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2. Antennae
3. Cocoon
4. Colony
5. Drone
6. Endangered
7. Endotoxin
8. Hive
9. Invasive
10. Monoculture
11. Pheromone
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13. Swarm
14. Wasp
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2. Array
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## HOME

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2. Vibes
3. Bedroom
4. Kitchen
5. Migrate
6. Domes
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- 8.

# Fumbling

CHAD SHOMURA

Nothing is more annoying than someone with a theory. That means the world is one big irritant. Everyone toys with ideas to find a way through. No one theory will ever do—and that’s the point. The world double-crosses us right when we have a foot in. Theory has no loyalty except to swerves and surprises. Theory surfaces from the pool wherein thought and life are one substance. It attunes to what becomes noticeable, or what deserves notice: the cadence of a room, the off-remark, the pause that hangs in the air. Theory dotes on the magic of things snapping together or falling apart, and much else besides. Theory is not about anything. It is part of the world and does things in it, with it, to it. Explaining things is just one form of theory. Floating questions is another. Writing theory is the work of thinking rather than knowing. It is fumbling around, poking about, unsure of what is afoot and kind of liking it, too. Theory is so over the seemingly fixed and finished. Common sense loves the fixed and finished. It is ignorant of the world yet hardwired into much, from institutions to reflexes. Theory dissolves common sense. Writing theory is a loosening in the name of freedom, in the name of life. Theory aligns us with all that is not but could be. It brings us to a threshold and nudges us to cross without asking if we are ready. It sparks anxiety, but curiosity too.

# Scission

DONOVAN O. SCHAEFER

The humanities is still deeply invested in an ontological split between theory and practice. So often we fall for the trap of thinking that by reversing the valence of a binary (privileging the body rather than the mind in the mind/body split, for instance) we have defeated the binary. But we've only consolidated its hold. The theory/practice binary is an iteration of that same surgical scission of body and mind. It relies on the same basic presupposition that what thinks and what takes up space are by nature separate. The world of words and ideas is detached from the world of forests and mountains, skyscrapers and birds' nests, embraces and wounds, machines and tools. Even after centuries of materialism—from old to new and everywhere else—it's still very hard for the humanities to think its way out of the presupposition that ideas make the planet spin, with the writhing mass of bodies and things trailing along behind them. Let's interrupt that thought and reimagine theory as Marx wanted us to see it.

1. Theory is bodily. It shapes and reshapes how we are made as subjects.
2. Theory is material. It grows out of the conditions of production, out of windowless cubicles and wood-paneled rooms, out of university endowments, shredded public funding commitments, and legacy nonprofit grant-makers.
3. Theory is emotional. It changes what we value, what we want, what we abhor, what feels urgent and what feels trivial.

That doesn't mean, of course, that there aren't words without actions, let alone actions without words. But those are extreme ends of a polarity. Most of the time, we live in a complex contact zone where bodies and worlds shape thoughts just as ideas shape bodies and worlds.

# Binary

ROWAN MELLING

Binary is bad. We all know this by now. The trouble with knowing something is bad is that bad people can pretend to be good by doing the opposite. Google, for example, is leading the charge to overcome binaries once and for all. A number of years ago they declared “quantum supremacy,” meaning they had built a computer that could perform calculations that digital computers could not. A digital computer switches between ones and zeros in its code (either/or), whereas a quantum computer can exist in multiple digits simultaneously. Google is queering code. What new reality might emerge in this post-binary, post-digital, numerically queer infrastructure? Here’s my anxiety: without the production of a hostile binary between an “us” and Google, will we just glide on Google’s unitary promise of queer code utopia, into a new and horrifying reality of its making? Put differently, is practice (or theory) possible without scission, without the production of some kind of difference? Does theorizing create differences—cuts in reality—that practice can then act on? Sometimes theory stitches reality back together after years of practice rending it apart. Sometimes practice reaches out its body to cross the divide that theorizing has opened at the level of perception. In universities today, people like to talk about “outcomes.” What is “the research” actually doing? What has it achieved that is measurable? This is a neoliberal solution to a binary split between theory and practice, encoded into the humanities in the neoliberal university: your work needs to do something, something measurable. As if words do nothing on their own. The idea here is that words must become more like incantations or spells whose utterance changes reality before our

eyes. In the beginning was the word! I publish my paper and wars cease. I critique the housing market and affordable units rise from the ground. This neoliberal non-binarism might come from the tech world, too. Isn't it extrapolating the logic of code onto the writing of theory? Definitionally, code is writing that acts. It is executable. Code lets individual programmers merge theory and practice without having to act as a collective. Code mediates theory and practice via the machine. We are used to code changing the world now—and tech bros are giddy with their reality-making power. They promise great things. Always just around the corner. Maybe there's a softening of pressure that occurs in some binaries. At least this one: theory and practice. It doesn't have to do everything at once. Words don't have to be big acts. One person doesn't have to do it all. Instead, words might bring together a group, bind it. Reading and writing together, then acting together.

