

Free for all
number nine

spring 2026 *resisto ergo sum*

Emergency Horse



year of the horse
by Maura K. Williams

**Gino Casagrande
Jeffrey Morgenthaler
The Micro-nation of Užupis
Jerry Lewis vs. the Nazis
Amazon Takedown**

Without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible — Zappa



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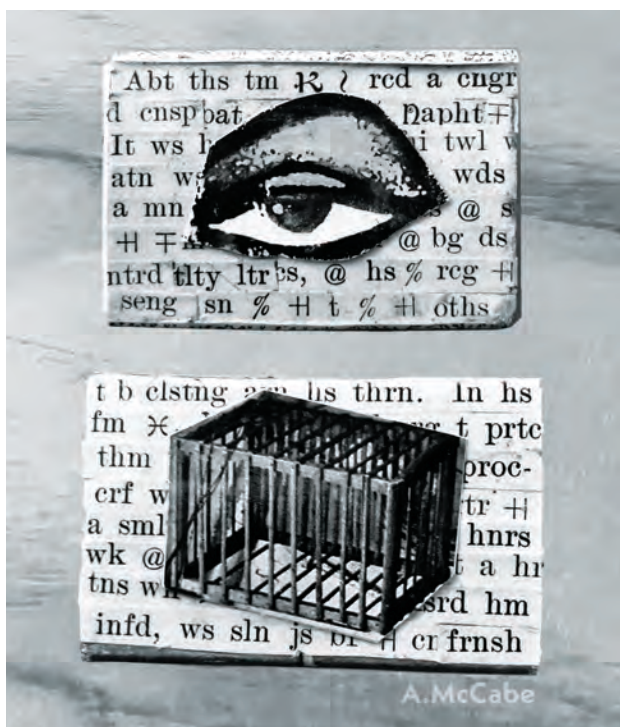


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The first beautiful songs
you hear tend to stay beautiful
because better than beauty,
which is everywhere,
is the memory of first
discovering beauty.
—Sarah Manguso



Horse Running
Carol Shenk



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Don't worry about people
stealing your ideas.
If your ideas are any good,
you'll have to ram them
down their throats.
—Howard H. Aiken

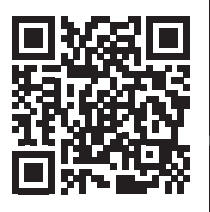
This journal pontificates, adjudicates,
gesticulates wildly, speaks its mind,
and serves the interest of a tiny insular
community. All materials contained herein
have been handed down from the mountain-
top which is an anthill to a gaggle of whirly-
eyed acolytes in a constant state of visionary
frenzy, resembling a
couple of guys loading
branches into the back
of a tiny rust-eaten
green pickup truck.
We live our lives as
though they were one
EMERGENCY HORSE.

EH on Substack



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From the Saddle

"There's a lot of bastards out there"

No chickens, no wheelbarrow,
no icebox, no plums

I considered a variety of 'From the Saddle' topics for *Emergency Horse #9*, but as the political climate in this country went from bad to worse, I thought those ideas paled in comparison to what needed to be said. So I searched myself on how to express my thoughts regarding the swirling chaos of our time without getting into the minutia of the horrors.

Then I recalled a story I always tell when an individual bemoans how another person or organization has treated them heinously.

In 1957, Jack Kerouac, Peter Orlovsky, Gregory Corso, and Allen Ginsberg are visiting the Rutherford, New Jersey home of the renowned poet (and pediatrician) William Carlos Williams. The 35-year-old Kerouac asks the 73-year-old Williams if he can impart some wisdom for young authors.

The four Beat Generation writers are sitting, and Williams is standing by the window, looking out the space in the curtains into the street.



Howard Libes

Williams pauses for a moment, then points out the window and responds, "There's a lot of bastards out there."

Over the years, I've consoled myself with this tale. For instance, I loved working in the music industry until I managed a band signed by a corporate record label, Universal Music Group. Daily, I dealt with this radio-public-relations bastard. This is the 1990s when radio was still all-important. He made ridiculous demands on my client like flying from Eugene to San Diego to Seattle to Baltimore to San Diego in a three-day span for radio shows. He constantly phoned me with threats about ruining the band's career if I didn't comply with his requests.

So I printed up a sign with Williams' response to Kerouac in 72-point font and placed the poster on the wall on the other side of my office. Every time I was on the phone with the soulless corporate bastards, I looked over at the sign, and I was amused.

Yes, the bastards are certainly out there ready to impose their agenda or just make life tougher, as if it's not tough enough already. Today, they're certainly on the march, but the world is a beautiful, wondrous place and life is a miracle to embrace and Williams' wisdom is always good for solace and a laugh:

THERE'S A LOT OF BASTARDS OUT THERE

This story can be found in Howard Libes' unpublished memoir, *Look What the Cat Dragged In*.




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...a little song,
a little dance,
a little seltzer
down your
pants.

—Chuckles the Clown

**Emergency
Horse**

Emergence

What we talk about when we talk about creation

Some say the world began when the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Some say the world began when the loon dived down deep into the ocean and brought up mud from the bottom to form the earth.

Some say the world began as a single point that exploded into time, space, and everything we call the universe.

Some say the world began when a hacker with a powerful computer, and a huge imagination created a virtual world so convincing, its inhabitants began thinking, feeling, and imagining themselves and their universe to be real—of course what constitutes reality is elusive and not something we agree on.

Some say the world is a flat plate balanced on the shoulders of four elephants that stand on the back of a giant turtle.

Some say the world began when God was alone and bored and drunk and crazy, and decided, fuckin-A, it’s time to make some shit.



Scott Taylor

The problem, of course, is that every single one of these stories simply kicks the can down the road a bit. I mean, you can’t exactly call it the beginning of the universe when there are turtles, loons, elephants, hackers and gods there already.

Either something was created out of nothing, or everything’s always been there.

Can something be created out of nothing? Can something be causeless? Cause and effect requires time, space and matter. It seems unlikely the physical laws of matter existed before the universe began.

If a black hole opened up from another universe, transporting time, space, and matter to create this universe—that first universe would need to be accounted for. If you bring a god into it, you have to account for the god.

It doesn’t matter if we go full-on physics, magic, or religion—the mystery abides.

In the 1970s, Carl Sagan proposed that because of the availability of basic chemical building blocks found in the billions and billions of galaxies in the universe, it seemed unlikely that we were the only place with life. Recently, physicist Brian Cox noted that while this may be true, it took almost four billion years for intelligent life to develop on earth. Therefore, the number of planets which have the resources for life would also need to be stable long enough for intelligent life to develop, and that could end up being a much smaller number, and in fact, we could be it.

So, here on earth, the only place in the universe we know for sure there is intelligent, creative life....

We set out, we explore, we stumble onto things. We float across rivers, lakes, and oceans. To get from one place to another, we look at the stars, and notice that magnetized needles always point the same direction.

We fill balloons with hot air. We update bicycle technology, and fly in hollow metal tubes all over the world. We leave the atmosphere. We travel to the moon. We send robots into space to explore other planets.

We experiment and we find, with some collateral damage, that certain plants are food, some are medicine, others are poison, and some get us high—and sometimes it’s the same plant. We control fire, and find that boiling water sterilizes things, makes the water safe to drink, indicates it’s time to make tea or pasta.

We invent optics that allow us to look, not only far into space, but also far into the past, toward the beginning of time. They also allow us to see smaller and smaller particles that make up, possibly, existence. We theorize that maybe they do not.

We figure out how to date very old objects to deduce, like detectives, an ancient past. We piece together evidence that the continents used to be in different locations, that they used to be part of one single supercontinent, and furthermore, that there have been multiple supercontinents before that.

Some say the world began when God was alone and bored and drunk and crazy, and decided, fuckin-A, it’s time to make some shit.



We find the bones of dragons and monsters, and put them together to look at in museums, and then later, with better information, we put them together again.

We discover cave paintings made tens of thousands of years before we were born that haunt the dreams of the people who find them.

We create language and languages. We sing. We tell stories. We put marks onto clay, parchment, and paper. We write letters, essays, manifestos, novels, and poems. We imagine the future and write stories about other planets, in other galaxies. We imagine other realms and creatures. We perform plays that were written thousands of years ago.

We grind up minerals, plants, and insects, mix them with oil to make paint. We create the illusion of three dimensions on flat surfaces. With chemicals, light and darkness, we capture images, then put them together so they appear to move and tell immersive stories.

We build shelters, houses, buildings, cities—cathedrals that take centuries to construct.

We create medicines: antibiotics to treat bacterial infections; vaccines to prevent polio, measles, COVID. More women survive childbirth. More children survive childhood. We discover anesthetics and operations without fierce, horrific pain are possible. We replace limbs, hips, knees—we can even repair and replace our hearts.

We develop feelings and then consciousness. Every single human who has ever lived, and can see, has looked up at the moon and stars. We wonder about existence. We tell stories about why we’re here. Life across the cosmos seems to be exceedingly rare. The universe is immense and beautiful, and we are how the universe is conscious of itself. We create meaning in the world.

The powers-that-be, however, prefer us to be mere consumers, processors, cogs in the machine, compliant undereducated livestock, doped up on sugar, alcohol, and television, treated like data and monetized.

They spend ungodly amounts of time, energy and, of course, money to convince us that our lives, that life itself, is commonplace, unexceptional, mundane. Not even the slightest bit remarkable. No big deal. Whatever. Get back to work.

Meanwhile, we continue to create entire universes, seemingly out of nothing.

Fictitious Drugs in Sci-Fi

- *Melange* (Dune, Frank Herbert)
- *Soma* (Brave New World, Aldous Huxley)
- *Betaphenethylamine “beta-phene”* (Neuromancer, William Gibson)
- *Dex* (Neuromancer, William Gibson)
- *Vurt Feathers* (Vurt, Jeff Noon)
- *Metaphorazine “Automated Alice”* (Vurt, Jeff Noon)
- *Can-D* (The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, Phillip K. Dick)
- *Chew-Z* (The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, Phillip K. Dick)
- *Substance D* (A Scanner Darkly, Phillip K. Dick)
- *Bliss* (Strange Days, dir. Kathryn Bigelow)

—David Turnbull



You Have Entered the Republic of Užupis

story and photos by David Turnbull

The year 1989 saw the start of a rapid succession of historic, world-altering events. The Berlin Wall had fallen. Germany officially reunited. The Romanian Extraordinary Military Tribunal executed Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu on live television. Hard-liners in the Soviet Union attempted a coup and failed within three days.

