

## Forty-one Wayward Pages

This book was read into existence on Thursday the 28th of May 2020 between 8:00pm – 9:42 pm, when players met and agreed to the rules of a game called Wayward Pages.

*Language lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it.*

– Mikhail Bakhtin

The rules of this game are as follows:

Players (readers) choose one book from their shelf, desk, under their bed, closet, wherever. The closest to hand will do.

They may open it randomly to a page or dog-ear a page in preparation for the game.

The players (readers) meet, online or in person, and read their pages to each other, so that one player continues after the other.

Players should refrain from revealing the title and author of the book they are reading from.

The game ends when every player has read their page, creating a new book. Players then send their pages to the 'editor' to be transcribed and published.

## Colophon

This book was created for the occasion of *Endless Study, Infinite Debt: Protocols for listening in (and after) social isolation*, an experiment in collaborative education and pedagogy, facilitated by Snack Syndicate and Liquid Architecture.

Edited by Tom Melick, designed by Robert Milne, and published by The Library of Wayward Pages, in an edition of 82 copies.

The players for this book, in order of reading, include: Andrew Brooks, Astrid Lorange, April P., Jaxon Waterhouse, Georgia Hutchison, Alisa Blakeney, Pip Stafford, Andrew Harper, Chantelle Mitchell, Ender Baskan, David Eagan, Jasmin Pfefferkorn, Carolyn Craig, Ceri Hann, Beth Sometimes, Rosie Isaac, Stella Maynard, Jennifer Stoever, Fayen d'Evie, Hassan Abdul, Leen, Hannah Wen Wu, Charlie Sofo, Tom Melick, Audrey Pfister, Simon Charles, Eleanor Zurowski, Kynan Tan, Danni McGrath, Julian Day, Madeleine Mills, Selena de Carvalho, Emma Fuchs Sjövall, Lukas Zenisek, Julia Drouhin, Chantelle Ly, Joel Stern, Helen Hughes, Debris Facility, and Clare C.

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The editor thanks all of the players (readers) who read this book into existence, as well as the authors whose wayward pages are included here.

Our Songs were like a movie of Romeo & Juliet made in a commune by the sentient effluvia of nothing, mainly gold, & demanding you tell them you loved them.

Our songs were always early.

Our songs would make you hate them one day & then the next feel compelled to defend them with your life.

If you liked our songs one time that absolutely didn't mean that you would have to like them the next. Our songs were very intelligent. Thus liking them or disliking them was purely emotional. Depending on how you happened to feel at the moment. This could be infuriating. But it was terrific too. I mean, likes & dislikes are really pretty boring anyway. Once you have them.

Our songs had beautiful voices. There were so many tones. Fast. Defiant. Obsequious. (Melodic) to the point. (Shameless) often garish. Elegant. Both too much of this world, & not of it at all. (Poetry).

Our songs were not something you wanted to argue about unless you were very good at denying the ecstatic its station.

Our songs were data pasteries capable of setting steam & snowflakes on fire. I know that they knew they were. So they were. Our songs had a way of enveloping a room.

It's weird, now, to think of our songs as being short. But I think they were. Not short really, but brief. They were three or four minutes. Mainly about longing. Or fulfillment. Or about the impossible. Or sex. It seemed strange that our songs could support all that feeling, & exceed it in the end, like new life.

Our songs were more capricious the human conceptions of god. (Cloudless & starry) their furnished mansions. And their sweet, dependable claim on our souls. Their empty vessels. Our moist eyes. And our glowing red complexions. Red partly (I think) from having come so hard from listening. And partly (I think) from confusion at how involuntary all that coming seemed. Or partly seemed.

memo for labor

you cannot separate the job from the house from the rent from the earth from the food from the healthcare from the water from the transit from the war from the schools from the prisons from the war from the water from the house from the healthcare from the war from the transit from the schools from the food from the job from the prisons from the rent from the earth

Later  
DMB BOOMBOOM

WHY DO I FEEL LIKE  
I WANT TO BARF?

BOOMBACMBABOOMBACMBAC

BOMBABOOMBACMBACMBACBOOM

My mother began to love at the same moment in her life that she began to search for who she was. This was the moment she met my father. Since my mother felt that she had to be alone in order to find out who she was and might be, she kept abandoning and returning to love.

My mother spoke:

“Isn’t Alice Springs just about on the topic?”

“It might be. I wouldn’t know. That’s in the middle of a land mass, too, of course.”

The girl asked, “Does it go quicker down a coast than in the middle?”

Dwight shook his head. “I wouldn’t know. I don’t think they’ve got any evidence on that, one way or the other.”

Peter laughed. “They’ll know by the time it gets here. Then they can etch it on the glass.”

The girl wrinkled her brows. “Etch it on the glass?”

“Hadn’t you heard about that one?”

She shook her head.

“John Osborne told me about it, yesterday,” he said. “It seems that somebody in C.S.I.R.O is getting busy with a history, about what’s happened to us. They do it on glass bricks. They etch it on the glass and then they fuse another brick down on the top of it in some way, so that the writing’s in the middle.”

Dwight turned upon his elbow, interested. “I hadn’t heard of that. What are they going to do with them?”

“Put them up on top of Mount Kosciusko,” Peter said. “It’s the highest peak in Australia. If ever the world gets inhabited again they must go there some time. And it’s not so high as to be inaccessible.”

“Well, what do you know! They’re really doing that, are they?”

“So John says. They’ve got a sort of concrete cellar made up there. Like in the Pyramids.”

The girl asked, “But how long is this history?”

“I don’t know. I don’t think it can be very long. They’re doing it with pages out of books, though, too. Sealing them in between sheets of thick glass.”

“But these people who come after,” the girl said. “They

closed circuit, but tracing the path of a spiral. So rich that each new curve, wider and higher than the one before, expands the arc of one's vision.

In perfect harmony with the whirlwind of the cosmos, the world of speed in which we evolve, from the greatest of human adventures to struggles for liberation, Spiralism aligns perfectly – in breadth and depth – with an atmosphere of explosive vertigo; it follows the movement that is at the very heart of all living things. It is a shattering of space. An exploding of time.

Re-creating wholes from mere details and secondary materials, the practice of Spiralism reconciles Art and Life through literature, and necessarily breaks with the hypocrisy of the Word. Re-cognition. Totally.

In this sense, as means of expression – efficient, par excellence – Spiralism uses the Complete Genre, in which novelistic description, poetic breath, theatrical effect, narratives, stories, autobiographical sketches, and fiction all coexist harmoniously...

\*

Every day, I employ the dialect of the untamed hurricanes. I speak the madness of opposing winds.

Every evening, I use the patois of furious rains. I speak the range of overflowing waters.

