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**ROOM: A Sketchbook for Analytic *Action*** was started as a newsletter by a group of New York–based psychoanalysts in response to the trauma of the 2016 US election. Since then *ROOM* has become an award-winning, interdisciplinary magazine that is a forum for mental health professionals, poets, artists, and activists to engage in community-building and transformation by shedding light on the effect our cultural and political reality has on our inner world and the effect our psychic reality has on society.

Cover photo by Lisa Fotios

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**Michael Eigen,** PhD, is a psychologist and psychoanalyst and the author of nearly thirty books and many papers. These include *The Psychotic Core*, *Contact With the Depths*, *The Psychoanalytic Mystic, The Sensitive Self*, and *Kabbalah and Psychoanalysis*. He is a teacher and supervisor at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis and New York University Postgraduate Institute for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. He has given a private seminar on Winnicott, Bion, Lacan, and his own work for over fifty years.

**Terri Greco's** poems have appeared in *Tar River Poetry*, *North Carolina Literary Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Jacar Press*, and *Main Street Rag*. She was the recipient of a James Applewhite Poetry Prize (Honorable Mention, 2020) and an honorable mention in *Kakalak* (*Main Street Rag*, 2019). She was a James Applewhite semifinalist (2022). She lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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**Sebastian Thrul** is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in training in Switzerland and Germany. His main clinical interests are the political dimensions of psychoanalytic technique, the application of psychoanalysis to clinical work within the public healthcare system, and questions related to gender. He has lectured and written on these topics for scientific and lay audiences. He is one of the hosts of the podcast *New Books in Psychoanalysis* and regularly invites interesting psychoanalytic thinkers to public online conversations as part of the *Free Association Lisbon*'s Forward section.

**Isaac Tylim,** PsyD, is a fellow at the International Psychoanalytic Association and a faculty and training analyst at the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research. He is an associate professor and consultant in New York University's Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. Dr. Tylim was a cultural correspondent for the *Buenos Aires Herald*. He was also the founder of IPTAR's Art and Society program. He maintains a private practice in NYC.

**Grace Bakst Wapner's** work with urethane or satin, clay or bronze, chiffon or pipe cleaners in an interactive dialogue between material and object has been determinative in her process. In the early 1970s she erected walls and barriers constructed from satin and velvet, alluding to the dual nature of our social interactions, and now, in the 2000s, after working for years with clay and bronze, on paper and on canvas, she has returned to working with fabric, sometimes conjoining the fabric with clay. Throughout, there has been a continuing belief that the implementation of color, line, texture, and form can evoke abstract truth. She studied painting and sculpture at Bennington College and at Bard, where she participated in the MFA summer program. But it has been her intensive day-to-day studio practice and the looking at the work of other artists that have most significantly informed her work. She has had twenty-nine one-person shows, participated in over one hundred group shows, lectured and taught, and been the recipient of honors, grants, and awards. She believes that the singular and complex practice of making art both asserts and affirms our humanity.

**Jiameng Xu** was born in Chengdu, China, and migrated to Canada at the age of seven. Raised in Ottawa, they studied at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, earning a Bachelor of Science. They also studied at McGill University, where they completed medical school and PhD studies in rehabilitation science. Their dissertation was an ethnographic study centered on an inpatient psychiatric unit, of the experiences of family caregivers of persons living with mental illness. At present, they are a first-year resident in psychiatry, living, training, and writing in Vancouver. They are continually seeking to participate with others in spaces at the intersection of art, healthcare, and the humanities.

**Elaine Zickler** received a PhD in English literature from Bryn Mawr College, specializing in seventeenth-century English literature and critical theory. Her dissertation was on the writings of Donne and Freud, tracing the history of Freud's thinking to the practice of moral theology. She has organized international conferences on children's literature and psychoanalysis and has taught courses in women's literature, gender and sexuality, French theory, and Laplanche at the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, where she is a member and on faculty. She has a private practice in Moorestown, NJ.





# Contents

STEVE JOHNSON



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# Social Dreaming

**...it is the horror we can't conquer**

**Pushing itself against the pane of dailiness...**

—Jorie Graham, "Miscellaneous Weights and Measures"

There is a "deep and somber unity" when the different impressions of our senses enter into "correspondence." So writes the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard in his seminal book *The Poetics of Space*. It is this "correspondence" that allows us to receive and transform the *immensity of the world* into the *intensity of our intimate beings*. There is an intimate "everydayness" that runs through all the essays in *ROOM* 10.22. And much as residual impressions from the day are transformed nightly into dreams, the synergy of these writers forms an unsettling social dreamscape.

Svitlana Matviyenko's day began at five in the morning on the 181st day of the war, a day before Ukrainian Independence Day. "Everything here is now immersed in a complete silence that you can only encounter in a small town like mine...The rocket attacks are most typical at this hour. When they are detected by our national radar system, the entire river canyon is filled with the wailing sound of air raid alerts." In her essay, **August 23, 2022—Kamianets-Posilskyi**, Matviyenko recounts the events of a day laced with horror and anxiety. "Many of us *here* in Ukraine are bracing ourselves for tomorrow," she writes. Her accompanying soundscape brings the birds, the river canyon, and the crescendo of the early-morning air raid from her window straight into ours.

Writing weeks before the crisis in Iran and weeks after the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States, Adrienne Harris, like Matviyenko, is also "bracing for tomorrow." But the event that was seared into Harris's soul happened over sixty years ago. "What am I wearing?" she writes. "A surgical gown? Perhaps just a slip and underwear." She has relived the shame, the fear, and the pain of that day many times in her imagination. **My Back-Alley Abortion** is the first time she has written it down. "Something of the return to the nightmare of illegal abortions requires me as a witness...I feel the interwoven strands of hatred and fear of women and sexuality, of the haunting that accompanies action."

Elaine Zickler's **August 27, 2021: Philadelphia** and Roa Harb's **Feeding** are elegiac and haunting. Eighteen months into the pandemic, Zickler writes, "I am an old woman now, and the city has been ravaged even more than I have been, by death and sickness, by neglect and violent desperation, so I have the sudden realization that it has always been the city itself I have loved, the city itself that has been my friend...And now, suddenly, I see it as fragile and as mortal as myself, not eternal, but finite." Also after an eighteen-month-absence, Roa Harb returns to Lebanon only to find that "In the interim, the financial crisis, compounded by COVID-19, had hit the country like a sledgehammer...On August 4, the explosion that rocked Beirut obliterated any remaining hopes for change, for a future, and for normalcy. Almost a year after the date, most of the people I met were in varying degrees of shell shock. My parents and relatives were also gripped with a fevered obsession for watermelons." Reentering their shattered cities, Zickler and Harb, both gripped by loss, are suffused in memories of the everyday.

Haunted from childhood by his gay forebears, the unfolding monkeypox epidemic in midsummer 2022 gave Kevin Barrett purchase to turn them into ancestors. **Ghosts in the Bathhouse** is a tribute to the men who paved the way, with their lives, to his. "I find myself longing for their past," he confesses. "A past when owning one's queerness was subversive. When camaraderie was found in secret gatherings. I'm ambivalent about the present—queer engagement parties, adoptions, and the sharing of last names. You can view this history through a lens of excitement, belonging, solidarity in fighting for one's rights, and you can view it through a lens of suppression, danger, trauma, and death." Like Adrienne Harris's, Kevin Barrett's

essay is a psychoanalytic exploration of that which has been occluded or repressed: the power of sexual shame to cast its shadow over a single life—over multiple generations.

Sebastian Thrul's essay **Psychoanalysis at the End of the End of History** also shines light on what has been shadowed over for "a generation of analytic grandchildren who have grown up in an era of predominant conceptual relativism and a generalized suspicion of grand narratives." Thrul is not longing for the rigid, good old bad days of an authoritarian "Freud knows best" approach to clinical work and psychoanalytic training. Nor does he espouse an ironic postmodern "shopping-mall approach," where all resides within the "here and now" and is tailored to the needs of the market. "The simple truth," he says, "is [that] psychic change at the deepest level takes a lot of time and a lot of dependable care. What we really need," Thrull pleads into the future, "are passionate psychoanalysts in public health settings to drive this point home again and again and again."

Jiameng Xu, Isaac Tylim, and Michael Eigen each write of moments where individual psychic realities and everyday life collide, collapse, or connect. Jiameng Xu's **Will You Go to the Bank with Me?**, is reported with the dispassionate objectivity of an ethnographer. It is the story of what they see as they escort a schizophrenic man on a day pass from a psychiatric ward. As disjointed realities begin to blend into one another, a poignant sweetness emerges in the telling of the tale. There is nothing sweet in the disjointed realities that collide in Isaac Tylim's **The Comfort of Fake News**. In this clinical encounter, Tylim turns a psychoanalytic lens inward to expose how the convergence of incompatible psychic realities creates fake news that begets more fake news. Magnified by technology, the implications of this psychic dynamic pervert not just the sanctity of the therapeutic space but the world at large. For Michael Eigen, his patient's bleeding psyche is part and parcel of the bleeding heart of today's world. His **Touching Psychic Fibers** lands like a prose poem.

*ROOM* 10.22 begins on the traumatic surface and ends in the deepest recesses of our psychic world. Like psychoanalysis, it is a space where the inside and outside meet. "Pushing against the pane of dailiness," *ROOM* is a social dream catcher.

ROOM *is a participatory community platform. As in psychoanalysis, themes or agendas are not planned ahead. Each issue is created from whatever* ROOM*'s readers will write next. Visit* ROOM*'s website to see* ROOM*'s living analytic archive. Add your voice to* ROOM *2.23. Donate what you can to keep this platform going.* ROOM *exists because we make it together.*

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# My Back-Alley Abortion

Let me bring you into the room. It's a clinical operating room in a private office in midtown Toronto. It has a space to lie down. Other than that, the room is bare. I am tempted to use the word "barren," which I think captures a fear I cannot articulate. All I can feel is how afraid I am. What am I wearing—a surgical gown? Perhaps just a slip and underwear. I remember already feeling shame and fear. I don't or can't really take in the specifics of my surroundings. I am terrified, shame-ridden, more singularly alone than ever in my life, though my life is not very long at this moment. I am nineteen, a sophomore at an Ivy League college, where one should surely be able to manage one's life. But, at that moment, late-fall 1960, I have left my quite luxurious and sociable dorm room to come north to the city I grew up in, where an older woman friend—the only person I can speak to in any confidence—has put me in touch with a doctor. I say that so easily. Maybe really a doctor? Many years later I learned that this person did indeed have a medical license, but during that first encounter, I knew almost nothing.

When I called my friend to say I was pregnant, she was kind and comforting. She clearly knew what that meant or could mean. Been there. Done that. She took a very strictly practical stance, and she helped me find the right person for that moment of legal, moral, and psychological uncertainty. Or so I had to believe. So, I sit in the waiting room and then the operating room under the control of a man who is mocking, sneering, subtly but clearly insulting, and shaming. He does his work. No anesthetic, no language, nothing comforting is said or intended, no pain meds. I walk out of the room onto the street not sure I am viable or safe. I feel damaged and bad in mind, spirit, and body. The physical pain of the experience must be carrying the emotions. I cannot sort out if I should and will die, or if I have escaped some human female requirement for suffering.

Am I bad? Damaged? Lucky? All of the above?