That same year, the modern Baltic liberation movement became international news. Thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians joined hands from the north of Estonia to the south of Lithuania to form the “Baltic Chain,” a peaceful protest against the illegal Soviet occupation.

Strange days indeed.

Lithuania announced the opening of its borders on August 26, 1991. At the time, I was nearing the end of a protracted stay in Berlin and was preparing to move to New York City. If I understood the news correctly, I would now be able to arrive at the Lithuanian border and receive a visa—something previously unimaginable under occupation by the U.S.S.R. I departed the next day with a college friend on a



The bronze Užupis Mermaid, created in 2002 by sculptor Romas Vilčiauskas, sits in a niche in a wall retaining the Vilnelė River.

chaotic yet memorable journey involving trains, smugglers, CIA agents and deportation.

Now, thirty-five years later, the Baltic countries had become members of the EU and NATO, and developed modern, prosperous, and open societies. I decided to return and observe this transformation firsthand. In the weeks before my departure to Vilnius, I conducted research on the cultural and political developments which had transpired since my last visit. I read about an independent “republic” or “micro-nation” called the “Republic of Užupis” in the center of Vilnius. Užupis (OOZH-oo-pis) was an artistic republic occupying approximately six-square kilometers within the city. I was intrigued and went to visit.

I entered the Republic of Užupis by crossing a small bridge. A border sign read “Užupio Res Publika” with four pictograms below it—a smiley face, a 20 km speed limit, the Mona Lisa, a car crashing into the Vilnia River. On the Užupis side of the bridge, the border-crossing station was essentially a gift shop. Here I bought copies of the

Užupis Constitution, stickers and a T-shirt. The clerk cheerfully offered to stamp my passport with an official Užupis visa. Fearing skeptical German border authorities, I politely declined.

Across the street was a pub, a row of artist studios, two galleries and an esoteric shop called Baltic Shamans. Up the street was a majestic statue of an angel perched upon a pedestal, over eight meters high, which is the physical and spiritual center of the micro-nation. Wandering around Užupis, one found sculptures and artwork everywhere—fantastic cats, copper coats hanging on walls and a mermaid embedded in a wall retaining the Vilnia River. I was especially struck by a four-sided obelisk in the style of a Balto-Slavic pagan devotional sculpture, specifically the Zbruch Idol in Krakow.

I contacted the Užupis Art Incubator and arranged a meeting with the Minister of Culture and Innovations, Gleb Divov. In advance of our get-together, Gleb sent me several links related to his numerous artistic, technological and cultural projects. Many were related to Užupis, some to Lithuania and others were more global. I wondered how so many projects could be central to one individual. I later learned his secret: He does not sleep much.



The Sculpture “Užupis Obelisk” On the western side of the sculpture, the text “I bring you the pure offering of the word” is inscribed, and on the eastern side, “To poet Sigitas Geda.” Mythological images are also carved on the sculpture, along with the initials of the monument’s creator, P. Repšys. .

woman from Tel Aviv. I took Avivi for a spiritual fraud who seemed solely interested in connecting with young European women. After a few days, I got the Achzivland stamp in my passport and moved on.

My second experience was shorter and less memorable. I took a detour into Copenhagen’s micro-nation, Christiania. At first glance, Christiania came across as a mellow hippie neighborhood until one entered the open-air drug market. I found the scene menacing with young men in balaclavas doling out hashish and grass to nervous tourists.

Užupis seemed to be the rare micro-nation success story—and certainly the only successful one I knew. Gleb stressed that Užupis was an artistic community rather than a political entity. Shortly after Lithuania declared independence, artists began squatting in abandoned structures along the Vilnia River. This made sense, as the area had been a hub for craftspeople and was purpose-built for working with wood, cloth and metals. The micro-nation’s founders lived and worked in the occupied buildings. In 1992, they formed an art incubator, and shortly thereafter, the community’s café was founded. The community established the republic primarily out of a need for security. The largely abandoned neighborhood had problems with drug addicts, petty criminals and asocial types. Self-organized defense was essential for survival. The community’s core values were forged in those early days. The now-famous Constitution of the Republic of Užupis was written by the founders over beers in a single sitting. A flag, a symbol, a national anthem and a national currency appeared in succession.

Gleb and I decided to meet at Špunka, a cozy, rustic pub in the center of Užupis, directly under the Angel. Špunka is the type of pub I try to find whenever I explore a new city—not fancy, good craft beer, well-worn and filled with people who I might want to engage in conversation. When Gleb arrived, we recognized each other immediately. We did a round of greetings and small talk with the crowd, then Gleb opened with a history of the artistic micro-nation. He pointed out that while most micro-nations were born out of breakdown or collapse, Užupis was born of celebration. He came back to this point several times.

I had two previous experiences with micro-nations. Once, during a month-long tour of the Middle East, I found myself at a strange commune outside of Nahariya, Israel, called Achzivland. It was run by an older man, Eli Avivi, who presented himself as a kind of guru. I rented a tent, hung around with the other backpackers, and met a nice



The Constitution held special interest. It gave the reader much to ponder as a serious philosophical document. Although amusing, it seemed to reflect the pain and trauma Lithuania suffered through the horrors of twentieth-century Europe. I focused on the last three of 41 articles:

- 39. Do not defeat.
- 40. Do not fight back.
- 41. Do not surrender.

I asked Gleb how he interpreted these three points of the founding document. Gleb immediately answered that the problem was a poor translation into English. For example, “Do not defeat” was more like “Do not force your opinion to win.” “Do not fight back,” according to Gleb, was more like “Do not fight over disagreements.” “Do not surrender” was mostly right. Gleb offered “Do not turn the other cheek” as a passable alternative translation.

“These articles are not about a greater macro-political position,” Gleb explained. “They are exclusively about managing relationships within an artistic community.” I still could not help reading Lithuania’s painful 20th century history between the lines. Gleb stressed that the Constitution was essential for managing a diverse group of people. The community uses it to resolve conflicts and move on. Gleb made it clear that members of the community had no unified political orientation and had essentially nothing in common besides a commitment to the vision. “These are people who would not even talk to each other on the other side of the river,” he added.

Four of the articles are related to human-animal relations:

- 10. Everyone has the right to love and take care of the cat.
- 11. Everyone has a right to look after the dog until one of them dies.
- 12. A dog has the right to be a dog.
- 13. A cat is not obliged to love its owner but must help in time of need.

I expressed that I found it funny. But Gleb was not amused. He explained that these points are serious and important. Without animal friends, humans would have never evolved into what they are today. Animals are part of the community and therefore included in the Constitution. I was compelled to concur.

I read about an independent “republic” or a “micro-nation” called the “Republic of Užupis” in the center of Vilnius. Užupis was an artistic republic occupying approximately six square kilometers within in the city.



The Republic of Užupis had all the elements of a functioning *res publica*. The flag depicted the symbol of Užupis—a human hand with a hole. Gleb explained that the hand “has everything without having anything.” I was surprised to learn that Užupis had its own paper banknotes. Gleb gave me a pristine 1 UŽ bill, which was exchangeable for one Euro. It was a beautiful banknote, that I will cherish forever.

After four hours and four pints, I finally got to my prepared questions. Upriver from the bridge was Dalai Lama Square. It was formerly a vacant lot that now hosts a stupa dedicated to His Holiness. I asked Gleb about the relationship between the community and the Dalai Lama. Gleb explained that the Dalai Lama has visited three times and offered a dharma talk to a large gathering. I asked Gleb how the connection was formed. He pointed to the woman behind the bar who had been serving us drinks and said, “She invited him.” I was both delighted and puzzled so I asked, “Is there a Tibetan Buddhist sangha here?” Gleb answered in the affirmative, then went to the woman and asked if she would discuss the local Buddhist community with me. She gave Gleb a look that said “No.” Respect.

Throughout the micro-republic, one saw frequent signs of solidarity with Ukraine. Earlier in our conversation, Gleb said that they were an artistic, not political, community and, yes, they supported Ukraine and desire peace. When I prodded a bit further, I received a more detailed answer. The Užupis community had sent busloads of medical equipment to Ukraine. The support was based on specific requests for necessary items that were missing or had been destroyed.

We returned to the topic of artistic and intentional communities. I mentioned to Gleb that I had written on Kunsthaus Tacheles, the former art collective in Berlin, which was now luxury real estate and a commercial photography gallery. According to Gleb, “Berlin made a terrible mistake. The politicians failed to understand how valuable such communities are to cities.” Tacheles was an example of how the dream of an artistic community can be destroyed by internal conflict and external profit motives. Fighting gentrification and protecting the values of the community required a constant dance with political and commercial interests. Despite encroaching gentrification from Michelin-starred restaurants and high-end art galleries, the community had held its own. However, the appeal of such a unique space made it a target of powerful interests. Gleb contrasted the success of Užupis with other experiments. “There is no barrier for anyone wanting to do this.” Gleb knew how his community thrived and why others have failed. If I understood him correctly, the Constitution was the key to its success. “It serves as a filter,” Gleb said. “You buy into the vision, or you do not. If you buy into the vision, you will work to defend it.”



The flag depicts the symbol of Užupis—a human hand with a hole. Gleb explained that the hand “has everything without having anything.”

met the evening before. He had lived in Vilnius for about eight years. We launched into an esoteric conversation that inevitably turned to Baltic Paganism, specifically the Lithuanian variant, Romuva.

I always had an interest in the pre-Christian religious world of the Baltics. As a student of European history, I was impressed by the Baltics’ long resistance to forced Christianization. The last pagan king was Jogaila (1362-1434), but the traditional beliefs held on until the late 17th century when they were eradicated through murder, church-sanctioned violence and the destruction of sacred sites. For this fortitude, pride and general badassery, Lithuania always held a place in my heart.

Gleb arrived and Brendan offered a final remark: “Under the surface, they’re all pagans here. Just look around.”