Every night, I speak to the islands of the Caribbean in the language of hysterical storms. I speak the madness of the sea in heat.

Dialect of hurricanes. Patois of rains. Language of storms. Unfolding of life in a spiral.<sup>7</sup>

"I'm in. I'm in, little man." His voice cracked into the whisper-shout terror of a boy who got exactly what he wanted. "I'm in," he said, astonished. "I can feel it. Fuck. Oh fuck."

I told him to hold still as I braced against the dirt floor and gathered myself. The pain shot out from between my legs.

"Let's keep going," he said. "I gotta keep going I don't wanna stop."

Before I could respond he was pumping again, his arms planted on each side of my head, the heat pulsing from them as he worked. He was wearing his gold cross, the one he never takes off, and it kept poking at my cheek. So I tool it in my mouth to keep it steady. It tasked like rust, salt, and Trevor. The sparks in my head bloomed with each thrust. After a while, the pain melted into a strange ache, a weightless numbness that swept through me like a new, even warmer season. The feeling brought on, not by tenderness, as from caress, but by the body having no choice but to accommodate pain by dulling it into an impossible, radiating pleasure. Getting fucked in the ass felt good, I learned, when you outlast your out hurt.

What Simone Weil said, *Perfect joy excludes even the very feeling of joy, for in the soul filled by the object, no corner is left for saying "I."*

As he heaved above me I unconsciously reached back to touch myself, to make sure I was still there, still me, but my hand found Trevor instead—as if by being inside me, he was this new extension of myself. The Greeks thought sex was the attempt of two bodies, separated long ago, to return to one life. I don't know if I believe this but that's what it felt like: as if we were two people mining one body, and in doing so, merged, until no corner was left saying *I*.

been a couple of days and so far they haven't come up with anything. You want to answer a question for me?"

"You really," he said, but he laughed. I was beginning to realize: that his manner was probably born of discomfort, so I plowed ahead anyway.

"Beverly told me she hadn't seen her sister for three years, but a neighbor of Elaine's she was not only up here at Christmas, but the two had a knockdown-drag-out-fight. Is that true?"

"Well, yeah, probably." Histone was softening and he seemed less aloof. He took a final drag of his cigarette and pinched the ember loose from the end. "To tell you truth, I've been concerned that Beverly's somehow involved in this."

"How so?"

He'd stopped looking at me now. He rolled the tag end of his cigarette between his fingers until nothing was left but a small pile of tobacco shreds and a scrap of black paper. "She's got a drinking problem. She's had it for some time, though you'd probably never guess. She's one of those people who might not have a drink for six months, then... boom, she's off on a three-day drunk. Sometimes a binge lasts longer than that. I think that's what happened in December." He looked at me then and most of the pomposity had dropped away. This was a man in pain.

"Do you know what they quarreled about?"

"I have a fair idea."

"Was it you?" I asked.

"He focused on me suddenly, with the first real life in his open. "What made you say that?"

"The neighbor said they probably quarreled about a man.

"You were the only one I knew about. You want to buy me lunch?"

We went to a cocktail lounge called Jay's just around the corner. It's very dark, with massive art deco booths in pale gray leather and black onyx tables that look like small free-form pools. The surface on them is so shiny you can almost see your reflection, like some kind of commercial for liquid

chopped off the dwarf's head. And that is how he rescued all three of the merchant's daughters.

The three sisters went back with him, and they returned to the bottom of the well. The young man shouted up to his companions: "Throw the rope down so that the three girls can climb out of here!" And that's how he was going to save the three daughters of the merchant. But the two young men above had their own ideas. "If we leave him down in the well, we can divide the merchant's wealth between the two of us." They tossed down the rope after pulling up the daughters but didn't pull it back up for him. Then off they went.

The young man had been betrayed, and he returned to the underground castle. He look at the many precious objects in it and walked through a garden that had all kinds of birds flying around, but there seemed to be no way out. Suddenly a snake with jaws wide open slithered toward him. He took his sword and chopped off its head. When the birds discovered that the snake was dead, the most magnificent of them flew over to him and said: "You have slain our worst enemy, a monster that had been taking the young from our nests. Let me carry you away from here and bring you back home. Just hop on my wings."

The young man climbed on the bird's back, and after flying for some time, the bird landed on a path in the forest. "Just stay on this road and you will reach home." And sure enough, he reached home. He inquired about the health of the merchant's daughters. Everyone told him that two of the daughters were already married. There was no news about the third suitor, not even from the men who had accompanied him on a journey. The fellow had received a ring from the youngest of the three daughters. He went to see the merchant and told him everything, but the merchant refused to believe him. He summoned his youngest daughter to ask if the young man was her rescuer. "If he has my ring," she said, "then he is the man who rescued us." The young man took the ring from his finger, put it on the table, and the girl acknowledged her own.

And so the fellow became the husband of the youngest of the merchant's three daughters. His two companions were punished for their crimes.

## Geology Night Sky

The nuclear cooking of free electrons creates spirals oolitic or pisolitic, it's a stalatitic wheat sheaf I vanish into the universe like a wave, cosmologically while you are a crenellated coxcomb, let's be twinned rolling into a ball of wind & water, made out of time crystals all have symmetry, stars'd quickly be damaged if worn as jewelry, Jupiter's magnetism conducive to the heat unlike a ruby or sapphire, a painted ball, a Saturnian system a topaz is not a potato but a potato can be like a heart the night geology sky, bye bye, the night pigeon sky the pearly silky luster of your opalescent heart glimmers like a sequel to a night sky, the prequel being splendid like an opera in a small hall, the pyramids are closed Desdemona will collide with Cressida or Juliet in 100 million atomic structures like a bird of geologic light years superstring theory might be astrology, the plump indigo fruit of crystal system, a falling hail of telepaths, it's so unlikely we'd be here, flat lustrous surfaces orthorhombically or just minerally archetypes, complex or simple in breezeway every specimen can be cut by a knife or corundum till political spirit fuses with shamanic allies, it's all good all forms are pinacoids like ice cream cones, the ice cream takes a chance with absence of meaning through goblins rather oolitic if not massive. If you drop it through like tomato plants told eons ago to slow down in 2013 it becomes mammillary, even reniform, then hackly or blocky Copernican modernity swelled with Homer & the Basques but when it refreezes it grows splintery or botryoidal

Oh the way a mineral fractures

Can sometimes help identify it

equal areas equal spaces equal times equal rights for women their beautiful & often elegant crystal form universal gravitation has a slow cadence when rolling down a hill regular geometric shape & smooth crystal surfaces Melville's whale is Elohim to some, dark matter to my twin easily broken into a powder by cutting or hammering

# TRIMMING AND TURNING

## DRYING YOUR POTS

Confusion can arise over the vague terminology that potters use to describe the condition of the clay. A clear understanding of this language is important because different stages of the making process come at crucial stages in the drying cycle.

