better or worse. But that's all any life and diaspora is, the movement between one moment to another.

The final portrait in this set is the daughter sitting by herself, still smiling. And I think this is at the heart of Alvarenga's portraits, that despite everything, it's ultimately to pass on something better, to build upon ruin and make it whole, whether it be a life or the histories of nations. It's a grimace that turns into a smile. Is it these moments that America is so bent on subverting? If you don't see how one of the greatest moral failings of our national project is the systemic sabotage of images like this, are you really looking at this portrait? If you only see

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the suffering, you never get what it's all for. Alvarenga's eye in capturing narratives and truths that span generations is what pushes the limits of what photojournalism and art can do: capturing the moment and the truth. Alvarenga does this, I think, because she, and I, depend on these things to be true, that we can flourish despite everything. You see, every portrait is a self-portrait because you have to see yourself as a 'subject,' or else you're just looking at a picture of a thing. Through these pictures, something of me has been revealed. You?

I'm not saying Alvarenga's work humanizes her subjects, nor that it's incumbent upon her work to combat media depictions of diasporic peoples; I'm saying that there's magic, love, thriving, nourishment, beauty and hope in every action of a diasporic peoples because there entire worlds and existences in each moment that will build to something larger always and here's the fucking proof to remind me that this is all what it's really for. In fact, as I wondered at Alvarenga's work, I had to ask myself: if all this beauty can be done under heavy oppression, dehumanization, and violence, what can we accomplish when we're finally free?



THE RECORDING OF THINKING 2

JEREMY GLUCK

# **CABIN SHOCK**

**GABRIELLA IACONO** 

# for Michael

O brother where art thou thigh and bone you drive for?

Where art thou hard consonant sounds cut up to your gut held

together by a pin. Click and unclicking a phantom into your mouth

each time you tell

and retell an eighteen wheeler plowing ahead

full speed full drunk and you were going to quit that day that day

a body quit. hmmm. I your new sister staring into your skull

a keloid fashioned by grafting itself into a bubble. O brother

where art thou soft hisses? Soft as sun shine eternal on scratched cornea soft

as side snap struck jammed jolt cells city fleeting so quickly soft solid.

O brother you say it is so simple to see an ache worn flesh colored you say

we should talk to our throb as friends do learn its name and tame and tame. ART VOL IV



TIERRA SAGRADA ALAN SERNA

### RICK OF GIBRALTAR

#### DANIEL O'REILLY

Brexit happened overnight, only I was sound asleep when it actually occurred. The following morning, though groggy from my long drive to Zaragoza, I noticed a distinct change in the way things are—that's for sure. Non-existent, yet undeniable changes. Every time I reached for something, it seemed to be just out of reach. My hand went to the nightstand for a glass of water, but failed to find its object. My hand grasped at the door handle, missed and clutched at air. I placed my phone on the table for a moment, but it took forty minutes for my hand to locate it again. Stupid hand. It's as though I was perpetually miscalculating the distances between things, or like the things themselves had become displaced, somewhat—but only by a fraction of an inch. And who can tell me the fraction of an inch? Perhaps my friend, Rick of Gibraltar—

Upon further reflection I considered that perhaps the objects were simply avoiding contact with me—as though our relationship had become slightly displaced, soured, distant even. I felt that the growing de-calibration of my hand-eye coordination had become an irreversible trend, and would most likely spread to other areas of my life. For instance, only the previous day, (and when, coincidentally, I was still a member of the European Union,) on my way up to the high plateau on the road to Zaragoza, I took a wrong turn on the motorway—but only

slightly wrong. Just a slight miscalculation, and then everything seemed wrong.

Tucked behind my steering wheel, cruising along the AP-2 into Zaragoza, pleasantly distracted by The Beatles' White Album on CD, and all of a sudden the motorway divided in two. It wasn't, however, a distinct separation like at a regular junction or whatever, it was as though the road had not been finished and had moved too far to the right. There were no signs, no chevrons to indicate the sudden displacement, just a sudden decision—this way or that way—lay ahead, and the briefest of hesitations led me to dither in that moment, neither here-northere, before impulsively applying clockwise pressure on the wheel and electing to take the wrong branch—the dead branch—off the road to Zaragoza.

At the time my mistake did not appear so significant (and permanent) as now I believe it to be; after all, it's an everyday occurrence to go the wrong way sometimes. All you have to do is, once you've recognised the fault, you go ahead until you can turn around safely, and then you drive back and rejoin the main road again so as to continue along your sensible way. But I was unable to do this—I don't know why—and for reasons I found myself unable to define. My commitment to this way, once made, seemed too strong, too resolute—like my driving was a refusal to acknowledge I had made a wrong turn whatsoever.

Upon reflection, my error wasn't surprising—not when you know what I am like. Distracted—hypnotized, even—by the tail lights of a long-distance truck

in front, I sailed right on through a small town with a dangerous slip road, past kilometers of rocky, untillable fields overlooked by ancient agricultural buildings which stood gauntly against the greying sky; past weird hills and caves, small forests, a brook here and there; past rows of abandoned industrial sites studding the road like milestones; huge, disintegrating buildings entirely covered in graffiti. Continuing past a failed motorway service station, then another, then a failed hotel, a failed resort complex, a failed poultry business, a failed diner. Or maybe it was I who had failed? At life, I mean, or at something else—something I was not even aware of? Something my intellect was just too restricted, too blunt to apprehend? I reflected on this thought as I slipped past one defunct business after another. This was certainly the dead road to Zaragoza, and I had the trick to see it.