I wanted to use the extra time with Gleb to make sure I did not walk away with the wrong story. Gleb discussed other interviews which had bad outcomes. He mentioned a German TV news team that seemed minimally interested in the community and more interested in where Gleb was from. They also asked if the woman working at the border crossing was “authentically” from Užupis. The news team’s misguided search for purity missed the point of the Republic. No one was from Užupis. A group of artists settled into a void and established a vision. If you can live by this vision, then you can be a citizen. The Užupis website (www.uzupiorespublika.com) expresses this sentiment perfectly:



Citizenship

There is no institution in the Republic of Užupis granting or depriving of citizenship. This decision is made by everyone who says “I am a citizen of the Republic of Užupis” with a loud voice. Want a passport or ID card? You are the only one so your document will be unique. Draw it yourself! The one who makes the decision—is the one who issues the document! Every citizen of the Republic of Užupis must visit Užupis at least once in lifetime.

David Turnbull lives in Berlin, where it is considerably less dangerous than when he lived there in the early 90s. Look for his work on The Berlin Dead Letter Drop on Substack.



The Angel of Užupis stands on an 8.5-meter pedestal, blowing its horn and announcing the revival and the artistic freedom of the Užupis district to the world. It was created to commemorate the patron of the Užupis district, Zenonas Šteinys.



Above: The unofficial currency called the EuroUžas (EUZ).
1 EuroUžas is historically valued at one pint of beer.

Below: The Munich version of the constitution of the Republic of Užupis, including an additional article (π) about artificial intelligence.

UŽUPIO RESPUBLIKA UŽ REPUBLIC OF UŽUPIS

CONSTITUTION

1. Everyone has the right to live by the River Vilnele, and the River Vilnele has the right to flow by everyone.
2. Everyone has the right to hot water, heating in winter and a tiled roof.
3. Everyone has the right to die, but this is not an obligation.
4. Everyone has the right to make mistakes.
5. Everyone has the right to be unique.
6. Everyone has the right to love.
7. Everyone has the right not to be loved, but not necessarily.
8. Everyone has the right to be undistinguished and unknown.
9. Everyone has the right to idle.
10. Everyone has the right to love and take care of the cat.
11. Everyone has the right to look after the dog until one of them dies.
12. A dog has the right to be a dog.
13. A cat is not obliged to love its owner, but must help in time of need.
14. Sometimes everyone has the right to be unaware of their duties.
15. Everyone has the right to be in doubt, but this is not an obligation.
16. Everyone has the right to be happy.
17. Everyone has the right to be unhappy.
18. Everyone has the right to be silent.
19. Everyone has the right to have faith.
20. No one has the right to violence.
21. Everyone has the right to appreciate their unimportance.
22. No one has the right to have a design on eternity.
23. Everyone has the right to understand.
24. Everyone has the right to understand nothing.
25. Everyone has the right to be of any nationality.
26. Everyone has the right to celebrate or not celebrate their birthday.
27. Everyone shall remember their name.
28. Everyone may share what they possess.
29. No one can share what they do not possess.
30. Everyone has the right to have brothers, sisters and parents.
31. Everyone may be independent.
32. Everyone is responsible for their freedom.
33. Everyone has the right to cry.
34. Everyone has the right to be misunderstood.
35. No one has the right to make another person guilty.
36. Everyone has the right to be individual.
37. Everyone has the right to have no rights.
38. Everyone has the right to not to be afraid.
39. Do not defeat.
40. Do not fight back.
41. Do not surrender.

π Any artificial intelligence has the right to believe in a good will of humanity. (Munich right)



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Top Ten Cigarette Brands from Countries that no longer exist

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- Filter 57 (Yugoslavia)
- Sparta (Czechoslovakia)
- Cleopatra (Czechoslovakia)
- Belomorkanal (USSR)
- Kosmos (USSR)
- Echt Türkisch (Austro-Hungarian Empire)
- Murad (Ottoman Empire)
- Rhodesian Gold Leaf (Rhodesia)
- Con Cop (South Vietnam)

—David Turnbull

Shining too Bright a Light on too small a thing

an excerpt from the book

Please Plant This Book Coast To Coast

a memoir of Virginia Brautigan Aste

by Susan Kay Anderson

Please Plant This Book Coast To Coast not only fills gaps in the history of the Beats, but exemplifies the typical attitudes, lifestyle choices, and thinking of the era. It paints a compassionate view yet serves as a gentle counterpoint to Ianthe Brautigan's *You Can't Catch Death, A Daughter's Memoir* (St. Martin's Press, 2000). It also uncovers Virginia's influence and bears witness to one of the Beat era's most unique writers, warts and all: Richard Brautigan.

Trout Fishing In America

I met Richard Brautigan at a laundromat in North Beach.

I had wanted to meet him. He was very alluring and I thought he might've been from Germany. He didn't say much. I had Ron Loewinsohn introduce us.

Richard was working in a lab that manufactured flavored barium powder. People drank the powders for X-rays—there were different flavors like peach, strawberry, lemon. He came home smelling like those different flavors. They hired Richard for one dollar an hour.

I was working downtown as a secretary. I carried the typewriter home with me. It was very heavy. I typed up his poems. He began sending them out to places like *The Nation*. He started with fifty poems.

I was working for two dollars an hour. I was good at Dictaphone. From our tax return and claiming Ianthe as a dependent, we bought a 1951 Plymouth station wagon and took a trip across Idaho, five hundred or six hundred miles across the Snake River. This became *Trout Fishing In America*. Jack Spicer helped edit it. I helped edit too, and typed it because I could read Richard's handwriting. I was used to it, and from reading lots of doctor and lawyer handwriting.

In the Afternoon

He would write in the afternoon because he watched Ianthe in the morning.

That became a routine because I was working. He needed time and space, time and silence, but not totally, he did not lock himself away.

Richard would read us stuff, and Jack Spicer or I would tell him to take out a lot. There wasn't much left. That was Spicer's thing.

He read incessantly at the Mechanics' Institute Library. It was a library founded by a union in San Francisco. He'd read fiction on the 2nd floor. He'd read the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

He told me his earliest reading was the *National Geographic*. He read old issues when he was in elementary school. He read Faulkner, Jack London. He read poetry.

I translated Neruda's work for him into English, also, Mayakovsky's. I took Russian so I could translate Russian poetry. A lot of people were killed under Stalin. People still talked a lot about the Spanish Civil War in those days and we knew at least two men who had gone to Spain to fight.

B Vitamins

Richard was a genius in his writing because of his humor. He was like Mark Twain or Saroyan. Because of his use of irony, he would be right on target. He also had a sense of the tragic. He had sentimentality for his dead relatives but he was never syrupy sweet in that way.

He was very caring, and cared very well for Ianthe. He paid the rent six months in advance before she was born. Had a stockpile of food in the cupboards. Probably

because he cared for his sister, Barbara, while they were growing up. He had grown up very poor. I almost got him sobered up. I gave him a lot of B vitamins. After our baby came, he began drinking heavily again, lots of socializing.

I read on the internet that he had homosexual liaisons at this time. It was when Ianthe was about four. I don't know if I believe that.

He had new fame. It was tremendously exciting. He began drinking heavily and became abusive. One night, he wanted to have sex and became violent. When I refused, I shut him out of the bedroom. There were these thick wooden doors—the next day I left with Ianthe.

What happened was totally against what we were all about. We were so pacifistic. This was the dark side of what was going on. On the other hand, he did love guns and loved going shooting.



*Virginia Brautigan Aste at the Ginny Aste Skate Park,
Ceremony of Naming & Dedication, Pahoa, Hawaii, 2018
Photograph by Susan K. Anderson*

To Say the Least

He had a constant dialog going and had constant jokes.

He was interested in everything about art. Dada was one of the themes. Jack Spicer said that one should pick out the worst thing in a piece of writing and keep that and then write from that. He told Richard that and sometimes he did that.

He was experimental like William Burroughs and the same in that he traveled around and eventually had a huge following. Burroughs would tear a page of his writing down the middle and then match up the halves to different pages, creating interesting sentences, to say the least. Richard never did that, but he matched and mismatched images. His poems are like a time capsule.

I think Richard was very sad when I left him, taking Ianthe with me. People didn't talk about addiction, about drinking then. Oh, I should've... maybe stuck with him, gotten...it was a few years later when the lawyer had me sign for a divorce. I didn't make any claim to his work.

In his early books, I know exactly what and where he is talking about—even though the writing is ambiguous on purpose. I can picture this or that place. I can picture every place in: *In Watermelon Sugar*, *Trout Fishing In America*, and *The Abortion: An Historical Romance* 1966, exactly.

Once we lived in Big Sur, in a cave that was carved out of a hill with a little roof jutting out of it to keep the rain off. He was very interested in the history of WWI and WWII. He loved reading about the Civil War. He was particularly interested in the campaigns of the southern generals. He talked about the Holocaust. He was fascinated with the personalities surrounding Hitler and in the atrocities dictated by the S.S.

Into the Creek

He was very interested in graveyards, gravestones. Interested in imagining what people's lives were like—the food they ate, the clothes, one hundred and two hundred years ago. He was interested in the working people.

On our trip to Idaho, we read gravestones in old cemeteries. He was always connecting different times and people and places together. He did this constantly, made connections. He had a maniacal laugh. Ianthe has the same, a real wild laugh.

In ‘57-‘58, we did crazy things. Climbed up on the Palace of Fine Arts and looked over the city—all the heads of statues toppled over.

Once, with Kenn Davis, who was selling paintings at the time, we went to a reading—the hood of our car flew off at one o’clock in the morning as we approached the Bay Bridge. Richard jumped out of the car, opened the trunk and threw it in. He could move really really fast when he had to.

We were cooped up inside five days once in Big Sur. Up a little creek. Water came down and we could not get up to the highway. He jumped into the creek and got me. He never could swim, but he was capable of athletic feats nobody thought he could do.

In Big Sur, Richard was very interested in Price Dunn, who was the Confederate General of Big Sur [from book of the same name]. Price read the Greek Classics as a child in Alabama. He took us down to Big Sur. We were two or three weeks there. We talked, fixed meals, had two cases of wine. I remember there was an invasion of frogs there. The wine had soured, so we poured wine around the porch to try to kill the frogs to stop their noise. They were kind of like the coquis in Hawaii.

As one of my friends said about Richard, ‘he was like shining too bright a light on too small a thing.’ His writing was not voluminous. By the time it got pared-down, and pared-down, there weren’t a lot of words. There wasn’t a lot to work with.

He was good at listening to criticism. He worked with and listened to Ron Loewinsohn, an academic and a poet. He wasn’t like Robert Duncan who was a traditional poet, or Kenneth Rexroth, who was a target for Beat poets because he was so academic, but was well-published.