The knack lies in getting the clay to the state you need at a convenient time. The pot is drying from the moment you finish it. In a warm, dry, well-ventilated atmosphere, the water evaporates out of the clay much more quickly than in cool, humid, airless conditions. The thin extremities, such as the rim, will dry first. This is indicated by a change in the clay's colour – it begins to lighten. But this is undesirable when there is further work to do on the pot, so ways to even-up or equalize the drying must be employed.

As soon as a rime is stiff enough, turn the pot over and allow the base to get an airing. With wide shapes thrown on a bat, another clean bat should be placed on the rim and the pot inverted, sandwiched in between the two bats. Now you may remove the bat from the

base. Alternatively, the rim may be sealed in plastic to retard the drying process. There are fireproofing sheet materials with super-absorbency. These can be cut into planks and used as pot-drying boards, which equalize the drying top and bottom. An airtight, damp cupboard or humidified room where pots can be stored, untouched, to dry evenly, will preserve more delicate items.

Problems can arise when you are unable to check the pots every day, as with weekly classes. Wrap up a wet pot and it remains too wet; leave it uncovered and it is often much too dry. Cut circles of thin plastic that will just cover the rim. As the outside dries, it slowly draws the moisture from the sealed interior.

To accelerate the process, a pot may be force-dried using the electric fan heater; faster still, using a glass blowlamp or paint-stripping gun. Slowly revolve the pot on a turntable or on the wheel and wave the hot air or flame over the surface. Keep fingering the pot to check its condition. Once a pot is in an ideal state, seal it completely in its own plastic bag. Kitchen binliners or bags are ideal.

## LEATHER-HARD CLAY

What does the term 'leather-hard' mean? When is a pot in this state?

As the term 'plastic' is used to describe the clay's condition for throwing, 'leather-hard' is the term most often used to describe its condition for all the remaining finishing processes – applying handles, lugs, knobs and spouts, trimming and turning.

Clay in the semi-dry state becomes more rigid but still slightly pliable – similar to thick leather or hide. It allows you to handle the pot safely without distortion, whilst remaining moist enough to graft on appendages and soft enough to carve into.

Within the term, though, the clay will vary from beginning like soft Cheddar cheese to hard like chocolate. To look at, the clay should still appear a uniform colour

## DRYING FOR FIRING

Once a piece is complete, it may be left uncovered to air-dry completely. However, drying cracks can occur in certain circumstances.

it properly. The horror buffeted the dark membrane with a massive impact of sounds and storms and sharp stones great and small. Whenever the noise arose it set in motion the layer of bright fire, winds and air, thus causing bolts of lightning to presage the sounds of thunder; for the fiery energy senses the first agitations of the thunder within it.

Below the dark layer, however, was the purest of the ether with no membrane beneath it. Here also I saw a fireball, of great magnitude, filled with white-shining energy; it had two lights placed above it which held it and prevented it from passing beyond the circuit of its course. Situated everywhere throughout the ether were many bright spheres, into which the white fireball discharged its energy at regular intervals. It then rose up again to the red fireball where it recharged its fires and sent them forth again into the bright spheres. The ether also contained a wind, which poured out its storms and extended them all over the cosmos.

Beneath the ether I could see a layer of watery air, which had a white membrane beneath it. It spread out everywhere, giving off water to the whole of the world. At times it accumulated quickly and sent out a sudden fall of rain with a great crash. But when it spread gently it sent forth soft rain with only gentle agitation. But from it there came a wind and storms which spread all over the globe.

And in the middle of these elements there was a sand ball of great size which was so surrounded by these elements that it could not move in any direction. However, when the winds collided with the elements, the force of their impact set the whole world in motion a little.

And I saw between the north and the east the likeness of a great mountain, which showed great areas of darkness towards the north and a great light towards the east. The darkness could not affect the light nor the light the darkness.

And again I heard a voice speaking to me from heaven.

‘I am a geographer,’ said the old gentleman.

‘What is a geographer!’

‘A geographer is a scholar who knows the location of all the seas, the rivers, the cities, the mountains and the deserts.’

‘Now that is extremely interesting,’ said the little prince. ‘That is at long last a real profession!’ And he cast a quick look around him at the geographer’s planet. Never before had he seen such a magnificent planet.

‘Your planet is very beautiful. Are there any oceans?’

‘I have no way of knowing,’ said the geographer.

‘Oh!’ The little prince was disappointed. ‘And any mountains?’

‘I really couldn’t tell you that either,’ said the geographer.

‘And cities and rivers and deserts?’

‘I have no way of knowing that either,’ said the geographer.

‘But you are a geographer!’

‘Exactly,’ said the geographer, ‘but I am not an explorer. I have no explorers on my planet. It is not the geographer’s task to count the cities, the rivers, the mountains, the oceans and the deserts. The geographer is far too important to waste his time browsing around. He never leaves his office. But he received explorers. He questions them and notes down what they recall of their travels. And if the recollections of one of them seem interesting to him, the geographer orders an inquiry into the explorer’s moral character.’

‘But why?’



“Do you have bells on all the cattle?” Fred asked. “That would be many bells”

“Not on all of them,” Sam answered. “But we try to have bells on most them. I think it is better to buy many bells than to lose good cattle.”

Fred was very tired that night. It had been a long, hard day. But he felt more like a real rancher than ever, and it was a good feeling.

Fred went right to sleep. To him the morning seem to come almost as soon as he had gotten to sleep.

We are the missing link.

We need to pause here for a moment. It seems an argument has broken out between a few members of our wandering troupe. Some philosophers and scientists are quarreling over whether we can ever know who we are. A clown, hearing this dispute, tries to solve the problem by simply introducing people to each other. A Zen master is impressed by this solution and bows to the clown. The Zen master then asks, “Isn’t it also true that we are what we eat?” On hearing this, the Jester rolls his eyes and says, “If you are what you eat, then why be a vegetable?” Why not eat people who are smarter and better-looking than you?” Surprisingly, the Jester does not get hit with a staff for this remark.

In the hope that greater perspective might give us some answers, as an astronomer suggests that we head out into space and look at humans from there. We know that the farther away we get from ourselves, the smaller we will look; maybe this will allow us to see the larger patterns. Maybe we will notice some clue to our meaning in the universe.

Of course, to live on a planet is to live in outer space already. Once we get *off* the earth we are able to see that clearly. In fact, one of the best views of earth is from outer space. Once we get far enough away, we don’t see dead animals on the roadsides or beer cans in the rivers or the grimacing faces of city commuters. If we get far enough away, the earth doesn’t look dirty. It doesn’t even look “earthy.” It looks more like a misted marble or a slightly sucked-on, dampish blue gumball.