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# Glitch

MATHEW ARTHUR

Dual monitors. Midnight. Neon green glow. Everything's dark mode and amphetamine stock tickers. Or it's hot pink glitter graphics, dark academia memes, cottagecore, porn screen-caps, or vaporwave gifs. In the background a slick user interface grays-out its objects and functions, lurking as plain text files on a server somewhere in New Delhi or the Silicon Forest. On one hand, it's a recursion of language: smaller instances of the same problem over and over until it gives way to ones and zeros—magnetic lines drawn on a metal disk. Liquid crystals on a screen. But it also explodes into endless scaffolding: technicians, assembly line workers, rare earth metals and miners, wires bound into meaty conduits that crisscross cities and continents. Code is an opinionated abstraction. Database rows and columns that siphon off bits of world into working terms. Lags that are real life earthquakes, out-dated machinery, or someone digging in the wrong spot. Decisions made in bad moods, planned obsolescence or product drops, trade deals, and policy contexts. Versions of bodies and their possible coordinations built into keywords that replicate and glitch, do things randomly, in series, or at the whim of a swipe.

# Overflow

KATHLEEN STEWART

Think of thought as an improv in a perturbed expanse (Cohen 2011). Writing, an overflowing in an intimacy of substance, flesh, trope, and tone, like the flowering hibiscus chaotically in-filling ditches along the road in the Mississippi delta. Expressivities experiment. Multiplicities stand together in a spectral exchange. Then something stands up on its own. A change of season takes place in the fall of a leaf. A self-sensing world activates. Fred Moten writes to be a DJ of a world, Alexis Pauline Gumbs pictures herself touching the skin of sea mammals (2020), minks stretch their necks high to check out the dog and I approaching. Writing here is a way of being a little bit unhinged and in sync with the creative fugitivity in an identity, the intervallic excess of the ordinary, the sensation of an alien thisness that pulls us out of our so-called selves into what's already beside and beyond itself. I write through the poetic condensation and elaboration of patches reiterated. In the process, something gets into me and starts propelling a voice not exactly mine. Moving with the ways of the world, a little chapbook riffs, rigs, amplifies, dog-piles, bleeds into things and backchannels.

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# Routines

MORGAINEE LEE

Back pain. Keeping Netflix on next to me while I sleep, worrying about the EMFs but wanting the sound. Needing caffeine. Procrastinating on making a doctor's appointment but diagnosing myself with everything I can find on the internet. Deciding which spiders are okay to stay in the house and which ones gotta go. The intensity of witnessing something violent and terrible—like a child getting pushed to the pavement by a grown man. Tea and its smells, flavours, and sounds, the sensation of it filling your veins. Painting. The Outlook email “ping.” Not wanting to buy a sponge because it's shitty plastic, but buying to-go coffee. Love mediated by WhatsApp, syncing shows. (Are you at 0:00? Three two one play.) Going to the gym, navigating what equipment is available and out of the way. Cats: chatty, hungry, soft. Noisy neighbours. Monitoring the air quality and the weather. The tension of enjoying work but knowing you're not being paid the value of your labour. Picking out outfits. Skincare routines. Film editing: keyboard sounds, short clips and sound bites repeating. Doing dishes just to dirty them again. Walking on the same side of the street. Marking papers. Gamer lights to make it a vibe. Avoiding tasks that seem bigger than they probably are. Procrastinating on sending emails that are probably less scary than they seem. Therapy and encountering an anti-abortion protester with a gruesome-looking sign on the way. Frodo: the creature that lives in the wall of the basement suite.

# Headspace

MATHEW ARTHUR

Getting in the right headspace for writing (or anything else) is a tuning of attention that personalizes in the direction of an emergent task. But spreadsheets, outfits of the day, and meal prep eventuate because wider forces set them in motion. Whatever mismatch crops up between the tasks' emergence and the "you" that angles toward it is usually pathology. You're ADD, lazy, or poor. Yet so often it's just a process coordinating. The headspace doesn't know what it wants. Or knows too much as an impediment. So we trick the mind with boring compartments: sitting up straight, chewing on a pen. Sometimes it's someone else's fault, too hot out, or the wifi is down. Other times it's expressed as biology that caffeinates itself into sharper focus. Or as neurobiological flow. But headspace is moody. You have to lean your feelings toward it just right. Hard to do when the world is on fire.

