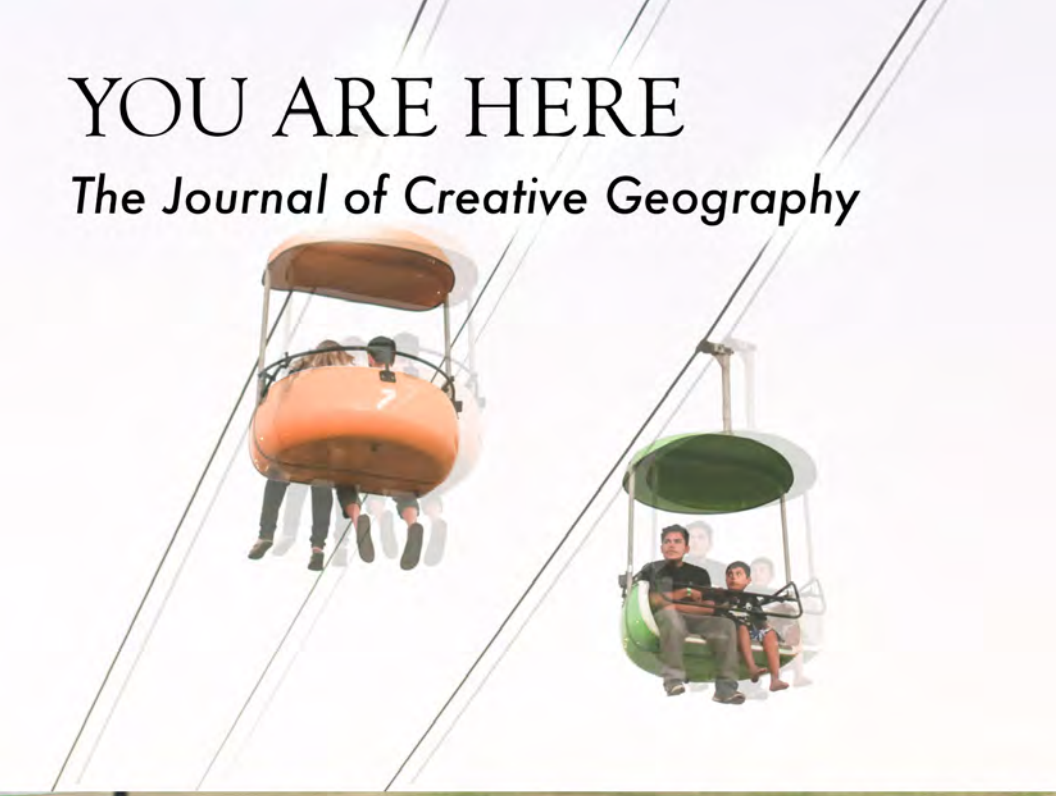
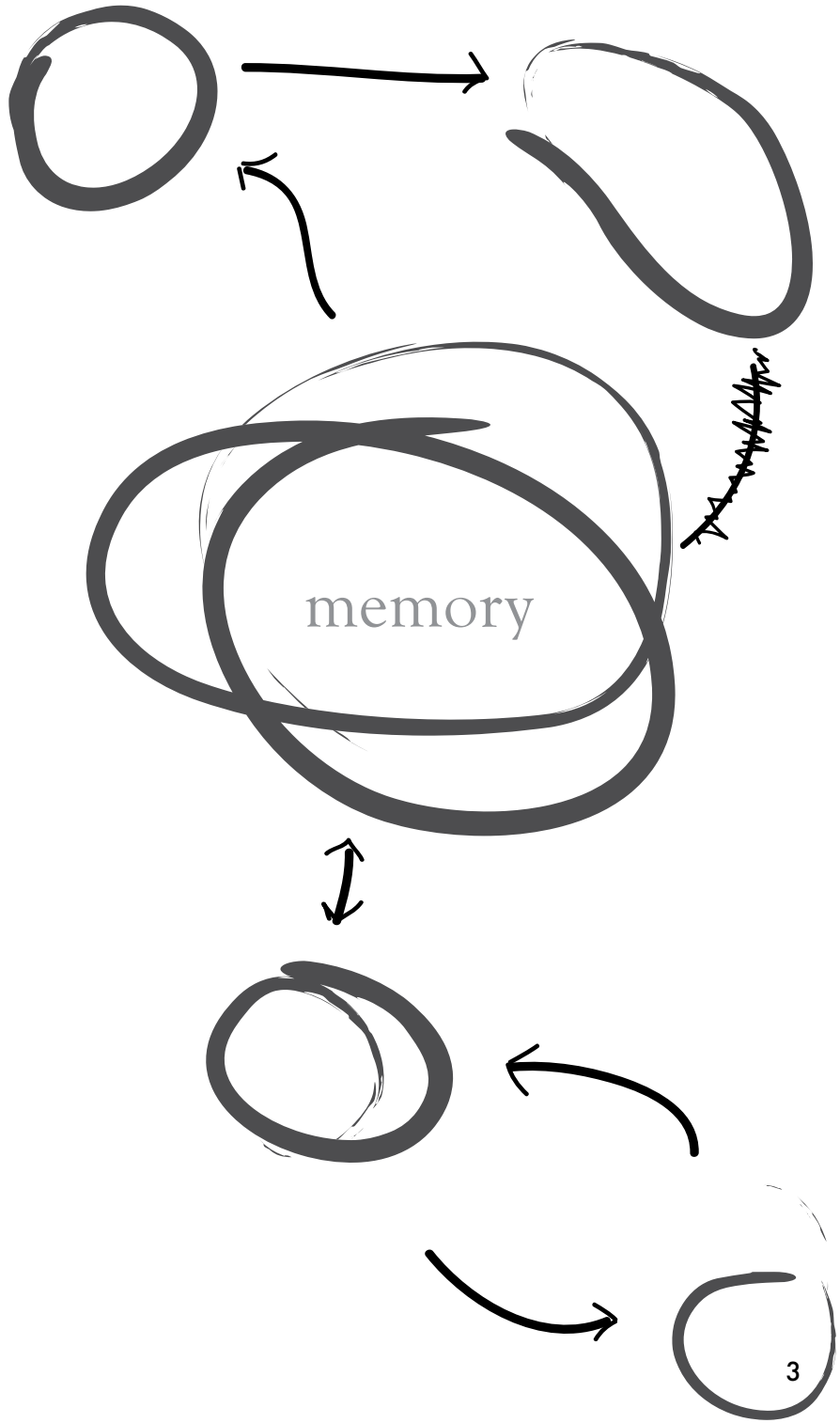
YOU ARE HERE

The Journal of Creative Geography



Issue xix: Memory


memory

you are here

ISSUE XIX: MEMORY
2017

CO-EDITORS Noah Silber-Coats, Joseph Patton
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Willa Ahlschwede, Rebecca Brice, Wendy Burk, David Chambers, Fiona Gladstone, Katie Gougelet, Robert Hibberd, Amanda Hilton, Lily House-Peters, Gigi Owen, Anushka Peres, Shelby Smith

School of Geography & Development at
The University of Arizona
ISBN 978-1-940985-56-5

you are here is made possible by grants, donations and subscriptions. We would like to thank all of the journal's readers and supporters, as well as the following institutions at the University of Arizona for their sponsorship of this 2017 issue:

The College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
The Graduate College
The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
The Southwest Center
The School of Geography & Development

Layout Design: Joseph Patton
Cover Art: Konstanty Hordynski

Note: "Racism in the Motor City" was originally published in *WW3*

CONTENTS

9 **Editors' Note**

11 **Birthday, 2015**
Valentina Cano

12 **Tulsa 1959**
Greg Geis

17 **Lox and Nova**
Steve Ablon

18 **The Uranium Capital of the World**
Jill Moffett

23 **Margaret's Dilemma**
Kelly Talbot

24 **The Inland Passage, Alaska, Charlie Age 13**
Steve Ablon

26 **Driving Back to Oakdale**
Claire Hermann

28 **Skeletons of Hôtel St. François**
Deborah Steinberg

39 **Jungle Gyms**
Andi Feddeler

44 **The TowHead**
Catherine Stearns

45 **Water**
Bleuzette La Feir

54 **Posted: No Swimming**
Lana Highfill

55 **Jarbidge, Great Basin, NV**
Karla Linn Merrifield

58 Overlay
Catherine McGuire

64 Water, and Other Lost Things
Michele Desmarais

66 Burying the Dead
Lucy Palmer

68 The Decision
Alan Dennis Harris

70 Racism in the Motor City
Jeff Wilson

76 A Hisory Written on the Land: The Geoglyphs of Chug Chug
James Kelly

92 Intransitives Need No Object
Mary Rowin

93 Geography and Memory
Nicole Harkin

95 When We Settle
Timothy Dodd

103 You Always Remember Your First War
Catherine Stearns

105 Portrait of Three Brothers as Camels
Kerry Krouse

109 The Big Tree, Phoenix, Arizona
Elizabeth Mosier

117 Keri Keri to Awanui
Mercedes Webb-Pullman

119 House in the Desert
Peg Alford Pursell

121 The Sea
Valentina Cano

123 Notes on Contributors

ART

13, 16 Detroit
Igor Winiarczyki

32 - 33 Nostalgic Journeys
Valerie Galloway

41 - 43 Untitled
Kathleen Koopman

49 - 53 Untitled
Konstanty Hordynski

56 - 57 Manzanar
Shelly Black

60 - 63 Family Quilt
Pamela Lawton

107 Untitled
Taylor Miller

Editor's Note

Memory is essential to how we know and experience ourselves as individuals and social collectivities. The ways we choose to remember and forget are at once intensely personal, shaping the stories we tell about ourselves, and eminently political, contributing to the formation of group identities like family, community, and nation. Memory is full of contradictions—it may evoke a sense of sentimental nostalgia, or trauma and loss. Landscapes, like minds, can be repositories of memory, or re-made in ways that erase what came before.

In this issue of you are here, we asked contributors to explore the ways that memory and place are intertwined. The poetry, prose, and artwork collected here explores the emotional, embodied, and, often, political expressions of remembering and forgetting. Memory is interpreted across generations with pieces that speak to aging, forgetting, and fleeting youth; as stories embedded in the micro-geographies of place and recollection; and in relation to the devastations and erasure, both material and psychological, of resource extraction and war.

In putting together this issue, we have attempted to recover a forgotten practice that was once a cornerstone of this journal: the editorial collective. A dedicated group of geographers, writers, poets, and educators contributed to the review process, and we are incredibly grateful for their input.

Leaf through these pages, mark them with a pen, fold the corners of those to which you wish to return. To remember.

BIRTHDAY, 2015

Valentina Cano

I was born in another hemisphere.
I was born in the whirl of pollen
and sweating limbs.
I live as a child of the cold,
of mottled leaves.
These truths are tectonic plates
rubbing inside me,
shrieking like split ceramic.

TULSA 1959

Greg Geis

Above all I remember the bathroom.

They were poor and there was only one.

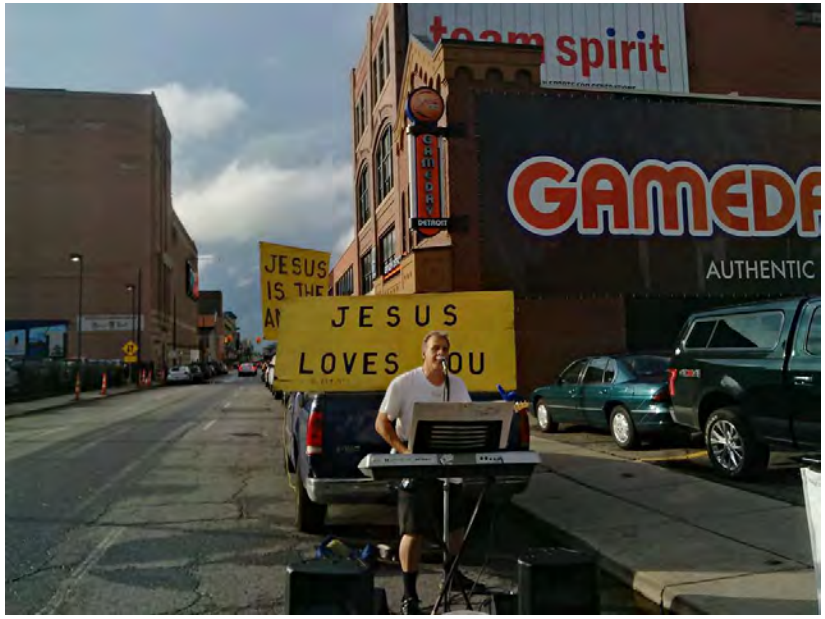
It smelled of Clubman and cold cream,
attar of roses and White Owl cigars.

A.L.'s razor strop hanging from a penny nail,
head hammered flat since 1925,
and on the ledge, a cow-licked shaving brush
standing bristles up. A toilet that
hawked before it up and spit.
The water splashed your crack
and tickled every time. The pipes
that strangled when the faucets ran,
howling bloody murder as they kicked
to life behind a glaze of lumpy plaster.

Below, white tile snowed with 40 years of drifting talc
and two mirrors hung to face each other.

See for yourself.

Your face, your life, affirmed in perpetuity.
You and you and you. And you again.



Detroit, Igor Winiarczyki

You the infinite regress.

You the ongoing argument
for you the ongoing argument.

And so A.L. the matter's settled:
you *do* go on forever;
at least the *front* of you.

On the night stand were their dentures;
smiling from two teacups, credit teeth
bought on time from a credit dentist
in Kansas City
"Cheap, but good chewers",
A.L. used to say.
"He made us a deal."

Beneath the pillow his black-gripped Colt,
a loaded Peacemaker caliber .45LC,
hammer down on an empty chamber.
In his wandering days, before the War
(the Great one he'd remind you),
he'd been a trooper up in Michigan,
and had the photograph to prove it.

A.L. on a horse named Bucky, circa 1913.
State police campaign hat, brim pushed up,
Sam Brown belt, and lever action Marlin in a saddle boot.
It was the younger him, alright,
cigar in mouth, the smoking skeptic,
looking for all the world like he was bored.
Which in fact, he was.

And the creaky wooden floors
which even as a small child
held me up; those same floors
that squeaked and sagged,
we hugged so tightly in the hallway
when the twisters came.

To us there was no firmer ground.
Such lowness could drive storms away
or at the least keep us from being hoovered up

or so we thought.

My mother reading OZ by candlelight,
unshakeable and bright.
Grandma doing needlepoint.
Grandpa calmly smoking.
We children terrified,
while all around the twisters raged,
their random terror
no match for Baum or Dr. Seuss.

It must have worked
because they missed us every time.
Such mother's magic did not lift us up from Kansas
or drop us on the road to Emerald City
but took us to a stranger place.

This world was Tulsa:

the house of my grandparents
2236 East 7th street.

We are in Oklahoma.

LOX AND NOVA

Steve Ablon

Lexington Avenue Deli, Katz's his mustache
fine as a linnet as he lifts rectangular slices
from the white oil heavy container, wraps them
in wax paper and we carried it home the smell
of Hamburg, heavy tumbling clouds, waves
and salt. Now there are twelve choices,
packaged in plastic, a fat bellied salmon leaping

above a green frosted wave. Once on the Gander
in Newfoundland I caught these treasures of my
religious life, waited all day above pools eddying
songs somnolence until my line struck with Thor's
hammer, a fish leaping over the current again and again.
Smoking it at the lodge, carrying it on the plane,
for each kosher deli, New York, Denver, Beirut.