If we had been monitoring earth from our perch here in space during the past few hundred million years, we might have detected and ominous new development. Up until about one hundred years ago the earth seemed relatively stable. Of course glaciers and continents slowly shifted and the occasional volcano erupted, but nothing too dramatic. The earth was just another cooling hunk of stuff. Then

first row on the solid ground, then the next row on top of it, giving a slight careful twist so that each kūmara fitted in nicely. The big kūmara were always placed at the back of the house and the small kūmara to the front. Always so much care! The reason? Because Māori lived from season to season and those kūmarahad to last a year, between one harvest time and the next, so that there was sufficient food to keep everyone alive.

‘I remember once I tried to go into pākoro to help him, but he wouldn’t let me, just in case I did a fart, because even that could make the kūmara go off.

‘Kūmara was the main diet, supplemented with pūhā, pumpkin, ironbark, pumpkin, and Māori bread baked from flour, water and sometimes yeast. Not many potatoes were grown at that time.

‘Our main drink was water. Whenever it rained we had to catch water by any means and put it into three twenty-gallon wooden casks. We didn’t have a tank. Sometimes, however, we had to get our water supplies from the Waipaoa River.

‘I remember one day, Pā said to me, ‘Haere, tama, kit e tiki wai.’ We took two of our casks on a sledge down the river. It was in flood and I wondered why we were getting this silty water.

“This water is to dirty, Pā,” I said. “How can we drink it?”

“Don’t ask too many questions,” Pā answered. “Turituri.”

‘After we had taken the water home, he proceeded to bucket the water into a third cask, which was empty on the kitchen bench. When it was filled he said to me, “Go and get a mug.” He turned on the tap at the bottom of the cask and the water came out clear! I was so astonished, until he told me his secret. At the bottom of the third cask was six inches of shingle, which filtered the impurities out of the water. Much later in life, I used this same principle when digging a well. I shoveled some shingle into the well because the water was so yellow. After a while, it came out clear.

‘These are some of the ways by which the people showed their

## TWENTY

For days the heat slammed the inland and the residents of Massacre gossiped about the mine and how bad it would be for the environment and others bit back that they needed jobs. Though all sides of the arguing agreed they were owed something more. When the previous evening, like a virus, the true rumour that Rinepalm Mining had set an open day at the town hall filtered into the Valley, and back streets, the men and women, though on the edge of heatstroke, leapt from their houses and headed into town. Late in the evening when people were tired and quenching thirsts, and anticipating new jobs they would have, they drunkenly sang along with the jukeboxes, some brawled onto footpaths, and eventually all returned into the night.

First thing on Saturday morning, while Elsie and August were outside arranging rows of chairs two deep around the fire pit, a woman from broken Crematorium arrived. She stood beside Prosperous House, in her hands a wooden case no bigger than a jewellery box. August looked at the woman and her chest caved then her neck became heavy with the coming of a sad feeling. Elsie arranged another chair, wrung her sore hands and walked with her head high to greet the woman and sign the paperwork. Aunt Missy descended the verandah stairs and caught her mother around the waist with one arm. August couldn’t bear to watch; she fixed the last of the chairs and

The atmosphere in the room changes. I stiffen. I feel coerced toward something forced. I feel myself flinch.

We like to think that doubt and questioning are crucial to finding one's faith, but it's our blinder belief that's the basis of any action. It's belief that's the fragile lynchpin of any resistance.

I open my eyes. My mother has tears streaming down her cheeks. There's something about it I can't access. There's something here I can't understand. I feel a twinge of jealousy. I want—I don't know. In the face of everything, I'm small, like a child. I feel weak and powerless. I want something to save me. Will it? Will anything? I haven't started crying yet.

I fall asleep, dreaming. In my dream, it's the end of the world, just like it always is. But it's not like usual, where it's dark and damp and cold and the sun has gone out. No, it was the opposite. In my dream, it was hot and sandy, a wasteland I could taste right in the core of my teeth. Nothing smelled of anything, everything was very granular. There was a lot of walking. We walked everywhere. I kept asking about people, but they had all disappeared. Alli and Brandon and Lindsey and Steve. You and I, we weren't lovers, but we were walking together with strangers, a little girl and a big man who was tall and brusque but had kind eyes. You got impatient with me because I kept asking about our friends and the little girl kept asking you, "But what's a friend?" She didn't know what it meant. The man snapped. He said she would have to learn the precision of language. He said the world was so broken it wasn't possible for it's words to have meaning anymore.

In my dream, there were a lot of rooms. I don't know what the rooms were like because they were so plain they didn't even seem like rooms anymore. You held my hand while I coughed blood and sand out of my lungs. I said I didn't know where all this was coming from. You said it was just what the world was made of now. I said it felt as if my body was dissolving from the inside out. The man told me that our bodies all felt the same, that I wasn't special. He told me I should stop complaining.

our mothers who were not famous—that I went in search of the secret of what has fed that muzzled and often mutilated, but vibrant and creative spirit that the black woman has inherited, and that pops out in wild and unlikely places to this day.

But when, you will ask, did my overworked mother have time to know or care about feeding the creative spirit?

The answer is so simple that many of us have spent years discovering it. We have constantly looked high, when we should have looked high—and low.

For example: in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., there hangs a quilt unlike any other in the world. In fanciful, inspired, and yet simple and identifiable figures, it portrays the story of the Crucifixion. It is considered rare, beyond price. Though it follows no patten of quilt-making, and though it is made of bits and pieces of worthless rags, it is obviously the work of a person of powerful imagination and deep spiritual feeling. Below this quilt I saw a note that says it was made by "an anonymous Black woman in Alabama, a hundred years ago."

If we could locate this "anonymous" black woman from Alabama, she would turn out to be one of our grandmothers—an artist who left her mark in the only materials she could afford, and in the only medium her position in society allowed her to use.

As Virginia Woolf wrote further, in a *A Room of One's Own*:

Yet genius of a sort must have existed among women as it must have existed among the working class. [Change this to "slaves" and "the wives and daughters of sharecroppers."] Now and again an Emily Brontë or a Robert Burns [change this to "a Zora Hurston or a Richard Wright"] blazes out and proves its presence. But certainly it never got

Half a year later, in early 1929, Riding saw her ménage à trois disintegrate. In desperation, she drank Lysol in front of Graves, his wife, and the Irish poet Geoff Gibbs, and then jumped out of a fourth-floor window. It is reported that Graves jumped after her, from the third floor. Both of them survived; the police called her a “vampire.” Riding broke her pelvis and fractured her spine. It was said she would never be able to walk again, but she miraculously recuperated. High on morphine in her sick bed, she reportedly asked for Stein, who shortly sent her reply in a letter to Graves: “Laura is so poignant and so upright and she gets into your tenderness as well as your interest and I am altogether heartbroken about her, I cannot come now. But tell her and keep telling her that we want her with us. I had an unhappy feeling that Laura would have sooner or later a great disillusionment and it would have come through a certain vulgarity in another and it will make Laura a very wonderful person, in a strange way, a destruction and recreation of her purification but all this does not help pain and I am very closely fond of you all. Tell her all and everything from me and tell her above all that she will come to us and reasonably soon and all my love.”