# Breath

SARAH LAW 婉雯

If the heat doesn't kill us will it be the smoke? Are you disoriented by the haze covering the mountains? Do you sing out for them when you can't see their edges, ripples, and peaks? Have you been calling for them, like whales trying to find each other? Climate catastrophes are never-ending: wildfire smoke and a hundred dead whales stranding themselves on the shore (Gumbs 2023). Will the ocean remember their bodies breaking? When their hearts (and mine) came apart? Their corpses held up by lapping waves as my language lapses in an attempt to capture grief. Does the ocean remember loss, will it miss them? How can we rise to the challenge to change our breathing, to be undrowned with our marine mammal kin? (Gumbs 2020). How do we learn to breathe alongside them under water? How long can you hold your breath? I wonder how the ocean mourns. Did the sinking project of USS Capitalism reach the cold deep waters once home to these whales? Did they sense a shift in the water, something we don't know how to feel? What changed down there that has yet to surface? Will we know when it's finally time to jump ship? Like the whales, will we organize a mass suicide? We could write and send suicide notes to the CEOs of Chevron, Exxon Mobil, and Tesoro. Or leave our corpses on the steps of banks that refuse fossil fuel divestment. Will we be able to trust each other enough to go through with it? Will I be stranded alone? Or in the company of ninety-nine other

grieving bodies? For the past three years we've been asked to change our breathing. It wasn't long before we discarded our N-95 masks. Doesn't that mean we're already willing to die together?

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# Atmosphere

REUBEN JENTINK

The sky is thick, the light a dull orange glow from fires unfathomable, hundreds of kilometers away. It's otherworldly. Still, we go about our days (to work, to school, out for a drink) because there's really nothing else to do. Or we stay inside: call in sick, work from home, stare at the ceiling. We close the windows and scan our phones for air quality ratings before going outdoors. New literacies suddenly normal. Outside, you can feel it in the back of your throat, a sharpness that isn't quite a cough. Some people wear masks on the street again: cloth, N95, spacesuit helmets. As if the atmosphere, the one we are caught up in making, is not our own. Online, we stare at image after image of each new inferno, coming to grips with what should be unimaginable. On the train platform a group of fairies flits about while they wait to be carried downtown. Bright rainbow-coloured hair tied up in pigtails or falling down to the waist. They've got huge glittery platforms on. They're giggling as people walk by. On the street, a warlock rushes past me, his heavy velvet robes dragging along the ground. They're deep blue with golden embroidery at the cuffs. In the orange glow, beads of sweat glisten on his forehead and around his high collar.

# Mirage

CEALL QUINN

The cat melted into the carpet again—a plush throw rug. As my friend would have it, a disordered heap. Still early in the year, our unacclimatized bodies override crisp cognition. Out of palms, thoughts flow a steady stream: a different flavour than the mania wrought by caffeine, liquid muffle more than quickening cadence. It feels kind of like a precipice, the cusp of mirage modality to come, those seductive distortions of visual field expressed in the real as parched cedars, desiccated bivalves. Slightly undone, it reminds me of when you said, “hotness is a state of mind.” Flat asses at Wreck beach jiggle in agreement. What say the body?

# Contamination

MORGAINE LEE

Oil sits slick on the surface of the sunlit waves, gently bobbing up and doWn. What life exists in the space beTween oil and waTer that repel one another? Are there microworlds in there? How many people did it take to pull the biTumen from the depths of the earth? Did they repel one another, too? Maybe they were friendS. If oil and the water met in another time and place would they like each other enough to touch? For now, the oil is not where it belongs: out of place, unwelcome and crUde. But it's quiet here, floating on the sea without the responsibility to fuel cars, planes, and boats like the one that tipped over and spilled. There are places where oil bElongs. At least that's what some humans think.

PFAS

PET

BPA

PVC

But oil always seems to find its way into the wrong place. A straw in a sea turtle's throat, a glistening rainbow in someone's carport, or a plastic bag dangling on a cherry blossom branch. It might age into microplastic, filling up our huManness with its unalive dangers. If the spill was on land, it might feed a hungry funGus. It might break down to its most intimate components and be made anew as a mushroom in a Stamets' experiment.<sup>1</sup> But this is not an oil slick's fate. Instead, it is just here, floating on the ocEan alone.

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1. For more on mycoremediation, see <https://paulstamets.com/mycorestoration/the-petroleum-problem>.