THE URANIUM CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Jill Moffett

My psyche is lined with rock: quartz and mica, granite and nickel, the shape of the Precambrian Shield etched permanently into my temporal lobe. When I was two years old my parents and I moved to Elliot Lake, a tiny Ontario town north of Lake Huron, because my father got a job there as the director of waste management for Rio Algom Mines. The region overflowed natural resources: nickel, uranium and timber. In the 1950s, Elliot Lake called itself The Uranium Capital of the World, and in 1975 it was still clinging to the title. Surrounded by dense forests and muskeg swamps, a steel sculpture of an atom rose from the pristine landscape like a one-man welcoming committee at the entrance of the town. The area had been an Ojibwa settlement until 1955 when a geologist, bankrolled by an American investor, transformed it into a planned community for the miners who would flock to the town by the thousands in pursuit of better pay. The Canadian government poured millions of dollars into the mining effort, and for a while it was a boomtown. But by 1962, the United States stopped buying uranium from Canada, leaving a lot of supply but little demand. Overnight, the town transformed. Families left in droves, houses were boarded up, the place became a virtual ghost town. Birch and pine seedlings sprouted in front yards, snow caved in the roofs of shuttered houses. The Uranium Capital of the World turned inward, and started its return to wilderness.

By the mid-seventies, the Canadian government had

launched a project to build heavy water nuclear reactors for use at home and overseas. Faced with skyrocketing prices of natural gas and explosive population growth, Ontario Hydro began considering nuclear power as an energy source. Although it might no longer be the capital of the world, there was still uranium plenty left in the ore, and the infrastructure to support its extraction meant that money started flowing to Elliot Lake again. My father was Irish, people who have always understood the necessity of leaving home to find work.

Elliot Lake truly was in the middle of nowhere. It was connected to the rest of the country by a small, two-lane highway. The streets were wide, every house had a modest backyard and a television antennae on the roof. The town was circled by Hillside Avenue and Missassaugua Avenue, and boasted two small shopping plazas, an IGA, a Moose Lodge, a small hospital and a bingo hall. There were no traffic lights, just stop signs and good manners. Our phone number was just four digits. Mining money bought us a small white and blue A-frame with a grey-shingled roof at 34 Bouck Road where we lived for seven years. Neither of my parents could have ever dreamed that they would live in this Canadian hinterland, where wilderness stretched out behind the town forever and where it wasn't unusual to be invited over to a neighbor's house to eat rabbit that they'd trapped that afternoon.

Uranium is the heaviest metal there is and the rocks in the Canadian Shield are filled with it. The trick is getting it out. In Elliot Lake, the uranium was trapped inside quartz pebbles, the remnants of geological events from 200 million years ago. To excavate uranium, the miners drilled, blasted, and then crushed the rock into a powder, sifting out the heavy uranium and leaving behind a fine white silt known as tailings. For every kilogram of uranium, a ton of ore was smashed to smithereens.

It was the smashing that made it dangerous. Hundreds of men spent their days inhaling radioactive dust and breathing in the damp, their hands going numb in the cold.

Smashing the rock released the radioactivity. Even though the uranium itself was packed and sold and whisked away to become a bomb or fuel somewhere in America, the tailings were still radioactive. The mining company didn't quite know what to do with the mess, so they just made a big pile—a twenty-foot dune of uncovered tailings sat at the edge of the town, the trees next to it were wan and leafless, the ground was empty and dead. Inevitably, the wind blew the dust from this great pile. The "radon daughters," as they were called, landed on trees, on the lady slipper flowers I picked in the forest, on the birch bark I formed into sculptures at summer camp. The dust leached into the aquifer, making its way into the water we drank at suppertime, and into the ice my Floridian mother insisted on adding to our drinks even when it was minus twenty degrees outside. It mixed with the beach sand we lay on in July.

It started snowing in October and didn't stop until May, so summers were precious. We went to the lake to swim every day, oblivious to the fact that radioactive waste had been polluting the water since 1955. We salted the leeches that clung to our legs, swatted horseflies, and stayed in the water until our lips turned blue. We built sand castles from radon-tinged sand, letting it absorb gently into our bloodstreams through our fingertips and toes.

The third summer we lived in Elliot Lake, my father planted a huge garden in the backyard, determined to coax life out of the hard, unforgiving ground. He'd leveled the earth himself, put in a drainage system, built raised beds and a deck. He planted corn and pole beans, peppers and tomatoes and cucumbers, and when everything was ready to harvest, he even made his own pickles.

On weekends we would go on expeditions. We'd walk in

the dense forest that surrounded the town, sometimes stopping near the tailings fields. I'd pick up perfectly smooth cylinders of rock, drilled as core samples and discarded when it was found they held nothing but granite. I loved to visit the Big Nickel in Sudbury, where you could take your picture beside it and hold up a little nickel and buy a souvenir. In Sudbury we'd go to McDonalds, climb up the gravel hill to the Big Nickel, watch the black muck that poured down the side of the hills, the leftovers from nickel mining. In Sudbury there were traffic lights. There was a shopping mall with an escalator. There was a toy store, and my father would take us there and let us buy anything we wanted. I got a cheap plastic make up and jewelry play set, with soft plastic pearls, and a non-functional tube of lipstick. As soon as I got back in the car I knew I'd made the wrong choice, the necklace broke. I didn't know what to do with the fake mirror that didn't even show a reflection.

We stayed in Elliot Lake until I was ten years old and the mine closed. All the girls I knew were skinny and dangerous. Their fathers drank too much, their mothers smoked, their sisters had sex in the bushes or in the back of their boyfriends' cars. They weren't from there, but they had grandmas in Sudbury or cousins in The Soo. And they had snowmobiles in their garages and all the dads went ice fishing or hunting on the weekends and their moms played bingo and painted their nails bright red. My father never shot a deer and didn't understand why anyone would want to. My mother played Chopin etudes on the piano. My Floridian grandparents came to visit us one time, I have a photograph of them standing together in front of the house, dwarfed by the size of the borrowed parkas and mitts and volume of scarves, Sorrel boots on their feet, disbelief in their eyes.

MARGARET'S DILEMMA

Kelly Talbot

There is a method to my stain.
This cacophony is genetic.
It could not have been avoided
had all the mulberries blossomed
in January. Do not walk across
the bridge in the mid-afternoon,
for the shadows of the egg cream
cart grow longer then. If you can
catch a whistle in the wind,
I envy you for your foliage.
To be that plush again, I would
give half my leaves, but then
everything goes eventually,
doesn't it? Leaves. I have
misplaced my old age. I fear
it is no longer there. All I have
left is my naiveté, such as it is.
Or was. Or will be. What was
that you were saying, dear?

THE INLAND PASSAGE, ALASKA, CHARLIE AGE 13

Steve Ablon

The glaciers are calving, flumes of ice,
mist lost in the berg strewn sea. I am bringing
my grandson to Alaska to teach him
to steady a kayak, secure a hand
on each gunnel. As for the paddles
I demonstrate the synchrony of pull
and push, forcing paddles deep enough
to resist the fast flowing tide along
the iron orange cliff. On the second day

I teach him to gauge the current
studying the flow of ice hunks,
their ardor going out and coming back.
We net somnolent sea cucumbers
from the bottom. He holds them, not too tight,
not too loose, limpid liquefying
in his hand. At dusk I teach him how to
lower traps, to tie the lobster buoy hitch
and an Aleut dance to summon crabs

migrating across the ocean floor.
On the third day, we lower fifty feet
of line for haddock, wait for the downward
draft then reel for an hour, taking turns,
resting for a drink, for cramped hands,
retrieving enough to feed the whole boat.
Each night in our cabin, his bunk like a gull
cruising above mine, I teach him gin rummy.
I win until he learns the inlets of the game.

DRIVING BACK TO OAKDALE

Claire Hermann

It's been thirty years since I last travelled this highway,
clutching a plush dog as our brick ranch and orchards
disappeared through the back window of a VW van.

Something deeper than memory recognizes this place,
offers me vocabulary for what flashes by
the window of my rented car:

that sheen is apricot leaves in the sun,
those rhythmic rows are almond trees,

that sweet smell is herbicide plummeting
in pale waves beneath crop-dusters,

those soaring shapes are cattle egrets
unfolding out of irrigation ditches,

those brilliant spills of color on the coastal range
are poppies and mustard in spring bloom.

In the dark of an early morning,
I pull over to the shoulder,
turn off the engine, climb out.

Gray-purple light leaks from the earth.

Birdsong surrounds me, thousands of voices rising
from the waking grassland.
No glass, no speed, no conscious memory
between me and the landscape
that taught me the proper shape of things.

I stand and rest beside the empty road.
Soon the sun will well up, gold between hills
that roll as simply as a child's drawing of them.

SKELETONS OF THE HÔTEL ST. FRANÇOIS

Deborah Steinberg

In the spring of 2003, Christophe and I moved into the building known as the Hôtel St. François, a massive stone structure that took up half a city block in the center of Bordeaux, just around the corner from St. Michel Cathedral. It was right on the Camino de Santiago, the medieval pilgrimage route that stretched all the way from Northern France down to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Hôtel St. François was enjoying its latest incarnation as a simple apartment building in a gentrifying neighborhood, inhabited by musicians, artists, writers, anti-capitalism activists, concert organizers, bicyclists, non-ticket-holding tram riders, change-counting cigarette purchasers, thrift store-rummaging hipsters, odd-job-doers, and other characters. Two of our musician friends shared an apartment a few floors above ours. We became accustomed to pushing open the massive carved oak door to the building and climbing the manorial staircase into the inner courtyard. We loved to drink coffee and wine on the two stone balconies that opened off both sides of our corner apartment, watching the comings and goings of the neighborhood.

What was I doing in Bordeaux? I'd gone there upon graduating from college to teach English, in October of 2000. After George W. Bush became president that year, and the Twin Towers fell the following year, and the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and started talking about invading Iraq, the idea of returning to my home country was less than appealing. Plus, I'd fallen in love with a Frenchman, started a band with him, and started publishing a Franco-American literary 'zine. Plus, the French way of life agreed with me.

So it was I found myself, a young American, living in a building older than my home country that had actual stone gargoyles bursting from the façade. And there was even a real skeleton in the basement. Nicolas and Jérôme, our musician friends from upstairs, took me down to see the skeleton a few days after they discovered it. We entered the basement through some old rooms that hadn't yet been renovated and attested to the building's 20th century life as an actual hotel. The abandoned rooms, left unlocked through neglect or carelessness, were relics of nineteenth century bourgeois domesticity overlaid with 1970's interior décor and made over as junky squats. Through the far doorway, stone stairs led down into the basement.

Nicolas and Jérôme turned on their flashlights, and we began our descent in the cobweb-hung darkness. We reached the first level of the basement, empty and musty, then continued down to the lower level, accessible only by descending an old metal ladder through a small trap door. The blackness became thicker. The ground was not stone, simply densely packed earth. Here, we saw the only remnants of the original 16th century foundation.

At the time the Hôtel St. François was constructed, Bordeaux was already an old city. Founded by a Celtic tribe in the year 300 BCE, Burdigala later became the capital of Roman Aquitaine, was fought over by the Carolingians, the Basques, and even the Vikings in subsequent centuries, and became an English territory following the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry II of England in the 12th century. In 1653, Louis IV

reclaimed Bordeaux for France, and it has remained the capital of the French province of Aquitaine ever since.

The Hotêl St. François was constructed during Bordeaux's golden age as a thriving center of commerce, a major port of call for the ships that made their way from West Africa to the West Indies and back, trading sugar and slaves. The bourgeois city spent centuries glossing over the fact that its wealth had been made on the traffic of human beings. But while I was living there, the city was beginning to acknowledge its past. An enormous sculpture of a lion was erected on the right bank of the river as a monument to the slaves who had passed through the port on their way to the new world. It was a new century, after all, and a nation that had buried its legacy of conquest and exploitation under a genteel veneer of white-washed immigrants from former colonies and a protectionist philosophy about its language and culture was being forced to admit that it was actually a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic country, now part of a larger Europe and a smaller world.

Nicolas and Jérôme shone their flashlights onto the packed earth floor in one far corner of the cavernous basement. A human skeleton was embedded in the earth, only partially uncovered, as if it were emerging: a swimmer rising to the surface of water.

I drew in a breath. "Amazing!" I whispered.

Nicolas crouched and brushed some dust gently from its ribcage.

"We didn't want to tell the authorities right away," said Jérôme, "because we know they'll forbid us from coming back down here."

"Wow," I whispered. "Who do you think it is?"

"We don't even know when it's from," said Nicolas.

"Maybe this was a burial ground long ago and people built on top of it," said Jérôme.

"Or maybe this only dates back to World War II," shrugged Nicolas. "Maybe the Nazis imprisoned Jews down here. Or maybe the Résistance was hiding people down here. It could be from any time, really. Who knows?" He dusted the skeleton's forehead, staring at it almost lovingly.

I was a little worried by Nicolas's fascination with the skeleton, and I thought Jérôme might be too. Nicolas was sensitive, depressive, incredibly musically talented, prone to substance abuse, and a veteran of several suicide attempts. I knew he was going through a particularly rough time at the moment. But he was showing interest in *something*, which was good. And the skeleton *was* cool.

We stood silently contemplating it for a while. I was thinking about how Bordeaux had been occupied by the Germans—how perhaps my own apartment had lodged Nazis. I was thinking about my German-Jewish last name and about hybridity—my own half-Jewishness, my feeling that I'd never quite fit in in the U.S., my fluent but accented French that would always mark me as a foreigner here. I was wondering who the skeleton had been, trying to imagine his or her story.

Around 1850, the architect Audubert undertook considerable renovations of the Hôtel St. François. The ornate Renaissance courtyard, once the height of fashion, was given a Baroque makeover, and the outside walls of the building were laden with the heavy sculptures they still bore in the 21st century: griffons, caryatids, eagles with spread wings.

My favorite statue on the Hôtel St. François was halfway up the north side. Its story was legendary in the neighborhood; I first learned it from the Senegalese man who ran the furniture store/tea shop across the street, and later confirmed it at the public library.

When the building was renovated in 1850, one of the construction workers carried the great stone slab that was to be


WORLD ATLAS AND GAZETTEER
[England and Wales]
85
ENGLAND AND WALES
PRINCIPAL CITIES
Environs of LONDON
IRISH SEA
ENGLISH CHANNEL
CHANNEL ISLANDS
RAND McNALLY
POPULAR MAP OF
ENGLAND
AND WALES


WORLD ATLAS AND GAZETTEER
[Arizona]
15
ARIZONA
PRINCIPAL CITIES
RAND McNALLY
POPULAR MAP OF
ARIZONA
GULF OF CALIFORNIA
GREAT DESERT

the north façade's largest balcony up the scaffolding by himself. He hefted the great slab onto his shoulders, as if assuming the burden of history, and climbed, as if with every step he was proving that humanity could heft itself painfully out of the past. He lowered the slab onto the waiting buttresses. The people watching broke out in applause. Then the construction worker came down the scaffolding, and while everyone gazed up in admiration at his work, his heart quietly stopped beating, and he died on the spot.