My older friend takes care of me for a week, and I go back to college. I have a different life from the one that would have unfolded had I not had access to abortion, however terrifying. And through some mix of luck and biology, my experience at nineteen does not consciously or critically destroy or fatally disrupt a later history of fertility and family. Yet I am aware that the emotional cost has taken a lifetime to process. I don't want to exaggerate, but that experience lived a virulent life in my unconscious. I think the criminality of that situation contributed significantly to feeling criminal. I feel it is important to speak about now, as abortion seems, with sinister determination, to be moving into criminalized spaces (inside one's mind and in the world). In the decades since my illegal abortion, whenever I drove down that street in Toronto, I felt a stab of shame—mild, subtle, but inevitable. Consciously, I practiced consistent support for women's freedom. Unconsciously, a slower, more insidious process took place.

But to go back to that room is something I still do reluctantly. Everything was at stake, and everything altered in that painful, frightening space. One odd remnant reappeared. Over a decade later, I am in Toronto with my family—my parents and my children. All seems easy. My father, his face oddly strained, asks to speak to me alone. He has had a call from someone in the police department. My name has turned up in the records of a man arrested for illegal abortions. My father looks anguished. I feel the world opening under my feet. I make up some story as to why I would have been in that person's office. My father, I suspect, is relieved not to have to hear or say any more.

What discursive scene has been enacted? I feel the interwoven strands of hatred and fear of women and sexuality, of the haunting that accompanies action. But mostly I feel my intense commitment to erasure and refusal. Nothing happened.

And in a sense, that refusal, that denial holds to this day. Everything worked out. No one was hurt. I stay in control. Refusal, resistance, repression. In one sense, this is a story of the bad old days, when abortion was not a right but a theft, a crime, an erasure.

RENE BÖHMER (PREVIOUS PAGE)

A number of years later, probably close to twenty-five—a quarter of a century—I take up reproductive rights activism. In a group called CARASA: the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse. We hold demonstrations, sit-ins. The Black women in this battle with us are inevitably more injured and harassed, and whenever we are arrested in the course of demonstrations, they inevitably get longer sentences and larger fines. At the sentencing after the arrests, the white women are sent to take care of the Black families whose protesting mothers are serving time in jail. I arrive at the house of one of the jailed women. Her children—four and eight, perhaps—await me. We shop; we go to the park. The older child is so grown-up, so parentified (a word I do not yet know), and he helps me care for his little brother.

But this neglect and loss sit in me alongside relief, enigma, and mourning. At the time, I was most conscious of shame and terror. Later I thought about the dangers I had not even dared imagine: death, sterility, never having or knowing that child or having the child come to a space of meaning.

I bring myself and my reader back to that room at this moment in a radically and dangerously changed world for women. Now that Roe v. Wade is dismantled, what will poor women and young women and women whose class, race, and situation limit massively what actions are possible do? *The New York Times* the other day had a picture of a young white, middle-class woman reflecting on the current (but surely endangered) possibility of taking medication—abortion by pills—to induce miscarriage. We surely know that whatever technology can generate, its availability will still function by class and caste and privilege.

I have relived that experience so many times in my imagination. This is the first time I write it down. Something of the return to the nightmare of illegal abortions requires me as a witness.

Because I could act and make my own determination about the outcome of pregnancy, I continued various forms of privilege: college, graduate education, a new relationship and marriage, a whitewash that at that time had something crucial to say about class and privilege.

I got to choose to keep the pregnancies I wanted to. My shame stayed hidden.

That shame-ridden scene in Toronto, now over sixty years ago, awaits many women in many difficult and dangerous situations. In thinking and talking about the destruction and dismantling of Roe v. Wade, the memories of that period of shame and fear came back. At a Zoom conference on abortion, a colleague, a woman of my generation, spoke of the history of reproduction and the times of "back-alley abortions." I shuddered. The room I went to in 1960 was in a polished, upstanding, reputable medical building. Who knew the actual practices of the doctor I was visiting? Yet it was "back-alley," covered up with veneers of legitimacy. But in the consideration of danger, legitimacy, and the shame so easily attached to female sexuality and embodiment, it was "back-alley." As I reread this account, I have to notice that there is no trace of a partner, shared responsibility, or mutual care. I think that was true throughout that experience. My older friend stood by me, helped, contained, and comforted me, and was never judgmental. But it is clearly in retrospect an experience that was mine alone to bear and manage and work through. This must be part of my character but also, I think, part of the era. How do we go forward maintaining the deep capacity for supporting other women that feminism and the women's movement gave us? How not to live always alone in a frightening and dangerous room?

That is one of my worries for the women, now three generations younger than me, who have an increasingly shaky access to means of being in control of their bodily, sexual, and reproductive lives. And as we learn, over and over, that danger falls unequally on women of different classes, races, social groups, and castes. We—all women—are again at the mercy of the "back alley," but we are not equally vulnerable. ■

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# AUGUST 23, 2022 — *Kamianets-Podilskyi*


I am sitting on the windowsill in my living room. It's five in the morning of the 181st day of the war. The night was sleepless, sirens after sirens, when the valley with the river canyon amplifying the sounds give it such volume that the city landscape alone never does, as it swallows the city steers, activating dogs and most certainly birds much earlier than their time. After a short while of peaceful rest, after the sirens stopped, my town, covered with a thick layer of fog, is slowly awakening: the curfew is over. Everything here is now immersed in a complete silence that you can only encounter in a small town like mine and in that rare moment when the choir of morning birds is quiet already but the people are still not out on the streets. This silence is so surreal and overwhelming amid the war. The rocket attacks are most typical at this hour. When they are detected by our national radar system, the entire river canyon is filled with the wailing sound of air raid alerts. It's rare we get a morning like today. I come out to the balcony—quietly, as even I am afraid to attract sirens—to immerse myself in this silence, so strange and challenging for the horizon of my human hearing. Today is August 23, and many of us in Ukraine are bracing ourselves for tomorrow, our Independence Day, that our enemy threatens to make hellish for us.

Reuters alerts us too: "The US has intelligence that Russia is planning to launch fresh attacks against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and government facilities soon." Right. When you are *somewhere there*, such a report probably makes sense. But if you are *here*, you'd know—the attacks against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure are daily. This morning, for instance, the Russians attacked Dnipro, Enerhodar, and Kharkiv, among many smaller cities, towns, and villages that do not make the news and whose names are unreadable to non-native speakers. Yesterday morning was like that too. And the day before. Dead and wounded. Dead and wounded. So, I wonder, what does "soon" mean, dear Reuters reporters? For whom are you minimizing the Russian aggression?

Yesterday I kept calm. I went for a walk with Olya. We hiked down the river canyon. Holding our things stretched high above us, we walked in the streaming water toward the archipelago of stones, where we settled to drink a bottle of cheap warm white wine with frozen berries. Today I've canceled all meetings and shut down my work, including that on my tenure file. I am shaking. All I can write now is this *letter*—let's call it this—addressed to no one in particular, as if it's going to rescue me.

It's close to eight in the morning already, but the fog over my town has not dissolved. Oh, this sticky fog, the fog of war, which makes my head spin, my heart race, and my lungs hurt every time I inhale it. But it could also be just dust raised by a storm typical for our region, which would hold it up in the air for a long while.

Sirens after sirens, I place my computer under the bed—unlike me, it has a hiding place in the case of a rocket strike. I must leave for a kinesiology session, as I am trying to fix my back after months of lifting my mother when she was recovering from surgery on her broken spine last year. Ivan, my instructor, seems to get how my body works better than I do, and I think, while following his directions on moving weights up and down the red machines, this workout comes as an investment in my future and makes it real somehow, despite the US intelligence about the preempted apocalypse tomorrow.

On my way home, a taxi driver tells me that everyone is complaining today about this fog, that everyone's saying their faces and bodies are itching. "I am sure it's radiation. Its color is yellowish—did you see? It's certainly radiation," he says. "I heard the level is ten times the normal today."

"This is not true," I say. "Radiation has no color, the level is okay, and you'd hear an alert in the case of a nuclear explosion, immediately." But the driver concludes, with a tone clearly signaling that he knows what he is talking about: "Yeah, they are just going to tell us, if it happens, of course—just like they did in 1986!"

At the beginning of August, the Air Alert app released an update with two new types of warnings—for chemical and radiation hazards. The update, in all honesty, came very late. The nuclear terror has been part of this war from the first days of invasion in February, and it has escalated tremendously after the Russian side announced the facilities of the biggest nuclear power plant in Europe, Zaporizhzhia, are mined. As far as chemical hazards, if you have not heard about the use of phosphorous bombs on civilian areas in Ukraine by the Russian forces, you probably don't have the Internet, as the videos of those deadly fireworks are viral.

The US Embassy, I am reading, urges US citizens to depart Ukraine—now. These people, I must say, trust their sources. Not like us. In February 2022, for instance, I did not *think* a full-scale invasion would erupt. I, personally, could not *imagine* it happening. Like many, I read the American and British intelligence as a clever blunt deterrence game, by which the CIA and SIS dudes were sending Putin open messages warning him they see all his cards—they *know*. They must have thought their *knowledge* could make him reverse his intentions. They probably figured a KGB guy's pleasure is secrecy. They probably believed they could kill it, his pleasure.

Tired and falling asleep, as I listen to the night's delicate breathing, I suddenly shudder from the loudest sound of pouring water falling from the sky on the roof below. I am sure—although, nobody would know that in a complete darkness—the fog of war is gone. ■

VISAX (PREVIOUS PAGE); ROSTISLAV BUDZAN (THIS PAGE)

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# AUGUST 27, 2021

## *Philadelphia*

EVGENI MADARIEV

Yesterday, walking in the city, nearly breathless in the heat, I was observing the way passing gusts of eucalyptus, ginkgo, dog shit, geraniums, and box, and cold urine drafting up from the subway entrance took on palpable qualities of chilliness, nausea, heat, and disgust as they seemed to reconstitute in the humid air, enter into my body, and merge with my sweat. This was always my sense of the city, that I inhaled it and perspired it, that it became mingled with my body odors and clung to my clothing. The city was the hard feeling of it under my feet, and the sound of it, polyphonic, and the sights of it, kaleidoscopic, now random, now patterned, always colorful. I never walk in the city in order to make friends, although every encounter, for the most part, is a friendly one in the city. I am an old woman now, and the city has been ravaged even more than I have been, by death and sickness, by neglect and violent desperation, so I have the sudden realization that it has always been the city itself I have loved, the city itself that has been my friend. I could walk there in the singularity and privacy of my own form, among others just like me, going somewhere or nowhere but needing to be there in the city and walking, and feel, at the end of the day, that I had been with an old friend and had caught up with all her changes and reassured myself that she was still there and that at any time we could pick up where we had left off. And now, suddenly, I see it as fragile and mortal as myself, not eternal, but finite.

The brownstone where Dr. Epstein has his rheumatology practice is redolent of the old Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital at Forty-Ninth Street, a place where psychoanalysis had a home until the late 1980s: the high ceilings, the moldings and plaster details, the wide staircases, the hidden bathrooms, the assorted art and photographs on the walls, the warren of transomed offices carved out of a nineteenth-century mansion, and elevators that require faith. Dr. Epstein is my age, a hands-on doctor who writes notes in a little notebook, alongside the de rigueur computer on his desk. The bookshelves behind him hold, along with textbooks, a half dozen or more bottles of Coke. He points at my thin-soled leather sandals and says I should be wearing walking sneakers. *Never,* I think. He feels my knees for heat and my thumb joints for swelling and pain, moves my arms at the elbows and the shoulders, rationalizes my elevated blood pressure, minimizes my hip pain of last week, and asks the infusion nurse to draw my blood so I can be on my way.