# Heatwave

MATHEW ARTHUR

Heat rises off the asphalt as wavy distortions. The big irony is that we're always stuck in a car when it hits. The contact high of humidity and hotness felt as thighs stuck or peeling off vinyl seats, recirculated air, a dry cough of exhaust. Hydrofluorocarbons waft everywhere, making bad weather worse. The AC is broken or amped up. Waves of heat move machines and bodies. Weather patterns. Traffic patterns. Old people and shut-ins die alone behind tinfoiled windows or sun-bleached curtains. Climate change stretches out the delirium of summer. Seasons blur and languish. The erotics of heat work up fervor—for beach days and day-drinking or the kind of dizzying nausea even water or high SPF can't mend. Tanlines grid across bodies and boulevards. Pinkish skin and sunburnt lawns meet the extravagance of money where everything is still shaded and pale, lush and overwatered. Like generations of wealth, it comes in waves, scorching its surrounds.



# Bees

CEALL QUINN

Tarsus. Scopa. Ocelli. Mesosoma. Language articulates anatomy, organizes a way of knowing, precise like the microscope's observation of punctate integument, like opening the genital capsule to locate species. Expertise folds upon itself in a certain enclosure of relation. Another story, another saturation point. Here we might read the casualties of metabolic rift in the statement "save the bees?" Who does the saving? Who is saving whom? Beyond conceptual grasp or capital's subsumption of figure, how might we draw affiliation? Could it flow from evolutionary love stories? Or the places where sensoriums intersect to detect a shared olfactory presence? A nectar-rich blossom. How, riffing on Don McKay (2005, 17), might we consider not what are bees to me, but what am I to bees?

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# Flowers

SARAH LAW 婉雯

White lilies sit in a thrifted glass vase on my coffee table. petals fall and wilt, their edges crisping up into folded, self-contained layers. In my living room, I'm surrounded by old bouquets wrapped in string: tied, bound, hung to dry, hung to die. My fingertips are strung out with desperation as I pinch, palm, and flatten petals between the already pollen-covered pages of my heaviest books. I fill tin containers, rinsed-out jam and pasta jars, and takeout containers with pressed and dried flowers—but also with mushrooms, acorns, pine needles, bark. These petals, pollen, stems, leaves, and ferns will never outlast the microplastics that are wrapped in and around my veins, that have sunken and swam into my digestive tract via jasmine green tea bags or the chipped non-stick coating of my favourite pan. But these are things I wish would just stay, things I'm trying to keep. The rhythm of drying and pressing flowers is a practice of self-preservation.

# Habitat

CEALL QUINN

Peek out the lenses of compound eye and find abundance in last year's discarded brush. Here, in stem's hollow, generational haven. How do notions of home nest amongst one another? The script of a sunset lover tells me that development and habitat are bound together. A quantitative severing shears urban and its offspring expressed in neat manicured lawns and cookie cutter homes. This making of habitat forecloses inhabitation. Here a lawn mentality occupies the psyche, spreads spatially through the striation of the urban (Lefebvre 1992).

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# Invasive

MATHEW ARTHUR

Something spreads prolifically and turns wilds into badlands or healthy tissue malignant. Encroachment firms up where the edges are: of cells, species, countries. Construction noise congeals property lines and bylaws. Or it localizes as a headache or stomach ulcer. Someone's bad breath or handsiness draws an invisible outline called "personal space." A thought intrudes and ramps up to a loop, hyperfocused on some anticipated—but still imaginary—specific. When grafts, stents, and bits of metal are lodged in the body laparoscopically we call it "minimally invasive" because we're used to it. Leaned over a beige divider, a co-worker's prying questions harden the space between cubicles. "That's a boundary for me." Someone else is eating egg salad for lunch or wearing one too many sprays of drugstore perfume. When a thing or sphere of activity is interrupted by difference, its familiarities get clamped down on.

# Colony

CEALL QUINN

Did you know that James Scott was a beekeeper? To get at the top-down simplifying practices of modern states he used the organizational structure of *Apis mellifera* colonies as a figure. When placed in a Langstroth hive—that 19th century invention composed of movable frames—the bees produce wax comb that falls amongst small grooves, standardizing the shape and size of cells. These hives are scalable: a technology at the heart of the modernization of apiculture. Honey bees are eusocial; colonial animals *par excellence*. They live in caste-divided societies and their lore reaches back to agricultural pasts, dreams of mythical lands of milk and honey. Can histories of colonization, at least in North America, be told in the bodies of honey bees? Brought over to the Eastern Seaboard, early hives were mud or clay enclosures. To get at the sweet insides they had to be cracked open, bees streaming out from their homes, with keepers praying they might retrieve the queen. Fumbling Protestants, expelled from home or voluntarily setting sail, thought the forests were infested with devils. At the same time, back in old England, burgeoning populations at the cusp of capitalism's ascent were withdrawn from the Church's concern. Queen Elizabeth's royal beekeeper had identified the caste system of honey bees—queen, workers, drones. The drones were deemed lackadaisical and thus disposable, evidenced by observing males left to perish outside the hive at seasons end. The "idle poor" became a new category of moral concern, discursively brushed as drones. Meanwhile, the pressure valve theory of colonization was borne on the bee practice of swarming. It was said that