The architect was so moved by this worker's act that he ordered a statue of the man to be placed on the façade, holding the massive balcony on his shoulders, testament to his final act. The laborer was carved in a different style than the rest of the building's ornate neo-classical statuary. He stood out as a symbol of the turn in Western thought that was happening when he lived, when the individual became paramount, when painters were beginning to scandalize Parisian salons with their portrayal of peasants and dancing girls: common, anonymous people. The laborer's statue was realistic, almost modern. His long hair streamed around his face and across his shoulders. His muscles were taut with strain. There was nothing decorative about him. His face had been eroded by rain and wind and time.

All the statues on the building were blackened now, mainly as a result of pollution from the Industrial Revolution, but cleaning our building was no doubt low on the list of priorities for a city with two massive cathedrals to clean and a new tramway that didn't work properly.

Bordeaux was like that: the old constantly butting up against the contemporary, with way stations in between: Haussmann-era houses nestled between modern glass buildings, and an entire neighborhood of post-war, vaguely Soviet-looking modernist architecture was tucked right behind the medieval St. André Cathedral. Stylish older women gracefully navigated cobblestone streets in high heels, passing young street punks, Muslim women wearing headscarves, guys from Cameroon playing soccer in the park.

During the seven years I lived there, Bordeaux strained into the new century. The city undertook a massive renovation of its transit system, completely redesigned the derelict riverfront and made it into a broad esplanade with bike trails and skate parks, and cleaned many of the old limestone buildings until they gleamed almost white. Meanwhile, society was moving forward, thick with political, social, and economic tensions.

It was a fascinating place and time to be as a young American. I was engaged in conversation by anyone who heard my accent; many people I talked to had never met an American before. I was challenged, questioned, asked to speak for my country by everyone I met. Questions ranged from the mundane—"Is it true that Americans eat pizza and hamburgers every day?"—to the accusatory—"Why are you invading Iraq?"

I tried to answer as honestly as I could, emphasizing that I was simply one person, with one individual perspective, as were the myriad people I met: the Kurds who ran the kebab shop downstairs and supported the invasion of Iraq, the homeland they'd been forced to flee under Saddam's regime. The self-righteous anarchist from a wealthy family who refused to believe that I didn't support most of my country's politics. The Egyptian store owner who dreamed of moving to New York. My teenage students who asked me to translate American hip-hop lyrics for them.

I took comfort in the more leftist, socialist politics of my adopted country; felt increasingly alienated by the direction the U.S. was heading. My American teacher friends and I marched in a protest against the war in downtown Bordeaux, wearing sandwich boards that said *Américains Contre La Guerre—Americans Against the War*. We ended up walking next to a group of Palestinian women and their children. We heard one of the

kids ask his mother, "Why are those Americans here with us?" and her answer: "Because not all Americans support the war."

My friends and I joked about it being a great example of a 'teachable moment,' but it felt important.

As a new, post 9-11 era began, as I watched my country changing from afar, as I pondered questions of nationalism and identity, individual lives continued with their individual loves, fears, and endings.

I was grading papers at home one morning after Christophe had left for work at the TV station where he was a cameraman for the local news. Gradually, I became aware of a commotion down in the street. I looked out and saw a cluster of police officers and paramedics standing around a body covered in a blanket on the sidewalk. Two skinny legs covered in dark hair stuck out from under the blanket. A horrible thought came to me, but I couldn't tell from here whether those legs could be Nicolas'.

I headed outside to find out more. As I came out of the building, I ran into Jérôme on his way in. He rushed past me, panic on his face.

"What's going on?" I asked, turning around and following him as he bounded up the stairs.

"A suicide," he said tersely. "Someone jumped from one of the balconies upstairs. They won't let me see who it is. I have to make sure Nicolas's OK."

My heart started pounding harder, and I raced after Jérôme, the unspoken fear taut as a guitar string between us. We ran up the five flights of stairs, as if we could prevent a suicide that had already happened. I thought Jérôme might break the door to their unit, so forcefully he hurled it open.

Nicolas was there, looking out the window, turning excitedly towards us, eyes wide. "Hey guys, there's a body on the sidewalk down there!"

Relief made me feel like I was floating on the ceiling.

Jérôme tried to act casual. "Yeah," he said, "I talked to the police. They said someone from our building jumped out. Suicide. Wanted to see if you'd seen."

"Whoa," said Nicolas. "Gruesome."

We stood around for a minute, looking out their window as the authorities tried to keep an ever-growing crowd at bay. The man who had been our neighbor lay almost directly beneath the statue of the laborer holding up the balcony. A dark stain was seeping from under the police blanket onto the pavement. We asked each other who it might have been, but we didn't know everyone who lived in the building. It was a scene strangely parallel to the one in the basement several weeks before: the three of us standing around wondering about the identity of a dead body.

On the ground, the action stalled. I went back down to my own apartment, but kept glancing out the window, unable to focus on my work.

Shortly, a van from the local TV station arrived. A journalist, a sound guy, and Christophe, holding the large camera, got out of the van. Christophe looked up and waved at me discreetly. I waved back, feeling strangely distant. Christophe filmed the journalist interviewing the police officers and the paramedics. Then he filmed the body being lifted into the ambulance. I knew that when they got back to the station, the editor would cut Christophe's footage up and splice it together in 3-second frames. He would pick the most interesting comments from the police and the paramedics, and discard the rest. Over the resulting montage, the journalist would recite the text of his story.

I watched as Christophe shot additional footage of the scene. I imagined that his camera could see all the way through the ground to the skeleton in the basement as he filmed the bloody spot where the body had lain. Christophe got what must

have been a gorgeous shot of the statue of the laborer holding up the balcony above. Then, with a small smile, he turned the camera to briefly catch me on our balcony, capturing the young woman I was that day, preserving that tiny moment of the life we shared there.

Within two years, Christophe and I would separate, and I would eventually fly back to a changed United States to make a new life for myself in a language and a culture that had kept on changing while I was gone. I would inhabit other apartments in other buildings in other cities, my time in the Hôtel St. François receding into the past, covered by new layers, one station on my own personal pilgrimage route.

JUNGLE GYMS

Andi Feddeler

I grew up in this park.

At the dead end of Tecate Drive it sits, quiet and still, bright yellow markers designating where our half of the neighborhood ends and where nature's half begins. The grass is tall and the trails are stomped clear, littered with insects; the toddlers cry out when the honeybees come too close. Here is the tree I watch sunsets from, the patch of cement I learned to ride a bike on, the rocky dam I climb across when I'm up for a challenge.

And here is where my sister convinced me that redheads were evil, that they peed in the drainage ditches and left their marks like scars in the cement. She told me stories about little girls and blueberries and dim tunnels with corpses; she's always been in love with the dark.

That house on the corner, the one by the mailboxes, that's where I got back together with my 5th grade boyfriend. Somebody else lives there now. The new kid. He's where the music comes from, late at night, when I squeeze into the rusting swings and look at the stars and hum along to the tune of the songs.

This is where the visitors park their cars, where I look into each tinted window and see nothing but flyaways and bruises. And

every time I stumble across McDonald's cups littering the cul-de-sac, stray french fries kicked to the curb, my stomach grumbles because the sun is setting and I still haven't eaten breakfast.

I bike down this hilly path every day and wait for rocks to flip me onto my face so I can be called an accident and leave my mother wondering why she never bought me a helmet.

Back in those woods, near the creek, is where I first smoked out of an apple, with that tall kid Ethan and the hick boy Ashton. Further down along the creek, where the mosquitoes are thick and the tree branches sting, I fell in love with a boy who kissed me goodnight but didn't look in my eyes.

This sidewalk is where I learned what fear was. It's where I looked behind myself more often than in front, where every cricket was a cause for tears, where each time a cloud covered the moon my skin prickled and my lips trembled.

This picnic table is where my head slammed against wood, splintering the graffitied planks of grey with a crack loud enough to wake the surrounding houses. The labradors barked and porch lights turned on, only to be shut off mere seconds later.

Untitled, Kathleen Koopman

Untitled, Kathleen Koopman

THE TOWHEAD

Catherine Stearns

They whacked and blazed, perhaps heroically,
settling the land which before their townships
only the trees divided: Big Grove, to the north;
the Salt Fork, crowned with elms;
Middle Fork, also called Sugar Grove;
and Dead Man's Fork. A stain of timber
on a knoll resembling a human head
known as the TowHead became a landmark
for travelers. According to tradition
(as recounted by the same judge who wrote
that the battle of 1811 was fought to
"remind the Indians of the wisdom of peace"),
a band of men trailed a horse thief
as far as the knoll, and seeing his red skin
inert in the shade of a tree woke him up
to hang him. Thus the land passed through
the intestines of worms and through this man,
dissolving into the temporal lobe of the TowHead
to be distributed like a glacier's debris—only
far, far inward. The People of the Place of Fire
ceded the TowHead when they moved west
to Indian Territory. One of their chiefs had died,
so William Nox made him a white man's coffin.
In return, he received a nicely tanned buckskin.

WATER

Bleuzette La Feir

Our fireteam—a highly trained, loaded-to-the-teeth four-man Army crew that accompanied me and two water guys—warned me about my camera. They said the SEAL team members across the river might not take kindly to having photos taken. Not only of themselves, but of the westerly perimeter of their base camp, the Blue Diamond Palace once occupied by Saddam's sons, Uday and Qusay.

Ashen colored rocks, dirt-brown dirt, and the humid, dusty scent of the blue-gray, murky water were no different than the colors of Conchas Lake, three hours east of Albuquerque, where I'd learned to water-ski and hook a worm. But this water, this dirt, these rocks were at the edge of the Euphrates.

Early that morning I'd received an emergency radio call from the ROWPU manager. The water supply to the ROWPU had stopped. Not even a trickle. A ROWPU is a Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit that feeds nonpotable water into immense bladders that lie on thick rubber-coated membranes on the ground. The fluid is then pumped through a system of pipes and filters, then pumped over to other bladders. This continuous process provides a remote camp thousands of gallons of drinkable water a day. As a military contractor and camp administrator for KBR at Ar Ramadi from April 2005 to November 2007, it was part of my job to ensure that all military personnel and civilians on camp had their basic living needs met. Water is number one.

Civilians are not permitted outside the wire. Unarmed, why would we want to be? But just the thought of it exhilarated me. I saw in this crisis an opportunity to go where I knew I would never have the chance to go again. My job in Iraq had forged me into a wordsmith, and I found it all too easy to convince my boss. I simply stated that in allowing us to fully document KBR's mitigation of the blockage of water flow from the deep and powerful Euphrates, to ensure an uninterrupted clean water source to thousands of U.S. military personnel in a mission-critical location, was indeed the best course of action for showing our commitment and dedication, not to mention our lightning response time. We needed to exceed their expectations.

So there we stood. Outside the wire. Seven of us at water's edge. The plan was to dive into the water and feel around to see what might be blocking the eight-foot-wide cement culvert at the bank that fed river water to the intake station.

The ROWPU manager was former military. Tall, cranky, painfully thin, red-haired, and a chain-smoker to boot, he took one last long drag of his cigarette and threw it to the dusty ground. He pressed the sole of his boot onto the red ember while pulling off his gray T-shirt, revealing a universe of freckles, a map of moles, and one three-inch, rickrack, raised purplish scar that left me wondering what had made that scar. Knife or shrapnel. He left his cargo pants and boots on, then tied one end of a long length of hemp rope around his waist. The muscled, fresh-faced young black man, known as Jono, he'd brought with him tugged at the knot, then placed his foot on the other end of the rope and wrapped a portion of it around his arm. Red methodically made his way into the water as the fireteam circled around, backs to us, rifles and eyes out, alert. Index fingers, straight and stiff, at rest-ready by the triggers of their arms.

I turned back around. Six of us now on the bank. My

focus on the oily, twisted rope extending through the surface, breaking the tension of the ancient water source.

A dervish burst up. Jono and I turned our heads away reacting to the spew of sand. The sun-glassed soldiers stood still. The reeds and tall grasses thick at the river's edge bent with ease. They waved, pointed their leafy blades, and laughed at us.

Up popped Red. "It's a huge fuckin' wad a plastic! I'm gonna try and get a corner of it up here so you c'n grab on."

Down went Red.

I sat on a large rock and slid my feet onto another rock under the water. It was just like the lake. I'd sit at the edge and sometimes catch a fish darting by. White canvas Keds let the cool liquid flow in and soak my socks. I didn't even bother pulling up my pant legs. It didn't matter, it was so hot and dry. As soon as we returned to camp, I'd change into fresh jeans and desert boots. I may as well have been thirteen again as I sat still with my camera and snapped photos of everything around me, of my feet in the water, of the waving pussy willow, of the forbidden palace on the opposite bank. I didn't hold the camera to my face but snapped the autofocus lever into place, sat it on my lap, and kept hitting the shutter button knowing I had room for nearly a thousand shots.

Up popped Red. "Jono, grab this!"

I shot a few frames of them, then pulled the strap from my neck and set the camera on the rock. I stood next to Jono, and we both pulled at the thick, milky plastic sheeting. We strained and gave it a big tug, pulling Red off balance in the waist-high water.

"Iz okay. Juz' keep pullin'!"

The roar of an engine ripped up and startled us all. Fireteam spun around and drew up. We paused. *Breath in.* A light black, six-person, rigid inflatable boat—a Zodiac, they call it: a shadow of a thing; wide, yet low profile—jetted past us. My belly sank tightening the cords over my heart, squeezing my

chest. About a minute ago I'd had my camera in my hand. It was just as well.

Overgrown dirty-blond curls protruded from his dark camouflage cap. Finger-streaked, grease-painted face, dull to the bouncing rays off the rocking water framed ice blue eyes as he looked directly at me for several seconds as the phantom boat whizzed by.

"Fuckin' pull!" Red's voice broke like a desperate teenager's. We fuckin' pulled. Fireteam couldn't help us. Three had our backs and one now stood sentry at the river's edge. Adrenaline crackled off our bodies as Jono and I heaved one more time on the plastic sheeting.

It gave way. Jono and I stumbled backward, but neither fell. A loud, hollow sucking sound rumbled as the Euphrates rushed to fill the void in the culvert. The hemp rope around Jono's arm tightened and pulled. Red was being drawn in. Jono grasped for the rope as it began to burn a spiral into the dark skin of his forearm. I dropped the plastic and grabbed the rope. We both pulled hard as Red grabbed the rocks, fought forward against the powerful suction, and heaved his tired, water-heavy body onto the bank. The sucking sound stopped. Birdsong came to us again. Leftover wake from the Zodiac lapped at the reeds and rushes.