She is a thirtysomething woman with a nest of green hair sticking up around her head, masses of tattoos on her arms, and serious, intelligent eyes behind her glasses. She is highly skilled, and I feel nothing at all when she inserts the fine pediatric needle. She asks me if I have plans for the weekend in order to distract me, and I say, "No, do you?"

"Not really," she says.

"It's hard to make plans," I say. "Even for simple things like going to the movies in the city."

"I miss that, too," she says. "But I'm also beginning to enjoy just being at home."

"Yes," I say. "It's not all bad, especially if you have some beauty outside the windows as we do. We're very fortunate, I know. "

"You're all done, love," she says.

"Thank you," I say. "You're very good."

I leave feeling better. When I get to the glass front doors of Dr. Epstein's brownstone, a young, solidly built bald Black man wearing some kind of uniform shirt is coming through, and as he pushes past me, he says, "I'm sorry," as if he had noticed me too late to halt his forward motion through the door.

"No sorry," I say. "No need to be sorry."

As I am walking west on Pine Street, a voice behind me says, "Excuse me miss, can I get by," and I move to the right as a tall, rangy young white man, also bald, likely gay, strides by me with a boxer on a leash.

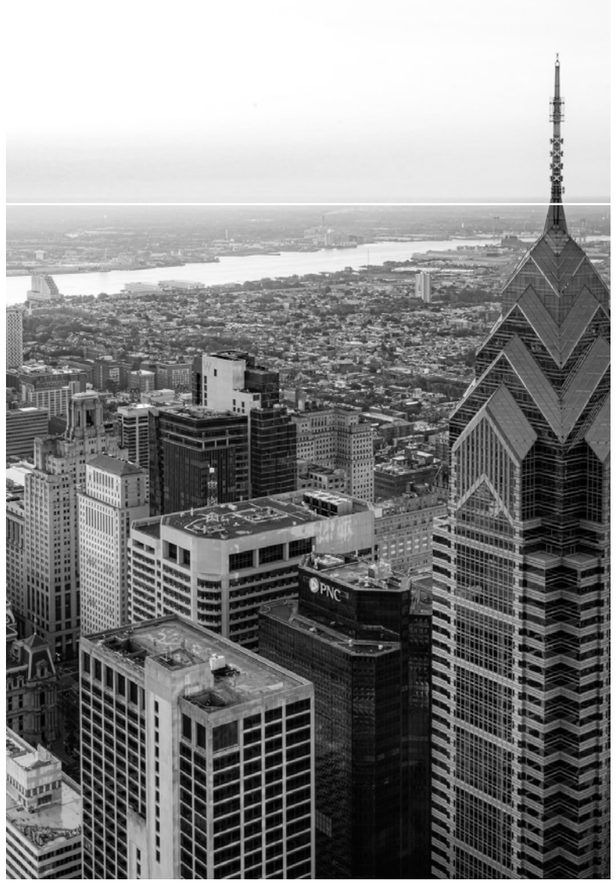
When he is in front of me, I say, "If you had been on a bicycle, you could have said, 'Passing on your left.'"

He laughs and says, "Yes, thank you."

The streets are sad but not in the way I felt their sadness as romantic, as the price of my freedom as a teenager, college student, and young mother. Then, when I was poor, the shops were rich and enticing. Now that I am old and richer, if not rich, all the shop windows are empty or filled with poor merchandise or services that speak to some moment that has passed or will soon pass. Varieties of Eastern body therapies and pet products. The Pine



ACTIONVANCE (OPPOSITE PAGE)






Street antique stores seem to have vanished overnight, as no one wants anything with provenance; it has all been devalued and trashed in one generation. Just as well. Still. The bridal shop windows have mock-ups of basic styles in cheap fabrics, so that one's fantasies are stripped down to muslin or polyester. Many restaurants have closed between Ninth and Seventeenth Streets. Sansom Street was slightly better, but Joseph Fox Bookshop seemed barer and hotter, depending on inadequate and overtaxed air-conditioning in this relentless August heat; the shelves seemed barer as well, as foot traffic hadn't returned in force, and I suspect they couldn't survive another fall and winter without it. Judy was running back and forth with big sunglasses on inside, thinner than ever, harried and distracted, unable to chat with me, only to ask if I needed help as I stood there eyeing the various shelves of books as if for the first time. It had been a year and a half since I had been there last. "No," I said. "I'm just trying to be normal." But I didn't feel normal. My eyes raced across the spines, unable to decipher or recognize most of the titles or authors, such was my mania at being there. I picked out two more volumes to add to the two I was picking up on order; these would be added to a shelf of perhaps twenty-five unread books, what I called my pension fund.

Outside the shop, two women are laughing at themselves, licking ice cream cones from Ben & Jerry's next door, melting fast in the heat. "We picked the hottest day," one says to me apologetically.

"But that's the day you want it the most, isn't it?" I say as I walk on to the train stop.

Whatever it was I used to get from taking a walk in this city, I didn't get yesterday. The rush of other people, other lives, of liveliness has dwindled to practically nothing. The things on offer in the shops held no interest for me, both because I am past the stage or age of acquisition and because they were not interesting in themselves, as objects of beauty or curiosity or art. I didn't see one beautiful piece of furniture, or sculpture, or a lovely dress in some gorgeous fabric. It seems my life had been filled with gorgeous fabrics until they all disappeared and we all now dress in drab pajamas and sackcloth. Does a beautiful Italian wool even make sense in this climate? Late summer had been a prelude to fall, had been a time of richly colored wools in aubergine, chestnut, and garnet, of the smell of new Italian leather shoes and bags, arrayed on half a floor of Wanamaker's. Fine soft suede. Brass buckles and eyelets. Tweeds and plaids. Elegant long coats in camel hair and cashmere. An afternoon of fantasy and longing for free, or for the affordable price of one beautiful thing, a gift to myself on my birthday.

It is December of 1978, my thirtieth birthday, and I am meeting my husband for lunch upstairs. The store is decorated and lit for Christmas, the noontime organ recital has just ended in the great hall. I am feeling old, that I have crossed the Rubicon of my generation. The handsome, well-dressed man two aisles over, shopping for a woman in the middle of the day, watches me run my hands up the shank of a beautiful Italian boot. Someone whispers, sotto voce, into my left ear, "If you let me put them on you, I'll buy them for you."

I turn to face a very old man, stooped over, in a fine black overcoat and hat. I am shocked, flattered, and amused all at once. "Thank you, no," I say. And as he walks away, I feel cruel and foolish and sorry. ■

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*Outpour*
*3' 10" x 2' 1" x 2"*
*Fabric Acrylic Ceramic Thread*
*2021*

I am interested in exploring our shared characteristics of curiosity and vulnerability, our emotions of sorrow and loss, and the need to understand what is hidden and inaccessible. The tension generated by the longing to expose and penetrate what is often blocked and obscure is what animates my work.

Beauty and what makes for beauty are central. For me, a work is not successful until it finally resonates in that sweet spot. But what lands it there? Integrity within the evolving parameters and constraints of each piece, an immediacy that comes from the expression of some measure of uniqueness, the palpability of intent, and the choice of physical material, color, form, line, and texture consistent with the ambition of each work. It is the engagement of the mind, the hand, and the heart in tandem, working together to affirm our human connection while asserting our singularity.

*Passage (Elegy)*
*42" x 36" x 1 1/2"*
*Chiffon*
*2021*

*Calving*
*54" x 34"*
*Chiffon Acrylic Paint Thread*
*2020*

*Sitting Shiva*
*42 1/2" x 26"*
*Chiffon Canvas Acrylic Thread*
*2021*

*Fractured*
*48" x 26"*
*Canvas Acrylic Thread*
*2020*

*Stopped*
*20" x 16"*
*Acrylic Buckram Embroidery Thread*
*2020*

GUERRILLABUZZ CRYPTO PR



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# Feeding

It begins when any one of us living abroad confirms dates for a visit. My mother starts asking weeks in advance for our favorite foods so that she can core, stuff, mince, chop, and knead her way into neatly packed pans, ready to be thrown into the oven at a moment's notice. On too many occasions, I've objected to this cheerful affirmation of the assumption that as expats we must be living in a state of food deprivation, possibly surviving on caloric stores between one visit and the next—to no avail. But it turns out that my younger sisters do have their favorite foods. It also turns out that I've had them—vociferously—in the mid-2000s.

For more than a decade now, the following script is rarely deviated from upon our arrival. Usually my mother allows until midmorning, sometimes noon, for the effects of jet lag to recede before she launches her campaign.

At the bedroom door:

*It's eleven. How about a meshtah with labneh and olive oil? Maybe with three mint leaves from the garden?*

At the bedroom door, ten minutes later:

*It's eleven thirty. Meshtah with zaatar, tomatoes, and cucumbers? Pure deliciousness.*

From downstairs as someone stumbles her way into the shower:

*One meshtah, half labneh and half zaatar?*

Next to the pantry with the one Nescafé jar and thirty kinds of teas:

*I know. How about meshtah with the Belgian chocolate spread your sister brought with her yesterday?*

In the garden:

*Fried eggs?*

At some point during this flight and pursuit, my father is bound to return from the orchard, jauntily carrying a basket of citrus, which he will proceed to sort and press for juice. Every now and then he will emerge from the kitchen and ask whoever happens to be languishing on a sofa in the living room if they wanted a glass of orange juice.

*A glass of orange juice? It's special.*

*Orange juice?*

*Juice?*

On the last foray, he might stand in the hallway and simply point in the general direction of the kitchen.

*Orange?*

*Orange?*

*Orange?*

*What about half an avocado with honey?*

Afternoon tea consists of several trays of hot drinks and cakes and pastries in perpetual orbit between the kitchen and the living room, where someone can reliably be found still draped around the furniture since the orange crisis. As additional proof of my parents' preoccupation with alimentation, my mother refers to this state of being as "lying around like colons." The Arabic word does not necessarily differentiate between small and large intestines, but given the multitude of possible positionings on each day, both can apply.

Tea is one of many on the program of daily sustenance, but it is lunch and dinner that offer the prime opportunities for a cataclysm—"gratuitous discussions" according to my father—instigated by an invitation to try the hindbeh, for example. The risk is constant, and this is whether lunch and dinner take place indoors or out in the garden for "all the village" to hear, whether it is parents and daughters only or relatives and friends as well. Fortunately, these affairs are conducted, on average, in under twenty minutes, during which there are random acts of vanishment of persons. They're not so much sitting at a table as being in a spatial relationship to said table. This includes but is not limited to standing, hovering, leaning, sitting *on* the table, placing one knee on the chair, ricocheting from stove to table to countertop, and strolling aimlessly around the kitchen or patio with a plate of food in hand.

For so long, I had been distracted by the table discourse and its familial and familiar heavyweight champions of denial, displacement, projection, and regression—into which everyone dives with glee. But time and practice had ensured that our techniques were scrubbed and polished until they sparkled, and it was now possible to jump into the fray on auto and *listen* to what was also said.