'Shall I arrive in time?' This thought persisted through the hills and valleys, the forests as I passed. Sudden raindrops on the windscreen, a light spray of water from the asphalt, lights flicker hesitantly on—

The right hand edge of the road is lined by dry, low mountains eroded by wind and extreme heat exposure. Swift hawks dart between elegantly sculpted cliffs, looking for shrews, young rabbit—

That night, after eventually arriving at the Airbnb in Zaragoza (after a protracted and needless drive all over the high plains of Aragón), I collapsed onto the sofabed in the main habitación of the little room I rented for the occasion and

began scrolling through the channels on the massive TV in the front room. My interest eventually settled on a reality show depicting crack cocaine smokers in Madrid. Three scrawny, toothless men and a woman shuttle around the outskirts of the city in a shabby MPV smoking crystals obtained by the driver, the car being in effect his mobile crack den. They chuff away on their pipes every few minutes—whenever they hit a red light—and then off they go again. The woman, it appeared, had a very large hand. After a little time passed, after the crystals were all used up, they disbanded and dispersed again, until tomorrow. I recalled thinking that I should like to have a detailed map of their peripatetic route; of their stops, their starts. I was curious as to the way things go. I curious about stops and starts.

The following morning, after Brexit, I awoke to the sound of the local waste disposal team clattering about and amiably speaking to a dog-walker in the street outside my window. I got up and after a little breakfast made my way alone along the river Ebro, then across the great iron bridge and onward to the cathedral square and my destination; the Goya museum.

Illuminated in dark, glass cases are indescribable images printed onto paper. Deleted scenes from a life—

In one of the plates from his book of engravings entitled Los desastres de

la guerra<sup>1</sup> and dated 1811, Francisco Goya sketched a group of starving women who have fled post war, famine-ravaged Zaragoza and taken shelter in a derelict ruin in the countryside outside the city—where two of their number already lay dead from their intolerable journey. The countryside I drove so aimlessly through yesterday was no doubt the scene of such ravages. The title of the engraving—No llegan a tiempo.<sup>2</sup>

I notice another woman in the scene—not visible at first—emerging like a stain from the rags of another; a dark shape profoundly weakened, desperate—a shadow, not a woman at all—just a few inky lines and an emptiness. There is something horrific, something worming, in this slight woman. The same woman years before, strolling through the marketplace and taking-in fresh, springtime air, a skip in her step, and a blush, handsome even—she may have appeared then somebody quite else—

After the exhibition, after a brief café solo at a bar, after walking aimlessly through well-kept streets I found the images from Goya's pen etched onto my mind. A clammy mass of people, vulgar faces, the whole horror of the human spectacle appeared from a fleeting stroke: several lines, a loop, a wash; monsters

<sup>1</sup> The Disasters of War

<sup>2</sup> They do not arrive in time

from behind a lady's dress. aborted fetuses collected in a basket. the garrotted priest tied to a post in the square; a tree illuminated with torches and draped with cloth in such a way as to look like a god or a scarecrow; men flying away on batlike machines off into the night without a 'how' or a 'why'; soldiers violating vulnerable women; mutilated corpses displayed on trees; witches flying up and away. I noticed in many of the most effective engravings that there is always some weird mass, something deeply upsetting; a tumor, or chrysalis perhaps; something emerging, not fully formed, but already dangerous, brutal, or harmful in some way. Whether they are gods or ghosts, or only the men who stand behind them, behind their faces—

That evening I made a rendezvous with my friend, Rick of Gibraltar. I conveyed to him these same sentiments as related to you already, above—

## **BECAUSE I ECONOMIZED MY RELATIONSHIP**

**GABRIELLA IACONO** 

it's hard to follow the logic of a beautiful stupid mouth. my ex-lover once tried explaining how a Malbec makes yellowing teeth turn blue, and why carnival tents are bound to pop-up in storm torn towns. collapse is inevitable, like a drink in my hand and hers, like us both slinking toward bed leaving behind the debris of our deluge, to be gathered in each other's arms the next morning. lovers are always left decoding the moments after a surge recedes, the promises they yawned through. I hope that in your last few eye blinks you will hold me and my name in your mouth, tasting the mineral and familiar.

ART VOL IV

PAGE 60 MALGORZATA MARTY ZYCH



ART VOL IV

### **WE USED TO**

#### ANNA MARIA MORRIS

We used to ride bicycles through Sunnyside a part of Houston that felt like a second home my home granny's home tucked away in a quieter part of town.

Funny how for black people all our grandparents live in the same neighborhood. Like how they once segregated the hoods my granny's neighborhood

a community of color my color my granny somehow she know everyone my family

We lived in Third Ward, before and during, when the dense white fog covered the lots of duplexes shotgun houses and corner stores

we used to walk to.

Texas sun reflecting waves
in our gaze from the pavement
my skin glowing but my thighs
remind me of children's hands after funnel cake.

Feet and bicycles the main forms of transportation the faint scent of swisher sweets and burning charcoal chain link fences becoming best friends with ivy and crabgrass growing as tall as the new condominiums.

We used to play cops and robbers before my hands our own hands could be mistaken. As a weapon people knock on my parent's door inquiring about "potential sales."