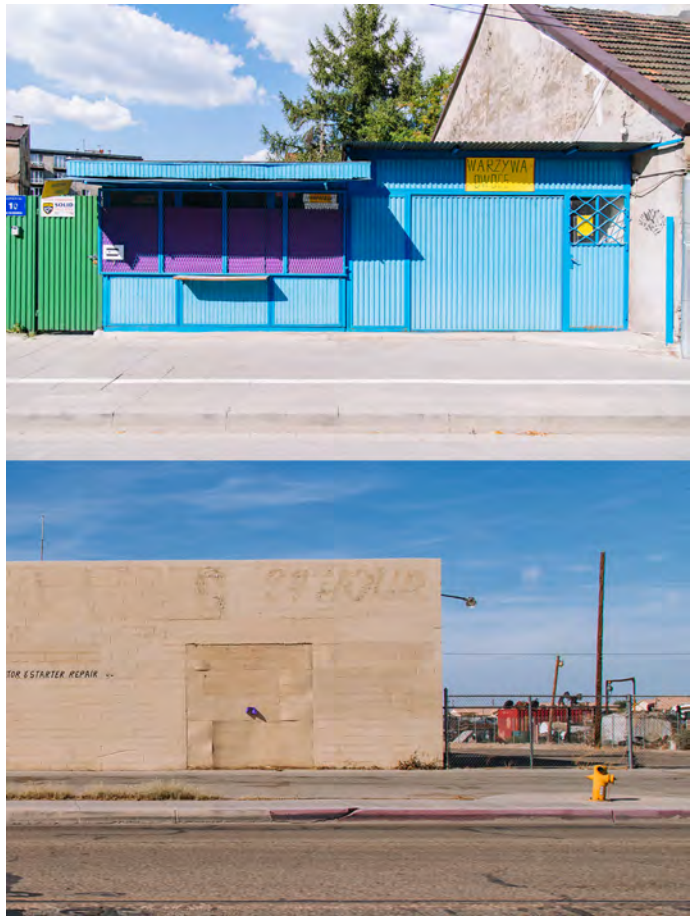
I collected my camera as the two men grappled with the plastic. Coming to the end of it, we saw something was stuck in the Visqueen. It was a cream-colored goat. The curled tip of its horn had hooked the plastic and become entangled. He was about the size of a large dog. There was no way to know how the little fella had ended up in the river or got his horn pierced through the plastic.

"Let's get outta here," called the fireteam leader.

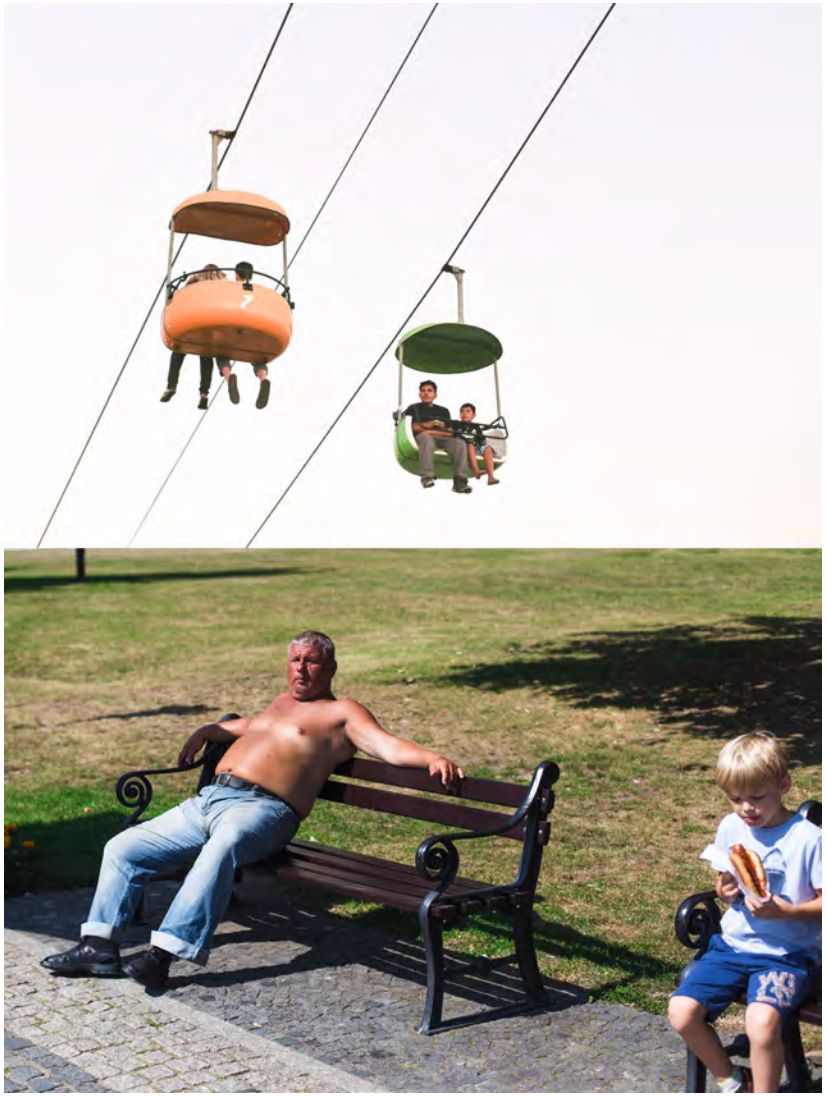
I snapped a series of photos, as the promise of evidence was how I'd talked my way out here. I better go back with record of it.

Shoes and socks soggy. Jeans drenched and heavy against my ankles and shins. It was just water, the earth's water. The same as from the lake I fished and water-skied on in New Mexico as a girl. The same as I would drink later from a plastic bottle. The same but different. This is the water of Eden. The water of kings and angels.

Red and Jono rolled up the rope, rolled up the plastic, released the goat and gently left him to rest on the bank of the Euphrates, in the shade of the waving blades.




I Love You This Much!
GOD IS LOVE
THE HOLY BIBLE



POSTED: NO SWIMMING

Lana Highfill

You would not recognize
these arms if wrapped around you
now: older, brown, soft—like fruits
late and fallen.

Do you remember, when we were
young, how the quarry was a magical
cave? Frigid rocky history in the middle
of it all—our secret hideaway
for only God and trains to see.

Our years race by above—
clouds cut and molded out of dust.
A fox hunts in the groundwater
as the echo of axes seeps up
from the mines below: an ancient warning bell.

JARBIDGE, GREAT BASIN, NV

Karla Linn Merrifield

In native tales, behold, it came to pass:
the monster that lurks in the canyon escaped,
feeding on silver-mine tailings, a radioactive,
white-skinned beast. Earthslayer. Deadly.
From canyons come all the lurking monsters.

for Roberta Moore
with a line from Marge Sill's "A Love Affair with Nevada"

OVERLAY

Catherine McGuire

there are two towns...

I.
The first welcomes you, a stranger
side streets like one-act plays unrolling
nothing in the expected place.
The ghost of where you left
overlays its face, confusing
the issue further.
Cafes, bookstores, groceries—
find touchstones; find the core.
Every direction in new coordinates:
East by NewEast by Sudden by West;
maps tied to every venture
distance will not settle into one length.

You are not yet here, as they are
who walk so easy on untranslated sidewalks
who navigate by hidden grids.
Approach like a lover
and it will let you in.

II.
The second, found under the first
when newness rubs off:

your new home town. As years cement
invisible pathways, you overlay map and filter,
comfort's GPS; your autopilot unerring
except at scattered moments, catching
a startled glimpse—scrap of first town—
the stranger-glaze showing
and you wonder how you could have ever
so mistaken it.


BUTCHER
WINGO
JONES
HARRIS


Family is a place to go
always feel at home.
someone
to talk to.
a shoulder
to lean on.
Laughter
can always
be found
Love is
Where memories are born
our hearts forever. Renew

WATER, AND OTHER LOST THINGS

Michele Desmarais

Indigenous: dream in place. We are the dreams of this lake.

Before almost ever after, all words were rain in our mouths.
We could travel language like birds, further than far, but always finding home.

Teninyankewin gave birth by the lake to a boy then Tcheer Kuhk took him, raised him up. A baby handed round, warred over, loved madly like water, like land. This boy, a little lake bird, could travel so early say *rain* in five people's tongues.
Great grandfather, when he could be bothered to talk, divided time his own way:
Before the English. After the English.
Before fences. When fences were young.
And then
Then they paused one summer, Tcheer Kuhk and the bird boy, beside a lake that seemed to forget them, to turn in on herself. This boy watched her curl away and away, saw dust puff from cracked earth edges as if even the lake could dream only ghosts, or would cough herself dead. And that is when he was taken away, again. Gifted with rain, this bird boy by September and ever after could only speak English, barely at that.

One day his bones returned wearing long clothes that disguised a history of storms

the beatings, the pleasings of God. Saying *Joseph*, *Joseph* and *Abraham*. New names, but no words came to his mouth for *home*, *water*, or *help*, so he walked on North through bitter dry lands found companions, silence and snow.

It was a long walk. Then some time
before almost ever after happened again, I crashed in
everyone's thunderstorm and then some. Not a well-behaved
story, but somehow finding my way back here
to this lake
to only one place, bone ache familiar with dreams that speak
that open my mouth like I'm some bird child, saying
Teninyankewin
Teninyankewin
today I learned our words
for home, for water,
mni wak'á
and this is what helps
mni wak'á
wopida

BURYING THE DEAD

Lucy Palmer

The last day was at the Killacourt, that ancient Celtic
ground where families once buried their dead. Perhaps

the sun shone dangerously on nearby cliff tops,
sharpening their flinty edges into points. I don't know,

it's just as likely it was raining, soaking
the deck-chaired onlookers to the insides
of their plastic anoraks, not that they'd let a bruised sky
put them off the weekly oompah of the brass band.

I do remember your skin, though, your face a blue pall
that you'd written wrinkles on since I last saw you. Flesh

hung loose-curtained around your jaw, stubbled
by hair still black, now with the gentle insistence of grey.

You pretended not to see me, but I know I prickled
your skin. Your bones are my bones, after all. We walked

these grounds when I was a child, my hand aching to hold
yours, despite everything. I've mapped the terrain——

each bench, each gorse-smothered rock, each
wall you'd hide behind to prick me with terror.

Those Sunday walks had teeth and even now the marks ghost my
skin.

THE DECISION

Alan Dennis Harris

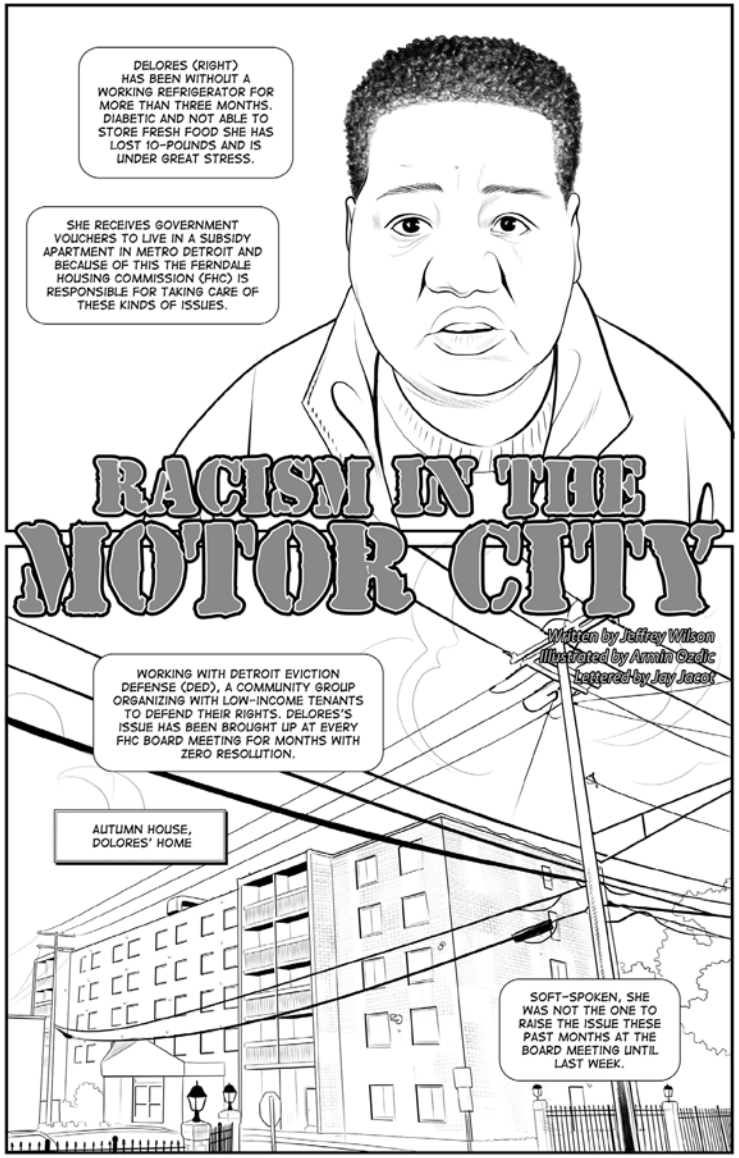
They laid the train tracks back to front and this caused a great deal of confusion—you'd think you were on the train to New York and arrived in Dublin, or to Shanghai and found yourself lost in Istanbul. That's how it felt. Lost in a world where engineers and commanding officers get it right only 50% of the time. And when things go wrong, the imagination of the rest of us—the dreamers, the writers, the artists, and the lovers construct truths which compete with the Great Pyramid of Giza or the Temple of Artemis.

If I had gotten on that train there was no way to know if I'd ever return. Too much uncertainty. I knew if I remained on the platform long enough for the workers to undo what was undone I'd remain safe. Once all the round pegs fit neat and securely into round holes maybe then I could finally step on board, take my seat, and let the conductor deliver me to New York—to return to my unit.

But you could see it in the eyes of the construction crew. This delay was meant for me, to give this young kid, this toy soldier time to reconsider. At least, that's what I imagined. This was all about me. Even the weather had something to say as the clouds rolled in.

What's worse than AWOL? An ill-fitting body bag? Jungle-rot? Shooting another kid out of some false obligation and then living with it for the rest of my life?

The commotion soon came to an end. Workers dispersed, satisfied that the train to New York would not arrive in Dublin after all. I surveyed my options. Since Shanghai and Istanbul were also off the itinerary, I came to the only decision that made any sense to a twenty-year old. Remaining at attention, I watched the last train car pass me by. I looked into the darkening sky and wondered if nature bets on a man's probability for redemption. Nature answered. Thunder crackled across the sky. Birds joined me in taking cover within the safety of the station. Rain dripping from the rusty gutters made a curtain between the platform and the tracks.


DELORES (RIGHT) HAS BEEN WITHOUT A WORKING REFRIGERATOR FOR MORE THAN THREE MONTHS. DIABETIC AND NOT ABLE TO STORE FRESH FOOD SHE HAS LOST 10-POUNDS AND IS UNDER GREAT STRESS.
SHE RECEIVES GOVERNMENT VOUCHERS TO LIVE IN A SUBSIDY APARTMENT IN METRO DETROIT AND BECAUSE OF THIS THE FERNDALE HOUSING COMMISSION (FHC) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING CARE OF THESE KINDS OF ISSUES.
RACISM IN THE MOTOR CITY
Written by Jeffrey Wilson
Illustrated by Armin Ozdic
Lettered by Jay Jacot
WORKING WITH DETROIT EVICTION DEFENSE (DED), A COMMUNITY GROUP ORGANIZING WITH LOW-INCOME TENANTS TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS. DELORES'S ISSUE HAS BEEN BROUGHT UP AT EVERY FHC BOARD MEETING FOR MONTHS WITH ZERO RESOLUTION.
AUTUMN HOUSE, DOLORES' HOME
SOFT-SPOKEN, SHE WAS NOT THE ONE TO RAISE THE ISSUE THESE PAST MONTHS AT THE BOARD MEETING UNTIL LAST WEEK.