*Why aren't you eating the tomato and kamouneh spread? I know it's your favorite.*

*Today half my salary went to grocery shopping. And what did I get in return? Only four kilos of bulgur, three kilos of flour, three kilos of rice with this and that and…Boom. My money's gone.*

*Who's the brainiac who told you this is enough? Add more mulukhiyah.*

*Mujaddara with yogurt? It's homemade with the fresh milk I bought from the Straw.*

*Look at your sister. She's so thin, she looks like a cricket.*

*I don't see you eating fruit after lunch. You should always eat fruit after lunch.*

*Put two grape leaves on her plate. They're vegetarian.*

*Thyme salad. Pure deliciousness.*

*Your mother and I always, always eat fruit after lunch.*

*Who wants carob molasses? It's special.*

*That Straw has doubled her prices. She's now selling the bucket of cow milk for—*

*Orange juice?*

Apricot jam: pitted fruit spread on white muslin cloths and sundried in the scorching dry heat of Baalbek on the rooftop of my maternal aunt's house.

Zaatar: dried oregano ground to fine powder by mallet and mixed with salt, sumac, and toasted sesame seeds in the courtyard of my paternal aunt's house.

Salt-cured zaytoun: green olives crushed by stone, submerged in salt, and left to sweat in their oils on my parents' countertop during the harvest.

Makdous: olive oil–cured baby aubergines stuffed with walnuts, red peppers, garlic, and chili, stored next to the jars of pickled Armenian cucumbers, olives, and jams, and best sampled during midnight raids on my mother's pantry.

Kamouneh: cumin seeds, allspice, dry mint, marjoram, dried hot pepper, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and rose petals combined with bulgur at my mother's kitchen table.

Curled-up ka'ak: family moniker for the crumbly, crunchy aniseed sugar pastry rolled and folded into small, individual cookies that look like they are hugging themselves.

Last summer, I visited Lebanon after an absence of eighteen months. In the interim, the financial crisis, compounded by COVID-19, had hit the country like a sledgehammer. On August 4, the explosion that rocked Beirut obliterated any remaining hopes for change, for a future, and for normalcy. Almost a year after the date, most of the people I met were in varying degrees of shell shock. My parents and relatives were also gripped with a fevered obsession for watermelons.

Everyone *loves* watermelons.

Once, when we were young, my cousin confessed at a family gathering that the smell and taste of watermelon made her nauseated. To see the shock on everyone's faces and to hear their exclamations, she might as well have confessed to murder.

Watermelons are mouthwatering on their own, but they're ridiculously good with white cheese on pita. Watermelons are served after lunch, in the afternoon, after or instead of dinner on hot nights, and on visits to friends or family or neighbors. Before the Collapse, watermelons were served—gratis!—at Lebanese restaurants after meals (*if* the head waiters, in their singular capacity as defenders of the honor of the establishment and the honor of the clientele, had determined via complex and mysterious calculations that the right amounts—or kinds—of food had been ordered).

When we were children and my parents could still press us into outings to the river, they and their friends brought along entire watermelons, which they secured with small rocks beneath the ice-cold river water. And when, once or twice, a watermelon managed to dislodge itself and float defiantly away from the rescue divers, the melee that ensued could reasonably be compared to one that follows the drowning of a child.

*Everyone* loves watermelons.

And yet. Something about the situation I encountered last summer hinted at a shift from passion to cult. To begin with, at any one point, there were two to three 15-kilogram watermelons stored on my parents' kitchen floor and sequentially finding their way into cold storage as soon as the ones in the fridge were consumed. Most of these watermelons came from our garden or had been gifted to us by one of my relatives from their own gardens. All these people lived within a ten-minute walk from one another. Doubtless, in their own kitchens, my parents' watermelons were also lined near the fridges, awaiting their turn to be served.

Instead of avocados and molasses and kashkaval cheese on the SEB—orange juice never in serious danger, belonging as it were, to a different season—we now awakened and slept to propositions of watermelon.

*Have you tried your uncle Hassan's watermelon?*

*Have your tried your aunt Dalal's watermelon?*

*Who's the brainiac who opened the fridge when the power's been out all day? Enjoy warm watermelons tonight.*

*Are the watermelons in Washington special?*

Anywhere and everywhere we went, it was the latest and greatest in watermelon news.

*Imm Mhammad's watermelon? Nectar and ambrosia. One hundred percent.*

*Ours was better. That one was pure deliciousness.*

*Which one? The one we had last night at cards? It was okay.*

*No, that was Hassan's. I'm talking about the one from the other night.*

*Why are you giving Nazar the white parts?*

*Nazar has diabetes. Do you want to kill him?*

*It can't have been Hassan's. We finished that one on Sunday.*

*Nadia, you won't believe this watermelon I've set aside for you. There will be a battle over this one, so let's step quietly outside.*

*Uff! Uff! We've still got four to go, and the generator can't keep up. Why don't you give it to Imm Mhammad?*

One morning I woke up to my mother's litany of the daily hike in prices after the Collapse.

*Did you hear that the baklawa kilo is 360,000 Lebanese pounds today? It was 320,000 yesterday. How is God not punishing these thieves and murderers?*

My uncle's voice came out of nowhere. He must have stepped in through the side entrance behind the kitchen.

*Let them eat watermelon. It's good. It's cheap. It's delicious. Here, we saved you some. This is the best one of the season. One hundred percent.* ■





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# RATATOUILLE:
# Sonnet for Shelly Bach

When the war ended he would order ratatouille.
Paris 1945. It was cheap
And he could make a meal of it. Healthy
Food, but the word had gunfire in it, the deep
Repetitive roar and rattle of metal, the stammer
Of explosive speech stuck in its own undoing.
The war ended up for some of them in a clamor
Of dreams, he said, dreams of pursuit and pursuing,
Identity on the run from the startle of its own image.
And then? I asked. Then? There is no then
Only the ever now of fear and rage
And unknown states, doors to never open.
Would you like to try my ratatouille he said
I said yes for the living and yes for all of the dead.

European Theater 1944-46

Sheldon Bach seated second from left

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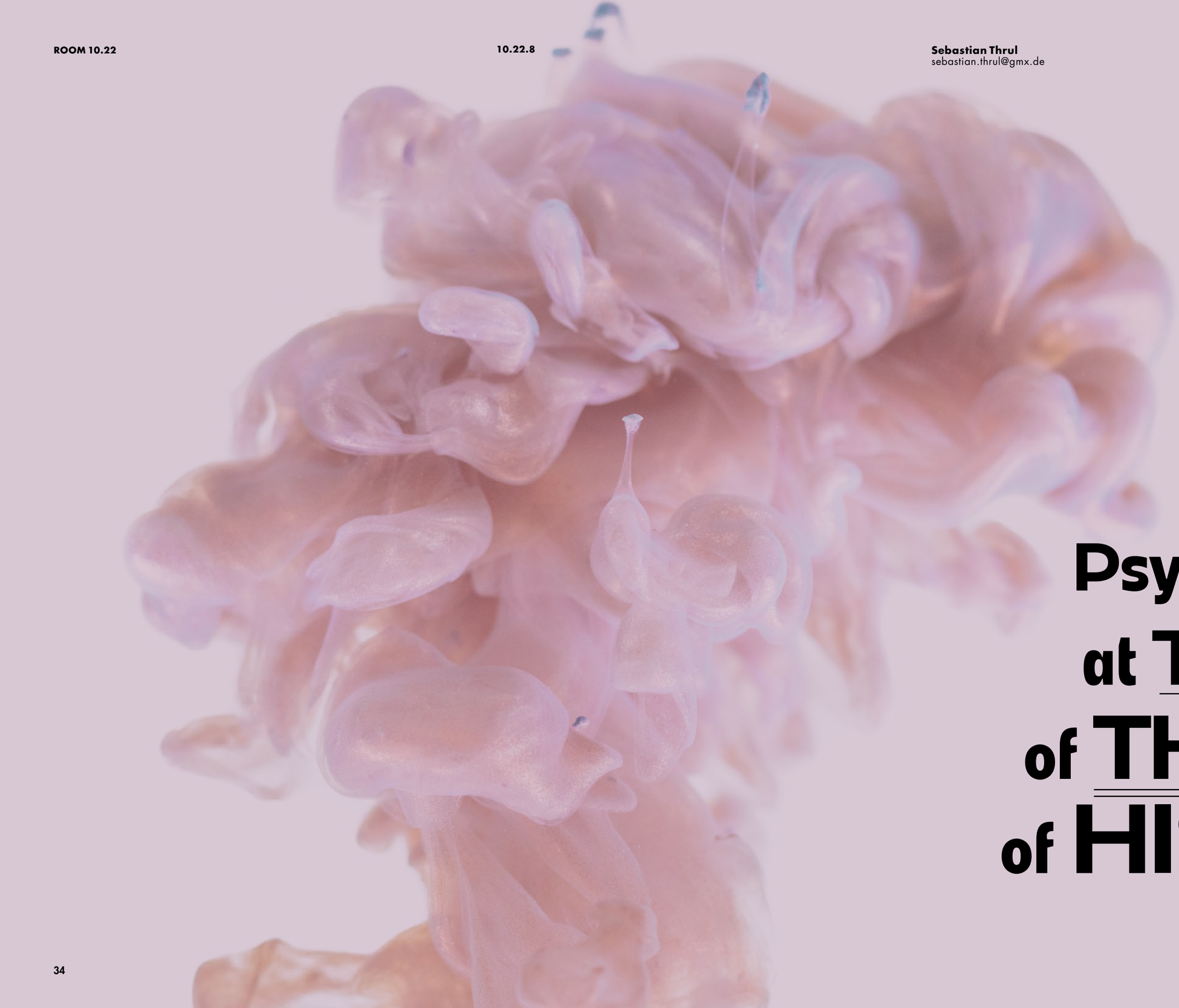

# Psychoanalysis at THE END of THE END of HISTORY

What is, or was, the End of History? The political scientist Francis Fukuyama claimed that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signaled the victory of the "Western world" in the Cold War and ended, definitively, the struggle between competing ideological grand narratives. Fukuyama's theory asserted that the basic formula of human government had been settled once and for all in favor of liberal democracy and market capitalism.

How can we describe the actual historical period that followed? It was characterized by a collective fantasy of a smooth, conflict-free society run by experts as a form of "post-politics." Having grown up in this period as a child and teenager, it's not that people did not argue. People still argued, of course. There were all sorts of cultural debates about lifestyle choices. But there was seemingly no urgency to these discussions. The idea that fundamental conflict or class antagonism was central to politics was not part of our day-to-day experience. The appearance of conflict-free management of society was reflected to the public by party politics that seemed to be based on the fundamental agreement that the needs of "the market" were of the utmost importance. The idea of imagining a future that did not center on the logic of the market was not only unpopular but unthinkable. In the words of cultural historian and critic Mark Fisher, it felt like the future had been canceled. Everything resides within the here and now.

"The End of History" was characterized by a postmodern sensibility. Discussions of values were shaped by a deepening feeling of relativism, and relativism was widely accepted as a philosophical and theoretical presupposition. Irony was the favored mode of expression, and people who held strong political views were seen as hopelessly anachronistic. In the meantime, the actual gulf between rich and poor widened.

But what did this postmodern turn in our cultural milieu have to do with the world of psychoanalysis? The most prominent development in psychoanalytic theory during this period was the rise of relational thinking. In its progressive iterations, relational thinking undeniably provided a much-needed critique and complication of analytic neutrality and the universalist claims of the psychoanalytic theory of previous generations. On the other hand, the relational perspective led to an unfortunate relativism in many clinical discussions, mirroring the pervading postmodern sensibility of the time. Since all knowledge is valid only from a particular point of view, any claim of truth, of knowing what is going on between analyst and analysand, could now be decried as an unfortunate and misguided attempt to cling to the grand narratives of the past. Adopting this sort of relativism, many analysts have developed a relationship to theory that could be described as a "shopping-mall mentality": a pick-and-choose approach whereby bits and pieces of theory can be pragmatically made use of when thinking about a certain clinical situation.