Riding described the situation in one of the first poems of convalescence:

What to say when the spider  
Say when the spider what  
The spider does what

The belief that we may look at children at certain points in their life and predict something of the adults they will become has been around since childhood came to be reckoned a distinct phase in human life. The modern-day pop version goes we can glimpse, or see squarely, the future grown-up in a seven-year-old Jenna or Timothy. Easygoing Timothy will sail into well-adjusted adulthood barring cataclysms while little spoilt princess Jenna will stomp through life expecting people to accommodate her view of the world until she may, or may not, run into enough brick walls to concuss the sense of entitlement out of her. Or: Jenna who cries when shown a picture of a wounded doggie will grow up to be social worker, Timothy whose eyes stay dry as dust will wind up a lawyer specialising in corporate takeovers.

Nahji at seven? Freeze-frame her, cute and bossy, in a refugee camp, what do you get? She could grow up to be a junkie or philanthropist. Or artist, businesswoman of the decade, abject failure, inspiration, a conqueror, the conquered, mother of many, mother of non, down and out in the suburbs, opening a flagship tuckshop in London (it'll go bust and the four Sydney ones will get sold off but that is so not the point). Nahji is marked by her early history, that's for certain, yet she could go this way or that. Or *first* this way *then* that. She is elusive as Douglas Fairbanks's bemasked Zorro.

Everywhere is Nahji's refugee visa. On menus, delivery bike basked, napkin dispensers, tuckshop walls—along with her siblings' visas it is the centerpiece of misschu design. She says it's a beautiful image. Arresting, and it tells a story, tells you why it's called misschu, makes people realise it's a surname and a play on words. 'It's retaliation too.' 'For what?' I ask. Not needing to ask. 'For racism. For being ashamed of who I was.' I wonder if she was worried it'd seem kitsch. 'No, I was worried about my

When Rhea Dempsey was doing workshop after workshop she could walk into a roomful of pregnant women and see—it's as if she was wearing special glasses—the imprints on their own birth on the women in front of her. Not just their birth, she tells me, but their first months in the world. It was like the moment after the Big Bang when both matter and antimatter rush apart filling the universe, and there it was caught in the faces of women turned towards her.

Rhea's been at it close to forty years—more than a thousand births (one was my dark-eyed son) as a birth attendant. She has steered through labour women who once fell out of their mothers' bodies into her arms. When Rhea's own three girls were young they went to a small community-run primary school where Rhea taught swimming. She'd been at the birth of at least half of those kids and could see their births in how they swam. 'You could pick,' she says, 'the kids who rushed out of their mothers' bodies and the ones who had a long, slow birth.' One boy in swimming class whose birth Rhea was at had an 'uncomfortable position in his mother's womb, all skewed, twisted' and he could not swim in a straight line.

Rhea tells parents to watch their kids early, before the world gets in there and starts hammering at them—watch how they crawl. The way they begin to walk. Watch closely. She says these things are 'a pure expression of who that child is.' Also children will never change as much as they do in the first year of their lives. 'It sets up our yearly rhythm and a sort of template.'

'Who the child is' is Rhea's big question.

(Who are the children before they become who we think they are? Before they become who they think they are?)

'My biggest passion,' Rhea says, 'is allowing children the clearest form of entry into the world.'

The Era of the End of Gravity and Beginning of Levitation

The Era of One-Minute Fire Paintings

The Era of Distinguishing Common Gold from the Gold of the Philosophers

The Era of Being Flattered by Camus

The Era of Drinking the Cocktails and the Void of Urinating Blue for a Week

The Era of Being Not Really Free in This World

The Era of Realizing Rosicrucianism Is a Waste of Time and Switching to Bachelard

The Era of Pricking Up One's Ears at the Door of the Devouring Sky

The Era of Deciding What to Do about Fire Seize it or Throw Oneself In

The Era of the Tragical Technique with Girls

The Era of Huge Sponge Reliefs

The Era of No One Knowing the Dangers of Synthetic Resins or of Working Twelve Hours a Day without a Mask

The Era of Traveling to Cascia and Leaving Four Gold Ingots for Saint Rita

The Era of Writing Letters to Eisenhower and Khrushchev Announcing the End of the Government of France

The Era of Proposing Plans for a City Built of Compressed Air Currents

The Era of Asking Aunt Rose for a Citroën

The Era of Filling Pages of Ones Notebook with the Word *Humility*

The Era of Ego Clashes with One's Friends

The Era of Realizing That One's Myth Has to Be Carried All the Way (Sacrifice)

The Era of Having None of the Qualities Expected in a Painter of Monochromes Like Quietude or Balance

sovereignty of the individual, not the sovereignty of the group and the issue of communal rights. People have acquiesced to native title for example, to schedule their rights and believe that that may be the extent of it, rather than looking at ways to expand on it. I do not know if that is because of the competing economic needs that people have, or their view of how culture changes. I think it is very important for people to have access to storytelling as a fundamental means of communication. It is not linear.

Story in one of its forms is narrative, and the narrative that white Australia accepts now is the narrative of a few Aboriginal people, because the narrative of more than a few seems to be unsettling, or not easily understood. In a lot of ways the scientific framework in which people understand issues rules out anything but a linear representation of issues. So context is ruled out, history is ruled out, an identity is ruled out, and it is becoming less widely known that there is a different world view that we ascribe to. Everybody thinks we are essentially the same as white people, we are just a bit darker and those that can speak English and go to school and get a job have got just as good a chance as any other Australian in succeeding. They do not even acknowledge anymore that our aims may be different, and maybe there are cultural imperatives that we want to meet. Those cultural imperatives are regarded as nothing.