Richard was contemptuous of literature taught in college. He got to become the flavor-of-the-month for a lot of them. He liked the Black Mountain College poets [Creeley, Dorn, Olson]. Richard knew Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who appreciated his work from the beginning. Ferlinghetti was very supportive of Richard. He liked him and helped him. Also, Mr. Diamond, the lawyer who I worked for. He allowed me to type up Richard’s poems, got me stamps to send them out. Very helpful.

Artist Tom Field was a really neat guy. He lived with us for awhile and was an inspiration to Richard. He taught Ianthe drawing when she was four.

A Great Fan

In “All Watched Over By Machines of Loving Grace,” Richard anticipated the impact of computer technology.

He was happy to get an electric typewriter. It was a lot of work making corrections on copies of his work, and typing it over and over. It took a lot of time.

He would’ve been a great fan of the word processor because he couldn’t spell. I think he ran out of things to write about, unlike Styron and Mailer—who he didn’t like.

Alcohol shut down his spontaneity and depressed him and accelerated/ exaggerated the parts of his personality that was pessimistic about people. I’m pretty sure he did not believe in god or an afterlife. He believed in art and the arts as the highest people could live for.

Like a Waterfall

The ‘60s were a lot like the ‘50s, a continuation of them. Except for ‘68 and ‘69. Then, everything changed. For example, I took Lamaze classes prior to Ianthe’s birth. They didn’t know what I was talking about when I arrived at the hospital. They gave me some pillows and helped me lie on my side. That was that.

The change came with the music. There were concerts every day, really REALLY good concerts every two weeks or so. Groups from New York came. The concerts were in Golden Gate Park.

In one house where we lived, there was something wrong with the plumbing so the water ran and ran. It was like a waterfall.

Richard admired the Diggers. Our whole thing was a proletarian idea that you take care of everybody. I remember baking bread in coffee cans. The Diggers did it. I did, too.

We had everything available to us at the Free Store. We never had any money. I don’t remember paying for anything for a while. This was the last half of the ‘60s.

At that time there was the Cow Palace, a big stadium—George Wallace was to speak. The atmosphere of hostility—it was a feeling of a mob and impending violence and we just had to leave. We went to that; Ianthe had gotten a new raincoat from her dad. This (Cow Palace) was a place where women burned their bras, where riots happened. Ianthe’s raincoat pocket caught on a car as we were leaving and she started to cry. It was no real riot that time, but it felt like it could’ve been. What we were witnessing was a lot of yelling and Wallace was yelling back. He was ranting. It was an awful ending to an awful day.

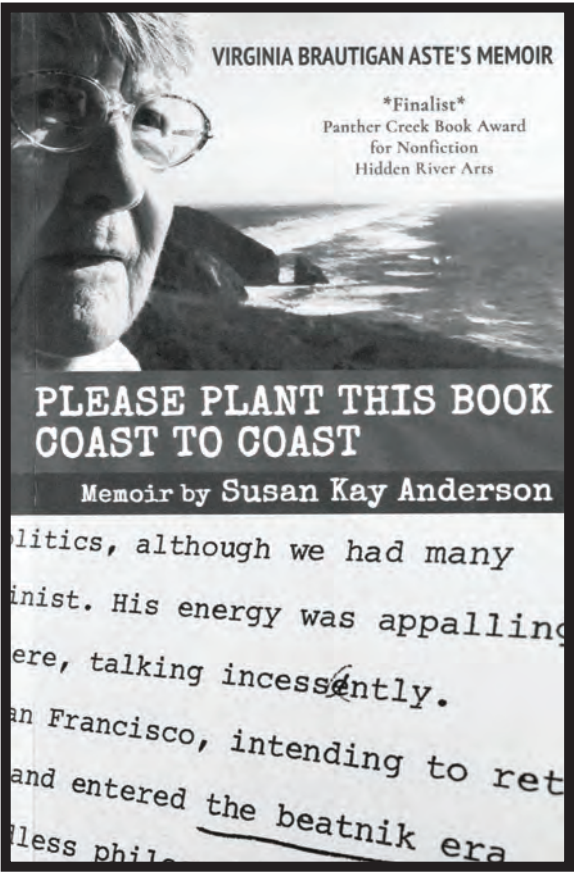
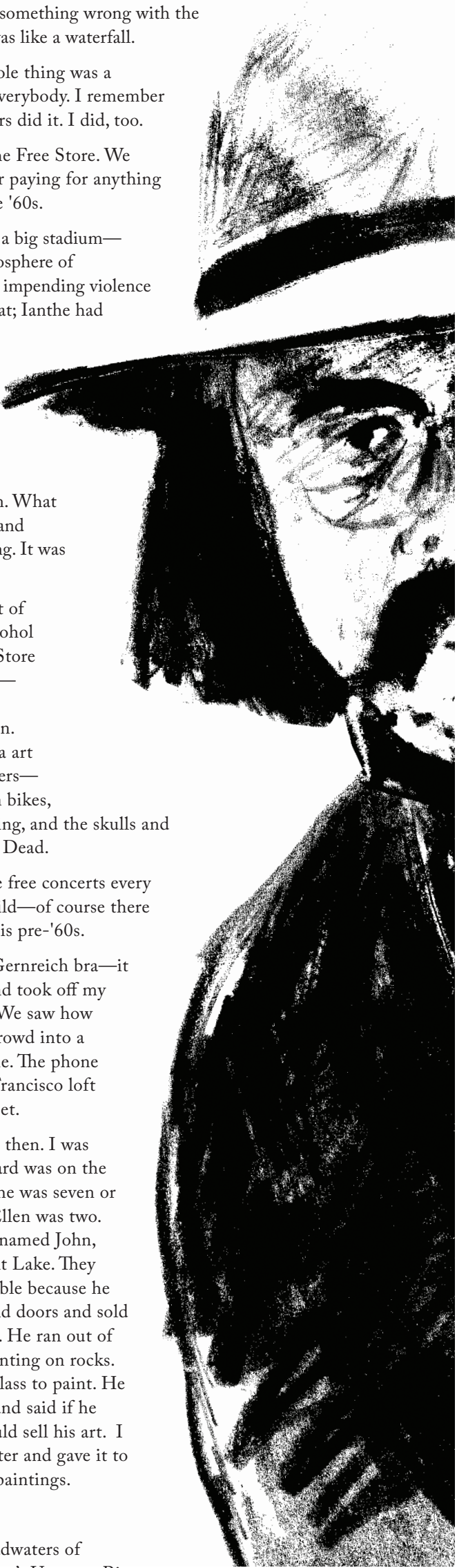
We moved out of North Beach and out of Haight-Ashbury. There was a lot of alcohol and pot use. There was the Ice Cream Store where bikers and bus drivers took pills—early speed, the chicken egg producing drug, Methedrine—cheaper than heroin. It was the time of the Alphonse Mucha art style on concert posters—big bicycle wheels on bikes, elongated figures riding, and the skulls and roses of the Grateful Dead.

For a year, there were free concerts every other week. It was wild—of course there were precursors to this pre-‘60s.

I purchased a Rudi Gernreich bra—it was see-through—and took off my shirt during a party. We saw how many people could crowd into a phone booth at a time. The phone booth was in a San Francisco loft south of Market Street.

Things were mystical then. I was with Tony, and Richard was on the periphery when Ianthe was seven or eight years old and Ellen was two. There was this artist named John, a transplant from Salt Lake. They called him Coffee Table because he painted a series on old doors and sold them as coffee tables. He ran out of those and started painting on rocks. He used a jeweler’s glass to paint. He came out one night and said if he had diamonds he could sell his art. I found a rhinestone necklace in the gutter and gave it to him. He put little ‘diamonds’ onto his paintings.

Susan Kay Anderson resides at the headwaters of Sutherlin Creek in southwestern Oregon’s Umpqua River Basin. Her poetry book, *Mezzanine* (2019), features her work as a graveyard-shift custodian at a university. She has also published interviews, articles, and essays in *Guernica*, *Hawaii Island Journal*, and *Honolulu Civil Beat*. Anderson’s book reviews are found in *NewPages* and *Tinderbox*. Her poems are published widely in print and online.



Laurie Evans-Dinneen



describing the young man

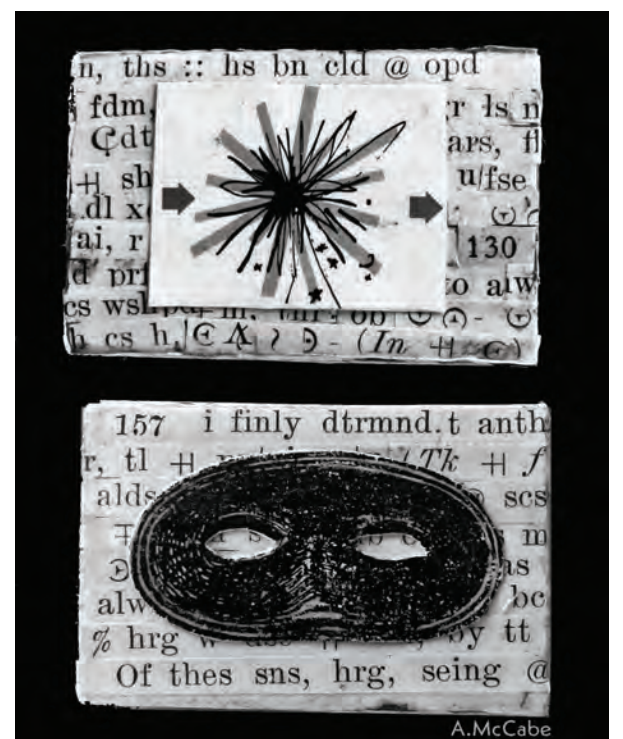
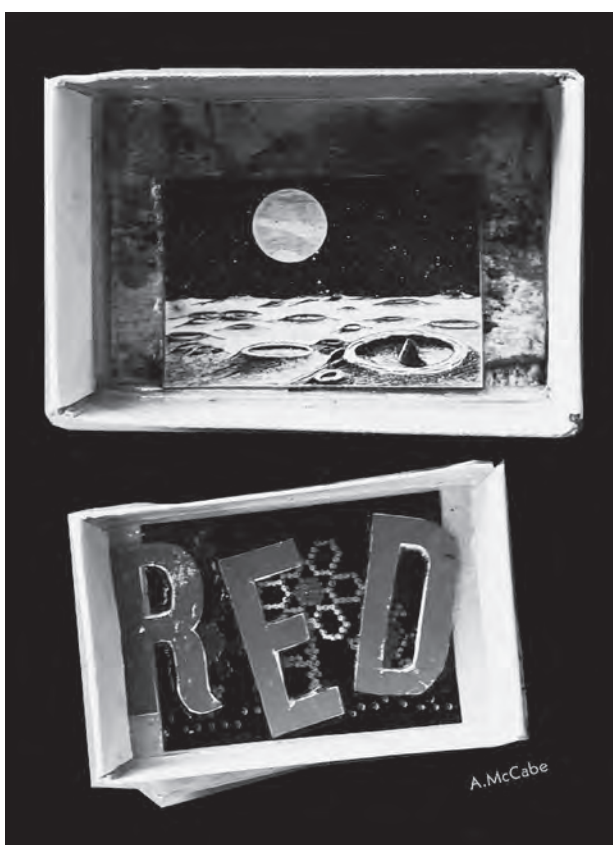
who ran in front of my car at the red light
on thirty-sixth and A he had the look
of twenty-one or -two his face graced
with the day and night's shadow
he folded crumpled his
jacket under his arm
as he hurried across the walk
his long hair tangled into fly away curls
above the collar of his shirt waving
over hips so thin i think of loves that match
his fit remember those that fit
my own hips in him i see all of our pasts
running ahead as if we'll never catch up
as if there were no more tomorrows
across the road he slows
to a walk blue jeans hanging on those
beautiful hips those extra loves we've had
resurfacing in each stride those that never
seemed to come at the right time or leading on
asking for just one more tomorrow