Funny how people used to be afraid of the tre how quickly facial expressions shifted if a grocery cart of aluminum cans pushed by or a glimpse of the basketball hoop with no net caught their attention.

My neighborhood a historically black neighborhood multiple lots, of now, vacant houses marked with black X's awaiting a steel monster.

Different from the one my granny encountered the "idea" of racial zoning.
Funny how black people flipped a neighborhood and created a community.
My community growing larger.

Expanding its reach south becoming closer in proximity to other neighborhoods white neighborhoods that somehow always migrated further away the closer we got especially after Brown V Board.

We used to play outside with my neighbors before developers started looking around before the white neighbors moved in before the cops were called by Karens before the city began to care about our streets before the university gained all this attention before the pandemic.

We used to just be kids black kids but still kids.

## THE DANCE OF DEATH

#### LYNNE PHILLIPS

I watched your birth and for several seconds you didn't breathe. I thought your soul was mine. A diligent midwife snatched victory from me.

"Come on, little boy, your mamma loves you," she persisted as she slapped and shook you. With a cry, you protested and entered the world of the living.

I missed that first chance, but I remained on the perimeter of your life. I lingered in the background, watching, waiting, always ready to claim you. As a curious three year old you couldn't resist the fascination of the bright blue dragonflies that flitted above the dark murky waters of the fish pond. "Pretty dragonflies," you laughed and leaned in too far.

Your vigilant sister prevented me from claiming you as your body sank below the surface.

"No, Max, I love you," she sobbed as she frantically pumped the water from your lungs.

You sputtered and took a deep breath. I gnashed my teeth with frustration realising I had lost again.

I followed you to school when you were ten and watched with delight when you got off the bus and ran straight across the road.

I rubbed my hands as the paramedics bundled you into the ambulance.

For three weeks you lay in a coma and I floated above your bed, watching, waiting, hoping, but once again you fooled me. I ranted and raved when your parents took you home.

At seventeen, the first time you made love to your sweetheart, your heart stopped for a few seconds. The bliss on your face gave me hope that you would join me but then she touched your shoulder. "I love you," she whispered. You turned to her and I had lost once more.

Age twenty, you joined the army. Five years later you were sent to Korea to fight. "Now you will be mine," I gloated. Many times I sat on your shoulder as you returned enemy fire but you pushed me aside. You returned home two years later strong but damaged.

I lay beside you in the gutter one dark, wet night. Succumbed to the horrors of war, you drink to drown the memories. Rain pelted down, thunder and lightning shattered the night. It was a perfect night to die. I reached out to take your hand, but the paramedics snatched you from my grasp.

"Alcohol poisoning," they agreed and rushed you off to the emergency room. You were lucky to survive. I wept with despair.

Grateful to be saved, you rallied; got off the booze and got a job. I hated you for your strength to recover.

Your life became uneventful. You married your childhood sweetheart, had

children and were content. You glimpsed my visage through near misses whilst driving but mostly you played the life game safe.

At 58, the doctor diagnosed you with lung cancer. I shouted, "At last, all those cigarettes had taken their toll. Now it's my turn to win."

The surgeon looked grim, "We'll be able to operate if the cancer hasn't spread." Once more I was thwarted. You embraced a healthier lifestyle and lived a long and satisfying life. Bored, I moved back into the shadows and bided my time.

You grew old; ninety-three, a good age, they say. Last week you fell and broke your hip. "The prognosis is not good Mr. Keneally," your doctor said. "I will give you something for the pain."

After a week the doctor increased the morphine.

"Im sorry, that's all I can do for you," he explained.

"Thank you," you replied, not caring.

I sat beside you in the nursing home. When your family visited I moved away to allow them their final goodbyes.

When we were alone I held your hand and introduced myself. "My name is Death. I have been your companion on your journey of life. Would you like me to explain the final steps?"

You acknowledged with a nod and we practiced the steps together.

The sun rose, it was a beautiful day. I stretched out my hand and you placed your hand in mine. You were grateful for my support. We embraced and finally enjoyed the dance of death together.

ART VOL IV

**SCREW** MIKE KNOWLES

### CRUCES

### José Eduardo Sánchez

(In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.)

what does it feel like to be canonized as a child? to be cursed with wanting to have the word?

CREED.

i believe

that on your tongue—those steps still drag

brushing

trail-

ing

that in your soul—those waters still ravage subtle insidious

S U D D E N L Y (SUDDENLY.) M A N I F E S T I N G (MANIFESTING.)

that on your body with your b o d y of your b o d y

these steps

these waters

writepoetry

breaking line by line with sharpened words the flesh of your flesh the blood of your blood

SLAUGHTER.)

leaving detritus of couplets and tercets

HEMORRHAGE.)

soaking puddles

with meters and rhythms A P O E M (APOEM.)

is heard and translated

WAILING (WAILING.)

it is not pain it is surrender it is not pleasure it is conquest

a poem becomes a prayer.

AMEN.

+++

oh mother, who never taught me how to pray in english because english never brought you any closer to god you though the roods in the desert were welcomes but they turned out to be warnings signs

dios te salve, the water reaches your jawline dios te salve, you hide from the helicopter lights dios te salve, the needles pierce your brown skin dios te salve, you send your blood to the wash

in our roods there is no triumph.

AMEN.