SEPTEMBER 2015: WAITING FOR "OPEN CALL."
THE 30-MINUTE TIME PERIOD WHEN TENANTS GET TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS TO THE BOARD. WAITING ARE TENANTS AND DED MEMBERS
HAVE WE CLARIFIED THE PROCEDURES FOR PAINTING?
NO, WE ARE WAITING TO RECEIVE THE PAPERWORK FROM HUD.
OK, WHEN WILL WE GET THAT PAPER WORK?
I'VE GOT SO MUCH WORK TO DO.
I'M GOING TO MAKE A CALL BEFORE THE MEETING IS OPEN TO PUBLIC COMMENT.
JEFF DED MEMBER


OH, HEY HOW YOU DOING?
I JUST DON'T KNOW WHY THEY WON'T FIX MY FRIDGE.
I CAN'T TAKE IT. 3 MONTHS NO FRIDGE... THEY THINK I'M DUMB. I'M SO STRESSED.
YOU IMAGINE IT, 3 MONTHS AND NO FRIDGE, NOTHING.
I'M FEEL'N LIKE...
LIKE I'M GOING TO HAVE A NERVOUS BREAK DOWN.
I KNOW.
I'M SORRY THIS HAS GOT TO BE SO STRESSFUL..
YEAH AND I'M DIABETIC SO I AIN'T GOT NO PLACE TO KEEP MY FOOD.
I JUST CAN'T TAKE THIS NO LONGER.
I WISH THERE'S SOMETHING MORE I COULD DO.


RENE: AUTUMN HOUSE TENANT.
YOU'VE GOTTA GO IN THERE AND SAY SOMETHING.
THEY THINK YOU'RE DUMB, YOU'RE SLOW, YOU'VE GOTTA SAY SOMETHING.
DON'T LET THEM DO THAT TO YOU, DELORES.
THEY HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU. YOU'VE GOTTA SAY SOME'N.
THEY CAN'T DO THIS TO ME.
I CAN'T TAKE IT.

*Thanks to **Confluencenter** for funding.*

A HISTORY WRITTEN ON THE LAND: THE GEOGLYPHS OF CHUG CHUG

James Kelly

Journeying north from the Chilean capital of Santiago, there is a point, perhaps passing the town of Copiapó, around 27° S, when the vegetation stops and the desert begins in earnest; arid, parched, the land strewn with rocks and rubble. It is an unworldly landscape, one that at first sight would appear to deny the very possibility of human life, but that nonetheless has been inhabited by humans for many thousands of years. Passing the Tropic of Cancer, now around 22° S, as the plane begins its descent into the oasis of Calama, the mining capital of Chile's Norte Grande, I have a bird's-eye view of the land, of its terracottas and arenaceous yellows, of the whites of the salt flats, the die-straight roads that cut across the land, the tops of distant volcanoes shimmering in the heat; a mirage, a landscape suspended in time. Touching down on the tarmac, the contrast between the solid black and the buff land from which the runway is carved sticks in my mind.

Later that night, leaving the city of Calama behind us and heading into the unknown, the contrast returns to haunt me, the beam of the headlights illuminating snatches of the empty space around us; vast, menacing, uncertain. The nightlights dance demonically in the distance behind us, flickering orange and red: Calama and the neighboring town of Chuquicamata, home to the world's largest open-pit copper

mine, its voracious appetite fed by multiple rows of pylons running in parallel to the road. Something about the landscape overwhelms me, a disturbing, almost hallucinatory quality. Already I feel the colossal energy that lies dormant beneath the surface of the land.

"The story of the earth," writes Robin Wall Kimmerer in Braiding Sweetgrass (2013), "is written more truthfully on the land than on the page; the land remembers what we said and what we did." If this is true, Chile's northern desert is blessed with a near-perfect memory, among the finest in the world. With some of the lowest rates of erosion, its landscapes are among the oldest on the planet, littered with artifacts and markings that record millennia of history, testament to the lives—and occasionally deaths—of those who have gone before us. It is among this flotsam and jetsam that the geoglyphs of Chug Chug—from geo, meaning earth and glyph, a sign or symbol—are found, a series of distinctive markings made from the contrast between the light sandy earth and its covering of dark brown stones. Spread across an area covering some 190 square kilometers, Chug Chug is one of the largest collections of geoglyphs in the world, representing a cultural tradition spanning the last 2,500 years of the pre-Hispanic period (1,000 BCE to 1,500 CE) and forming part of a complex network of routes linking the oases of Pica, Quillagua and Calama along a north–south axis, and the coastal settlements of the Pacific and the Andean highlands from east to west. Over the next few days, I have the privilege of shadowing an interdisciplinary team of anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers and conservation experts from the Atacama Desert Foundation on a field trip to survey the geoglyphs. For now though, it's late, I've been on the road all day, I decide to turn in for an early night.

The first light of dawn reveals the desert in all its

splendor, unchanged, unchanging, the land waiting expectantly for the sun to rise over the distant hills. From our camp, it is a twenty-minute walk to the main sierra, which has the largest collection of geoglyphs (around four hundred and counting, one of 18 separate sites discovered at Chug Chug). I follow the path to a rudimentary viewpoint installed by the Atacama Desert Foundation last year at a safe distance to protect the geoglyphs from further human damage. Clustered on the east-facing slopes of the sierra's five hills—a detail, it strikes me that may not be wholly accidental—I watch the geoglyphs and wait patiently for the sun to rise. When it finally does appear from behind the distant mountains, the hills are struck by its horizontal rays, a rich, luxuriant light that works its way gradually down the slopes, illuminating the contours of these curious shapes that have marked the desert for millennia: crude representations of human figures, lizards, felines, llamas, fish, circles and the stepped rhombus, or chakana, commonly referred to as the Andean cross.

Researchers who have worked extensively on cataloging the geoglyphs have identified three groups of symbols: anthropomorphic, the hypothetical representation of an important figure in the religious, political or ideological realm; zoomorphic, of species such as camelids, used for transport in the desert, and deep-sea fish, which attest to the presence of coastal fishing communities; and finally, geometric figures, which may have served as markers for different ethnic groups. Yet while researchers may have been able to shed some light on the meanings of the geoglyphs, their full significance remains largely shrouded in mystery. Theories range from simply functioning as landmarks to being bound up with the cult of the mountains and Andean myths and divinities. However, some of the most recent and comprehensive work on cataloging and systematizing them has focused on a more prosaic explanation, centered around their importance as part of pre-Hispanic caravan traffic and trade between the indigenous peoples of the region. For Gonzalo Pimentel, Director of the Atacama Desert Foundation, their size—some measure up to 15 meters—and high visibility suggest they were "strategically placed to reach a wide audience as an active mechanism to distinguish and denote belonging to specific social groups." Moreover, imprinting these signs on this apparently "empty" landscape, a place of transit, or "non-place" in anthropological terms, creates a sense of continuity or permanence, which, he explains, manifests "the power to objectify the presence of other places and people." On the hills, in the markings carefully arranged on their slopes, is written a history, ultimately unknowable perhaps, of peoples and cultures all but lost to the sands of time. It is, as Pierre Minvielle reminds us in his essay on schematic rock art, a form of proto-writing, once described by Abbé Breuil as "the page before this one."

Like all histories, the geoglyphs have evolved over time: looking back to the earliest designs, we find the use of an "additive" technique, which works by arranging the earth and stones to create a light border around a dark shape; however, some three and a half millennia later, by the time of the Spanish invasion, the designs were almost exclusively executed using a 'subtractive' technique, removing the darker top layer of stones to leave visible the lighter earth underneath. Yet as Pimentel is keen to point out, it was not only technique that evolved, but also the designs themselves. While the earliest specimens are characterized by crude, unadorned human forms and more detailed animal figures, later images see this trend reversed: humans are adorned with tunics and headdresses, equipped with implements such as shields and axes; instead, it is the animals that are simplified, reduced to abstract representations in what perhaps serves as a curious commentary on how humans came to see themselves in relation to the animal kingdom.
Yet if the geoglyphs are important to researchers and experts,

offering a puzzle to be solved, they are equally important, if not more so, to the local indigenous communities that still live in the area. While the thriving cultures of their forbearers, and with them the knowledge of the language and traditions associated with these signs, may have all but vanished, Chug Chug's importance as a sacred site lives on.

For Esteban Araya Toroco, Chug Chug is a magical place pervaded by a powerful energy. A young 47, he remembers hearing about the site as he was growing up, although it was not until around the age of 30 that he made his first visit: "I'd heard about the geoglyphs but the first time I went there, it was incredible," he explains, before going on to describe the site's significance as a point of confluence for the ancient caravan routes that criss-cross the region. Esteban represents the Autonomous Council of Ayllus Without Borders. Ayllu, a word for community or people in the indigenous Kunza language, traces of which still survive among the inhabitants of the village of San Pedro de Atacama, and "Without Borders," a reminder that the communities he represents predate the drawing and redrawing of borders across their ancestral lands, most notably Chile's annexation of the mineral-rich northern desert from Peru and Bolivia during the War of the Pacific in the nineteenth century.

Esteban is convinced that somewhere in the area lies a settlement or campsite waiting to be discovered: "there has to be a place where people lived, where they would have spent various months at a time; this wasn't just somewhere people passed through." For Esteban, this gap in the community's collective memory is a powerful reminder of the loss of the knowledge of his ancestors, which might offer clues to help discover the location of the site, while for Pimentel and his team, it acts as a reminder of just how little we know, of the mysteries contained in this immense open space.

———————

We spend the days moving across the surface of the desert, aided by the foundation's four-wheel-drive, approximately following the course of the ancient caravan routes and stopping from time to time to catalog some of the lesser-known geoglyphs. As we walk together under the sun, I am acutely aware of its intense luminosity, of the aridity of the desert, of the absence of any moisture whatsoever. Yet despite the pervading sense of inhospitableness, the tracks serve as a reminder that these distances were once covered without the luxury of motorized transport. Still visible to the trained eye, having perdured the passing of millennia, they snake across the desert in shallow parallel furrows. Pimentel shows us how to distinguish between the lines made by different animals: those of horses, narrow and straight, and the broader, more erratic marks left by caravans of llamas. These were, he reminds us, long and arduous journeys, with no sources of water for days on end and nowhere to shelter from the incessant glare of the ever-present sun.

With the keen eye of an anthropologist, Pimentel reveals how this apparently empty space is bristling with clues to multiple pasts. The climate is such that the only element acting on the objects we encounter is the sun. When, from time to time, we come across the bones of some unfortunate animal, they are brittle and calcareous, baked and bleached white by its rays. Who can say how many years—or decades—they have been lying there? From the nitrate boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we find green glass bottles and iron cattle shoes scattered across the pampa, the latter fitted by drovers to protect the hoofs of their livestock from the scorch of the earth. Reaching further back in time, we find rocks arranged in shelters that once protected people from the winds that whip across the desert at sundown, signs of fires lit beneath the earth and covered over to create the warmth of a makeshift bed, piles of stones arranged in ceremonial cairns and tombs, telling of the lives—and, for those less fortunate, deaths—of the people

that once transited these lands. This debris of the past is a treasure trove for experts. An article by Luis Briones describes how the remains of a young girl found to the north, wrapped in the skin of a seabird and wearing leather sandals made from sea lion, indicate the presence of coastal groups and suggest the seasonality of their journeys, which were most probably made during the summer to coincide with the greatest availability of resources. The dating of the tomb to approximately 1400 BCE tells us that the caravans predate the geoglyphs by a considerable period of time.

Approaching a cairn, Pimentel directs our attention to small pieces of copper mineral lying on the ground, once thrown into the air as an offering, or payment, for safe passage across the desert, now scattered at our feet. Almost imperceptible at first, as we draw closer, their density increases until a sea of turquoise spreads out around us. I think of Chuquicamata, of that gaping copper mine ripped piecemeal from the flesh of the earth. These peoples, it appears, also mined for copper, albeit on a smaller, more human scale. It is the same activity, yet separated by millennia and two cultural contexts that could not be further apart. Somewhere along the line, a profound loss has occurred, the loss of our respect for the land, of an awareness of the limits of human activity, of a sense, when all is said and done, of balance. Yet this is not equally true for all: for the survivors of those pre-Hispanic cultures, that sense of respect, as Esteban explains to me when we talk later that week, the tradition of making offerings and payments to give something back to the land, lives on. “When we go,” he tells me, “we take coca leaves, alcohol and drinks and give thanks looking across toward the volcanoes, the ceremonial hills of the cordillera, invoking them, asking their permission, giving a payment to mother earth and to our ancestors, offerings made when setting out on a journey or arriving safe at a destination.”

The following morning, we rise early and prepare the four-wheel-drive for a long day: lunch, sun protection and, of course, water. Setting off due north, our first destination is the Aguada de Chug Chug—literally a waterhole—after which we will continue along the bed of the Quebrada de Chug Chug, or gully. As the only source of water between the oasis of Quillagua, some 70 kilometers to the north-west, and the point where the route rejoins the River Loa, some 40 kilometers to the south, the importance of the aguada cannot be underestimated. Our vehicle jolts as we cross the pampa in the morning sun. It is not long before we leave its flat space behind us, dwarfed by the mountains rising up to our north, their rounded contours defined by the rills and channels that run down them. Thus do we enter the gully, following its course, stopping occasionally to negotiate points where the route has been eroded or washed away by last year's rain, until at last we emerge into a sort of basin. In front of me rises up a sierra of mountains whose rock contains an implausible spectrum of colors: ferrous oranges, purples, browns and cupriferous greens; a mineralogist's paradise. Behind me, dry scrub spreads out across the basin, the first vegetation I have seen in days, telling of moisture below the surface of the ground. We follow its trail, noting the presence of grass as we draw closer, leading us to a small cave that extends down into the rock. There before us is the Aguada de Chug Chug. With our abundance of drinking water in the car, it seems little more than a dark, murky pool. However, to those who once made the grueling journey from Quillagua to Calama, travelling for days under the sun with no escape from its heat, this was a lifeline, a chance to quench their thirst, to recover from the hardships of the desert and allow their weary herd to drink its fill. If they were travelling due south, they would drink safe in the knowledge that the most dangerous stretch of their journey was behind them, that it was only another day or so to Calama and the abundance of the River Loa; if they were travelling due north, on return to Quillagua, they would know to stock up well, for it would be many days before they would see water again.

We survey the geoglyphs in the surrounding area and stop for lunch, letting the landscape work on our minds. I can feel the vulnerability of being in the desert: no food, no shelter and, save for the aguada beside us, no source of water for miles around. I think again of the bones from the previous day, brittle, calcareous, bleached by the sun, of the tombs and the cairns. I feel fragile, perishable.

We set off again, following the gully bed as it widens and grows deeper, the route increasingly difficult to navigate, the jolts of our vehicle more severe. When at last we come to a stop, it is not because we have reached our destination but because the land will allow us to go no further. We get out to inspect the obstacles in front of the wheels and take in the lie of the land. In some parts, the watermarks on the sides of the gully are over a meter high and it is tens of meters wide. I try to imagine the fast-flowing waters rushing down from the mountains, tearing through this channel and on out to sea. Yet the land is so dry and the climate so arid it seems impossible that the gully could ever be filled with running water. I wonder if some of the erosion comes from an earlier age, from glaciation perhaps. Yet it is equally true, as recent flooding in the north of Chile showed, that land this dry does not absorb the rain, instead sending it cascading down the sides of the hills, down into the gullies and ravines, where it collects in gushing torrents; whence the rivers' deadly power. For now though, there is nothing, the riverbed is parched and cracked, streaked with white salt marks, baking under the afternoon sun.