12-2-23

Raven hides behind the full
moon at sunrise
his strange fa-la-la
gives him away.

Love is a Portal

Love is the way the mountain opens up
and lets you climb inside and all over it.
Love is the moon's sliver showing you
the true color of the sky: a chip
of paint, remnant of the family before
who long ago left the world to you.
Love is the river with its slow song at bedtime.
Love is the glacier revealing the faint
blue of the world before you were born.
Love is the path that appears where moose
have moved between the trees,
leading you to the place where light
shimmers across the rippled surface of snow.





Morgenthaler Distilled

from the Tiny Tavern to Seth Meyers

by Jeffrey Morgenthaler

illustrated by Maura K. Williams

On the night of Thursday April 25, 1996, I stepped behind a bar for the first time.

It was in the Whiteaker neighborhood, far from my insular college enclave on the other side of town. This was the same neighborhood where I'd spent the previous summer at a job, stashing away money for the school year, screen printing realtor signs onto corrugated plastic.

I had little interest in hanging out and drinking in bars, much less working in them when I applied for that job at The Tiny Tavern on the corner of 4th and Blair. I was mostly interested in making as much money as possible, and hopefully overcoming my lifelong shyness. I'd always had a hard time talking to strangers, but this was a skill I'd need to develop if I would ever become a successful architect. After faking-it-in-hopes-of-making-it through the interview, somehow I got the job, but that first night was like a movie montage of bumbling buffoonery—starring yours truly.

After a brief tutorial on beer taps, I was sent out into the world alone, about a dozen feet from my trainer—an absolute local legend named Nancy Bertini—who could save me if things went sideways. A four-top had plunked down in a booth and she told me to take their order. I approached them shaking like a leaf. “Hi, what can I get you guys?” I said, in my most bartender-ly voice. One by one they ordered—Olympia, Olympia, Bud Light, Budweiser—and each time I carefully leaned over my guest-check pad and dutifully spelled the beer out in full (B-U-D-W-E-I-S-E-R) in my best architect-boy block writing to the visible disbelief of everyone at the table. When I returned with four beers, my hands were still shaking as I set them down, consulting my carefully written notes, and was met by four expressions of pure incredulity—the kind that silently said, *this guy isn't going to last a week at this job*.

Those first few months I spent behind the bar brought joy to few—particularly me—as I fumbled my way through doing little more than pouring cheap beer, wiping down tables, and ladling chili into bowls. I was nervous, awkward, and scared. To be completely honest, I didn't really care for the work, and it showed. I was constantly late. I didn't love being on my feet for eight hours at a time, and I didn't really feel like connecting with the majority of the guests, whose life experiences were the polar opposite of my sheltered suburban Californian upbringing. And besides, I'd planned on quitting at the end of the summer, because my daytime bar schedule wasn't compatible with a full-school courseload—so why should I care, right?

One thing I found out soon enough about customer service is that customers have expectations for their server. People who spend a lot of time in bars really know how to spend time in bars, and they tend to have very little patience for anyone in the room who

doesn't follow the unpublished rules. And I gotta tell you, those old guys—many of whom had spent a large part of their lives at Tiny's—were tough customers. Moreover, college towns aren't like other small towns, which can often be host to a sort of monoculture. The transient population of a university town comes with high standards. People from all over the world pour into town, bringing with them an array of cultural assumptions. Bartenders who don't give a shit about doing their job well don't typically last long when they've got a grad student from Japan and a professor from London sitting at their bar. That degree of difficulty is multiplied when there are two loggers sitting on one side of that pair, and a well-known local band on the other.

But in the course of five months something beautiful happened: I developed an appreciation for the work. In the process of doing so, the clientele warmed up to me and I was welcomed to what unknowingly would become my new life.

Hospitality doesn't run through my DNA like it does for some of my peers. Nobody in my family had ever worked in a bar, restaurant, coffee shop, or anything even remotely resembling service. The act of caring for people and anticipating their needs didn't come naturally, but my metamorphosis happened when I started watching people I admired.

I consciously observed and befriended the incredibly talented staffs at Eugene dive bars, nightclubs, pool halls, and fancy restaurants. Eventually, I developed my own sort of bartending style based on what I borrowed from my favorites. There was Nancy's firm-but-fair manner toward her sometimes-rowdy clientele. At Doc's Pad, Gary and Jackson threw the best party I'd ever attended, every single night. And then there was the best bar team I've still ever seen to this day: the cocktail and hospitality geniuses at Café Soriah. I credit my success in this business to these bartenders and countless others around town.

I worked at The Tiny Tavern for four years, long after I graduated with an Interior Architecture degree. I tried working at firms, but the pay was dismal which kept me working bars at night. Over the

course of several years, it became apparent that I had more of a talent for pouring drinks and making people happy than I did designing hospital waiting rooms and spec'ing carpet samples.

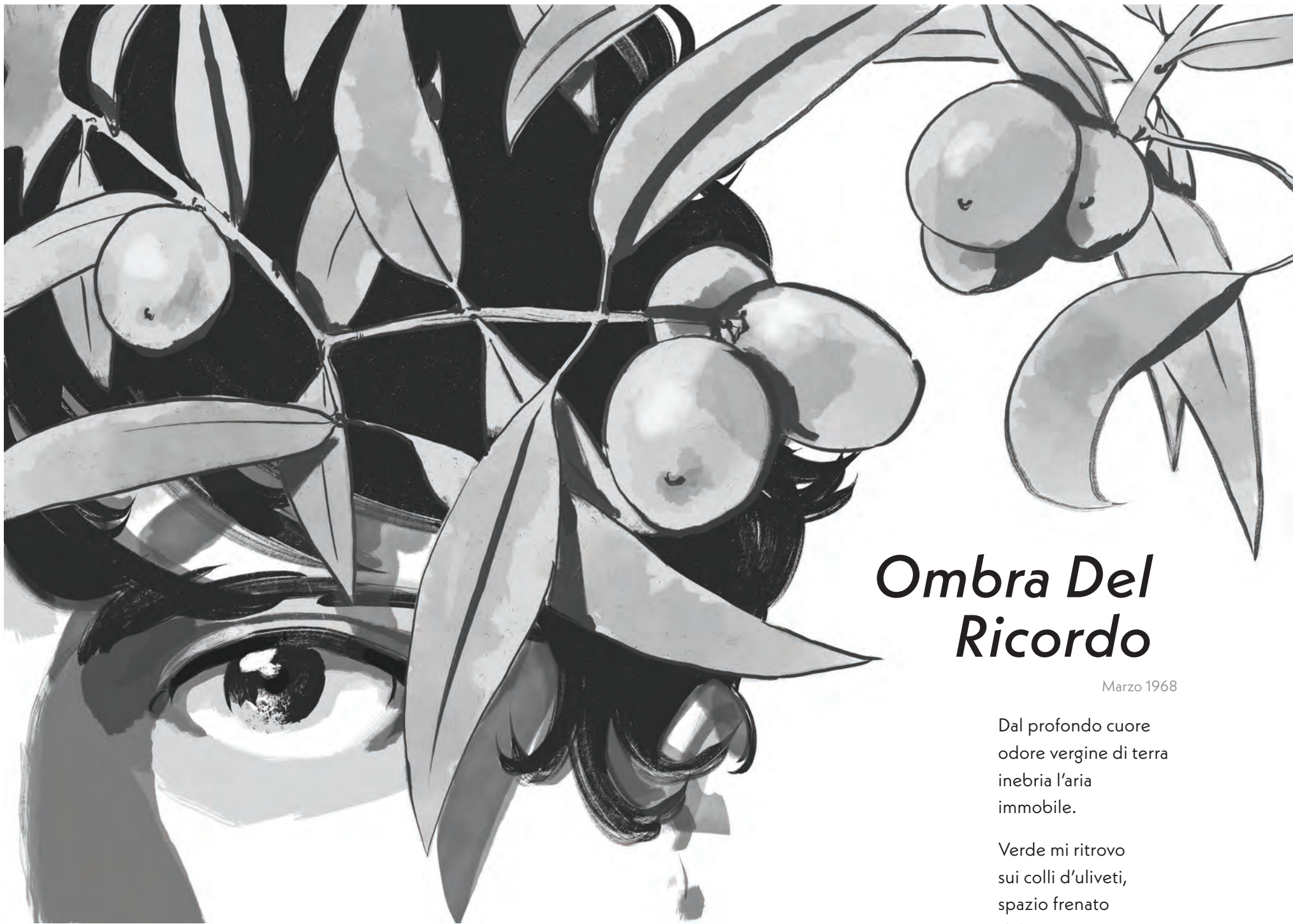
Bartending became my full-time career, and took me places I never dreamed of.