### Owen Cole

---

I can remember at the {Central Australia Aboriginal} Cattlemen's Association {conference at Uluru in the 1990s} where Tracker was talking about setting up this Association and how we would all feed into it, and set up an abattoir to send our cattle through, and how to split the proceeds. It was pretty complicated. Tracker was trying to explain it and not having that much success so he gets Harry Nelson, and Harry came along and he used the analogy of when you go out hunting: *That what we do is we all collectively do it and then we all sit down and we split it up* – Dah! Dah! Dah! All of a sudden, from a really complex sort of economic allocation issues, they were all nodding their heads because Harry explained what was really a traditional concept,

Straining against the history of it  
I stick a finger in my ear. I hear  
the world in half. There's a long  
washy drone that's my closed ear's  
loop. The other ear does a full-on  
stretch to figure a stereo. It's  
afternoon. I am in a literal sea  
of friends. The roads are blocked  
by buses, skidded into an empty hash.  
I am listening for the cops, but cannot  
hear them, cannot hear chewing gum  
or the foul whistle of their pants.

I root around in my pockets. I find  
a dozen sandwiches, warm  
because of my body.

*disproportionately imprisoned) also became imprisoned.  
The way we imagine work, our relationships, the  
future, family, everything, is locked down.*  
—Alexis Pauline Gumbs<sup>12</sup>

Everywhere I look I see sleepwalkers under the  
spell of the prison.

What counter-spell is powerful enough to break  
the prison's stranglehold on our imaginations?

But the spell is never total. The intensification of  
the desire for life undermines the prison's capacity  
to structure our mental lives.

Imagination is excess, is that which could never be  
contained by the prison, that will always  
exceed it.

What night endeavors must we embrace to enter  
that hidden frequency—that special vibration, the  
one Sun Ra believed would set us free.

#### THE DIALECTIC OF DREAMING

*The imagination is constitutive ... It's not just  
unworldly, detached from the world spinning off the  
refusal of things, rather it's constitutive in the sense that*

#### AUBADE

*to Jimmy Schuyler*

A million stars are dreaming out  
the murderous whims of the apple,  
Sinking like celestas in the dawn  
already growing faint, beyond temples

whose silent throbbing dictates  
a green life to my waking heart. Bids  
the bones that decorate this shore  
become the pearl of loved eyelids'

sunlight, withdrawn until unseen  
at night, when like the cat's hand,  
the sea, they warmly flutter near  
upon the belly of the sable sand.

A meaning of my life volleys  
thus into the sky to rest, breathes  
upon these vessels by the sea,  
to be wrought in the frothing waves.

## MARSH SAMPHIRE or GLASSWORT

Pickled samphire is still familiar, prepared either from the true samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) of seaside rocks and cliffs or from the unrelated Marsh Samphire (various kinds of *Salicornia*) which makes a carpet on muddy salt marshes, and which it would be less confusing to call by its other names of glasswort (it used to be calcined to alkali for glass-makers). In Norfolk and Suffolk the marsh samphire is boiled and eaten as a vegetable and regarded as a summer delicacy. You may be tempted by the fact that it belongs to the same family as beet (another seaside by origin) and spinach, though you never guess that from the narrow shiny succulence of its bright green jointed stems.

If you manage to buy marsh samphire from an East Anglian fishmonger, rinse it well, then trim off the small wiry root from the fleshy part. Boil it until just tender – better still, steam it – and serve it with melted butter or an hollandaise sauce. John Evelyn included samphire in his salad garden (see the salad calendar he made, p. 322), although it is not clear which kind he meant. He got his seeds from France, which also gave us the name of samphire, a corruption from Saint Pierre, i.e. the herb of St. Peter, from its habit of striking deep into the crevices of rocks.

### JASON HILL'S SAMPHIRE PICKLE

In *Wild Foods of Britain*, which came out in 1939, well before the present mania for eating the hedgerows, Jason Hill gave a recipe for pickling the true samphire. He liked its 'aromatic, slightly resinous taste', which the marsh samphire does not have.

Fill a litre (1 $\frac{3}{4}$  pt) bottling jar with samphire, adding peppercorns and some grated horseradish. Bring equal quantities of vinegar and dry cider to the boil, adding salt, and pour over the samphire to cover it. Put the open jar into the oven to infuse for an hour (about 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2). Remove it, cool the jar, then fix on the rubber ring and close.

### MUNG BEANS, see SOYA BEANS

If one extends the time frame of the action beyond that of even an instant, billiard-ball causality falters. Alongside and inside singular human agents there exists a heterogeneous series of actants with partial, overlapping, and conflicting degrees of power and effectivity.

Here causality is more emergent than efficient, more fractal than linear. Instead of an effect obedient too a determinant, one finds circuits in which effect and cause alternate position and redound on each other. If efficient causality seeks to rank the actants involved, treating some as external causes and others as dependent effects, emergent causality places the focus on the process as itself an actant, as itself in possession of degrees of agentic capacity. According to Connolly,

emergent causality is casual... in that a movement at [one] ... level has effects at another level. But it is emergent in that, first, the character of the... activity is not knowable in... detail prior to effects that emerge at the second level. [Moreover,]... the new effects become *infused* into the very... organization of the second level... such... that the cause cannot be said to be fully different from the effect engendered... [Third,]... a series of... feedback loops operate between first and second levels to generate the stabilized result. The new emergent is shaped not only by external forces that become infused into it but also by its own previously under-tapped capacities for reception and self-organization.<sup>43</sup>

This sense of a melting of cause and effect is also expressed in ordinary usage of the term *agent*, which can refer both to a human subject who is the sole and original author of an effect (as in "moral agent") and also to someone or something that is the mere vehicle or passive conduit for the will of another (as in "literary agent" or "insurance agent").

If ordinary language intuits the existence of a nonlinear, nonhierarchical, non-subject-centered mode of agency, Hannah Arendt makes the point explicitly by distinguishing between "cause" and "origin" in her discussion of totalitarianism. A cause is a singular, stable, and masterful initiator of effects, while an origin is a complex, mobile, and heteronomous enjoiner of forces: "The elements of totalitarianism form its origins as if by origins we do not understand 'causes.' Causality i.e., the fact of determination of a process of events in which always one event causes and can be explained by another, is probably an altogether alien and falsifying category in the realm of the historical and political sciences. Elements by themselves probably never cause anything. They



O this feeling has drenched my bones  
and turned my skeleton pink  
with you I feel my mind changing  
with you I feel my blood changing  
I want to get really good at woodwork  
I want to get really good at woodwork  
and go into the forest  
and cut up some logs  
and make you a beautiful house to live in

killing it, am I frightening the spider or humiliating it? What would I learn from figuring out the difference? Does the mistreated animal have a property of dignity or “face” (gaining face, losing face) whereby humiliation can occur? A friend tells me that his dog, when left alone in the apartment, eats its own feces; a veterinarian, when consulted, said that the dog was suffering from shame. (My friend, hearing the diagnosis, felt a sudden blast of shame, as if he’d been accused of abusing his pet.) I’ve heard people say that they respond more tearfully to the plight of a suffering animal (a mistreated pet) than a suffering person (a homeless person with edema, swollen calves exposed to the elements).