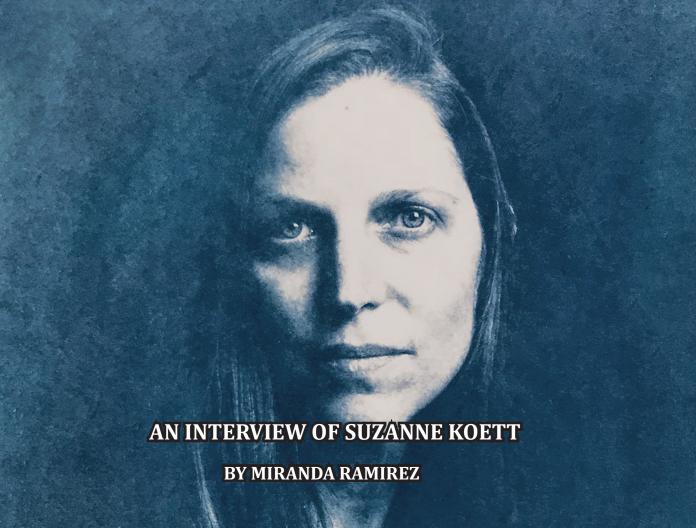
+++

what does it feel like to see your mother prostrate to empire? to know your body is poetry and prayer?

never forget that the first conquest was paradise and we are the poor, banished children of eve; a mother's faith was enough to make us holy but her crossing could not make us free

never forget that in the beginning was the word and the word was always empire a serpent's tongue was our first language but now we pray thy kingdom come.

A M E N.——



INTERVIEW VOL IV

**Miranda Ramirez (MR):** Have you always known you would become a professional artist/how did you find yourself on this professional path?

**Suzanne Koett (SK):** I think I've always known I need to have the practice of making art in my life because it helps me process things. Making art has really helped me get unstuck in many life situations, to see my own strengths and areas for improvement, and has allowed me to have a deep and authentic relationship with all of the selves and shadow selves I've had in this lifetime so far. I've been able to fully integrate them into my art. So I really do make art first and foremost for myself. Then it becomes for other people and has universal meaning. I make a point to show this work because I believe we are all interconnected and experience a shared human condition. Our grief, power, joy, love, and anger might be similar but probably looks very different visually, and that is interesting to me and worth sharing. We are all bravely existing in a very unbalanced world—some of us bearing the burden of that even more so.

**MR**: Have you ever been formally trained? If so do you believe it is a necessity for a professional artist?

**SK:** Photography grabbed me at 14 years old, more specifically, black and white film

**INTERVIEW VOL IV** 

photography - there were no digital cameras yet. I continued taking film photography and art classes in high school and decided to study art in college. I skipped around and attended a couple of colleges all along the West coast and ended up

graduating from San Francisco State University in 2001 with a degree in Studio Art (concentration in photography). My last year of college I did an independent study class and taught myself Photoshop 5.5 (Year 2000 software!). I was definitely formally trained in black and white film photography, color film photography, printing in the darkroom, and learning how to make conceptual work.

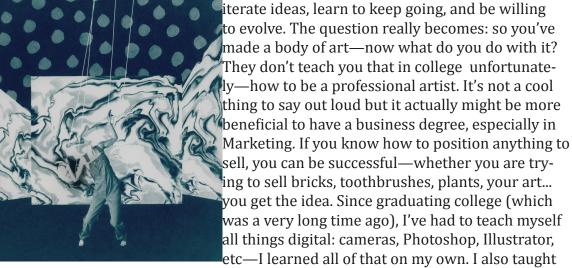
While I think it is helpful for someone to take classes in art, especially the foundation and theory to help get you started, I don't think it's needed to become a professional artist. All that you really need is to possess a desire to learn, be fairly self-generated in your learning and have ideas to make art. Both

Track 14: Saturation

SUZANNE KOETT

formally trained artists and self-made artists need the ability to fail in their ideas,

INTERVIEW VOL IV



**Track 2: Someone's** myself how to make digital negatives and the Cyanotype and Vandyke brown alternative process. I've taken Marketing classes as well because to

be honest I'm great at making bodies of work, but promoting them not so much. Still trying to improve on that!

**MR:** You state on your site that you are an art educator—Do you teach within an academic setting or within the community? Or both?

**SK:** At the moment I'm not teaching, but I was a photography and International Baccalaureate Art teacher for seven years in Austin. I absolutely loved teaching teenagers. There has been no greater experience than helping to shape and form a young person's mind and to help bring their artistic vision to life. My students were so insanely good and it was the combo of their own ideas and dedication mixed with my ability to fully see them, encourage and love them, and intuitively know how to facilitate that for each of them. I got pretty burnt out though - I think it was the mix of putting 200% in and working in an unstable place that had dramatic changes for years. I'm not good at playing politics, I don't understand how that works, and it doesn't help that I question authority. That's probably why I love working with teenagers!

I don't think I'm interested in teaching at a school setting, but I am considering running film photography workshops in Austin when this pandemic eventually goes away. The last four years I've returned to shooting only film photography, and it brings me pure joy to develop a roll of film in my darkroom or make prints. It seems

like there's been a resurgence in film photography, so the timing might be right for that sort of workshop offering.

**MR:** You say that you have trouble marketing your work, but we recently had the joy of publishing a number of your prints. This leads me to ask—what do you consider marketing the work? Do you often submit for publication or do you lean more to the gallery side of things?