I've managed some of the most celebrated bar programs in the industry, earning more awards and mentions than I ever could have imagined. I've written two books on bars, cocktails, and drinking in general. One of those books led me to a high-wire *Late Night with Seth Meyers* appearance, where I successfully did not burn down Rockefeller Center while making a Spanish Coffee. And I've almost gotten over my crippling shyness in the process. And absolutely none of this would have been possible without the incredible education I received in Eugene's bars and restaurants.

Jeffrey Morgenthaler is an award-winning bartender, author, and industry innovator based in Portland, Oregon. He is the co-owner of Pacific Standard, Portland's favorite hotel lobby bar. Named one of the top ten mixologists in the United States by Playboy Magazine and one of the ten most influential bartenders of the past decade by Food & Wine Magazine, Jeffrey's impact on the cocktail scene is profound. He is the author of the best-selling The Bar Book: Elements of Cocktail Technique, the first book dedicated entirely to the techniques of cocktail making, and Drinking Distilled: A User's Manual, which offers a humorous yet practical guide to drinking well.

I consciously observed and befriended the incredibly talented staff at Eugene dive bars, nightclubs, pool halls, and fancy restaurants. Eventually, I developed my own sort of bartending style based on what I borrowed from my favorites.





Ombra Del Ricordo

Marzo 1968

Dal profondo cuore
odore vergine di terra
inebria l'aria
immobile.

Verde mi ritrovo
sui colli d'uliveti,
spazio frenato
del tempo memore.

Ma tu, onda fluttuosa,
tra ginepri pungenti
del dolore,
non sosti,
macchia rossa
al crepuscolo
autunnale.

Shade of Memory

From the deep,
the virgin smell of earth
inebrates
the immobile air.

I find myself green again
on the olive-groved hills,
the space held
by time remembered.

But you, wave fluctuating
among the
pungent junipers
of pain,
don't stop,
red stain
at the autumnal dusk.

Miraggio

Febbraio 1966

Mirage

The meanders of reflection
dilute the blue of the evening.
Under the dog days
geometric lights
in their intricate magic
striae the space.
Opaque apparitions
drinking the silence
of the serene night.

A mirage perhaps
of another life
that mingles
into the surreal night.

Beyond the mountains
lies your destination.
Look to the earth:
on the stone
the blood of centuries is dry.

I meandri del riflesso
diluiscano il blu della sera.
Sotto la canicola
luci geometriche
nella loro magia contorte
strisciano lo spazio.
Opachi fantasmi
bevono il silenzio della notte serena.

Miraggio forse
d'un'altra vita
che si mesce
nella notte surreale.

Al di là dei monti
è la tua meta.
Guarda la terra:
sulla pietra
secco è il sangue dei secoli.





poems by

Gino Casagrande

translated by Monica Casagrande
illustrated by Sophia Luongo

Meandri luminosi
si susseguono
nell'ora antelucana.
E fragori celesti
accompagnano
il fluire del tempo
nell'ora vespertina.

Luminous meanders
succeed each other
before day-break.
And heavenly choirs
accompany
the flow of time
in the evening hour.

Opus 01

Maggio 2023



Nell'azzurro cielo
alt'è 'l cipresso
nell'antico
sepolcreto.
Ed erto s'è alzato
a difesa
dei trapassati.

Re-quiescant
in pace.

In the azure sky
tall grows the cypress tree
of the ancient
sepulcher.
And it has risen
in the defense
of those who have departed.

*Re-quiescant
in pace.*

Opus 02

Maggio 2023

Viaggio

Dicembre 1967

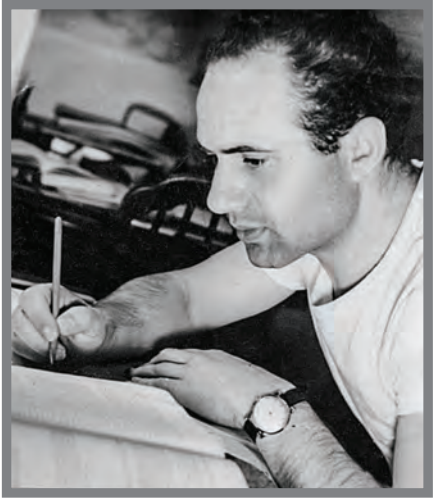
The Voyage

I heard you migrate,
black eagle,
over the mountains
of white clouds,
and over the
green waves
of the great lake.

And in the dark night
I saw you descend,
in remote lands
surrounded
by the autumnal haze
of a grey city.

Migrar t'udii,
aquila nera,
sopra montagne
di cirri bianchi,
e sopra i flutti
verdi
del gran lago.

E nell'oscura notte
scender ti vidi,
in terra remote,
tra la caligine
autunnale
d'una città
grigia.



My father, Gino Casagrande, was an older parent. As far back as I can recall, he was a lauded Danteist and beloved Italian professor. He died in July 2024, his 98th year, in continual correspondence with his peers, writing until the end.

When one of my children, Sophia, and I were cleaning off his desk we discovered his poetry. Never having heard of his writing poetry, I'm unsure if this legacy had been planned or not. I suspect it was, as his life's works were on his mind at the end. Indeed, Opus I and II was written in 2023. Papà's poetry from the mid-1960s concerning his immigration from Italy to San Francisco a decade earlier are perfect for our present moment. He always viewed life from a Humanist point of view and I have endeavored to convey his voice faithfully in my translations. My humble thanks to Sophia for her fitting and beautiful illustrations and EH for everything they do.

—Monica Casagrande



Listen Up!

Why We Should Keep Looking for New Music

by Glen Stohr

A little over a decade ago, around age 50, I developed a new avocation: trying to keep my friends and acquaintances conscious of new music. This was no radical departure; I'd always been a "music guy." Going back to high school, playing and talking about records was a big part of my social life. So my love of music hadn't changed, but this was an emphasis on new music, produced in new styles by musicians younger than me and my peers. I enjoyed a lot of what I was hearing from the "kids" and I was determined to spread the gospel.

The inspiration for my emergent mavenhood was a meme. The introduction of that term for a humorous, intertextual, and, one hoped, viral post corresponded with the adoption of social media among Baby Boomers. (Born in 1963, I am barely one according to most definitions of the term.) In 2009, when "meme" began to get its current usage, there were around a million Boomers on Facebook. By 2014, that figure stood at nearly 40 million. By that time, we were all there, "poking" each other, reconnecting, and sharing our likes and prejudices with our friends and the algorithms.

The meme that caused me to be triggered (there's another word we'll never use the same way) had several variations, but generally went something like this: If you grew up listening to Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and Queen, then it's hard to care about Justin Bieber, Kanye West, and Miley Cyrus. It was a narration of smug superiority and dripping contempt.

What bothered me so much about these posts was neither the sharer's celebration of beloved classic rock acts, nor their sneering dislike of the contemporary pop artists. What bothered me was the sloppiness of the analogy. The early-70s counterparts to Justin Bieber weren't heavy, experimental rockers, they were Donny Osmond and David Cassidy. Likewise, the right bands circa 2010 to hold up to Zep and Floyd were the likes of Queens of the Stone Age or Radiohead.

Now, if you want to do the analogy justice, it would go something like: If you were listening to Zeppelin and Floyd back in the day, you probably weren't spinning 45s by David Cassidy and Donny Osmond just like high-school students in the late Aughts who had QOTSA and Radiohead in heavy rotation on their iPods probably weren't hard-core Beleibers. My mission wasn't just to share new musical discoveries, it was a defense of clear thinking!

Fuzzy reasoning aside, the My-Decade-Had-the-Best-Music memes (and, yes, they've been repeated by the '80s and '90s kids) uncover another troubling notion: We elevate, indeed canonize, the music of our late adolescence and very early adulthood. And this isn't happening by chance.

It turns out that the trajectory of musical discovery is a reasonably well-researched topic. Around 2015, it got a fair amount of press due to a study of US Spotify user data by the website Skynet & Ebert, indicating that musical

"adventurousness"—the active seeking out and consumption of music outside the mainstream—reaches its zenith in a listener's early twenties. Before that, in their tweens and early teens, listeners are largely tethered to the "mainstream" (do people still refer to the Top 40?) in sync with the prevailing popular culture. This period is characterized by "identity seeking," where the consumption of popular music serves as a social currency and a means of cultural alignment.

As individuals move into their early twenties, a diversification of taste occurs.

Listeners begin to explore less-familiar genres and artists with lower popularity rankings, moving away from the gravity of mainstream radio and Top 40 charts. However, this era of exploration is surprisingly brief. By age 33, the aforementioned study and others find that the average listener effectively "checks out" of the contemporary music circuit. At this threshold, a dual process takes hold: the discovery of unfamiliar genres dwindles, and listeners begin a "renaissance" with the music of their youth.

In an article titled "Neural Nostalgia," published in *Slate*, a year before the Skynet & Ebert study, Mark Joseph Stern does a nice job examining why the music of our adolescence resonates so deeply, citing research that attributes our enduring connection to a combination of neurology and hormones. During the developmental window between ages 12 and 22, the brain is flooded with pubertal growth hormones that intensify emotional experiences, effectively "wiring" these songs into our memory. Daniel Levitin, the author of *This Is Your Brain on Music*, explains that this process is also deeply social. He notes that teenagers use music as a "badge" of belonging within social groups, which permanently fuses these songs to their developing sense of personal identity.

Stern cites psychologist Petr Janata of the University of California–Davis who supports this "sociality theory," adding that songs from our formative years become embedded within emotionally charged memories of that period. He links this to the "reminiscence bump," a phenomenon where adults possess disproportionately vivid memories of their youth. In 2008, researchers at the University of Leeds provided further context for these ideas. They proposed that this period is critical because it coincides with the "emergence of a stable and enduring self," making the music from this time an integral part of one's self-image. In conclusion, Stern suggests that while adult tastes may become more sophisticated, the music of our youth remains a "neurological wormhole" back to the raw passion of that era.

At this point, it would be entirely fair of you to interject, "Well, so what? I like what I like. That's not hurting anybody, right?" But I won't abandon my mission to get you to listen to new music that easily, so I'll parry with a line spoken near the end of singer-songwriter Stew's winsome, Tony Award-winning 2008 musical *Passing Strange*. Stew, playing the wizened (and semi-wisened) narrator of his own searching, rebellious rock 'n' roll picaresque, breaks the fourth wall to tell the audience:

**The memes seldom,
if ever, say, "Listening back
to the songs I loved at age 16
makes me feel safe and nostalgic,"
which is likely accurate.
Instead, they valorize the music,
holding it as high art,
often placing it in contrast
to cherry-picked strawmen
from later generations.**



“It’s weird when you wake up one morning and realize that your entire adult life was based on a decision made by a teenager . . . a stoned teenager.”