The concern here is not in the clinical situation itself. Whatever bits and pieces of theory pop into the analyst's mind in the analytic situation are part of evenly suspended attention and should be treated as such. I am talking, rather, about the metalevel clinical thinking that takes place outside the consulting room and in our discussions. Through its distance from the clinical situation, it is more in line with secondary process thinking and therefore more susceptible to reality testing. In clinical discussions, we can make claims about what is going on between analyst and analysand that have a stronger or weaker correlation to reality. And yet what I sometimes observe in case discussions that involve younger colleagues (myself included) is a tendency to assert that reality itself is co-constructed and can only—if at all—be assessed by someone who experienced the immediate situation. Although this line of thinking might be a tempting fallback option when conflict over the validity of a specific interpretation becomes vicious, it is in my opinion not conducive to robust clinical discussions that thrive through disagreement.

To be fair, psychoanalysis never had the world's greatest track record of constructive disagreement. Our history is littered with splits over controversial theoretical discussions. By looking at our analytic grandparents' authoritarian approaches, as in the Lacanian or Kleinian traditions, it becomes obvious that critique is necessary. However, an infatuation with relativism tends to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

This issue is exacerbated by the fact that psychoanalysis is missing a generational mid-level: the decade, or rather decades, of the brain have thinned out the ranks of psychoanalysts between the 1980s and 2000s. These decades could be seen as the medical and scientific emanation of the End of the History and were characterized by the belief that psychiatric and psychological issues could once and for all be resolved by neurobiological or genetical research into their causes that could be remedied at their supposed biological root—a belief that is deeply anathema to the project of psychoanalysis. Although the promises of this period thoroughly failed to materialize, they had huge traction during their heyday and turned many prospective candidates off psychoanalytic training. Thus we are now in a situation where a generation of analytic grandparents, who believe their theories to be true and have a somewhat authoritarian approach to institutional organization, talk down—or, rather, don't talk at all—to a generation of analytic grandchildren who have grown up in an era of predominant conceptual relativism and a generalized suspicion of grand narratives. What seems to be missing is an intermediate group that is able to reconcile and integrate modern and postmodern sensibilities.

We seem stuck in a crisis of generativity that bears semblance to the crisis of futurity in Western culture in general. We need a new generation of analysts who bring a healthy amount of passion and idealization to our theories, who are willing to defend them in controversial discussions—both internally and also to the intellectual community at large. Another remarkable feature of psychoanalysis at the End of History is our seeming collective retreat from the public sphere. In the mid-twentieth century, psychoanalytic interventions in public discourse were a regular occurrence. Take, for example, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's groundbreaking and best-selling work on the defensive strategies of perpetrators of Nazi violence or Donald Winnicott's very visible and public commentary on child development. Now the voices of analysts are rarely heard in public debates. It is rather unbecoming of a profession that bases its scientific identity on self-reflection to blame this demise in public visibility on marginalization by outside forces opposed to its ideas.

Psychoanalysis can thrive, or at least survive, without participating in public debate. What it cannot live without is a steady influx of young candidates for training and people requesting treatment. It seems therefore against the interest of our field for virtually all analysts to have retreated from public health settings to private practice. Today prospective candidates find no psychoanalytic role models in the psychiatric hospitals and clinics where they have their first experiences with patients. If they find elders with a psychodynamic orientation, they tend to be milquetoast psychotherapists who have a focus on palatable and easily quantifiable concepts like manualized brief treatments. What we really need are passionate psychoanalysts in public settings who can tell it as it is: patients who are very disturbed or deeply traumatized need high-frequency therapy from an extremely dependable analyst over a long period of time. We need analysts in public health settings to drive home this point again and again and again.

These psychoanalytical gadflies are bound to provoke resistance from many psychotherapeutic and psychiatric colleagues, but it is a battle we should take on if we want psychoanalysis to thrive and hold on to the most sophisticated set of models of human subjectivity that we have.

The public health setting is also the place where patients end up when they don't have the means for out-of-pocket analysis in a private practice. The chasm between rich and poor has widened during the End of History. A few years back, during the Bernie Sanders or the Jeremy Corbyn campaigns, I would have argued that the end of the End of History could be marked by attempts to make this material reality visible through populist left-wing politics and that psychoanalysis should ally with these political movements. Now that these projects have been defeated, it seems unclear to me what the political way forward could be. I do believe that psychoanalysts should still be on the lookout for political movements to ally with that aim to radically redistribute public wealth, making high-frequency psychoanalytic treatment available for the greatest possible number of people.

The simple truth is not that controversial: psychic change at the deepest level takes a lot of time and a lot of dependable care. We should speak out whenever we can in favor of conditions that provide this sort of care to as many people as possible, thereby helping to end the End of History and make way for something new. ■

PAWEŁ CZERWIŃSKI [PREVIOUS PAGE]

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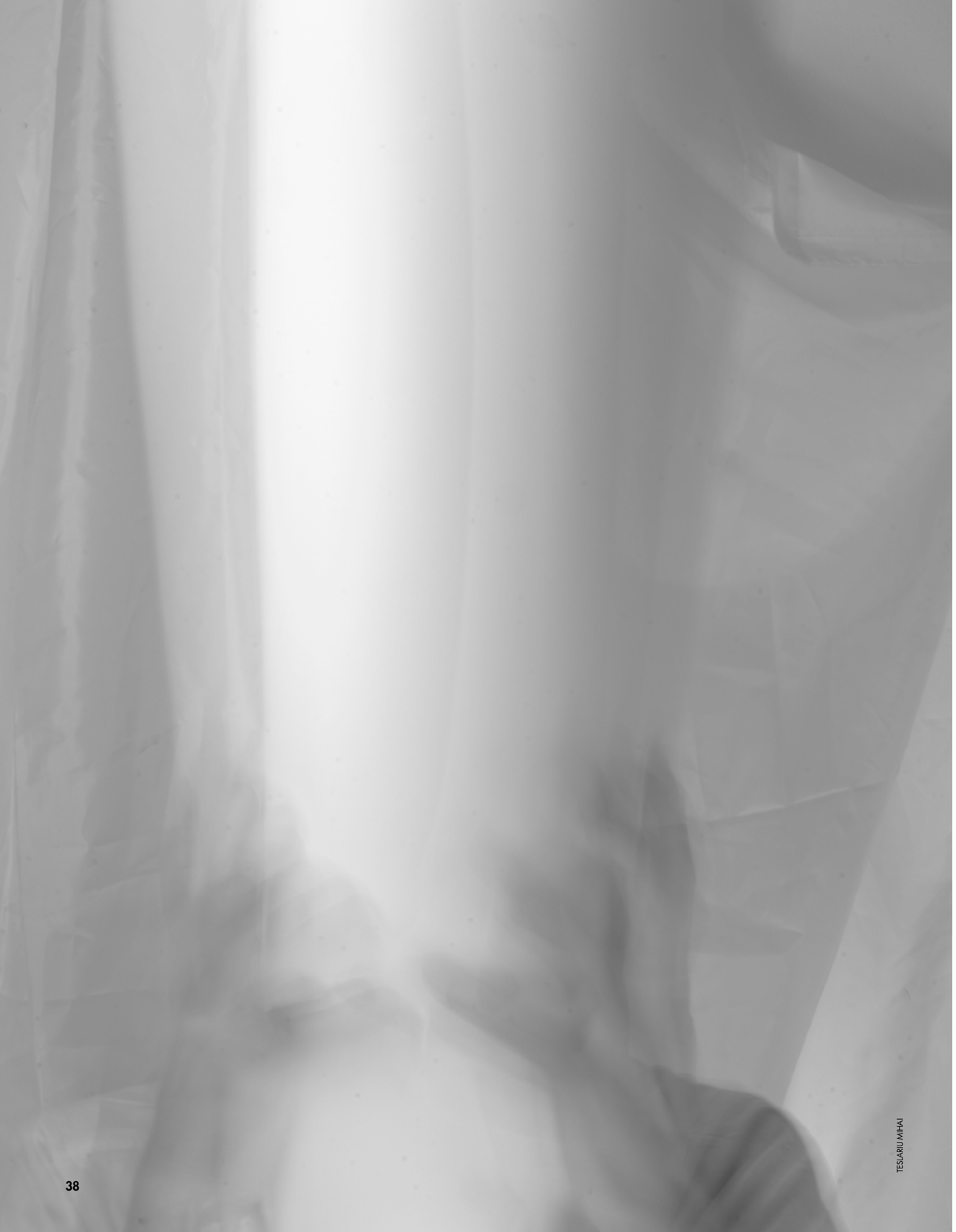

TESLARIU MIHAI



# Fire

*I'm out with lanterns*
*looking for myself*
*—Emily Dickinson*

A week after deciding
to begin psychoanalysis,

after twenty years of silence—
telling myself, I could never

do it— then, finally figuring
finances, logistics, securing

the when, the why, the how,
reaching the fork in the road,

the voice inside, escalating,
Turn Left, Now,

somehow, without thinking,
I microwaved a sandwich,

wrapped in tinfoil
leftover in a container.

When they started, the flames,
I almost couldn't believe it,

then panicked. Reached, tried
to stop it without a fire-retardant

blanket. The heat engulfed me,
hair and eyebrows, maimed.

Is this how it starts— conflagration,
then char and ashes of shame.

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# Ghosts in the Bathhouse

## GHOSTS OF AN EPIDEMIC

In *The Texture of Traumatic Attachment*, Jill Salberg suggests that it takes three generations to process a disturbing traumatic event. The work on transgenerational transmission and healing of trauma has been focused on familial ties and attachment experiences. In the case of gay men, the generations are linked through an identity that isn't familial. Thirty years beyond the worst of the AIDS epidemic, gay men who did not directly experience those years are still haunted by the history. In these cases, we aren't able to speculate about transmission through attachment experience, so how do we think about the way this trauma has been transmitted to and worked through by subsequent generations?

Psychoanalysis, positioned at the nexus of science and the humanities, allows for a certain creativity in its theorizing. We can unselfconsciously conjure up ghosts as the best metaphor for a psychological process we don't fully understand. Selma Fraiberg's powerful 1975 paper, *Ghosts in the Nursery*, begins; "In every nursery there are ghosts. They are visitors from the unremembered past…" A young gay child can look out at representations of queerness in culture and have a feeling of "that is me"—a kinship without familial ties. The gay child, unable to locate this aspect of "me-ness" in the home, may have sought it out later in life in places that were safe for gay men to gather—such as bars, bathhouses, parks, and underground societies. Locating myself in what Walt Odets[1] would call the middle generation of American gay men, I want to consider the ghosts of my gay forefathers—ghosts haunting a subculture and a home.

People both fear ghosts and search for them. We fear ghosts because they represent something unthinkable. We search for them to learn something about our past. Fifteen years ago, my mother told me I had a great-uncle who was gay. All she shared was that he'd left rural Tennessee for San Francisco in the 1970s and returned to visit only once or twice. At the time the topic of my queerness was still contentious, so I didn't ask anything further. Years later I became curious about this ghost in my family. I signed up for an account on a genealogy website and began to search for him. I discovered that Gary, a name my family had never spoken to me, died in 2002 at the age of sixty-seven. I found the address of a home he'd owned in California and mortgage documents that listed a male co-owner. I assumed this must have been his partner, so I wrote him a letter. A few months later I received a handwritten reply on a single sheet of notebook paper. There were some details about Gary's life but no acknowledgment that this person was a partner or lover.