the health of the parent society could only be maintained if the excess populations “hived off” to remote lands to establish new colonial offshoots and make use of “unutilized” resources. Captains of the Elizabethan era even suggested that teaching industry to Indigenous peoples, notably producing wax and honey through beekeeping, would have them so gracious to the imperialists that they would gladly bend the knee. With the Morrill Act of 1863 alongside a suite of other land-grabbing legislation, the continental United States is gradually secured and economic entomology takes flight. Here we return back to the Langstroth hive. The expropriation of Indigenous lands provided a seed fund for institutions like Cornell, the greatest beneficiary of the Morrill Act, where apiculture is increasingly technified and the practice of migratory beekeeping matured. Jump to the post-World War II context and the scale increases exponentially. Chemical weapons used in warfare get remarketed as pesticides. Capitalist agriculture bloats, leaches lands, poisons the native bees. Migratory beekeeping to the rescue, serving as a “pollination override” (Ellis et al. 2020) for lucrative crops. The bees are bigger than they used to be. Langstroth hives invite infestations of *Varroa destructor*. In a feral colony (or one reared without guiding grooves) wax comb forms in different sizes. Smaller workers can thus regulate and dispose of *Varroa* in ways that the standardized industrial bees cannot. Today we live the impacts of these legacies. Did you eat an almond? A cranberry? Any of the other pollination dependent crops that intensified production in

the latter half of the 20th century? Beekeepers whisper that populations are getting harder and harder to maintain. The bees are sick and getting sicker, a host of compounding drivers held in their small bodies. The sickness of honey bees is the sickness of the colonies. Who speaks of saving?

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# Birthplace

ROWAN MELLING

The hospital grounds were overrun with rabbits. It wasn't possible to keep them from getting into the vents and dying. It became a health concern. This is where I was born. I had to go to the hospital repeatedly when I was five or six, and I remember seeing the rabbits then, hopping around the blackberry bushes. It made me happy. Years later, they would move the bunnies to the university campus, where they continued to die in vents. For a while, I worked there, cold calling seniors to survey them about medications for research purposes. Little rabbit bodies were constantly being found in the building, wire grates chewed through. Why were they so desperate to get inside? My university friends began trapping the rabbits to eat them and make hats and gloves out of their skins. I was given one of the skins as a goodbye gift before traveling. Other students loved the friendly bunnies—they would come right up to you, sniff your shoes. Stoners would blow weed smoke in their tiny faces. So, the administration waited until summer (when the students who loved the bunnies were gone) and collected all the rabbits in traps and “sent them to a farm in Texas.” Now, there are no bunnies at any of the institutions in the town where I was born. It is a clean and safe place. A recent ordinance has made it illegal for cats to go outside without a leash. I still keep the rabbit pelt in my closet. From time to time, I take it out and touch the soft fur.



# Home

CEALL QUINN

To conjure home the mind reclines back. Could it be a suburb? Contained in a dog? Maybe it's a kind of story the deracinated tell themselves to assert a sort of lineage: an unnamed Toisanese village, the old homestead in Clifden. Longing can function to displace the here, perform an occlusion of settlement, index hanging anxieties. Perhaps home materializes most vividly in the ephemera of dreams. Is home a sickness? But I could take this somewhere else, follow tried and true paths to find bits and pieces of recursive sentiment. Maybe, most definitely, home is the shedding of selves found in minutiae. The cat touches bits of paper before sunrise, invading the space of sleep. The familiar rhythm of your post-coffee bathroom break. Home can be witness to the homes of others: an *Andrena* nesting aggregation in the heart of an East Vancouver Park. Home is a portal, a feeling. Home is the well-worn groove of a rubbing stone. Home is...