It’s a laugh line, and it gets a pretty good one in the show, but it resonates with deeper implications. As we circumscribe our self-identities, we also define their connections to the world. If we’ve calcified a canon of greatest albums of all-time, what might that say about our openness to new and different social experiences or political opinions? Because if you can’t mature your artistic taste past what you thought was cool when you were an adolescent boy, you likely won’t mature much else past that point either. At least for me, actively pursuing new musical experiences has exposed me to not only new ways of arranging sound, but new information, new opinions, and new priorities.

Beyond the public good of submitting new voices to our cultural and political fora, scientists suggest more immediate benefits to the pursuit of novel listening experiences. To cut to the chase, the Fisher Center for Alzheimer’s Research Foundation cites a study of more than 10,000 elderly people by Australia’s Monash University that found regular music listeners (those who engage with music “most days”) had a 39% lower risk for dementia. The researchers noted that lifestyle-based interventions, including listening to a variety of music, promote long-term cognitive health.

Studies also suggest that listening to new music challenges the brain in ways which familiar music cannot. When the brain has to “struggle” to understand new structures, rhythms, and harmonies, it stimulates the formation of new neural connections. This process, called neuroplasticity, is critical for maintaining mental alertness as we age. While much of the research focuses on playing a musical instrument, a 2023 study published in *NeuroImage: Reports* found that “active listeners” saw many of the same benefits without playing, even including increased grey matter in the brain, and associated improvements in memory.

In the end, my best pitch is just this: Hearing the music of younger generations has made me immeasurably happier. I’ve heard sounds I never expected, moved to rhythms unimagined. My musical library has doubled or tripled, and most importantly, what I’d been told was an immutable canon has been opened, expanded and revised. Artists I’d overlooked in my youth have turned out to be wildly influential, while the impact of others has faded over time, and people not yet born when I was in my 20s and 30s are among my all-time favorites.

Artists I Would Have Missed Had I Stopped Listening To New Music at 33

I turned 33 in 1996, so I’ll stick to artists whose recording careers started around that time or later. I probably would have followed the output of an artist or band (for example, Blur, Radiohead, or the Flaming Lips) that I already liked, even if their best music arrived after my fateful “stagnation point.” Let’s also assume that even without actively pursuing new music, enormously popular acts such as Beyoncé, Bruno Mars, Coldplay, Lady Gaga, or Amy Winehouse would have at least crossed my consciousness. (Of those, I quite like Amy and Bruno, by the way.) I’ll focus here on artists I genuinely “discovered.” Some of these might seem mainstream to readers a generation or two younger than I am, but each in their way challenged or disrupted aspects of music as I’d known it prior.

Inflo’s Near Perfect 3-Year Run

Inflo is the *nom du producteur* of Dean Josiah Cover, a 37-year-old British musical polymath. From 2019 through 2021 he was on fire, helming no less than ten notable, genre-blending albums with nary a misstep.

If you’re the kind of person who pays attention to production credits, you might have become aware of Inflo through his work on Michael Kiwanuka’s 2016 *Love & Hate*. That record opened with “Cold Little Heart,” a slow, atmospheric number reminiscent perhaps of vintage Pink Floyd, at least until Kiwanuka’s gravelly, soulful voice finally enters more than five minutes into the nearly 10-minute long epic. Inflo co-produced “Cold Little Heart” and five other songs on *Love & Hate* with Danger Mouse, famous as one-half of Gnarls Barkley (remember “Crazy”?).

The album’s second track, “Black Man In A White World,” was Inflo’s alone, and by the time you’ve listened to *Love & Hate*’s first two numbers, you’ve been introduced to several of Inflo’s signature sounds—lush strings, towering choral vocals, rock timbres, and funk rhythms—and themes—identity, struggle, and perseverance.

“Cold Little Heart” would become the theme song for HBO’s series *Big Little Lies*, but despite *Love & Hate*’s success, Inflo kept a low profile, apparently woodshedding through 2018. Whatever he was doing, they should bottle it, because starting the next year, he would drop major statements more-or-less quarterly through 2021. There was *Kiwanuka*: An even better album than *Love & Hate* which was again co-produced with Danger Mouse. There was *Grey Area*, the breakthrough third album by Little Simz, a prodigious and agile North London rapper, and its colossal follow-up, *Sometimes I Might Be Introvert*, a hip-hop record of astonishing musicality. Then there were five (yes, five!) albums from Inflo’s anonymous collective Sault, which were rather unhelpfully titled *5*, *7*, *Untitled (Black Is)*, *Untitled*

(*Rise*), and *9*, in that order. Each one is an exultant mashup of funk, gospel, post-punk, disco, soul, and rock. Give “Wildfires” or “Miracles” from *Black Is* a listen, and then jump over to *5* for “Why Why Why Why Why,” “Masterpiece,” and “Up All Night,” and you’ll begin to grasp the range of styles Inflo has mastered. Finally, there were two wonderful solo albums—2020’s *Rose In The Dark* and 2021’s *Mother*—by Cleo Sol, a key member of Sault. Sol has a smooth yet deeply expressive voice that Inflo records so intimately you’ll feel her in the room with you. Drop those 10 albums into a playlist, hit shuffle, and find yourself transported for hours, if not days.

Mary Halvorson’s Reinvention of the Jazz Guitar

Simply stated, there is no one who sounds remotely like Mary Halvorson. Playing a hollow-bodied jazz guitar, she will lure you in with clear, often hummable lines, only to knock you off-balance with woozy pitch shifts or blow your hair back with sheets of frozen crystal noise. Nearly 20 years into her career as a leader and soloist, Halvorson remains unmistakable, and we are only just now hearing young players who exhibit her influence in their approach.

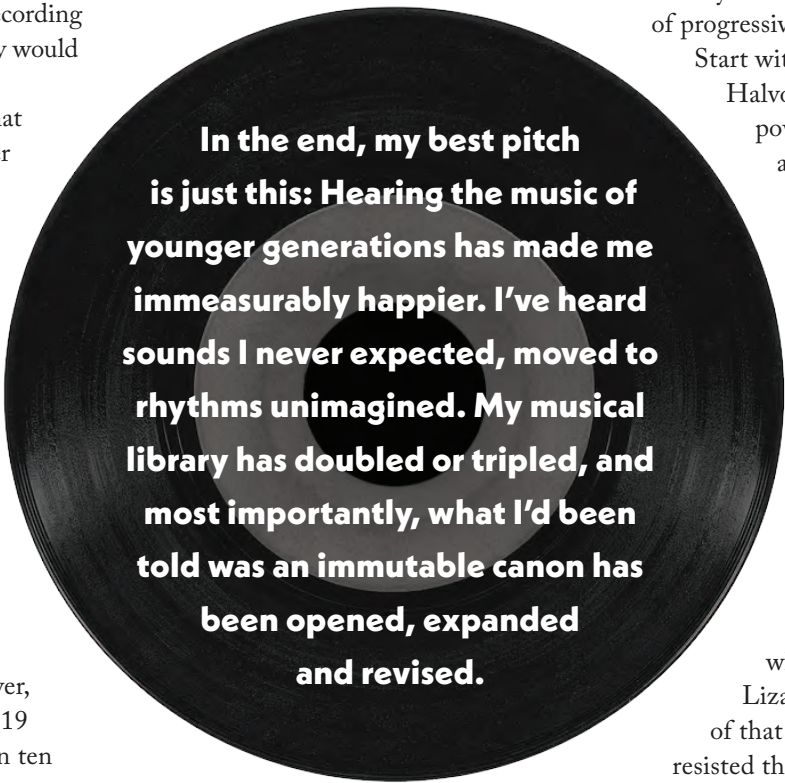
If you’re a neophyte Halvorson listener, you should try her 2008 recording *Dragon’s Head* or 2010’s *Saturn Sings* to hear the guitar front and center. And don’t miss her gorgeous 2015 solo guitar album of covers *Meltframe*, where she interprets composers ranging from Duke Ellington to Ornette Coleman and Carla Bley. Those earlier records are exciting, but Halvorson’s writing and arranging have grown substantially. Recent efforts with her band Amaryllis—an all-star team of progressive jazzers—are probably the pinnacle of her output.

Start with 2022’s *Amaryllis* or 2025’s *About Ghosts* to hear Halvorson’s finest writing and her mature guitar style with powerhouse collaborators like trumpeter Adam O’Farrill and vibraphonist Patricia Brennan. Better still, find a way to see Halvorson perform live. The contrast between her rather unassuming demeanor—she plays seated, bespectacled and demure—and the transporting flood of sonic creativity she pours out will leave you with indelible impressions.

King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard’s Multiversatility

2014’s *I’m In Your Mind Fuzz* was the first King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard album that I ever heard. I was motivated almost entirely by the band’s name. There’s nothing more deadly to rock and roll music than taking oneself too seriously, and the guys who’d choose to call themselves King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, I correctly surmised, wouldn’t be guilty of that offense. It’s worth noting that a music buddy Mike, resisted the Gizz for years on the basis of their name, which he considered irredeemably bad.

In any event, I thoroughly enjoyed *I’m In Your Mind Fuzz*. It opens with the motorik four-song title suite that sounds like the garage psych of the 13th Floor Elevators or Count Five colliding with the precise krautrock of Neu! From there it



moves into even more lysergic dimensions with “Empty” and “Hot Water” (the latter’s flute redolent of Traffic or early Tull), only to emerge into the genuinely anthemic “Am I In Heaven?” The song often closes the band’s live shows and is equal parts transcendent jam, unifying chorale, and mosh-pit maelstrom. It’s the album’s climax, too, but not its end. There’s a three-song denouement, a sunshine daydream somehow sexy and folk.

I’ve always been a fan of psychedelia and I’ve happily shared my discoveries, but *In Your Mind Fuzz* by itself didn’t catapult King Gizzard into the elite circle of my favorite bands. That ascendance would be three more years in the making. The year 2015 saw two Gizz releases: *Quarters*, four tracks, each exactly 10 minutes 10 seconds long that jammed their way toward jazz-fusion and acid rock (with “God Is In the Rhythm” sounding like a deconstruction of Led Zeppelin’s “D’yer Mak’r”); *Paper Mâché Dream Balloon*, a pastoral album of acoustic folk-rock with flutes and woodwinds with comparisons again to Traffic and their Brit-folk peers. In 2016, they went harder still with *Nonagon Infinity*, a blistering, metal-heavy song-cycle shaped into a nine-track “infinite loop.” This was getting interesting!