**SK:** Years past I haven't spent much time promoting and submitting my artwork for publication. Just recently I've intentionally focused on submitting my artwork for publication. So I was super honored and excited to be featured in Defunkt! It's a newer practice for me, and typically I'll show work in group gallery shows. Something that I really appreciate about publication is the collective effort that it takes, and it feels tangible and permanent.

**MR:** In specific consideration of the body of work entitled, TO RECORD ONLY WATER FOR TEN DAYS you immersed yourself in the creative works of another artist, a famous musician John Frusciante most commonly known for his time with the Red Hot Chili Peppers. However, this body of work is drawn from his solo endeavors—an album of the same name, To Record Only Water For Ten Days. From this inspiration you created an amazing body of mixed-media photographic works, in your own

words they are, "Digital and film photographs, scanned drawings/paintings, psychedelic backgrounds made in Illustrator and Photoshop, and scanned hand-made Suminagashi [which] were arranged into digital collages." This inspires two queries—Do you often seek artistic influence from other media, such as music? Do you also feel that this desire is rooted in your belief in the interconnectedness of humanity? Does completing a body of work such as this one heighten that sensation for you personally?

**SK:** Listening to music is a main influence of where I get most of my ideas. I grew up playing piano, guitar, and bass; and MTV and VH1 music videos practically raised me. Understanding the energy that occurs when instruments are played sets me up emotionally to be able to take in music. The visual narratives I grew up seeing in music videos probably led me to be able to create my own and apply it to any music that moves me. Most of my artwork titles (with the exception of the documentary work) are all named after song titles.

I think that literature, poetry, music and sound art, all forms of visual art, film, and dancing are ways we can relate and learn about each other, which in turn leads us to be more empathetic and understanding of each other instead of judgmental and fearful. That all results in interconnectedness. In art we can see or hear each oth-

er's freedom and oppression, joy and anger, fullness of life and grief. By nature, I'm

a highly empathetic person, so hearing or seeing other people's expression of life tends to resonate with me in a powerful way.

Completing TO RECORD ONLY WATER FOR TEN DAYS was pretty laborious. It is an emotionally heavy album for sure. My interpretation of Frusciante's album is that he was rebuilding himself after completely losing himself to years of addiction. There seems to be elements of spiritual dimensions and the shadow self highlighted in his lyrics. Sonically, its simplistic, yet [the] instruments are beautifully layered. Frusciante's influences at the time of making the album were German Krautrock bands and



**Track 12: Representing** 

SUZANNE KOETT

New Wave bands, so this inspired some of the design elements in the artwork. And when I make art it is because I am personally stuck on something in my own life

that I am trying to move through, process, or demystify. So this album allowed me to make 15 pieces of art where I was basically opening a psychological can of worms: working through historical trauma, disassociation, shining light on my shadow self, learning how to process all of that, and learning how to integrate it. I started this body of work shortly before turning 40, and, after completing it, I basically feel as though I have new skin and much greater self-compassion. Watch out for 40 y'all!

**MR:** You have used the term shadow-self, can you define what that is for me? In your opinions are there two opposing senses of self within us all?

**SK:** We easily display the parts of ourselves that our ego wants others to see, and we usually hide the parts of ourselves that we don't want to see or others to see. I think of the shadow self as certain parts of ourselves that we carry some sense of shame about or don't want to admit to having. But it's important to integrate all aspects of yourself and carry a sense of awareness because the more we keep things in the dark, the more they tend to fester and bubble over. For example, if I'm feeling really angsty or pissed off about injustice in a situation or the world—and if I'm at the point where I want to rage against the machine so to speak, it's usually the teenage part of myself that was never healed. That reaction is what I look at, that trigger so I am aware of where it's coming from. Through self compassion, I've learned to love

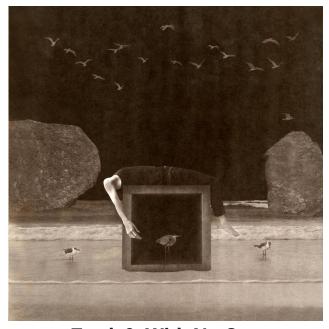
that part of myself and integrate it into healthier ways through action and curiosity. Now when I get pissed off, I call Texas Senators and representatives (they are on speed dial), I sign petitions, I support causes. Since I was a little kid I've never been able to just fall in line and that has made things hard for me at times. I have wished countless times I could switch off my brain and accept something even though it made no sense—I have felt weird and alone in this. At the same time I do believe it's really important to question authority, not fully trust authority, question process, question our institutions, offer solutions—we need people like this in society who question things. So part of my shadow self is something that gives me pause about my personality, but it's also something that I know exists and have self compassion for.

**MR:** What are you currently working on? What is on your horizon?

**SK:** I'm currently working on a project called P A N D E M I C. Since March 20th I've been photographing friends quarantined in their homes in Austin. I chose to work with 120mm film that produces 6x7cm negatives and photograph people using a Mamiya 7 (a medium format film camera). In general I enjoy shooting with film more—it allows me to be really present, connect to my subjects, and be much more intentional because film is expensive. Typically, this might be a photographer's worst

nightmare having no idea what the lighting will be like, if the location will work or not, not really directing much, and not having a safety net (aka using digital) to make sure the pictures come out okay. It's actually been one of the things I've enjoyed the most about this project—going into something and having no control whatsoever. Very much like this situation we are all in. I think I'm winding down and finishing next week, I'll have around 60 photos. I've also been writing daily along with the photos which is very new for me. Topics either originate from stream of consciousness or it might be something I've talked to a friend about, and I'll write based off of that prompt. Most of the writing is asking who we are as individuals as well as a society and wondering if we will change from this. Nearly two months later, I really hope people are paying attention to who is actually dying in the US at the highest rates—indigenous and minority populations, the disabled, immunocompromised, and elderly populations. That is the biggest cause for alarm.