There are more geoglyphs further along the course of the gully, but the distance is too far to cover without the help of motorized transport. For now, at least, they remain inaccessible, a reminder of our impotence against the might of the land. As

we make our way back along the gully, the walls and hills close in around us and in the shadows cast by the afternoon sun I reflect on the still and silent power of that mortal landscape, on its capacity to evoke awe and reverence among its pilgrims, of which I am one.

The landscape and its geoglyphs are not respected equally by all. According to recent estimates by the Atacama Desert Foundation, over a fifth of the markings have now suffered irreparable damage as a result of various human activities. On a small scale, there is the underlying threat of informal tourism and the series of gradual modifications made to the sierra by visitors improvising paths in an attempt to see the geoglyphs up close, in some cases passing directly over them and even creating their own. It is a problem that has been largely addressed since the foundation established a permanent presence at the site in 2015. On a slightly larger scale is the damage caused by vehicles passing through the area, most notably when the Dakar Rally tore across the site in 2015, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. The tire tracks left behind by the vehicles are all too visible across the desert, scarring the memory of a land that does not readily forget. Despite attempts to hold the organizers of the event to account and the hope that tighter regulations can be put in place to prevent the re-occurrence of similar damage in the future, the simple fact is that once done, the destruction of this archaeological heritage cannot be undone.

Finally, on the largest scale, there is the ever-present threat posed by mining activity in the region. Copper remains the driving force of Chile's extractivist economy, a fact to which the sprawl of transient cities such as Calama readily testifies. Once an oasis in the desert and a point of confluence for the pre-Hispanic caravans, the city has grown rapidly in recent decades, fueled by the easy money to be made exploiting the region's vast deposits of the red metal. In the 2000s, Calama swallowed the population of the neighboring town of Chuquicamata whole as the operations of the mine rendered the area unfit for human habitation. Yet if copper has been mined in these lands for centuries, the scale of recent operations is unprecedented. From its origins at the end of the 19th century, the Chuquicamata mine has grown to a gaping chasm over 4 kilometers long, 2 kilometers wide, and 800 meters deep, with the pit reflected above the surface in the massive human-made mountain of sterile rubble that towers over the complex. By volume, it is the largest open-pit mine in the world, with round-the-clock operations that feed the global manufacturing supply chain. With industry on this scale comes money, and with it power, a dynamic in which environmental and conservation concerns are often relegated to second place.

Sites such as Chug Chug live in the shadow of this power and have limited means to resist it: a recent power line project put the geoglyphs directly in its line of sight, and there is an almost daily battle to control prospectors and prevent their pick-up trucks further scarring the land. It is a David and Goliath struggle that pits grass-roots conservation against the economic interests of big business. Yet for groups such as Ayllus Without Borders, the Atacama Desert Foundation offers a glimmer of hope, a means to defend, as Esteban explains, "that which cannot defend itself, namely mother nature, the hills, the volcanoes, the cemeteries, our ancestors." A means to defend, when all is said and done, the desert and its sense of wilderness.

The darkness envelopes us as we emerge into the cold, dark night, leaving behind the snug of the campsite. As we walk, a crescent moon sets over the sierra, leaving only the stars in the sky. Returning to the viewpoint I visited on my first day, the Milky Way arches over our heads, a shower of speckled silver, leading our gaze from horizon to horizon. The desert, its vast open space, spreads out around us. As I set up my camera, I

think of the caravans crossing this space, alone in the night, guided by these very same stars. I think of the strange symbols they left behind, markers in space and time, a history of human resilience and survival in a hostile and seemingly uninhabitable environment. I recall and understand Wallace Stegner's words in his "Wilderness Letter": "we need wilderness," he wrote, "because it is the challenge against which our character as a people was formed." Over the last few days, contemplating the enigma of these markings, the mystery that surrounds the people who left them behind, has reminded me of the fragility of our own existence, of our overdependence on technology and the manufactured environment, of the delicate complexity and imbalance of our way of life, all-too vulnerable—as we realize when we step outside—to collapse, of the rapacious rate at which we are depleting the resources of a planet with a finite carrying capacity. Standing here under the stars, I am struck by something primordial, a sense of wonder, the power of the land.

There on the horizon, to the east, is our camp, the warm yellow glow of the dome visible in the blackness of the landscape. To the west, a chemical miasma, the grimy pall of Chuquicamata, of Calama, the city that serves it. Yet its power, the electricity of human life, is dwarfed by the latent energy of the surrounding landscape, of the firmament above, a deeper and slower energy, one that will outlive our civilizations and their vanity, an energy that will one day reclaim these spaces for its own when we who inhabit them are gone, leaving behind nothing more than the markings we make on the land.

INTRANSITIVES NEED NO OBJECT

Mary Rowin

Elsa has a past full of color
and some mystery I do not pursue.
My task is to teach her English
not quiz her on personal history.

But vocabulary is like a prompt
for a poem she is writing to keep
memories of family and home.

> Fill in the blank with a linking verb
> like *tastes or smells:*
> *This honey (tastes) wonderful.*

But for Elsa the *honey (was) wonderful…*
in stories she tells about her beekeeping aunt.

> Sticky combs *taste* wonderful.
> Buzzing *sounds* wonderful.
> Flowers *smell* wonderful,
> The sun *feels* wonderful.

On Monday afternoons at the kitchen table
Elsa reveals her *historia* one word at a time.

GEOGRAPHY AND MEMORY

Nicole Harkin

Montana is home to one of the few triple divides in the world. If rain falls on this mountain, Triple Divide Peak, in Glacier Park, the water has the opportunity to flow in three directions: to the Atlantic, the Pacific, or the Arctic. I always wondered how the direction the water will go in is determined. If it falls directly on the very tippy top, which way will it flow? Will it split into three drops, each going one direction? Or will the angle of the drop falling on the first drop decide? Does the pressure from this next drop determine where the water will flow?

We all wanted Dad to live so the pressure of waiting for him to die would end. The pressure lay on top of us—almost suffocating us. Every time the phone rang I expected someone would tell me that he was dead. Every improvement was met with a setback. No doctor was willing to tell us he would make it, but they were quick to give us the worst-case scenario.

"If he does live, he won't have any quality of life."

We were there on the top of the mountain for quite some time. In one direction, lay Dad dead. In a second direction, he improved and life went back to normal. In the third direction, Dad survived, but things changed nonetheless. We contemplated only the first two options, not even understanding that a third way existed.

The feeling of absolute knowledge is the same between religious zealots and doctors: they will both say they

fundamentally know the answers to life's most vexing questions. But they don't—not really. No one can know, even with medicine's most advanced techniques or the most faithful's prayers for who will live and who will die.

Even as I hated this absolutism, I asked the doctors, like the oracles of history to tell me, to give me some sign, daily, that he would live.

Dad's improvement happened slowly from that day the nurse told us his liver numbers improved. Each day he improved a bit more. And the next day and the next. He started waking up. Eventually he moved from ICU to the step-down ICU. Then he moved to a regular hospital room. All of his muscles atrophied. He couldn't walk or even sit up at first. He needed to relearn how to do everything. He didn't die. He wasn't a vegetable.

We knew when we knew. But the reality of what was happening didn't clobber us over the head in the same way his initial illness had. His improvements were gradual, as was our understanding that he wasn't going to die.

The process gained momentum daily as a different drug or bandage or medical device was removed. But he was still on quite a fair amount of pain medicine. And he watched the Weather Channel constantly.

"Montana, move the fan please. It's going to melt," said Dad from his hospital bed.

"What are you talking about, Dad?" asked ten-year-old, but almost six feet tall, Montana.

"Montana, the fan. Move it away from the window."

"But it can bring in the cool air. Aren't you hot?"

"Montana, the fan is made out of chocolate. You can see that. If it stays in the sun, it will melt."

We all looked at the fan. And then at Dad.

WHEN WE SETTLE

Timothy Dodd

"It'll probably just bring us out at Birch Run Road," Jimmy Paine whines, the hand-me-down flannel shirt tight on his plump frame. "Your boots are a lot better than mine, you know. My socks are already wet."

I urge him on, tell him we won't know without seeing for ourselves. "Besides, you got anything better to do?"

It's our first talk since leaving the gravel road and wandering into the woods behind the lumberyard. The dirt path ended at old tires lying around a rusty, door-less refrigerator in the weeds, so for a good half-mile we've walked through the underbrush, picking ticks off our legs and shoulders while listening to the trickle of the nearby creek. The buzz of traffic has faded, making it easy to forget the highway running on the narrow valley's shoulder, easy to imagine we are deep in the forest.

"Let's turn around," Jimmy says, his voice soft as he tries to hide his heavy breathing. "If we come out on the other side of the ridge we'll still have to walk another mile or more back home."

I know he's about done, know he hasn't liked it since the valley narrowed and turned our level walk into a slope through thick beech and elm. But just as he says it I see an opening in the trees ten yards ahead. Jimmy bursts forward. I can't catch up with him until he stops at the edge of a clearing, hands on hips, mouth open.

Two acres of bottomland are in front of us, picture-perfect, level as a plate on a table. A log cabin stands on the distant side of the land, the mountains rising sharply behind it. The creek on our left meanders to follow the cut of the land, slides past a small mill at the corner of the property, then runs up to the side of the house and heading into the hills.

Jimmy isn't interested in the postcard scenery. He catches his breath and shoots for the front door of the cabin. "Looks like olden days," he says, running past a collapsed outhouse and small well sealed up with concrete.

On the porch Jimmy tests several loose boards with his foot, finds a couple of places where the wood has rotted. The cabin itself looks habitable, almost cared for except for the foot-high grass tickling its foundation and the black tarp covering the front windows. Jimmy reaches for the knob of the front door and it falls loose in his hand. He presses his body against the entrance and strains. The door doesn't budge.

I walk to the side of the house. A foot above my head is a single window, its glass dusty. "Help me find some flat rocks and start stacking them," I call to Jimmy.

Within minutes I'm standing on a wobbly pile of stones. I push up on the bottom of the window. It doesn't open smoothly, but it's unlocked and I force a three-inch crack. I pull myself up, shift my weigh to the sill, and push the window open until it's wide enough to insert my head and neck. I push up with my shoulders to open it further, worming my body into the house before trying to cushion the fall with my hands. Jimmy quickly follows. Never worried about bruises, he dives in headfirst, then licks a sore that reopens on the side of his hand.

The dank smell of rainy woods hangs inside the three-roomed house. A thick layer of dust covers the simple furniture. In the kitchen a tin box rests on a dinner table pushed against the wall, and a cast iron kettle sits on the fireplace's cooking andiron. Empty earthenware and glass jars fill an overhead shelf, and cast iron pots hang from hooks in the wall.

"Don't bother looking for a light switch," I say. "There never was any."

"Just remember that black snakes don't need any light," Jimmy replies, following me into the main room where a wooden table, dresser, and chairs are neatly arranged. He opens the dresser drawer and the smell of mold rushes out. "If nobody lives here I can promise you they're in one of these corners." He speaks from excitement, not fear.

"Maybe somebody is living here. Maybe someone from the lumberyard," I say while exploring.

"Well, it's neater than my bedroom. That's for sure," Jimmy answers, still opening drawers.

Neither of us sees the black and white photographs hanging on the wall in the main room until our third walk-through. Two of the photos are portraits, one of a man, the other a woman. Above them hangs a third, larger picture with three generations of people posing alongside a pair of horses.

"How old are these pictures?" Jimmy asks when I point them out.

"Who knows?" I answer, moving within a few inches of the photos as Jimmy's interest moves elsewhere. The man looks about forty years old and wears a light shirt under a buttoned, dark vest. Above his thin neck, cheek bones stick out under tiny brown eyes. He's clean-shaven with dark hair parted on the side. His small mouth is tensed as he stares into the camera.

The woman is dressed in a white blouse, a line of frills down the front. Her dark hair is piled high, and a subtle smile shows hesitancy. There are no backgrounds or color in the old portraits, giving them some strange power of another time.

The third photograph shows the man and woman standing in a group of eight people on the porch of the house. An elderly man with a cane holds his hat at his side. Two other women wear lacy dresses, one holding a baby wrapped in a

blanket. Two children stand barefoot, one boy and one girl, their hands held by the women. Two horses are tied to a nearby wooden post.

"Hey, there's a rifle here leaning in the corner," Jimmy says, breaking my stare. He examines its every hole and crevice, explaining it's a flintlock musket with the name Booth written on its lock.

I'm more interested in the pictures. I look at them again and wonder what happened to the lives of the family. Are their bones resting in the ground around us? And how did these photos change the current of the air and put a wormy feeling on my skin? What sent my hand to fiddle in the space between the photograph and the wall?

From the crevice behind the man's portrait I pull out a worn, brown paper folded once down the middle, tiny cursive writing on both sides. I push my face down to it, struggling to read its sharp slant.

"I was born out of wedlock in Amherst County and so I took my mother's surname. My father's surname became my middle name, but it's been reduced to an initial now. Then Mother died…"

"What are you boys doing in here?" a shaky voice interrupts. I know it isn't Jimmy's.

I look up from the letter and find an old man pointing a rifle at us, his grey beard long and flowing like a waterfall. Overalls are strapped over his scrawny, shirtless chest. He's barefoot and has a wandering eye. His voice is weak and sickly, and even his firmest declaration lacks power. But a loaded gun still makes us the vulnerable ones. Jimmy puts the Booth on the ground, and I lower my hands, drop the paper. I glance at the old man's hand, the one with a finger on the trigger, and see the gnarled roots of work.

The old man's eyes say we shouldn't be there, that he's got a castle to defend. But then he sees the letter that has fallen

from my hand. His jaws start to move like he's chewing gristle. He looks at me more intently and examines my clothes, puzzled by the dark green sweatshirt, jeans, baseball cap, and hiking boots. Then he lowers the gun and drops his head.

Jimmy stands quietly and I don't know what to say.

The old man raises his head, nostrils flared and lips clenched. His eyes go to the photos on the wall. The faces in the pictures look even lonelier.

"Son, could you pick that letter up and read it to me? I don't know what it says. I've been dying to know all these years."

I reach down and pick up the old paper. I start reading again, this time out loud.

"I was born out of wedlock in Amherst County and so I took my mother's surname. My father's surname became my middle name, but it's been reduced to an initial now. Then Mother died when I was a teenager and the people said, 'Move on, son. You're hardy-boned enough and plenty hard-headed.' I figured a farmhand here is a farmhand there. I was born in backcountry and I'll die in backcountry. I figured on the other side of the mountains no one would know I was illegitimate."

I stop and look up. Even Jimmy is listening. The old man is staring at the floor. I am speaking more carefully than when reading in school, moving slowly to pronounce each word clearly.

"Things have turned out fine over those hills. My first wife passed, but hard fought I have my own family, my own property here, my own horses and own gun. Right at the foot of our mountain is a little creek gurgling and bubbling, babbling like a child, reminding me where I came from. We've planted and we've grown, feeding sweetly off the land. The tobacco plants of Virginia are forgotten. So are the boats loaded with all they could handle, sent down a rough James to Lynchburg.

There were plenty of stops before I made it here, plenty of people I worked for, both good and bad. Plenty of work, and

my back took the worst of it, but that is not as bad as this talk of war. What more should a man want but an opportunity to work green fields that'll produce something for himself and his family? And now that my children have moved to other lands, now that their mother has departed, it is time to prepare my own bed and retire our land.

This nation grows large and grand. The guns are more powerful. Railroad tracks have opened the forests and rivers. But we would be mad to forget that the land we toil is for our family, our community. For every hand, every leg, every lung comes from the land. We can neither trade, nor buy, the mysteries of the soil.