I'd asked if he had been happy. The answer read; "I don't know. We didn't talk about those things." I wanted for him to have found someone to love him—to have created a new chosen family after needing to escape ours. I wanted him to have been happy. His story informs my story. He was a gay man born in 1935. Did he ever find acceptance from my grandma? Did he lose a lover to AIDS? Maybe dozens of friends? I imagine flying out to meet the man he shared a home with. I want to learn more about Gary and maybe something about myself. Perhaps this is an attempt to transform a family ghost into an ancestor.

[1] Walt Odets in *Out of the Shadows* considers a tripartite division for contemporary gay men. He postulates an older generation who experienced the AIDS crisis prior to the introduction of effective treatments, a middle generation that did not directly experience the early epidemic but were old enough to have been significantly developmentally impacted by it, and a third, younger group, who may have never associated being gay with the trauma and loss of HIV.

## ECHOES OF AN EPIDEMIC

It's midsummer 2022, and while many people are no longer allowing the COVID-19 pandemic to inform daily decisions, a new epidemic is creeping its way into the gay community. There are three hundred cases and counting of monkeypox among gay men in Chicago, and reliable information about how it's spread and how to get vaccinated is hard to come by. I'm sitting with my patient Alex, who is roughly my age and three months into chemotherapy. The risk of COVID is always on my mind with him, but he wants to meet in my office. He begins today by telling me about people he knows who are getting the monkeypox vaccine. "I thought you had to be a sex worker or have had several anonymous sex partners in the last week to get vaccinated," he said. "Maybe I'm out of touch, but are that many people doing that?"

I've been seeing Alex for three years. He's fastidious, obsessive, desperate for intimacy but so fearful of closeness and contamination. He has a tender vulnerability that takes time to see. The AIDS epidemic is just one of the childhood ghosts that haunts him. He's also particularly attuned to how I react to him. I tell myself that there's no reason he needs to know that I just got my vaccine a few days ago. The information wouldn't be helpful. I lean back in my chair, comfortable in my decision.

He continues. "I told my friend Jon that I couldn't see him for dinner this week because he got the vaccine. I'm not supposed to be around anyone who's had a live vaccine in the last two weeks."

"Because of the chemotherapy?" I ask.

"Yes. Apparently, it's a risk. They told me about it at the hospital."

My heart sinks. I have to tell him. I've put him at risk here in my office.

"Alex, I need to tell you that I got the vaccine a few days ago."

"Oh, well, that's okay." He waves it off. "We aren't sitting that close."

"And," I added, "I haven't traded sex for money in the last two weeks, if you're wondering."

I'm not sure why I added that. Remnants of my Southern Baptist superego tell me to make sure he knows I'm not out at the bathhouses. I should have waited and allowed him his reaction.

He is a few years older than me, but we're both young enough to have escaped the worst of the AIDS crisis. Our knowledge of HIV and AIDS came from the evening news, from the jokes about gay people at school, and from the made-for-TV *Ryan White Story*. I was only six years old when it aired. Ryan White, a child with hemophilia, contracted HIV through blood transfusions. An "innocent" victim of an illness considered by many a deserving punishment for gay sex. I vividly remember seeing the movie and connecting it with homosexuality. My six-year-old mind assumed the virus was lying dormant in my body. I feared that it might make me ill at any moment, exposing me for what I was.

I never spoke with anyone about this secret ghost until well into college. In my senior year I was in a study abroad program in Mexico. During dinner with my host family, some of the other students began to joke about Parque Juarez. The consensus was clear: *stay away*. Their insinuations told me it wasn't violence or crime I was supposed to avoid. I was familiar with the unspeakable nature of queerness, and while still unable to speak it, I was ready to act. I'd never been brave enough to visit a gay space, but with much trepidation, I decided to visit one the next evening. In Parque Juarez, I met Martin, walked with him to his apartment, and looked a ghost in the eyes. This part of myself that I'd thought made me broken, for the first time, felt completely natural. The next morning, I felt like the change in me was visible. I was still scared for anyone to know, yet I hoped someone would read it on my face.

With this newfound buoyancy, the fear that I'd contracted HIV became an unwelcome stowaway in the back of my mind. The messages of my childhood were clear: gay sex leads to AIDS, which equals death. An image from one of my undergraduate courses flashed in my mind—a guest lecturer there to share his experience with HIV. He carried a bag full of pills and injections with him. His image haunted me.

I think of how he, or several other older gay men, could have been important mentors or friends to me, but I was terrified of them. Through a process of afterwardness (après-coup), my fear of the contaminated and what I othered so as not to locate in myself has, over time, been transformed into an attitude of reverence, respect, and mourning for these men.

I find myself longing for their past. A past when owning one's queerness was subversive. When camaraderie was found in secret gatherings. I'm ambivalent about the present—queer engagement parties, adoptions, and the sharing of last names. You can view this history through a lens of excitement, belonging, solidarity in fighting for one's rights, and you can view it through a lens of suppression, danger, trauma, and death. Both are true. I celebrate progress and mourn what has been lost. I'm aware of my tendency to romanticize a past I wouldn't have wanted to live in and likely wouldn't have survived.

During this unfolding monkeypox epidemic, I want to be with my gay friends. In an echo of the AIDS epidemic, we're encouraged to avoid large gatherings of gay men—no bars, bathhouses, or large parties. Instead, we meet up for a day at the lake or a backyard dinner. We compare our reactions to the vaccine. We talk about the strangeness of sitting in a municipal basement with other cis and trans men waiting for a vaccine hoping to protect ourselves from a virus we don't fully understand. We recognize the obvious parallels to the past. When I mention monkeypox to my straight friends or colleagues, it's barely on their radar, and I remember what it means to belong to a subculture. A common threat stokes a desire to be with your people.

As we've progressed to an era in which HIV no longer hangs over us as a likely death sentence, perhaps enough time has passed to process the trauma and tell these stories in a way that we can know and touch. We can celebrate and mourn the lives of those who came before—those who fought, loved, and many who died. We can transform the unthinkable, untouchable ghosts in the bars, in the bathhouses, and in our unconscious into flesh-and-blood ancestors with whom we can weep, act, and love. ■

SERGEY VINOGRADOV [PREVIOUS PAGE]

# Will You Go to the Bank with Me?





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JANA SABETH (THIS PAGE AND PREVIOUS PAGE)

**1.**

Mr. Stevens, an elderly man who stands a head shorter than me, is helping me to cross the street.

"It's safer to cross here," he says, placing his hand gently on my elbow. "You have to be careful when there's construction." I follow his lead as he steers us across an empty portion of the street just before it turns into a busy intersection, a visual confusion of traffic cones, temporary road markings, and piles of tarmac and gravel. I do not look left or right for oncoming traffic, my body implicitly trusting his judgment, his hand a reassuring pressure upon my arm.

Under the overcast, late-morning sky, we reach the other side. Mr. Stevens lets go of my arm. We walk side by side toward the entrance of the bank. Earlier this morning, Mr. Stevens had asked me to accompany him there. The automatic doors, sensing our approach, slide open in a single swift motion. He goes to stand in front of an automated banking machine. "I need to find my card," he says, reaching into his front, then back pockets. "I think I've lost it. There might be a hole…"

I wait, standing several steps behind, as Mr. Stevens inserts a card into the machine and begins pressing upon the screen. I notice two brown-red spots on the back of his blue-striped shirt just above where it is tucked into the waistband of his dark blue jeans.

My feet wide, my shoulders pushed back, I feel protective of him. I am standing guard.

**2.**

During the months I spent immersed in the inpatient psychiatry ward as an ethnographer, I often stood at the periphery of hallways and rooms, watching the staff and patients live and work at a rhythm shaped by the ebb and flow of symptoms, the application of therapies and medications, the pressure of administrative needs, and, weaving through it all, the pace of human life and conversation.

In the day room, a tall, African-Canadian man is talking to two Asian-Canadian women. Standing, they look intently at the yellow plastic patient identification bracelet worn on the man's left wrist. "You have to take this off," he says, giving his bracelet a tug, "when you go out looking for a place to live. When the landlord sees your band, he's gonna know you're from the hospital, and he's gonna give the apartment to someone else, no doubt about it." He takes a deep breath. "I made that mistake. The landlord saw it, and everything was over."

He bows his head. The women regard him silently, his words sinking in.

**3.**

Mr. Stevens's yellow identification bracelet is visible as he extends his arm across the counter, handing his bank card to the teller. I think back to the man who was promptly rejected from being considered for the apartment. I wonder if everything is over for us, too.

"There was a withdrawal of a thousand dollars that I didn't make," says Mr. Stevens. "I'm trying to find out what that's about. I've been in the hospital for the last three months, you see. I've been sick."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," says the teller, taking Mr. Stevens's card. She glances at me. "We've known each other for thirty years."

"Since you were at Hillside and Park," says Mr. Stevens.

"Yes," she replies, smiling. "That was before the branch moved."

"I keep coming back because the service is so good," Mr. Stevens replies.

The teller reassures him that they will file an inquiry into the transaction. Two weeks have already passed, and no other transactions have been made. "Don't worry," she says. "Is there anything else we can help you with?"

"Yes, I'm interested in having more information about a mortgage," he says.

"I can help you with that," intones a man standing nearby. He is tall, younger than Mr. Stevens, and wearing a black suit, a white collared shirt, and a name tag identifying him as a manager. "Why don't you come into my office?"

Mr. Stevens and I enter his office as he holds open the door. In the room the bookshelves and desk are made of dark, varnished wood. Upon the wall are framed diplomas and certificates in accounting and financial planning. Sunlight streams in from the window spanning the length of the office, showing a view of the street below and the hospital facing opposite. We are at the same level as the inpatient psychiatry ward. I imagine that one of the windows from across the road is probably that of the day room.

"I used to be an accountant," says Mr. Stevens. The manager invites us to sit in the chairs facing him.

They discuss Mr. Stevens's interest in purchasing a condo in a new development close to the hospital. I have seen pre-sales for the development advertised on billboards. For a mortgage of twenty-five years, the monthly payment would be $795.

"That's like paying rent," says Mr. Stevens. "In twenty-five years I will be…" He pauses, looking upward. "I will be almost a hundred."

After the meeting, we return to the main hall of the bank branch and pass through the sliding doors. Out on the sidewalk, Mr. Stevens turns to me. "Do you have time?" he asks.

I nod.

"Do we have to go back?"

I shake my head. "We still have some time before lunch on the ward."

"Let's go there," he says, pointing to a burrito shop ahead of us. "I don't want to go back for lunch." Turning away from me, he makes for the front entrance. I quicken my pace after him.

## 4.

"I am afraid sometimes to walk with him on the street," she says. "Not afraid of him, but people on the street…the looks that we get."

In the coffee shop, she is telling me about her middle-aged son. He has a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

"The stigma has been the worst. We go into a restaurant. We are sitting at the table. We wait for the menus to be brought to us and later the food. He is talking to himself. And other people are looking at us. What is wrong with talking to yourself?" she asks. "I do, sometimes, when I am alone. Now that I'm older, I talk to myself even more."

I would recall her words later, when a taxi driver begins to mock an elderly man I am accompanying. He was counting aloud, as though only to himself, the number of trees passing by.

## 5.

A young man, the burrito maker and cashier, waits patiently for our order behind the counter.