# Domestic

MATHEW ARTHUR

The intimacies of home scale up and get passed around. A neighbour calls the cops on the couple next door who won't stop throwing things at each other. Impacts escalate and it's all over the news. Or the neighbourhood Karens whisper and stare and what gets done feels like a loaded nothing. Stay-at-home moms make bento boxes with elaborately primed snacks and become TikTok famous. Microwaves, fast fashion, and electric cars get caught up, too: when a factory in Bangladesh burns down or an assembly line in Sudbury, Ontario goes bust. Suddenly, keeping things at home—manufacturing, call centres, oil—becomes what we fight about over dinner, how we come to know about “it” in the first place. The domestic is a microcosmic nation—how things are tamed in big ways by small acts. We're all housebroken, trained into doing dishes and laundry or taxes, our hygienes a boring map of moral and regulatory apparatuses. Maybe we even like it: tidying up, getting into routine, the forms and feels of time and matter having edges to pit ourselves against.

# Recipe

SARAH LAW 婉雯

Early days of Covid-19 quarantine recall freshly baked loaves. Banana, focaccia, sourdough, whole wheat, rye. I've never been good at baking. I'll never know the difference between baking powder and soda. Why are there so many different types of flour? I type "banana bread recipe" into the search bar. Enter. About 154,000,000 results in 0.42 seconds. "Banana bread," "banana banana bread," "MOIST banana bread" (yes, all caps), "my favourite banana bread recipe." I click the first hit: "banana bread recipe (with video)"—and with a solid 5-star rating. Seems promising. I plop my phone down on the counter and raise my index finger to the screen. I rev up to swipe my way toward the recipe. Fuck! I clicked an ad. I brace myself for the pop-ups of people with secrets who are hated by doctors, dentists, dietitians, personal trainers, even librarians. Tummy tuck, magic pills, eye-lift tape, anti-aging cream. Teas that cure any ailment from having a body that ages to having a body at all. 3D lash extensions, eyebrow tinting, microblading, lip blushing, lip filler. A skincare revolution and effortless glam for looking your best during the apocalypse. I frantically search for that tiny X hidden away in the corner of the screen behind yet another ad. Impatient, I exit the page and start a new tab. I retype "banana bread recipe." The second hit is a recipe with raisins and toasted walnuts. I don't have either. I guess I can leave them out. Phone down. Finger up. Scroll. I watch lines of text paying homage to a dead grandma's love of baking, multiple shots of the same loaf, and a hyperlink to Natasha's Amazon storefront for fucking vanilla extract. Another pop-up. No. I don't want to subscribe to your mailing list.

# Print Dialogue

MATHEW ARTHUR

Click PRINT and what's just a draft is suddenly real because it conforms. Margins, done. Fonts, picked. Maybe even page numbers or a logo. Destinations are selected—LaserJet5M9P or Lobby-BW—and what was formerly just pushing things around onscreen arranges itself on paper. Choose how many copies, cueing up necessary reach or bald ambition. Choose a paper size (A4, Envelope #10, Legal) and, with it all the working groups, manufacturing standards, ISO, DIN, machines, and wartime geopolitics. When things break or go missing: fit to page. Go double-sided or economy mode when you're eco-virtue signaling or broke. Print to PDF, attach, file under "back-ups." Something happens in code, across wires and office layouts, in invisible wifi waves: looking for printer, job spooling. Then it shudders into hardware zipping back and forth spraying ink or the acrid smell of toner, dust, ozone.

# Smartphone

CEALL QUINN

Writing about social media seems trite nowadays, I know. Like, just the other day some dude's Substack came up on my Tumblr feed (who uses Tumblr, anyway?). This would-be prophet hurls invectives about—I kid you not—"suicide boxes", AKA cellphones. His cure? Returning to "older forms": folk tales, origin stories, the durabilities of myth. As if these genres stand outside history, context, and change. I mean, look at the tarot renaissance happening with the pagan influencer set or witchTok's spellbinding popularity. Of course he peppered the end of his newsletter with a "like, donate, subscribe" type sign off, though rhetorically distanced from the lowly objects of his critique. I guess the whole "our phones are killing us" shtick, feels a bit too "old man yells at cloud" to me. Which isn't to say we shouldn't think about it. But technological disavowal feels tired in a way that recalls my Shibari teacher's consistent refrain (following Derrida) that "there is no outside to context". So, how might we enter the text of algorithmic address to better account for network culture's distribution of subjectivity? Is it possible to map something like context collapse? I wonder if the smooth movement of information, the material weight of which undercuts fluidity, can produce a transposability of ethics, diagnoses, micro-identities? Old socialities dissolve. Do new bonds form?