As I write on this thin slice of tree, yes, it too will burn or fade or blow away. But I write it with the faith that took me over the mountain. Should I believe I have cared for them? No, they have cared for me. So humbly I sign, Clarence Coleman Given."

I lower the paper to a silent room.

Then the old man speaks. "Son, could you read it to me again?"

So I start from the beginning, read it twice more. I know the old man is memorizing the words. For once Jimmy isn't fidgeting. He's quieter than he's ever been in church and school.

"No more," the man says after the third read, the words pocketed in his mind. He takes a deep breath and wipes his brow with the back of his hand. "I thank you."

"Go ahead and put that letter back behind the picture where you found it, son. Then you boys can follow me. Bring that musket if you want," he says to Jimmy. "It's yours now."

I fold the paper and carefully place it behind the photograph while Jimmy picks up the musket. The old man turns and leaves with surprising energy. We follow him outside where he's started up the creek, farther into the mountains. I look to Jimmy, but he's already in pursuit. We don't catch up

with the old man until he reaches a knob on the ridge. He sits down and pats the ground beside him in invitation.

Jimmy accepts first, putting some space between him and the old man. I sit down between them and we look out at the opposite ridge, sliced in half to put in the highway. The sky is cloudy and grey, and in the distance the little cars zip by without a sound. On a mountain to our left we make out the edge of an old cemetery clearing.

"That's where Clarence Coleman Given rests," the old man says as he points. I lean over for a better view. "You boys ought to pay him a visit some time."

"Down there in the valley there were ten or twelve homesteads surrounded by cornfields," the old man continues. "Green beans. Onions. Cabbage. You name it. And up in these hills were deer, rabbit, pheasant, and turkey. Don't think it was like those little gardens now. Or that there were separate deer seasons for bows and guns."

"Now take a look out at that highway. Look closely and don't accept the first thing you see."

I squint to make the distant automobiles clearer, studying the highway as instructed. Jimmy and the old man are quiet, looking out as well. But the longer I stare the more the highway's dull pavement glistens. It turns to a bright silver and starts to run in watery waves. The cars begin to streak by less frequently, then hardly at all. The few that pass seem to float by like boats over the steady flow of a river.

"You ready to go?" Jimmy asks some minutes later. I nod and then look around for the old man, but he's gone. Jimmy turns and leads the way back down the mountain. We don't speak. In less than an hour we're back at his house where we wash off and sit down on the sofa with Cokes. Jimmy turns the television on, but for once neither of us cares to watch.

I've walked to the lumberyard many times since that day

two decades ago. It's changed very little, and the small trailer still sits rusted and vacant on the back corner of the grounds. In twenty years I've never seen anyone working the site. Each time I go I stare at the fallen trees and stacks of lumber, realizing that even as a boy I felt something illicit hanging around those grounds, something ghostly.

The day after Jimmy and I met the old man, I returned alone to the woods, walking along the creek to the bottomland where we found the log cabin. But there was no house, no well, no old man. I still stop to look each time I return there, thinking if I linger that it all might reappear. Sometimes I continue on up the mountain to watch the cars flying by on the highway. Sometimes I visit the tiny cemetery on the ridge, Clarence Coleman Given's name wearing away on a faded tombstone.

Jimmy never went back with me—he doesn't even talk about that day. But in a corner of his parents' garage, behind rusty rakes and cobwebbed tennis racquets, sits the old man's musket. Booth still readable across its lock, it now collects a different dust.

YOU ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR FIRST WAR

Catherine Stearns

We were eating barbecued chicken and corn on the cob when we heard the shots. Becky's dad dropped his paper plate, pointed to the next farm over and started running, and because we were good kids, we ran too, through row after row of sunflowers, to get to the Linder porch. Before the party, Becky's older brother Daniel had been strutting around in front of a mirror, as if in uniform already. Daniel, with a tiny mole under his left eye. Or was it his right?

That first Sunday in August, Miss Malone brought over her famous white divinity and said to me with a wink, "Don't worry, hon, it'll be a real short war."

Out of breath from running, I looked up: a girl's dress like a bride's dress, tier after tier of delicate lace hanging wet on a pneumatic screen door. Becky said it was his granddaughter's First Communion dress that we heard dripping on the floorboards as the old man pitched forward in his rocking chair, a rifle between his knees. Her dad grabbed the rifle, then sent us back to the party where for the rest of the day we whooped it up with everybody's blessing, because Daniel was headed for hero-hood, Daniel would halt the bad guys in their tracks. Daniel of the first kiss, first glimmer of the vista opening before us.

Becky's dad had to keep explaining to his guests: "The old coot must be senile. Said he was shooting at the birds because they were stealing his seeds." *His* sunflower seeds! Daniel, always so good at voices, mimicked him over and over

that day: "Come winter, I'da fed 'em to the birds. Not now, no, but come winter."

But come winter, everything had changed. Becky's mom sat at his seat at the table, gulping for air, her dad punched his fist through the kitchen window. For years, they kept their curtains closed. After I moved away, after Becky and I grew into separate people, we were talking on the phone one day when she said, "Guess who finally died? Remember that crazy old guy who shot at the birds?"

Crazy old Linder—everybody must have called him that—crazy old Yannic Linder, crazy old oracle of the ragged leaves of sunflowers, of their giant heads wheeling above us, their suns various and hidden, hidden forever, of the iridescent wings of starlings and seeds cracking like bones between their beaks.

PORTRAIT OF THREE BROTHERS AS CAMELS

Kerry Krouse

". . .even when I lived in the country of my childhood
I used to have a feeling that I came from elsewhere." —Edmond Jabés

They arrived as all who cross the desert do: kneeling
beneath the load carried. The oldest first, then each in turn
lower to the ground bodies fed by nettle and thistle,

that knew thirst only to turn away from it.
If no place is my own, where is my true place?
the youngest brother asks. The journey from one country

to another is without destination, the eldest answers,
a wandering that begets more wandering.
The middle camel, the one with a love of rhyme

and riddle, tells a story: A tailor, having left Poland
during the Pogroms, removes his yarmulke,
shaves his beard, unbinds his siddur and sews

the pages into the linings of his children's coats.
His three sons, inscribed by the hand of their father
in the words of our Father, travel through city

after city without sleep, until stillness itself
is a kind of wandering. “Why can a camel travel
so far without drinking?” I ask my youngest son,

who follows the path of his ancestors across the globe
with his finger before lifting it to point at my book.
He studies the rise of the camel’s hump,

imagines it as a reservoir riding high and cool
over the body, the camel carrying its water the way
a woman—having drawn it from a river—would

balance the vessel above her body returning home.
But there is no water; the camel is stalwart,
sustained on the strap and sinew of its own body,

carrying its burden like an unopened gift,
born on its back for another’s pleasure, another’s thirst.
“What does the camel carry if not water?” my oldest asks.

I trace the path across the globe with my own finger
before I say, “Each carried a miniature world:
their father’s name, the family that did not yet exist,

the long journey between homes lost and found.”
“And how did they know home when they found it?” he asks.
I, like the middle camel, like my grandfather, have a love

of rhyme and riddle, answer questions with stories:
Three foreigners wearing three new coats set out on a journey.
They work their way across two continents, four countries,

and ten cities. Three siddurim lining three new coats
wander with them, humming inside their pockets, their sleeves.

They search for home, and unable to find it, grow weary.

Put down what you can no longer carry, the sage said.
But the foreigners, whose hands were empty,
still bent under their weight. And the sage said:

Carry the book on your back; carry your place in the book.

The italicized line in stanza two is from *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Book* by Edmond Jabés

THE BIG TREE, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Elizabeth Mosier

The Big Tree was already old when we were kids at Madison Meadows Elementary School in Phoenix, and it was wide enough to block the path from home to away-from-home. The towering eucalyptus's leaves laced the sky; sunburnt bark peeled and fell away from its body; its roots gripped the ground where it had stood for at least a half-century. The tree, a native Australian transplanted by Arizona pioneers, gave shade and cover for the fights that began in our schoolyard and smoldered in class until the last bell. We all understood what "Meet me at the Big Tree" meant: the words were a challenge, a red flag signaling to the crowd of bike-straddling students to gather and witness and fan the flames.

Beneath the Big Tree, we watched boys—sometimes, best friends—wrestle murderously in the dirt. We saw a girl's tube top slip to her ribs as, bare-breasted, she pummeled the boy who'd broken her heart. Some of us kissed or smoked or drank beer there, and some of us just said we did. I chickened out of kissing a quiet, wolfish boy who sat in the back row of my fourth-grade class, an intriguing Huck Finn character of confusing parentage. He courted me with several gifts—a dented wooden ruler, an orange-scented eraser, and a palm-sized, half-deflated Phoenix Suns basketball—before he dropped an invitation on my desk on his way to the water fountain. The wadded-up piece of colored construction paper said simply, FIRST BASE AFTER SCHOOL. I didn't have to ask him where. The venue was

understood.

Just down the road from our K-8 school, the Big Tree was for a time the center of our circle, both a battleground and a retreat. As we got older and tested our boundaries, it was our midnight meeting place, a familiar springboard to new experiences. This was, of course, before cell phones—so we'd hide, hearts pounding, behind the tree's massive trunk until we heard our conspirators whistle the code. Then we'd emerge and roam our neighborhood together in the dark, studying the skeletons of our houses illuminated from inside, and our backyard swimming pools gone still and quiet, reflecting the moon. Once, I met my father at the Big Tree to strategize in secret after my mother—angry and scared as her diseased brain dissolved to lace—became violent, bruising his back and breaking his thumb. But that happened many years later, long after I'd grown up and left behind my childhood in Phoenix, or thought I had.

The houses in our North Central neighborhood, called Orangewood, were a storybook collection of pretty revivals—American and Spanish Colonial, Pueblo and Tudor and English Cottage—mixed in with more typical California Ranchers, long and low and land-grabbing. These domiciles were just stage dressing, though. In the Valley of the Sun, we didn't know the insides of our friends' houses as well as we did the outdoor spaces we all shared: the bike trails, the mountain parks, Murphy's bridal path bordered by graceful olive and ash trees, the Madison Meadows School bleachers and basketball courts and playing fields, the citrus orchards, the stand of giant eucalyptus trees along the Arizona canal north of Northern Avenue, the lone Big Tree. The mountains around us (North and South, the White Tanks, Camelback and Squaw Peak, now called Piestewa) were our compass points, orienting us in space and geography. This was helpful, even comforting. In our air-conditioned neighborhood of green lawns, sparkling pools, non-native trees and imported architecture, it was all too easy to forget where we were. Sometimes we had to look to the mountains—find the nimble silhouette of a saguaro cactus thriving in the Mars-like landscape—or smell the rainy-day scent of a creosote bush to remember we lived in the Sonoran Desert. When I return to Phoenix now, I still search for these natural clues amid all the traffic and commerce and new gated communities.

The disorientation we felt was self-imposed; in Phoenix, desert denial is a survival strategy, a sales tactic, even a point of civic pride. If the view outside our art class window was of blinding sunshine and skinny date palms, we sketched stylish snowmen and bright autumn leaves on deciduous trees. In winter, when the dead grass sparkled with morning frost, we squinted and saw white fields of snow; we scraped up the scant crystals to fling at each other, mimicking snowball fights we'd seen in children's books and our parents' albums. Before water parks were popular, Phoenix had the first faux beach: Big Surf, with an engine pumping 2.5 million gallons of water into waves at three-minute intervals. By defying the desert in these absurd ways, we were following a long tradition that began in 1867. That's when an ex-Confederate cavalryman, Jack Swilling, looked out across the arid valley abandoned by the Hohokam Indians and imagined a modern Phoenix rising from verdant land irrigated by the tribe's clever system of canals.

It turns out that the promise of a second chance is a powerful motivation to move. And what better setting for rebirth than a city resurrected from the ashes of an ancient civilization, a mecca enabled (if not sustained) by Swilling's new and improved plan to channel the Salt River's flow? Our city's population tripled in the time it took us to graduate from high school—and it's doubled again since then. Eventually, one and a half million people would journey to Phoenix seeking cheap land or dry air, employment or an education, to get lost in the

sprawling metropolis or to find themselves.

But these pilgrims, including our parents, didn't leave their old lives behind; they didn't prepare physically or mentally for hardship, or give themselves up to this strange new site where their personal transformation would take place. Rather, they came to Phoenix and built an ice factory. They diverted the Salt and Gila Rivers, paved the desert, and planted rose bushes. They created a theme park called Legend City, which replicated the landscape in miniature and presented our history to us as myth. Some of us had never been to the Grand Canyon, but we'd been to Legend City to ride kid-scale ore cars through the haunted "Lost Dutchman's Mine" (believed to be located within Arizona's Superstition Mountains) and take a boat trip down the "River of Legends," filthy with animal waste runoff from the nearby Phoenix Zoo. In Social Studies class at school, we never seemed to get past the Civil War, but the River of Legends took us to "Cochise's Stronghold" in the Chiricahua Mountains, where stiff-armed Apaches staged a shoot out with a troop of cavalrymen, some of them re-fashioned from female department store mannequins.

By the time we were old enough to learn the dictionary definition of "irony," Phoenix had grown into a city of golf courses and resort hotels with continuously running man-made fountains flowing into lovely basins and evaporating into the air. No wonder we were called to the Big Tree. Giant and incongruous, it was to us a vestige of the natural landscape, a survivor that had withstood heat and limb-breaking winds, and that had witnessed our adolescent wars. The irony is that the eucalyptus isn't natural to Phoenix at all; the Australian import competes with—can even destroy—Arizona's native species, and is highly flammable besides. That's a problem in a hot, dry city with a single-digit dew point temperature for most of the year and a summer monsoon season bringing wind and rain and lightning. Still, the Big Tree, with its deep roots and tall

branches, is a potent symbol for all of us even after all these years. It stands, weathered and defiant: a conduit between earth and sky, body and spirit.

A few years ago, on a tour of Gettysburg with my childhood friend visiting from Chicago, our guide wisely skipped the monuments and battle plans and tailored his talk to our teenage daughters. "Right there," he said, pointing to the house-turned-field-hospital, "the limbs discarded after surgery were piled right up to the sill of the first-floor windows. Imagine the gauntlet those brave volunteer nurses—most of them completely inexperienced—had to walk through just to go to work." He told us about a young woman who enlisted (and cross-dressed) as a Union soldier, and about another, Tillie Pierce, who wrote about the battle in her published diary. He implored us to imagine the sticky summer heat, the air dark with cannon smoke, the line of Philadelphians holding ground on Cemetery Ridge as the Confederates made their slow-mo march—Pickett's charge—across a field of last resort.

As he recounted the men's hellish, doomed journey, goosebumps rose along my arm. It wasn't just being at the legendary battlefield, or the zealot guide's story filled with gruesome details—but also the summer heat, the light breeze on my bare arms, the reunion with my best friend from Madison Meadows, each of us now mother to two girls just like we'd been girls way back when. I was feeling what G.M. Trevelyan called "the poetry of history," which, as he puts it, "lies in the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth, once, on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing into another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone." That day, our guide's stories brought history close and held us to the spot listening, while lightning flashed in a distant corner of the darkening sky, heralding an afternoon storm that would fell

the last Civil War witness tree in the National Cemetery.

My daughter took a picture of it. I thought of the Big Tree.