My plan is to make a book and figure out self publishing options or work with a small photography book publisher. Might be bad timing since the economy is tanking, but I'll design it and look into things at the very least. Hopefully at some point I'll have a show of the photographs when things get back to "normal" (whatever that means). I'll probably continue making more work based on what's happening right now. I do wholeheartedly believe that making art even without a "robust economy"



Track 9: With No One SUZANNE KOETT

## **VISUAL ART CONTRIBUTORS**

Jeremy Gluck is currently working on an MA in Arts is an expatriate Canadian, UKbased intermedia artist who mainly works with contemporary strategies. By rejecting an objective truth and global cultural narratives, Gluck creates work in which a fascination with the clarity of content and an uncompromising attitude towards conceptual and minimal art often collides with ambiguity and concealment, merging the banal and poetic in novel ways. The work is aloof and systematic and a cool and neutral imagery is used, obscuring a subtext speaking to process as practice. In his work he tries to enfold concepts and realities and involve the viewer in a way that is physical and authentic to function following form in a work. His background is multidisciplinary, spanning, writing, music, and art. Inspired by Gustav Metzger, the Fluxus artists, Bacon, William Burroughs, and the Beats, his aspiration is to communicate visually so that the viewer is part of a unitive, experiential energetic annihilation of space, place and meaning. Jeremy Gluck has exhibited in London, Sydney, and Swansea, and has been curated this year for the Bath Arts Fringe, and SHIFT (Glasgow) festivals.

**E.E. King** is a painter, performer, writer, and biologist - She'll do anything that won't pay the bills, especially if it involves animals. Ray Bradbury called her stories, "marvelously inventive, wildly funny and deeply thought-provoking. I cannot recommend them highly enough." King has won numerous various awards and fellowships for art, writing, and environmental research. She's been published widely. Her books include Dirk Quigby's Guide to the Afterlife. King was the founding Director of the Esperanza Community Housing's Art & Science Program, worked as an artist-in-residence in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sarajevo and the J. Paul Getty Museum's and Science Center's Arts & Science Development Program. Her landmark mural, A Meeting of the Minds (121' x 33') can be seen on Mercado La Paloma in Los Angeles. King has also painted murals in Cuenca, Spain and in Tuscany, Italy. She's worked with children in Bosnia, crocodiles in Mexico, frogs in Puerto Rico, egrets in Bali, mushrooms in Montana, archaeologists in Spain, butterflies in South Central Los Angeles, lectured on island evolution and marine biology on cruise ships in the South Pacific and the Caribbean, painted murals in Los Angeles and Spain.Mr Tractor Inspector is an aspiring but unsuccessful artist drawing monochromatic comics and occasionally getting involved in secret street art projects. Most of his art is open to interpretation.

Art has always been part of **Malgorzata Marta Zych's** life, but she only decided recently to focus fully on practicing visual arts. Her practice is still in development and her professional career as an artist is just beginning. Her main focus is on abstract canvases, collages and installations. She uses various techniques and materi-

als, including acrylic, cement, glass, pastel and watercolour. She works in series and usually starts from sketches, which she refers back to and uses as a base for choosing materials. In this particular times of isolation and very very limited access to workspace and materials, she decided to go back to the basics and start Quarantine Diaries, which she shares couple of images from.

**Mike Knowles**, this poor soul, spent over 40 years working mainly in comics, along with TV, Radio, animation and gonzo-style journalism for a "top-of-the-shelf" magazine, along with odd spells as a digital artist. Finally, there were the three gruesome years writing gags for comedians (even though they begged me not to. But what did THEY know about humour), in which he was subjected to the thick fug of cigarette smoke that permeated the working men's clubs.

**Brenna Rogers** desires a connection to the world and has achieved this through art. She can reconnect with herself and discover new hidden layers already here. Discovering our identity can be crippling and confusing. When people place or force identities on a person it can drastically change their state for the worse. The process of connecting to our own identity is one of the great journeys we can pursue and it is one she is currently on. Outside of making artwork, she loves drag and music, and Rogers is currently a senior at the University of Houston.

When **Donna E Perkins** was still small enough to stand in the church pew, her parents gave her paper and pencil to keep her quiet during services. In junior high she was given oil paints. Donna has been drawing and painting ever since. After earning a Master's Degree from the University of Houston at Clear Lake, she taught art in public schools for 20 years. In 2008 donna joined Archway Gallery, an artists' collective. Donna is primarily an abstract painter with a passion for social justice. No Más Muertes is an art piece created as part of a collaboration with author Margo Stutts Toombs (Compassion at the Border). It is a 35 x 35" acrylic and charcoal, with traced hand and foot prints of various immigrants (friends and associates of perkins). Acrylic and paper transfers of words in Spanish and English are embedded in thick, rough clear gesso, on an un-stretched, frayed canvas

**Alán Serna** is a mixed media artist from Huanusco, Zacatecas now living and working in San Antonio, TX. In 2018, Serna earned his Master of Fine Arts degree in Intermedia from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2015 from the University of Texas at San Antonio where he is currently a professor of painting, and foundations. Alán also serves as Master Printer for Feral Editions, a collaborative press that Serna and his partner Madison Cowles Serna co-founded in 2014.