# Password

ROWAN MELLING

Everyone's first email address was embarrassing. I don't want to tell you mine. But I remember my older sister's boyfriend's from the time when people still used their first email addresses: slayer\_69@hotmail.com. Passwords then were dumb little intimacies or sex jokes. Everyone's password had "69" in it. My ex's password was "boobs2." I got my first ATM code when I was maybe ten, and it was my best friend Jim Casey's birthday. Actually it still is—and I haven't talked to him in probably fifteen years. These days passwords are not enough. Now there is multifactorial authentication. It happens through an app on your smartphone, generating six random digits that must be input before the clock runs out. It only rarely has "69" in it (and only by chance). Even when it does, it's not funny or hot because the clock is ticking. These passwords aren't mine and, when I forget my phone, I'm locked out. Sometimes even reaching across the room for the phone is too much: you get stuck between the first password and the multifactorial authentication code. These tiny machinic demands for attention and input build up. I tip back in my fraying, navy blue office chair and groan my tiny refusal.

Passwords must be changed. My friend Britta just adds a number to her password. The School Board makes her change it every few months. Last I checked it ended in "12." The growing number is a small catalogue of futility, a small snub to the bureaucratic demand that we care about security. How large will Britta's password grow before she retires from teaching in thirty years?

In the future there will be more passwords, cross-checked with more devices. Sometimes, I think the point may just become the inputting of passwords. What we are accessing will become uncertain. Codes will link to new codes, the input of which will whirr the apparatus of checking and referencing along. Friction at gates that lead nowhere will generate heat in the system. My password is fa!!ADA19\*#. I changed it from s6kb^ZAS! the last time a machine told me to. Every now and then I still meet someone with an old password. Like my girlfriend whose password is "hair69." On her phone it's just 6969.

# Format

MATHEW ARTHUR

LP, VHS, CD, DVD, Mp3, Mp4—or that brief window when rich kids' parents had LaserDisc: not quite a vinyl record, like a king-sized DVD. Chicago, MLA, APA. Formatting is scrolling endlessly through fonts and footnotes, making selections that align to a dream job, bad boss, or just to pay rent. It's how bodies become anatomical in diagrams or machines that diagnose then dissect, bringing flesh and blood back into known shape. Formatting is an architectonics: how matter is coded into zoning maps and material specifications. How rails, walls, and roads shape access and chance. How texture formats sense and the other way around: braille dots placed just above reach on an elevator control panel. Or smartphone screen haptics that draw attention to angry texting or a Wikipedia vortex. A room can be formatted by the choreography of furniture or bodies, placing trinkets or higher-brow things like so. Alone or clustered. Just there. Format opinionates content: like a file format's compression or the rules of the road. But it also gets the vibe right, lights dimmed or all the way up, patterns cut to cinch a slutty or million-dollar look.



# Practice

SARAH LAW 婉雯

Practice makes perfect. I learned this at a piano bench: metal ruler hovering above my hands waiting to strike, faceless body blurred behind me, reflected in black gloss paint like a funhouse mirror. My back is tense. Shoulders clenched. I chew the inside of my mouth. Waiting for my hands to falter, for the metal to drop. Four hours a day, every day for twelve years. Almost half my life spent on this practice. Like an endurance athlete, my fingers would run across black and white keys made of wood and ivory. When the page in front of me demanded a crescendo in *ff*, fortissimo, my heart pounded louder than my hands on the keys. Holiday weekends were spent racing from lessons to recitals to competitions. Hours sitting in plastic chairs, scratchy dresses stuck to my legs. *Back straight. Don't scratch. Don't swing your legs. It's only a couple more hours. We'll be home soon, you can listen to the tape and work on your mistakes.* I just wanted to eat dinner together. I don't practice piano anymore. Now, I practice on a different set of keys, ones made of plastic. The letters light up. I write about feelings and climate change. I tell people my work is about climate grief because, "I don't do anxiety." If I said this to my therapist or close friends, they'd laugh. I do anxiety a lot. It may even be my longest practice. It textures my lower back pain, the clicks when I roll my neck. It textures each song I hear: those black and white keys, notes and melodies. Piano practice textures my writing, every word a sound, a colour, a note, a major or minor key, a feeling, a surface to touch. In this practice, mistakes aren't met with a lashing. But my fingers still freeze in anticipation of that silver whoosh. Is someone hovering behind me?

# Fieldnotes

MORGAINEE LEE

Jenny said, “write your fieldnotes immediately.” Cristina said it, too. I didn’t heed their admonition. Life things come hurling at you and stretch the memories thin: encounters, events, planting sunflowers, going on strike, baking cherry pies. Reaching for ideas and feelings, with love and appreciation for what they taught me, this is what I remember:

## **SpiderSong<sup>1</sup>**

The pitter-patter of the drum was cadenced with an ephemeral sort of magic. I regret that I trapped a spider under a plastic container. I regret that it’s still there a week later, just in case. We do science because we think things are beautiful. I think that’s really lovely. The vibrations of sound that wooshed like a starship felt nice, exciting, and satisfying through the speakers embedded into the walls and floor. It is enough to want to make something that’s beautiful.