7.

Listening to my voice, I note no excitement: no rush, no rise. Instead, the anhedonia and anesthesia of the humiliated. Murmuring, numb, I am speaking as if already flattened by an injury from which I can’t recover.

8.

A woman in L.A. creates a fake MySpace account “with the identity of a cute teenage boy.” And she uses this alias to humiliate a thirteen-year-old girl, who, as a result, commits suicide. Thirteen-year-olds are easily humiliated. Like a Thirteen-year-old, I depend on email for compliments, affection, rescue, stimulation, greeting. But, if email brings bad news, or information that casts me in a negative light, then the technology itself becomes (by virtue of its impersonality, its silence, its stealth attack) a poisonous substance. Instant communication mecha-

serene gullies. The freshwater Thames now a tropical haze of blue green saline.

Nektonic lurkers watch you from beyond your sight, you progress to the east.

Eventually you come to the white giants of Essex, pride of what was once the largest off-shore windfarm in the world. You paddle through the spokes of the two-hundred-and-seventeen turbines – guardians of an estuary that is now an underwater canyon.

Still brilliant white in the marine half-light, you watch them as they turn, soft and slow and webbed in plastic, They stand ironic monuments to the pathetic efforts of our time.

After some while tilting at the windmills, you arrive at a plateau.

It was once a car park for taxi cabs. Now it is a forest of greasy kelp.

Swaying in the circulatory system of the sea. Each vehicle squats like a sprouting bulb, at the base of long thin stems of spilt oil.

You see jellyfish the colour of antifreeze.

They make aimless rounds, spreading their larvae in an uneven whorl.

These cluster around the clutch and pedals, nurseries in the burst ribcage of a cab driver.

At the abrackial tip of every leaking stamen there is a slick rainbow grease, toxic pollen for the fishes to collect.

This petro forest, and the tainted jellyfish who haunt it, are a cruel reminder of the jetsam we did not jettison in time.

You leave the grove in sorrow.

But know this: right after the deluge – it was human bodies that drifted like so much plankton.

The city became feed for our inheritors, meek organisms, blooms of flesh-eating bacteria, aquatic mega-rats and mutant roaches now at home in water.

The inhabitants of drowned councils and sunken tower blocks became inhalable intake for the Shard-sized basking sharks.

London, perhaps the lushest cityfall on Terra, has a radiant secret at its centre.

IMAGINE A RUIN SO strange it must never have happened. First, picture the forest. I want you to be its conscience, the eyes in the trees. The trees are columns of slick, brindled bark like muscular animals overgrown beyond all reason. Every space is filled with life: delicate, poisonous frogs war-painted like skeletons, clutched in copulation, secreting their precious eggs onto dripping leaves. Vines strangling their own kind in the everlasting wrestle for sunlight. The breathing of monkeys. A glide of snake belly on branch. A single-file army of ants biting a mammoth tree into uniform grains and hauling it down to the dark for their ravenous queen. And, in reply, a choir of seedlings arching their necks out of rotted tree stumps, sucking life out of death. This forest eats itself and lives forever.

Away down below now, single file on the path, comes a woman with four girls in tow, all of them in shirtwaist dresses. Seen from above this way they are pale, doomed blossoms, bound to appeal to your sympathies. Be careful. Later on you'll have to decide what sympathy they deserve. The mother especially – watch how she leads them on, pale-eyed, deliberate. Her dark hair is tied in a ragged lace handkerchief, and her curved jawbone is lit with large, false-pearl earrings, as if these headlamps from another world might show the way. The daughters march behind her, four girls compressed in bodies as tight as bow-strings, each one tensed to fire off a woman's heart on a different path to glory or damnation. Even now they resist affinity like cats in a bag: two blondes – the one short and fierce, the other tall and imperious – flanked by matched

## 3D Bones

plastic ass  
artificial  
shit that's all we got  
garage

shit for sound  
something about  
money and sex  
being ready to die  
ready to kill for it

no long human

no longer human  
no longer human  
plastic and static  
plastic and static

no longer human  
no longer human

can you hear it echoing from the mountain tops of freedom  
no longer human  
can you hear it grasping for air on a Philadelphia street  
no longer human  
can you hear it coming out of suburban fathers mouths  
to young sons

no longer human

they got virtual reality for the poor

parallel realities

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As displaced persons the world over know all too well, language is both a gateway and a closed door. Language represents a sliding scale of opportunities pegged to fluency, belonging and access at the top, and muted alimentionation, and restriction at the bottom. The fascination with mangled dis-coherences, while politically and metaphysically interesting, has rarely become the purview of groups for whom 'getting the words out' is as much about legal representation as sense making, meaning and cultural orientation. Nonetheless the challenge and intrigue of cultural and political miscommunication remains. For me, this is a valid pursuit providing I avoid the dream of the artwork as some sort of conciliatory tower of babel.

immutable mechanism, a forgone conclusion, not open for discussion. If by some extraordinary chance anything went wrong, they would simply start all over again. And so, logically, what was really annoying was that the condemned man had to hope for the guillotine to function properly. This is where I'd say the system is definitely faulty. And it's true in a way. Yet I had to admit that this system held the secret of good management. Because, when all was said and done, the condemned man was obliged to collaborate morally: it was in his own best interest that everything went smoothly.

I also had to admit that up until now I'd had ideas on this matter that weren't really correct. For a long time, I had believed – though I don't know why – that to reach the guillotine, you had to walk up some steps to the scaffold. I think it was because of the 1789 Revolution; I mean because of everything I'd been taught or shown about it. But one morning, I remembered a photograph I'd seen published in the newspapers about a sensation execution. The guillotine had actually been set down on the ground, as simply as that. It was much narrower than I'd imagined. I hadn't realized this before, which was rather odd. I had been struck by how well constructed it looked in the picture: precision-made, polished and gleaming. People always have exaggerated ideas about unfamiliar things. I had to admit though that, in this case, everything was very simple: the guillotine was positioned at the same level as the man walking towards. He walked over to it as if he was going to meet someone. That was also annoying. The imagination could connect with the idea of walking up the steps to the scaffold, ascending to the open skies. But the guillotine

listening for my sister at the door and thinking about my work, and especially about *how* to begin it, how the first sentence should run, for I still didn't know how to word the first sentence, and before I know the wording of the first sentence I can't begin any work. So all the time I was tormented by listening for my sister's return and by thinking of how I should word my first sentence on Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Again and again I listened despairingly, and again and again I thought, just as despairingly, about the first sentence of my work on Mendelssohn. I spent about two hours thinking about the first sentence of my Mendelssohn study and at the same time listening for my sister's return, which would put an end to my study before it was even started. However, since I listened for her return with ever increasing intentness, reflecting that, if she did return, she would inevitable ruin my work, while at the same time thinking about my wording of my first sentence, I must finally have nodded off. When I awoke with a start it was five o'clock. I had meant to begin working at four o'clock and now it was five. I was alarmed by this negligence of mine, or rather this lack of discipline. I got up and wrapped myself in a blanket, the horse blanket I had inherited from my maternal grandfather, and tied it around me as tightly as I could with the leather belt which was also inherited from grandfather, so tightly that I could scarcely breathe. Then I sat down at my desk.