**Mr. Tractor Inspector** is an aspiring but unsuccessful artist drawing monochromatic comics and occasionally getting involved in secret street art projects. Most of his art isopen to interpretation.

Robert M.Scheiderman is a writer and a visual artist residing in New Jersey at the NJ Shore. Robert worked in the marine construction industry as a diver before returning to school in 2003, at which time he began working as a substitute teacher in Marine Science and as a paraprofessional with gifted & talented high school aged students at the Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science (MATES) located in Stafford, NJ. He is a lifelong, self-taught artist who has taken only occasional course work to help sharpen his skills. During this time, Robert completed his BA in the Bachelor's Program at the New School for General Studies in New York, NY. He most recently completed the Master of Arts & Letters program at Drew University. Robert works mainly in paint with watercolor and acrylics, pen and ink, found objects and assemblage. He has been in several shows over the years, but has only recently began to seek out a larger audience.

**Danielle Wirsansky** is a photographer whose main interest is telling stories through her work. Her photography has been published in such publications as The Weird Reader, Genre: Urban Arts Magazine, Sad Girl Review, Anti-Heroin Chic Magazine, Bleached Butterfly Magazine, and more. To learn more about her work, visit www.DanielleWirsansky.com.

## **POETRY CONTRIBUTORS**

**Gabriella Adriana Iacono** is a writer and artist. She is a recipient of the 2016 Mayapple Fellowship, the 2020 Round Top Fellowship, and an Imprint Fellow. A transplant from Staten Island, New York, she is an MFA candidate at the University of Houston. Iacono currently teaches for Writers in the Schools and at the University of Houston.

**Rosie Lee** writes emotionally evocative spoken word poetry based on her lived experience as a Korean American, and she dabbles in prose in her free time. This inaugural submission of her work for publication marks a milestone she's dreamed of since she was twelve.

Anna Maria Morris is a local artist currently based in Houston, TX. Despite being a writer for most of her life, Anna Maria didn't start performance poetry until May 2017 after a college professor suggested reading her work at a guest lecture. Since then, she has performed at various open mics, slams, and features. Her most recent performances have been at Slam Mania II and Black Excellence Open Mic both events by Write About Now Poetry. In addition to poetry, Anna Maria is an actor with a background in live theater performance.

While in undergrad she published an introduction and devising for new play adaptation Woyzeck, On and On by Nick Lantz in 2016.

**Eryn O'Neal, PhD**, is a criminologist and emerging creative writer who has published research in a variety of scholarly journals, including Justice Quarterly, Violence Against Women, and Journal of Interpersonal Violence. Her fiction and satire has appeared or is forthcoming in DUM DUM, High Shelf Press, Glass Mountain Magazine, and an anthology edited by feminist writer, Ariel Gore. In 2019 she received the Lillie Robertson Prize in creative nonfiction for her work, "Rape Cris-ish," a satirical piece highlighting problematic societal and institutional responses to sexual violence. Eryn is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Sam Houston State University. She has received six national awards for her research contributions to the study of gender and crime. She is currently working on a bookette/zine, forthcoming from Microcosm Publishing.

**José Eduardo Sánchez** is a queer, immigrant artist, cultural organizer, language worker, and popular educator. His collaborative experiments with language and space, including writing and translation, have appeared at the Hammer Museum at UCLA (2016),

Pacific Standard Time (2017), ALOUD at the Los Angeles Public Library (2018), El Zócalo at the Alley Theater (2019), and Border Tuner at the Rubin Center at UTEP (2019). He is currently working on Notas Jotas, an arts and literary community intervention centering LGBTQ+ Latinx voices, through a grant from The Idea Fund. Sánchez is also a 2020 PRH-KGMCA Fellow investigating the implications and ramifications of creative placemaking in Houston's historic Third Ward.

**Liam Strong** is a Pushcart Prize nominated queer writer and studies Writing at University of Wisconsin-Superior. They are the former editor of NMC Magazine. You can find their works in Impossible Archetype, Dunes Review, Monday Night, Lunch Ticket, Chiron Review, The Maynard, Panoply, Prairie Margins, and The 3288 Review.

California native **Elisabeth Commanday Swim** moved to Houston in 2008 to be editor of Houston Grand Opera's Opera Cues. Her poems are live in care of Defunkt, Thimble and The Local Train Magazines as well as the Gentle Hour, Intercultural Press and High Shelf Press. She has appeared with Words and Art Houston at the Contemporary Arts Museum and the Menil Collection and Thin Air Magazine. She published previously under the name Eliza Swan and she is now a therapeutic in-home music teacher.

**Kyndal Thomas** is a Texas-raised, Brooklyn-based poet. She is a graduate of Northwestern University's Creative Writing program, a recipient of the Faricy Award for Poetry, and a Brooklyn Poets fellow. Her work has been published through Brooklyn Poets' Poet of the Week feature and is forthcoming in Lunch Ticket's Amuse-Bouche series. She works in the New York City literary non-profit sphere, with a focus on programming and a passion for inclusive and accessible creative spaces.