## **BirdSong**

The biologist studied birdsong and wanted to know why they make mistakes. What neurons fired and why. What *is* a mistake? Does the bird’s stomach sink in embarrassment after belting out a melody made with its whole little body? “We need more scientists to admit they care about their work and think it’s beautiful,” they said.

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1. Mendel Skulski’s *Spiders Song: The Music of Evolution* is a spatial audio artwork about “the grandest symphony on Earth: the music of evolution.” <https://lobestudio.ca/new-events/spiders-song-the-music-of-evolution-mendel-skulski>.

## MetaFauna<sup>2</sup>

As the characters of life evolving swayed, stilts swinging below the scaffolding, I swayed too. Then I stopped. Why don't I want to be witnessed being moved? PVC bones clinked with every body, flip and flop. The movement was gentle, more so than I anticipated. Perhaps the evolution of megafauna had a gentleness to it, too. I miss dancing, I wish I was dancing. You can feel the dancers breathing in every movement, their bodies infused with intent, aliveness. Do the microbes that dangle from the cloth hung along the proscenium feel the rhythm? Are the bacteria on the dancers' hands, feet, and bellies swaying, too? Do they stop if they feel seen?

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2. Inspired by Haraway's cyborg, Isabelle Kirouac's performance work *Meta/fauna* incorporates contemporary dance, contact improvisation, acrobatic stilts, and physical theatre to portray chimeric flora and fauna. See <https://threelittlereddots.org/megafauna/>.

# Taichi

CEALL QUINN

Tinted glass reflects motion: a body's integrated movement. Grip ground, smooth arc of leg driving shoulder, elbow, wrists towards heaven. Each repetition cycles weight through sole yielding untrained footache instantly. The first two times threw off my Vans, preferring rough concrete to constraint. Alex says his feet are so powerful, they destroyed innumerable sets of shoes. On Wednesdays when Robson Square ice rink is drained, dancers are drawn to the space. Competing rhythms, styles, and tunes sonically clash. Teenagers carrying bottles of Jack Daniels congregate away from parental eyes. They are amused by our practice—some come stand with us as we hold *Zhan zhuang*, stoically until they burst out laughing. We must seem funny to them: stationary old people gathering in the square. Yet amidst these cacophonous choreographies, holding and learning to organize the body, each time I am gripped by a growing awareness of motion held in stillness. How do you learn to hold your body as if density is evenly distributed? How can your legs support your arms as you reach to the heavens for twenty minutes or longer? From the living reference of posture, what expressive movements come to life?

# Calendar

MATHEW ARTHUR

Time grids into view: all the Mondays and weekends stacked in perfect columns, even though it doesn't feel that way. Small numbers with spaces where things happen or feel guilty. Little multi-coloured events like sprinkles: Columbus Day, a dentist appointment, payday, the coronation of King Charles II, restaurant reservations, cancel my free trial, Daylight Savings Time, geolocations—you were here on this day. Reminders that keep coming up well after they're gone. The next month edging in on the current one to keep the interface pristine. Swiping between hours, days, months, years as if it all happens at the same time.

# Outtakes

MATHEW ARTHUR

I. Guys in combat boots and utility pants, cuffs tucked into khaki socks, digital camouflage gridding olive-grey pixels over a twilled field jacket. It's a drone operator in Kandahar or TikTok fashion influencer wearing 80s Issey Miyake. Something rustles in the brush and it's a midwest dad with a 12-gauge aimed at unlucky waterfowl. You can hunt for terrorists, fauna, or trends.

II. White people like Japanese writing. Or Chinese. Each character like a torii gate or ornamented pagoda—criss-crossed lines making little worlds. Words like buildings, sentences like cityscapes. People get “joy” or “luck” tattoos. Or some bad misspelling that circulates as a meme. Stuck in the 80s, video games are worlded with neon signs that scream “urban” like Shibuya crossing or vapourwave. Logograms look like Nike swooshes or heiroglyphs: a kind of streetwear orientalism.

III. The interstitial spaces of public life are always one long tiled hallway: a muted off-white expanse of doors marked “authorized personnel only” with a pop of neon yellow or red as occasional wayfinding. Maybe it's a mall hallway—where the bathrooms are, parkade stairwells, or the in-between of airport terminals. Stretches of nothing that are walked on the way between shops, offices, waiting rooms, and service desks. The backrooms are a design feat, non-space made from reams of concrete, metal, and glass carved out of someplace else.