"There are so many vegetables," exclaims Mr. Stevens. He orders a vegetarian burrito and turns to me. "Would you like something? It would make me very happy if you got something."

I reply that I have a packed lunch stowed in my bag on the ward but pick a small packet of bite-sized chocolate brownies for dessert. Mr. Stevens insists on paying. He takes a knife and fork as I peel several layers of paper napkins from the dispenser.

Sitting down, Mr. Stevens promptly begins cutting his burrito into thirds. "Please take this," he says, offering me a portion with a plastic fork and knife. I receive it with my hands.

"I wanted to come here because it's healthy," he says between bites. "After this I won't be able to eat anything for the rest of the day."

I finish my third of the burrito and open the packet of brownies.

"I wonder if they have a catering menu," he muses, rising from the table. The young man behind the counter takes notice and strides over.

"Do you have any catering menus?" asks Mr. Stevens. "I am thinking of hosting a party in the fall."

The young man nods and disappears into the back of the shop. Within a few moments he reappears, holding at least a dozen folded menus, which he hands to Mr. Stevens, who thanks him.

We have now certainly stayed past the start of lunch upon the ward. On our way out of the burrito shop, we walk by a social worker, a staff member on the ward, who is eating at the window.

## 6.

"Here nothing ever moves," says Mr. Stevens softly. "I have been here three months."

"Do you talk with your treatment team?" I ask, remembering that this is a common issue voiced by patients.

"Yes, all the time."

"You talk with them all the time, and nothing moves?"

"Yes," he replies.

Weeks later, on the day of his discharge, I would watch a nurse use scissors to cut the yellow patient's band from Mr. Stevens's outstretched wrist. "Goodbye, everybody!" he would call out before turning to leave the ward.

Months later, the weather significantly colder, Mr. Stevens would greet me as I walk down the hallway of the inpatient ward. Like so many patients, he has returned once more to the hospital following another episode of worsening symptoms. "Jia–meng, Jia–meng, please help me," he would say, his eyes reddened and brimming with unshed tears. "I can't bear it. The medications…I feel I am not myself." I would touch his elbow, and we would walk up and down the hallway together as a distraction from the nausea and dizziness.

But today specters such as medication side effects exist only in the future. Today Mr. Stevens is standing beside me in the day room, and he is smiling. Morning light streams in from the windows behind him. "I know your job is to do research, but will you come to the bank with me?" he asks. "I can only go outside when friends or family members take me."

Promising that we will be back for lunch, we get permission from his nurse to go out of the ward on a pass. She presses the buzzer to unlock the heavy metal doors. We keep pushing against them, using the weight of our bodies, until they swing open.

## 7.

Outside the burrito shop, when we step onto the sidewalk once again, the sun is shining more brightly. We cross the street to head back to the hospital. As we near the front entrance, Mr. Stevens chooses a longer footpath. Walking a few paces ahead of me, he turns around and stands with his hands in his pockets, lifting his face to the noon sun.

Silently, I follow suit, closing my eyes and tilting up my chin in kind. In the middle of the path, under the windows of the inpatient psychiatry ward, we list toward the sun, catching its light. Upon my skin the sensation of warmth spreads, and spreads, and spreads. ■

GUILHERME GOMES



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# THE COMFORT OF FAKE NEWS

*The following vignette attempts to illustrate how the culture of fake news seemed to have invaded the sanctity of the therapeutic setting. One may argue that the underlying motivations for this invasion are multi-determined. No single interpretation could embrace what at first glance may be viewed as an acting out or an enactment. The case of E highlights the indestructibility of wishes underlying fake news, coupled with the permeability of the therapeutic frame.*

A regular morning at the office during pre-pandemic times. My 10:00 a.m. patient just left the waiting room. I have a brief break before my next appointment, which is with E—a businesswoman who began treatment over a month ago. It crosses my mind that E has remained ambivalent about committing herself to her treatment. During the last session, she expressed skepticism about increasing the frequency as discussed on a previous occasion.

Closer to 11:00 a.m., I pour myself a glass of water, anticipating the impending loud buzzer from the front door. I sit. My cellular phone's exact clock indicates it is already 11:10. "She is not coming. I knew it," I mumbled. "Acting out already." I engaged in an internal debate on how to proceed should she fail to notify me of her reasons for not making it to the session.

As happens with every new patient, a veil of anxiety colors my reflections. Writing a few notes seems to ease the wait. At 11:20 the bell rings. I feel somewhat relieved by her arrival. Shortly after the second buzzer, the door to the waiting room opens. Aware that the session will now be twenty minutes short, I move to invite E into the consulting room. To my surprise, upon opening the door, I am confronted with an unfamiliar face. A perfect stranger is standing next to the magazine rack. Confused and mildly disoriented, I take a few minutes to recover. *Who is this woman? Have I mistakenly scheduled a new patient during E's time? Am I so much the prisoner of negative countertransference to a difficult patient that I'd rather replace her with a less resistant one?* At that moment, the ability to discern what's really going on eludes me.

Yet, despite my unregulated state, I manage to say, "May I help you?"

The proper stranger replies, "Aren't you Dr. T?

"Yes, that's me," I declare.

The stranger standing a few feet from me says, "E called me early this morning and told me that due to a work-related emergency, she won't be able to make it today. Rather than wasting it, she offered the hour to me. Here I am. I am very curious about therapy and would like to know how it works. A sample would help me decide one way or another." Explaining that I only see people by appointment, I rush to wishing the stranger good luck while retreating into the safety of my offce.

As could have been predicted, the rest of the day I felt quite uneasy and irritated. E had used me, treated me like an object in her possession, replaced or disposed of me like a tool with limited value. E attempted to control the therapeutic situation by exerting power over me. It triggered something in me, brought me a sense of unreality, as if the brief exchange with the stranger was not a real encounter but rather a fictional one, a scene of a movie longing to be produced.

The following session, E shows up on time. Overtly enraged, she accused me of betraying what she called "the contract." E brought up her own version of how we were supposed to work. She claimed her hour belongs to her, and "Who are you to take possession of it?" E was convinced that an appointment is to be considered like a theater ticket—if for any reason one can't make the show, it is always possible to offer a friend the ticket. To E the no-show session was the equivalent to a voucher with no expiration day. She declared knowing that many practitioners she came in contact with approved, even welcomed, the transfer of missing sessions to friends and relatives.

My internal response was a phrase that was becoming popular on the national political stage: more FAKE NEWS.

E's psychic reality was flooding the field. I felt gaslighted, and it crossed my mind that E and the stranger had plotted the scenario, constructing a homemade conspiracy aimed at perverting the analytic setting and attacking the frame. Fake news provided E with a degree of comfort she couldn't attain by distorting the frame I so carefully discussed during the initial consultation. For my part, my countertransference resonated with E's fake news, leading me to conjure conspiracy theories.

In hindsight, I realized that speculating about the patient's fake news led me to the creation of my own counter fake news—E and her friend having plotted an "insurrection" to demote me from the analytic chair. The virus of lies had contaminated the treatment and the analyst's function as well. A perverted transference rendered the frame fake, thus sterile.

Has the political zeitgeist of lies and deception at the macro level exerted a ripple effect at the micro level? A splitting of the ego allows for foreclosing aspects of reality. E's fake frame may be viewed as one that subverts the established one, which is thought to be limiting and restrictive.

The pull toward disseminating fake news finds fertile soil on social media. The ever-growing posting of fake news operates as an industry devoted to the production of lies and misinformation. Fake-news generators assist cybernauts to create their own private, custom-made fake news. At times they are benign pranks aimed at friends and relatives; at times they are at the service of aggression—inciting individuals or groups to violent actions. E's intentions to make fun of the treatment—was it a prank or the ultimate attempt to defy reality in favor of gratification?

E perverted the frame, resulting in a kind of delusion/distortion. The therapeutic setting existed only as it related to herself. She rendered the landscape of therapy into a self-referential one. Consenting to work under the agreed analytic frame must have been experienced as an imposition of a reality that did not fit in her quest for gratification. In order for E to get what she wanted, she needed to rely on psychic reality rather than on material reality. Creating a fake analytic frame embodied a wish which the persistence of primary process helped to sustain.

Mental functioning is ruled by a dynamic choreography of the two mental principles that govern mental life: the reality principle and the pleasure principle. While the pleasure principle aims at reducing tension to a minimum, the reality principle attempts to regulate and modify the demands of the pleasure principle.

Fake news represents the failure of the reality principle to exert its regulatory function. It runs counter to the commands of external reality. Like wishes, fantasies, and irrational beliefs, fake news is a signifier of conscious or unconscious pulls mobilized to foreclose what is deemed to be unacceptable fact and fabricated evidence. Fake news seems never to go away, and like unconscious wishes, it is indestructible. Under an umbrella of misinformation, secondary process is replaced by the logic of primary

process. The logic of primary process is one that wants gratification without delay. Regarding fake news, secondary process fails to provide thinking, reasoning, and postponing of gratification. In this manner, fake news serves as a buffer against narcissistic wounds. It bypasses a potential unbearable confrontation—the confrontation between external reality and internal. Limitations are thus denied, and perceptions became dominated by the comfort (pleasure) derived from the indestructibility of wishes.

Wikipedia defines fake news as "a false or misleading information presented as news. It often has the aim of damaging the reputation of a person or entity…The term doesn't have a fixed definition and has been applied more broadly to include any type of false information, including unintentional and unconscious mechanisms…" Fake news is also defined as information pollution.

The quest for power is often at the root of fake news, as if holding on to power relies on the fabrication of a suitable narrative based on lies. To purge that which does not fit into a given narrative favors the creation of fake news.

Social media—Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp—is nowadays a fertile soil for the growing of fake news, that is to say, dissemination of info/pollution. Technology offers cost-effective tools for unchecked news to reach out to millions in a matter of minutes. Once posted, fake news seems to propagate as if it has a life of its own. It operates like a virus capable of contaminating human endeavors ranging from the most personal and intimate domain of people's private lives to the larger and multilayered ideological arena of political discourse. Across the world, cyber aficionados fail to sort out what is fake from what is not. Cybernauts are prone to embrace a reality defined by anonymous others who are masters in the field of selling seductive conspiracy theories.

Fake news is not a new phenomenon. Although the late twentieth century's cyber-technological revolution made the spread of fake news easier and expedient, fake news has exerted powerful influence from the dawn of civilization. It was, and continues to be, a faithful companion to changing ideological constructs. Fake news often evolves into elaborate conspiracy theories. Once posted, these conspiracy theories prove to be too diffcult to eradicate. Like viruses that do not respond to treatment modalities, fake news mutates into variances that elude logic while strengthening its hold on entire populations. In the Middle Ages, some Christians clung to a belief that Jews killed children to consume their blood during Passover.

This centuries-old construction continues to thrive in the twenty-first century albeit in different versions—e.g., the belief that the American election was stolen.

As stated above, fake news multiplies at an unforeseen pace due to the dominance of digital technology. Technology has become a vehicle for the rapid transmission of fake news as never before in human civilization. Online communications have enriched consumers' imaginations with mixed results. On one hand, creative enterprises developed, contributing to economic and social advances, while on the other hand allowing the proliferation of statements that attack truth and consensual reality.