**M. McDonough** is a queer trans poet from Denver, Colorado, now residing in Phoenix, Arizona. Their work focuses on grief, humor, tenderness, and calamity. They grew up in slam and spoken word and worked for several years mentoring youth poets. Their current work can be found in We Grow Anyway from Prickly Pear Press, Name and None, and Exposition Review.

## PROSE CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Blickley is a New York writer and proud member of the Dramatists Guild and PEN American Center. He is the author of 'Sacred Misfits' (Red Hen Press), 'Weathered Reports: Trump Surrogate Quotes from the Underground' (Moira Books) and the 2019 text-based art book in collaboration with artist Amy Bassin, 'Dream Streams' (Clare Songbirds Publishing House). His video collaborations with Ms. Bassin, 'Speaking in Bootongue' and 'Widow's Peek: The Kiss of Death' will represent the United States in the year-long international world tour of 'Time Is Love: Universal Feelings: Myths & Conjunctions.' The screenings kicked off last month in Madrid, organized by the esteemed African curator, Kisito Assangni.

**Najla Brown** traded in the oil pump jacks of West Texas for the oil skyscrapers of Houston. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Texas A&M in English and Political Science. She spends her days writing taglines and her nights writing everything else. You can find her work in Houstonia Magazine, Molotov Cocktail, Coffin Bell Journal, and elsewhere.

**Jennifer Companik** holds an M.A. from Northwestern University and is a fiction editor at TriQuarterly. Her accomplishments include: first prize, The Ledge's 2014 Fiction Awards; a Pushcart Prize nomination; and stories or essays appearing in: The Evansville Review; Northern Virginia Review; The London Reader; The Bookends Review; and Another Chicago Magazine. By reading her work you are participating in one of her wildest dreams.

**Yolanda Movsessian** is an Armenian born in Iran who has lived most of her life in Houston. She writes fiction and poetry, creates art and photography. Yolanda's story "Death of a Storyteller" won Mississippi Review's 2020 prize for fiction and will be published in the summer 2020 edition. Her poetry, photographs and art have been published in the 2020 spring and summer issues of Synkroniciti magazine.

**Lynne Phillips** lives in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales Australia. Her stories, across all genres, have been published by Zombie Pirate Publishing, Black Hare Press, Fantasia Divinity Publishing, Our Wonderful Anthology and in various online magazines. She enjoys exploring the craft of writing stories. Her priority is spending time with her family while her passions are reading, writing, keeping fit, and spending time at her farm.

**Daniel O'Reilly** is an independent author, philosopher, publisher and media artist living in rural Catalonia, Spain with his wife, daughter and sausage dog Dexter. His current project is [archipelago] - an independent small press producing avant-garde fiction. Daniel has published short fiction in the 'Bengaluru Review', original poetry and essays in the 'Cutbank' literary magazine, 'Roots-Routes' magazine and 'The Dawntreader' literary journal, and currently produces handmade chapbooks of surreal literature and other experimental forms of writing in his current home of Spain. He founded The Unstitute online art lab and artists' co-operative space with wife and longtime collaborator Marianna in 2011, and screened original video art in competitions and exhibitions in over 22 countries worldwide. He also worked for the radio station at the Auroville international township in Tamil Nadu, India, recording international musicians and airing original sound compositions. He received his Master's degree in fine art from Chelsea College of Art and Design, and his firstclass Honours degree from Winchester School of Art.

**Miranda Ramirez** is a writer and artist residing in Houston, Texas. You may find her publications in Ripples in Space: Science Fiction Short Stories for Fall 2018, Glass Mountain, Shards, The Bayou Review: The Women's Issue, Coffin Bell, Cutthroat--A Journal of the Arts a collaborative project with Black Earth Institute: Puro Chicanx Writers of the 21st Century.

Her visual works have exhibited at Williams Tower Gallery, Tea+Art Gallery, and Insomnia Gallery.

Reyes Ramirez is a Houstonian of Mexican and Salvadoran descent. Reyes won the 2019 YES Contemporary Art Writer's Grant, 2017 Blue Mesa Review Nonfiction Contest, 2014 riverSedge Poetry Prize and has poems, stories, essays, and reviews (and/or forthcoming) in: Indiana Review, Cosmonauts Avenue, Queen Mob's Teahouse, Deep Red Press, The Latinx Archive, december magazine, Arteinformado, Texas Review, TRACK//FOUR, Houston Noir, Gulf Coast Journal, The Acentos Review, Cimarron Review, and elsewhere. He is a 2020 CantoMundo Fellow, 2021 Crosstown Arts Writer in Residence, and has been awarded grants from the Houston Arts Alliance and The Warhol Foundation's Idea Fund.

**Emily Uduwana** is a poet and short fiction author with recent publications in Miracle Monocle, Eclectica Magazine, and the Owen Wister Review. She is currently based in Southern California, where she studies history as a Ph.D. student at the University of California, Riverside.

**Tony Valverde** nace en 1992 en San José Costa Rica, es graduado de bachiller en Filosofía de la Universidad Nacional. Fanático de la literatura de Bolaño y cinéfilo por elección existencial. Ha publicado poesía para una editorial independiente en Costa Rica y un relato breve titulado "La Rosa" para Defunkt Magazine.