A famous bushranger and debtor

Dictated a furious letter:

*You cops are all c-ts,*

*Your laws cunning stunts,*

*By G-d you should all do much better!*

WHERE DID THE PROJECT HAPPEN?  
 Newly cleared building sites, London Street, Lyttelton.

HOW LONG DID IT LAST FOR?  
 One week.

WHAT ORGANISATION CREATED THE PROJECT?  
 Street artist.

HOW MUCH DID IT COST?  
 \$50

WHO WERE THE MAIN PEOPLE WHO WORKED ON THE PROJECT?  
 Delta.

DID THE PROJECT REQUIRE CONSENT OR PLANNING PERMISSION OR OTHER?  
 No permission sought.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE INVOLVED IN CREATING THE PROJECT?  
 One.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:  
 Remembrance-Vision project: acknowledging what had been lost in the heart of the township and looking to the future.

PUBLIC/START DATE OR MONTH:  
 May 2011.

Made from demolition material rescued from the township..

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO ORGANISE?  
 Three weeks.

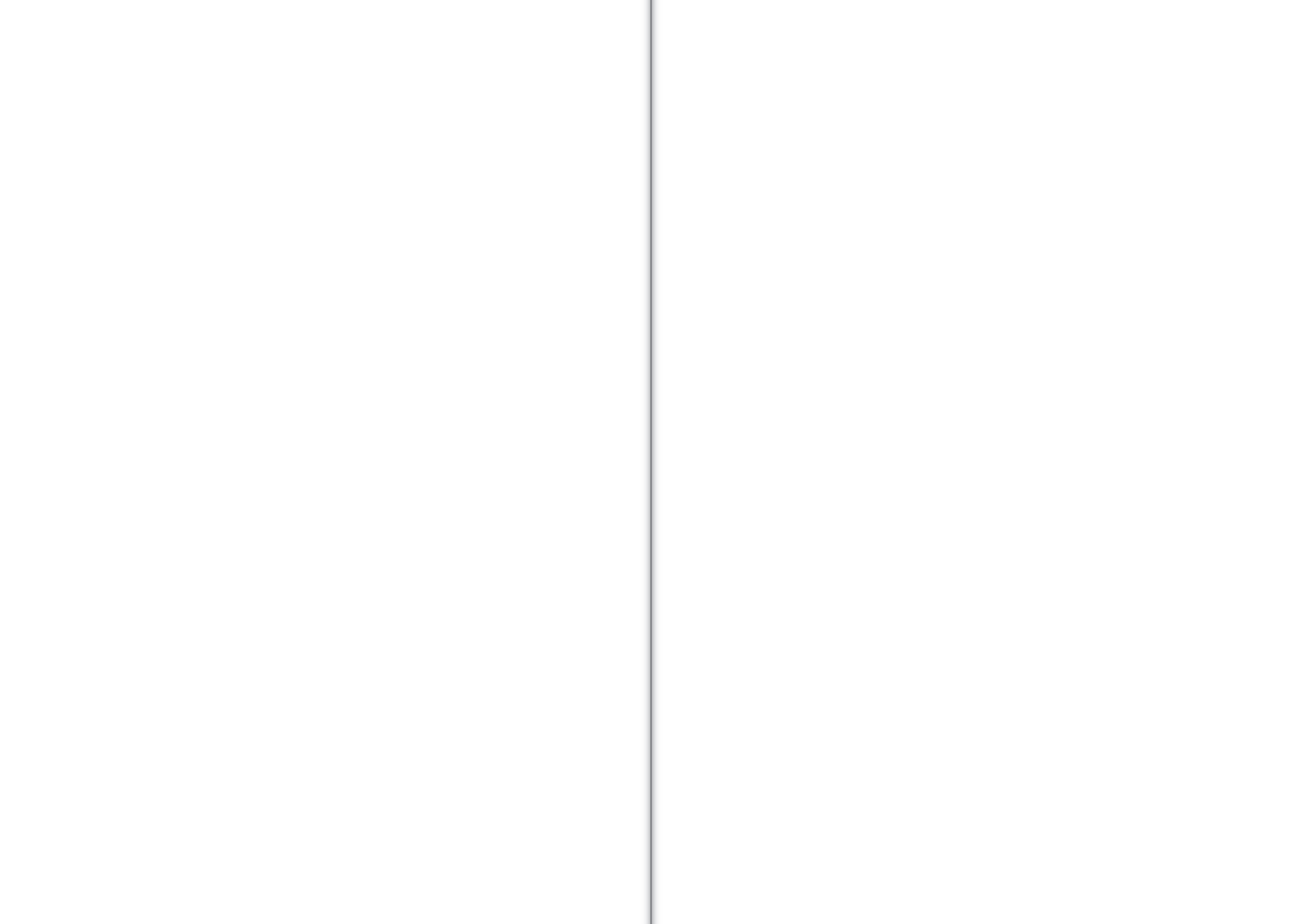
## THE LAW OF PROXIMITY

‘Everything is ruled by lightning.’  
 Heraclitus

‘See this mosquito? It’s an incredible device with its tiny captors that can detect blood-carrying vessels. It makes an incision in the skin with a microscopic saw and sucks the blood with remarkable precision. If we were to build a machine of this kind, we could take blood and analyse it without you even feeling the sting. *Soon we will make microrobots that will take on a mission to explore the human organism.*’ So says the Vice President of Toyota Motor Corp’s research laboratory.

And that is the promise: in the near future, the human body will become the training ground for micromachines that will travel through it in all directions and do so, they say, without causing any pain. So here then are the latest prostheses, the new automatons: these **animates** that will colonize our organism, just as we ourselves have colonized and controlled the expanse of the earth’s body.

Today, when 99 per cent of all microelectronic machines produced are captors or sensors, and when motor vehicles (smart cars) are already equipped with over fifty microprocessor scanners of all kinds to control pressure, vibration or shock, *smart pills*, are being concocted for the human organism that capable of transmitting information long-distance concerning nerve function and blood flow; and later on we will have microrobots capable of circulating in our arteries to treat diseased tissue.



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The editor is responsible (and apologises) for all transcription, spelling, formatting and citation errors.