Fake news is highly contagious. Its effect spreads across time and space of a world made flat by the internet. Online texts are like a double-edged sword: they facilitate connectivity, while being capable through false narratives of attacking the same connectivity they promote, fostering hate and division. Indeed, the internet opens doors to psychological lands hitherto unvisited. Isolated cybernauts may find others who share similar views and who trust the unifying mission of social media. Yet the internet also erects a forum for the discharge of aggression disguised as fake news. The potential damaging, if not dangerous, outcomes of fake news are displayed almost daily on monitors. Roaming around cyberspace stimulates uncanny disinhibition, offering a green light for hate to run amok under the shield of anonymity. ■

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JEFFREY KEENAN



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# Touching Psychic Fibers

*The following is an excerpt from a session with a man who had been hospitalized several times and found his way into therapy. We have been working for five years in ways that have begun to touch places that were inaccessible or, rather, accessible mainly as threats that would periodically flood him. The patient mentions Wilfred R. Bion, who has written deeply on catastrophic dreads and psychotic processes. It is not unusual for me to suggest bits of writing that touch aspects of a patient's inner being. I am calling the patient Ariel (A) and I'm Mike (M).*

**Session Vignette:**

Ariel (A): I thought I was getting better, but here I am weeping blood all over myself and you. I would wipe the blood off my eyes and eyelashes, but what good would that do?

Dr. M (M): I wish I could see the blood, but I can feel it when you say it. For me it is invisible at the moment.

A: I feel it flooding your office, flooding our insides, soul floods. I think of a phrase I learned from Bion in your writings: "Blood everywhere."

M: Yes, he said that about his war experience, but he also meant a war inside us. He called it a war that never ends.

A: I feel it now too. I used to make believe it wasn't there. My parents didn't want it to be there. But when I look at them in my mind, I see the wounds, psychic blood without a solution.

M: Yes, a problem with no solution. But one thing I learned from Bion—you can build more tolerance. You can take more of yourself, more of your being, even when it's attacking you.

A: It stops me from breathing, but you tell me to breathe into it.

M: A little at a time. And when you can, a little more. We can try to breathe into it together. Shall we try?

A: I'd like to. I'm closing my eyes and just feeling, trying to feel.

[Moments of breathing together, breathing into the problem with no solution.]

A: The blood is receding a little, going back to its bed, a kind of bloody riverbed. I remember my parents pointing to red mud when I was little and saying the earth was bleeding. Now I understand they were bleeding; I am bleeding—the human race is bleeding.

M: A wound that never heals?

A: Yes, but we can grow with it, grow into it, be with it.

M. Work with it.

A: Yes, I'm learning that here—we can work with it. ■

# Skiffieworlds

*May the great lord god of movement*
*carry us safe,*
*on all the choral waters of this world*

*The Birlinn of Clanranald*

(1)

Sucked in by sea-suddenness
the skiff leaves the skeers of Birling Carrs,
four rowers in time
then a bow-side

turn and she lifts on a wave.
An oar rows air,
she lifts again. A wave.
Another wave slaps her

thick, lifts and rocks her,
swallows her in its salty swell,
carries her out to the five fathoms line
where at last she is all the sea's.

You should see them pull,
with the long-lost fear of childhood they pull
in time, yet useless to strike this path
for the beacon on Bracken Hill.

*Shore Base to Pride of Aln*

*Shore Base Over*

(2)
There goes Mussel Scarp of Coquet Island,
the painted puffins, mourning selkies,
North Steel and Dovecote Hole.

*And easy*

There go the lights of Cromer Ridge
give it all you've got

round the headland of Dungeness

*And pull*






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(3)
In the shallows
shells wash up
ears fill with water
you listen to later
as a voice memo.

He washed up on Tean,
between Tresco and St Martin,
bloated as bladder wrack
between high and low
water mark.

Herring gulls listen
between screams,
they will never let on,
going around and around
hearing everything
saying nothing.
There goes another boy.

(4)
This is no metaphor
this is no joke

the albatross has a plastic bag
twisted around its throat

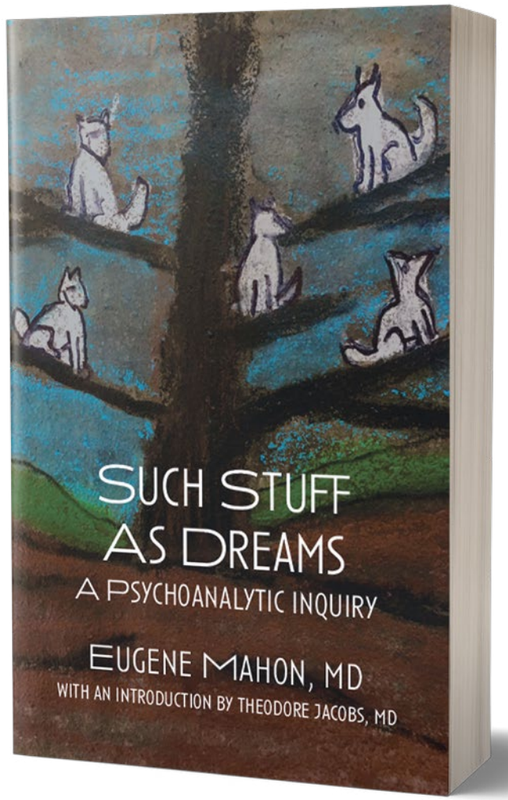
(5)
*Is this a dream, Elliot*?
Lefkothea sails deeper into the cave
of dreams. *Hello*
*Hello*? An under-earth basilica

where sea and swallows
swoop and fire themselves
into stone. Gone,
then appearing from cracks, swirling and urgent.

We climb out of the boat
into a sea-cup,
a sea-cave
where selkie skins hang on hooks.

We crawl through spurs of stalagmites and limestone
and listen to the inside of the world
inside a shell
in our newly found seal-cloaks.

# IP Books




*Such Stuff As Dreams*

By Eugene Mahon

Mahon unlocks some special dream strategies, dreams within dreams, films, jokes, puns, and cartoons, all revealing how the dreamer's unconscious thinks, portrays and then conceals the dreamer's wishes. Mahon the poet shows how Shakespeare and James Joyce used dreams, while Mahon the child psychiatrist leads us in exploring the dreams of children. Throughout, Mahon the psychoanalyst uses dreams to teach us how the mind works, and how the psychoanalyst goes about exploring and understanding it. —Robert Michels, M.D., Walsh McDermott University Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry Weill Cornell Medicine; Chair, Board of Directors. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Former Joint Editor in Chief *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.

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## Puerto Rico

# DONATE TO TALLER SALUD

TALLER SALUD VIA YOUTUBE

This is a Call for Action for Puerto Rico, where 120,000 people are still living in the dark. Recovery efforts are in high gear to help the most vulnerable populations on the island. Locals do not recommend that you give money to the government but rather to organizations like this one.

See this video for a glimpse of the work they are doing on the ground, in real time, and reaching people every day. https://youtu.be/I9v6-5HQ_eM

Taller Salud has collaborated with other community organizations and has helped 10,000 families affected by Hurricane Fiona.

To DONATE to Taller Salud: english.tallersalud.com

*—Submitted by Rossanna Echegoyen*

# Pakistan

## DONATE TO THE HASSAN FOUNDATION

Whether the immense damage is a result of climate change, poor planning of infrastructure on the part of the Pakistani government, unusually high monsoon rains, or water diversion to the areas where the poor and underprivileged Pakistanis live (to save neighboring countries or the assets of the privileged landlords in Pakistan), *the bottom line is: one human being in severe distress is no different from another human being in severe distress...whatever the color of their skin, their eyes, or their hair, or their level of education or socioeconomic status.*

ALI HYDER JUNEJO/FLICKR

Many of my family members in Pakistan are setting up medical camps in flood-stricken areas, going in with much-needed medical supplies and treating people. These are simply personal efforts being made by many in Pakistan who have the capacity to help in some shape or form.

**If you would like to help, the best organization I can suggest is the Hassan Foundation.** It was founded by two physicians in Michigan, Drs. Shahida and Mukhtar Khan, after they lost their son Hassan several years ago. The organization is a good and honest one. Shahida and Mukhtar are currently on the ground in Pakistan, providing aid in various areas.

Donations can be made at: Hassanfoundationusa.org

As James M Robinson said: "...the most important commonality is the fact that we all bleed red. We are humankind. These are the bonds that unite us...bond us...make us better beings."

*— Submitted by Aisha Abbasi, MD*

# The Psychological Aspects of the Ukraine Crisis

A conversation with Regine Scholz, Coline Covington, and Anna Zajenkowska

In this podcast four members of the International Dialogue Initiative are engaged in a discussion about the European reactions to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The discussion sheds light on the psychological, cultural, and historical dimensions on how an actual event, i.e., Russian aggression in Ukraine is viewed so differently across Europe. The podcast also elucidates how large group identities influence narratives, perspectives, and emotions in Russia and elsewhere in Europe.

https://youtu.be/_cKroqz8UZs

IDI Podcast
International dialogue initiative


## NOVEMBER 19, 2022 ▪ 1PM EST

LIVE VIA ZOOM

Join authors from *ROOM 10.22* as they build on their ideas and share reflections against the background of ongoing war, environmental catastrophe, and evolving global electoral realities.

Join us for a conversation moderated by Richard Grose and featuring:

**Isaac Tylim**: *The Comfort of Fake News*

**Sebastian Thrul**: *Psychoanalysis at the End of the End of History*

**Kevin Barrett**: *Ghosts in the Bathhouse*

To receive the Zoom invitation link, please scan the QR code or click the link to register.
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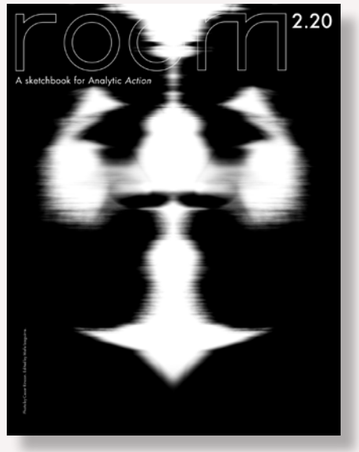





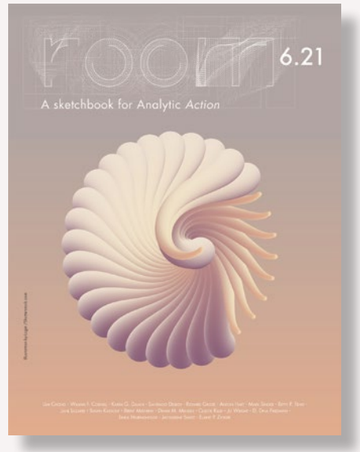



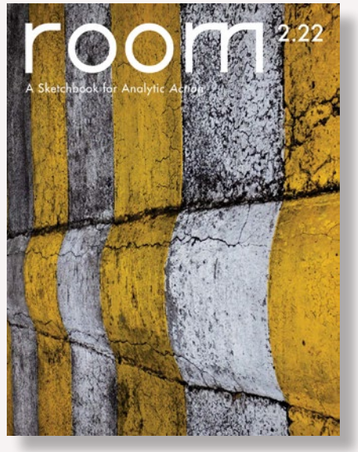


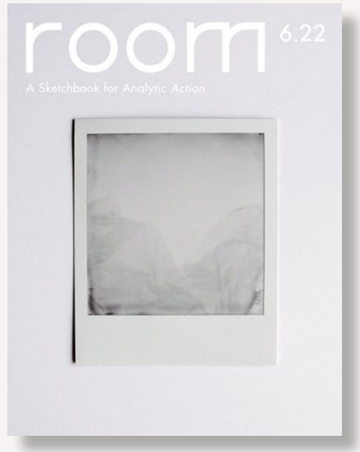


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