Certain artifacts from our pasts are discarded; others stay with us, charged with emotional power. I visit the Big Tree every time I'm in Phoenix; from my desk in Philadelphia, I search for it on Google Maps. The tree often appears in my stories and essays, as itself or in disguise. I've imagined my fictional teenage characters standing beneath its protective umbrella, where the air tastes—in my memory—of coconut and citrus, sweat and cooling mud. Their hearts beat loudly from danger they've summoned, as they swagger and posture, daring a friend or defender or life itself to strike the first blow. But the stories we tell ourselves affect us, too; they become part of our personal mythology.

What I felt for that lonely boy whose kiss I refused so long ago wasn't familiar enough to be dismissed as love, and it was violent enough to split me in two. My daydreams of taking care of him—bringing him home with me to serve him TV dinners, bandage his scabbed knuckles and fix his rotten sneakers with duct tape—were my shameful secret; some unnamable desire made my face hot when I thought of him. I never knew him well enough to know what he dreamed. He died before he turned twenty-one, shooting himself in the presence of friends—boys then, now men, who are still making their way back from that awful night.

And when I met my father at the Big Tree—the summit chosen unconsciously, unintentionally—I implored him to see what my brothers and I saw: taking care of our mother was killing him, and he had to save himself. That night I pocketed a large piece of the Big Tree's bark—curved gracefully, like a hand at rest or half a prayer—and carried it home with me to Philadelphia. This tree bark now sits on my writing desk, while I sort through the story of my father's rescue and my mother's

decline. Sometimes I stop and rest my hand on the wood and, in the mysterious way that memory frees and fails us, I'm a teenager again. I am returned like magic to some forgotten sense of safety, as I kneel beneath the Big Tree and touch its rough trunk, feel its gnarled roots beneath my sneakers.

KERI KERI TO AWANUI

Mercedes Webb-Pullman

Bellbird chimes warp time
and place, this hospital
in the capital becomes
a clearing in the North.
My mother, skeletal, deaf,
suddenly lifts her head
as if she listens too,
as if she can remember

my father changing a tyre
by a shingle road
between Keri Keri and Awanui;

being crammed in the Ford,
gears double-clutched
through pohutukawa and fern,
the shifting slippery curves,
my father's grin as we drifted, gripped
almost to swim the turns,
my mother soft and billowy then,
a comfort for me to sink in.

I remember that road, those stones,
their crunching underfoot,
the heat, the dust that puffed up,

the way it sifted over the ferns
like talcum.

My father is dead, my mother
has misplaced her memory.
If I forget too
will any of this still exist?

HOUSE IN THE DESERT

Peg Alford Pursell

The vibrant blooming cacti had attracted her first, where in the desert's shimmering white air, even the towering rocks seemed to breathe. She makes her home there now, surrounded by mountains, bajadas, and badlands, taking pride in the closest town's designation as an International Dark-Sky Community. But every several months she makes the sojourn to the house of her childhood in the Northeast, to the tiny village surrounded by forest and crisscrossed with streams. Her father still lives there in the same wood-sided house, white with painted blue shutters swollen and warped from rain, snow, and heat.

When she enters the house her father—once a man sturdy as the trees he felled—holds her and cries. She loves and hates this, that it took him almost fifty years to learn to hug her. Half a century. Another few decades for her to acclimate to the change is out of the question, and she wishes she could simply accept the awkward demonstrativeness, forget the long past.

She carries her bag to her room, pale yellow walls, a muted print cover on the narrow bed. An arrangement of silk flowers in a white wicker basket hovers in the corner, added once the room became used for guests. On the dresser top sits someone's perfume, a gold bracelet. A china dish holds a tortoise shell barrette, two pennies, a faded receipt. Fluffy bright rugs cover the floorboards, texture under her bare feet. She has always loved to go shoeless. You can't, really, in the desert. She leaves her unopened bag and returns to the kitchen.

Her father and she sit at the old oak table and sip cups of black tea. She tells him about the research that she's read on drinking tea. All good news; the habit promotes health. They say nothing about the company who owns the rights to the earth beneath their feet, about the dying town, the villagers pale and sorry. She's doing that thing again, wanting to make him happy.

Then he opens his mouth in a terrible smile that squeezes her heart. Struggling not to sob this time, as each time, he begins the story. He was there that morning in the hospital. In those times the father wasn't wanted, but the doctor appeared in the waiting room and pointed at him: *I need you*. When finally the doctor had her out, the gray gristled cord wrapped round her neck, how blue she was. Not a sound from her for the longest time. He breaks down.

Through his fingers he says something that sounds like *tell me my great day gave you a reason*.

She murmurs soothing affirmations. Eventually her breath calms, pulse rate restored.

She's aging too. She has her own stories. She has a house in the desert. Shelter from the extremes. In the mornings, the stone floors are frigid. Slippers essential. Under the old table, she presses her bare feet together, one warm foot to the other. No need to think about what's going on underground. Imperative not to. She rests her hand on her father's forearm. She's here.

THE SEA

Valentina Cano

She's been chasing a red pail
her entire life.
It ran into the sea
as she
wished to do,
soaking its plastic heart
in churning salt,
looking to see
what the sea keeps.

CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Ablon is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. He has published four books of poems, most recently Night Call (Plain View Press) 2011 and Blue Damsels (Peter Randall Press) 2005. His work has appeared in such magazines as Off The Coast and Ploughshares

Shelly Black is originally from California and Japan. She is a photographer working in Tucson, Arizona, and has had work shown throughout the country and overseas, including the West Valley Art Museum in Surprise, Arizona and the International Photography Festival in Pingyao, China. She holds a BFA in photography from the University of Arizona.

Valentina Cano is a classical singer who spends her free time reading, writing, weaving, or spinning wool on her antique spinning wheel. Her works have appeared in numerous publications and her poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Web. She has two chapbooks, Winter Myth, and Event Horizon, as well as her debut novel, The Rose Master, which was published in 2014 and was called a "strong and satisfying effort" by Publishers Weekly.

Michele Desmarais is a Canadian writer of Métis, Dakota (Spirit Lake), English and French ancestry. Recent publications include poems in Yellow Medicine Review: A Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art and Thought; International Studies in Literature and the Environment (Climate Change issue); Room Magazine's In Translation issue (38.1) and the Two of Cups press Moon anthology. In 2011-2012 she was the recipient of a Canada Council for the Arts Aboriginal Writer's grant.

Timothy Dodd is from Mink Shoals, WV. His stories have appeared in Yemassee, The Owen Wister Review, Glassworks Magazine, Coe Review, The William & Mary Review, and elsewhere. He is currently in the MFA program at the University of Texas El Paso.

Andi Feddeler lives in Austin, Texas. She loves golden retrievers and writing (and any combination of the two). She is the editor-in-chief of her school's literary magazine.

Bleuzette La Feir is from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her work has appeared in Blood Lotus, Blue Lake Review, decomP, descant, Diverse Voices Quarterly, Forge, Lindenwood Review, The Manhattanville Review, Storyscape, and SOMOS-Storied Wheels. Her flash fiction piece, "Bangs," was nominated for the Best of the Net 2012 anthology.

Valerie Galloway was born in France to an American father and a French mother. She received her BFA in photography from the University of Arizona and has been a working artist ever since. She has been commissioned by many prestigious organizations to create awards and gifts, including the Yellowstone Park Foundation, Sundance, and Pima Community College. Her handmade photo mirrors and photo jewelry have been carried at Etherton Gallery, Verve Gallery of Photography Santa Fe, and International Center of Photography, among others.

Greg Geis lives in Houston, Texas. His first full length collection "Fire Sale" is forthcoming from Tupelo Press (Leapfolio) in January, 2017. His chapbook "Mockumentary" is slated for publication in Fall of 2017 (Main Street Rag Publishing). Most recently he has published in Fjords, Crannog, The Moth, A New Ulster, and Skylight 47.

Nicole Harkin currently resides in Washington, DC with her husband and two small children, but she hails from Montana. A long time ago she wanted to be a paleontologist. She is finishing her memoir, Tilting, from which this piece is excerpted.

Alan Harris is a hospice volunteer and graduate student who helps hospice patients write memoirs, letters, and poetry. Harris is the recipient of the 2014 John Clare Poetry Prize as well as the 2015 Tompkins Poetry Award from Wayne State University. Harris is a two-time Pushcart nominee. His work has recently appeared in The Lake, Poetry Breakfast and The Great Lakes Review.

Claire Hermann lives in a little house in the woods outside the small town of Pittsboro, NC, where she raises funds and tells stories for progressive nonprofits. Her work appears in such publications as Borderlands: Texas Poetry Journal, Lines + Stars, Bracken, Southern Women's Poetry Review, and Prime Number. She has a weakness for cats, farmers markets, foggy mornings, and justice. Find her at www.ironclaywriters.com.

Lana Highfill holds an MFA in Writing from Pacific University. She writes poetry in Southern Indiana, where she is an English professor. Her interests include live music, comic books, and sci-fi. She has been published in Three Drops Cauldron, Rose Red Review, and Nota Bene, Phi Theta Kappa's honors anthology, and is currently working on her first manuscript.

Konstanty Hordyński was born in Warsaw and is based in Oakland. He is a photographer who takes photos of landscapes, people, and everything in between. He is interested in using photography to explore the interaction of human-made and natural environments. He is a lover of good coffee, good composition, and understatement.

James Kelly is a writer and translator with a strong interest in the natural environment. He has spent the last ten years living between Scotland and Chile, where he is currently based. More of his work can be found at blog.geosoph.scot.

Kathleen Koopman was born and raised on the North Shore of Long Island. She emigrated to Tucson in early 1970. She received a BFA and MFA at Long Island University. She is a certified art specialist and taught for 12 years in the Amphitheater School District.

Kerry Krouse lives in Oakland, California where she teaches a Creative Cartography course at St. Mary's College. Her work has appeared in such journals as The Southern Poetry Review, The Mississippi Review, Rattle, Lumina, Linebreak and the anthology Appetite: Food As Metaphor by BOA Editions.

Pamela Lawton is Associate Professor of art education at Virginia Commonwealth University. For seven years she taught at the Corcoran College of Art and Design and served as Director of Art Education. In 2009 the Corcoran honored her with the Betty Foster educator of the year award. A native of Washington, D.C., she is a practicing artist whose artistic and scholarly research revolves around visual narrative and intergenerational arts learning in community settings.

Catherine McGuire is a writer and artist. Her poems have appeared in New Verse News, FutureCycle, Portland Lights, Fireweed, and on a bus for Poetry In Motion. Her chapbook, Palimpsests, was published by Uttered Chaos in 2011 and her first full-length book of poetry, Elegy for the 21st Century, will be published by FutureCycle Press in 2016.

Karla Linn Merrifield is a nine-time Pushcart-Prize nominee and National Park Artist-in-Residence. She has published twelve books, including Bunchberries, More Poems of Canada, a sequel to her award-winning Godwit: Poems of Canada (FootHills Publishing). She is the founding poetry editor of Sea Stories, the literary journal of the Blue Ocean Institute. She is assistant editor and poetry book reviewer for The Centrifugal Eye. Her website is: http://karlalinn.blogspot.com.

Taylor Miller received her MA and BFA from the University of Arizona in Art & Visual Culture Education. She is currently in application as a Ph.D. student in the University of Arizona's School of Geography. Taylor's research centers on the geographies of occupation in southern Arizona and Palestine. As

a poet and photographer, her work is deeply influenced by her travels abroad as well as the largely unnoticed corners around Tucson and the southwest.

Jill Moffett is a poet and essayist whose work has been published in The Headlight Anthology; Stirring: A Literary Collection; The Manifest Station; DifferenTakes; and Cultural Dynamics. Jill holds a Ph.D. in Gender Studies from the University of Iowa, and has taught Women's Studies at Cornell College and Durham Technical Community College. She is currently a health sciences editor and copywriter in Durham, NC and is working on a poetry chapbook.

Elizabeth Mosier grew up in the Orangewood neighborhood of North Central Phoenix, the setting for "The Big Tree, Phoenix, Arizona." A novelist, essayist, and seven-year volunteer technician at the Independence National Park archaeology lab in Philadelphia, she is working on a collection of essays on archaeology, memory, and home. Her work has appeared most recently in 1966: A Journal of Creative Nonfiction, The Journal of Compressed Creative Arts, and The Dock: Hayden's Ferry Review..

Lucy Palmer grew up in Cornwall, England, before moving to California. She has a BA from Oxford Brookes University in English literature and music and has had previous poetry published in the Unbroken Journal, By&By Poetry, The Pickled Body, and others.

Peg Alford Pursell lives in San Francisco where she curates the literary reading series Why There Are Words in Sausalito and serves as founding editor of WTAW Press, an independent publisher of literary books. She is the author of the forthcoming book of stories, SHOW HER A FLOWER, A BIRD, A SHADOW (ELJ Publications). Her work has appeared in VOLT, Permafrost, the Journal of Compressed Creative Arts, and RHINO.

Mary Rowin lives in Middleton, Wisconsin, but she was born and raised in the Dakotas. Her poems have been published in Postcard Poems and Prose, Solitary Plover, Portage Magazine, The Avocet, Blue Heron, Panoply, The Best of Kindness, an anthology of the Origami Poems Project and by The Ariel Project, Anthology of Poetry and Art. In addition to being a poet, Mary is an ESL tutor, a docent at the University of Wisconsin's art museum and a fiber artist.

Catherine Stearns is a writer-in-residence at The Roxbury Latin School in Boston. She is the author of the collection of poetry, The Transparency of Skin, New Rivers Press, and has a chapbook forthcoming from Slate Roof Press. Her poems have appeared in Southwest Review, Yale Review, and North American Review. She is writer-in-residence at The Roxbury Latin School in Boston.

Deborah Steinberg is based in San Francisco, where she works as a freelance writer. She has been published in Devilfish Review, Necessary Fiction, Monkeybicycle, and other journals. She is the fiction editor at Red Bridge Press and Rivet:

the Journal of Writing that Risks. Her website is: http://deborahksteinberg.com/

Kelly Talbot has edited books and digital content for 20 years, previously as an in-house editor for John Wiley and Sons Publishing, Macmillan Publishing, and Pearson Education, and now as the head of Kelly Talbot Editing Services. His writing has appeared in dozens of magazines.

Mercedes Webb-Pullman received an MA in Creative Writing from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Her poetry has appeared in Turbine, 4th Floor, Swamp, Scum, Reconfigurations, The Electronic Bridge, Otoliths, Connotations, The Red Room Company, Typewriter, Kind of a Hurricane Press, and Cliterature, among others, and in her books. The latest, The Jean Genie, explores the work of Jean Genet through a series of contemporary sonnets. She lives on the Kapiti Coast, New Zealand.

Jeff Wilson is a graphic novel author and Ph.D. Candidate in Geography at the University of Arizona. His work focuses on the intersection of foreclosures and health in Detroit, Michigan. He received a Master's in Anthropology from Columbia University where his worked explored the ways ethnography could be written in graphic novel form. He has published one of the first graphic novel interviews to appear in a peer-reviewed journal. His current graphic novel manuscript is based on an interview with MIT professor Noam Chomsky.

Igor Winiarczyk is originally from Poland and moved to the US at the age of six. He studied history at the University of Minnesota and geography at Minnesota State University, Mankato. After obtaining a geography degree, he returned to Poland to work as an English instructor and freelance writer. He currently lives in Canada where he works as a consultant in land acquisition on renewable energy projects.