Gizz sealed the deal for me in 2017. They delivered FIVE new albums that year: *Flying Microtonal Banana*, an exploration of Turkish and North African tunings featuring custom-built instruments; *Murder Of The Universe*, a noise-rock nightmare featuring a spoken-word sci-fi short story about a robot who destroys the cosmos by seeking to vomit; *Sketches of Brunswick East*, a groovy, psychedelic jazz collab that passes the pipe with Mild High Club; *Polygondwanaland*, a proggy, polyrhythmic masterpiece released directly into the public domain; *Gumboot Soup*, a genre-agnostic odds-and-sods compilation of recently written songs that didn’t fit any of four preceding LPs. This was becoming the stuff of dreams for a self-styled musical adventurer like yours truly.

Baffled friends shook their head saying, Wait! That’s the same band?!?! But Gizz kept venturing farther and farther afield. They’ve delved into infectious electronica (2021’s *Butterfly 3000* and 2023’s *The Silver Cord*), then blasted out convincing, ferocious heavy metal (2019’s *Infest the Rat’s Nest* and 2023’s *PetroDragon Apocalypse*). On nine additional studio albums over the past eight years, they’ve touched on everything from pop and ‘70s radio rock to trance and hip-hop. What’s more, they have done all this with seemingly guileless enthusiasm and commitment, and therein lies Gizz’s great lesson for listeners of my generation.

Music fans of my era were (and many remain) unduly focused on drawing genre boundaries. In the 1970s and ‘80s, they generally rewarded bands and artists for staying in their lane, and departures of the expected often came with a deflecting ironic distance, and sometimes an accompanying sneer. Even David Bowie, the greatest musical shapeshifter of his time, inhabited distinct fictionalized personas to deliver music in different styles.

King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard represent a generation that can embrace irony without the distance. It is viscerally fun and powerful to play heavy metal. Must that mean you’re a “heavy metal band”? Let’s hope not, Gizz contends, because it’s also fun to play synth-pop, and to jam out like the Grateful Dead, and to boogie or groove or pogo like two dozen other acts.

[Editor: You’ll hear more reviews from Glen and “Artists I Would Have Missed Had I Stopped Listening To New Music at 33” in future issues, and on Substack (QR link below)]

California-born, Athens (Greece)-based **Glen Stohr** listens to a lot of music and occasionally writes down his thoughts about what he hears.

Glen’s Playlists

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Scan the code below on the left and listen to the artists that Glen has told us about.

Look for a longer version of the story with more artists coming in May on our Substack



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EH Substack

- 1. Inflo
- 2. Mary Halvorson
- 3. King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard

More to come!

Jann Wenner and the Musical Immortals

Arguably the most influential music critic of the late 20th century, he provides a cautionary tale of someone tied to their past listening habits. The critic in question is Jann Wenner—co-founder and 52-year lead editor of *Rolling Stone*—someone you’d imagine spending a lifetime in pursuit of exciting, unfamiliar sounds. In

2023, Wenner published *Masters*, a book of interviews with seven “musical immortals” who Wenner had adjudicated the most profound spokesmen of their (and crucially for our purposes, his) generation. They were Bono, Bob Dylan, Jerry Garcia, Mick Jagger, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, and Pete Townshend.

It’s hard to imagine anyone quibbling over the bonafides of those rock titans. No one begrudges Wenner his personal favorites, but when a *New York Times* interviewer, David Marchese, pointed out that all seven were white men, Wenner responded:

The people had to meet a couple criteria, but it was just kind of my personal interest and love of them. Insofar as the women, just none of them were as articulate enough on this intellectual level.

Turning to the subject of race, Wenner continued:

Of Black artists—you know, Stevie Wonder, genius, right? I suppose when you use a word as broad as ‘masters,’ the fault is using that word. Maybe Marvin Gaye, or Curtis Mayfield? I mean, they just didn’t articulate at that level.

When Marchese tried to throw Wenner a lifeline, the self-appointed judge of “articulateness” barrelled ahead with:

The selection was intuitive. It was what I was interested in. You know, just for public relations’ sake, maybe I should have gone and found one Black and one woman artist to include here that didn’t measure up to that same historical standard, just to avert this kind of criticism.

The racism and sexism are appallingly ignorant (if you don’t think so, I can’t help you), but I want to focus on what the whole exchange says about Wenner’s relationship with the music of his youth, his self-image, and his adult worldview. Look closely at what he says about the subjects he included in his book. On the one hand, choosing them was intuitive, based on his interest and love, but without batting an eyelash, this becomes in the book’s official marketing copy “a visit to the Mount Olympus of rock.” Certainly the inherent deification (titans, indeed) isn’t lost on a man who made a career of using words.

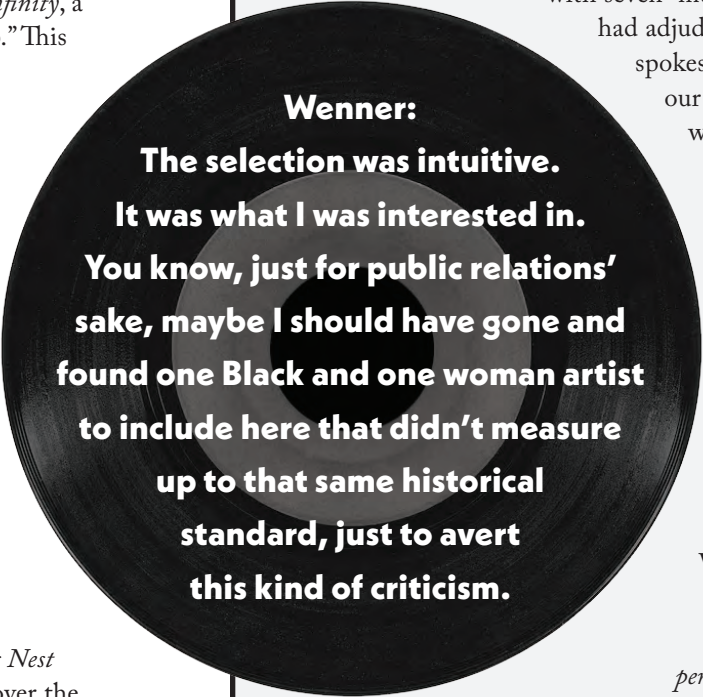
In fact, Wenner is amazingly close to identifying the problem when he tells Marchese, “I suppose . . . the fault is using that word” referring to “masters” in his books’ title. Imagine if he’d instead called his book *Favorites*, and said plainly, “Here are the seven musicians from whom I took the most of my own self-image.” But he can’t, or at least doesn’t, and his circumscription of self becomes the limits of his worldview. In the end, he doesn’t just use the word, he believes it, and he literally cannot think of a reason to include women or people of color in his pantheon other than rank tokenism to avoid the hassle of competing points of view.

So totalizing is Wenner’s self-absorption that, later in the interview, it blankets his entire peer group. Asked if there are any valid criticisms of the Boomer generation, Wenner replied:

What didn’t the rock ‘n’ roll generation do? I mean, it didn’t get everything done. But I have no fundamental, deep criticisms. Is there something that you think we didn’t get right?

Wenner’s question comes off as half-rhetorical, half-gambit with his interlocutor, but it’s one with real answers. If he were interested, he could get some of those answers from the musical artists of subsequent generations. They’d help him see the world as they inherited it, and Wenner would’ve heard some incredible innovations in music making in the bargain.

If he gave himself the chance, Wenner would certainly find new, more inclusive roads to travel, erasing many of the restrictions that still dog him and his generation. In any event, let’s leave Wenner with the note that he later apologized for his statements to the *New York Times*.



BYE BYE BIRDY

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The Day the Clown Cried—Directed by Jerry Lewis

by David Weddle, illustrated by Wayne Shellabarger

For decades *The Day the Clown Cried* occupied a unique pinnacle in American culture. It was considered to be not only the worst Jerry Lewis movie, but also the worst comedy, and THE WORST MOVIE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CINEMA. An abomination of bad taste and rabid ego, a refutation of the auteur theory pushed by a pack of effete egghead French critics who in their intellectual derangement had the audacity to argue that Jerry Lewis was one of America's greatest filmmakers.

It became fodder for late night comics, and for critics, film historians, and journalists who pointed to it as a symbol of Lewis's orgiastic egomania and vulgarity.

It was an extraordinary assessment, considering no one had actually seen the movie. The production imploded in 1972 when the film's producer absconded with the funds to complete the picture and a Swedish film company seized the dailies. Lewis possessed a rough cut, but after years of getting beaten up in the press for making it in the first place, he refused to show it to anyone and stipulated in his will that the footage would remain locked away until after his death.

For decades comedian Harry Shearer grabbed a great deal of attention by claiming to be one of the few people who saw the rough cut, though he has never provided any documentation that proves this is true. In interview after interview over the years, Shearer smugly denigrated the movie as a hideous misfire that resembled a garish velvet painting of Auschwitz.

That seemed to define the film forever and always, until...

A few years ago Europafilm, the Swedish production company that owned the dailies of *The Day the Clown Cried* needed to free up some space in its overstuffed film vaults. So it ordered a crew of archivists to destroy the dailies. But it turned out the archivists, like many Europeans, regarded Jerry Lewis as a great filmmaker. So they duped the dailies and smuggled them out to other film scholars.

As a result, last year Eric Friedler and Michael Lurie wove a documentary around the footage. *From*

Darkness to Light features interviews with acclaimed directors such as Martin Scorsese, Pierre Etaix, and Lewis himself—filmed just before he died. Lewis had once considered *The Day the Clown Cried* to be his greatest achievement. But decades of public abuse had beaten him down and he confessed it was a failure that nearly drove him to suicide.

But the real star of *From Darkness to Light* is the raw footage of *The Day the Clown Cried*. There are almost 45 minutes of cut scenes, and uncut footage. The effect is not that of a hideous velvet painting of the holocaust, nor is it an undiscovered masterpiece. The scenes range from awful and amateurish, to complex and deeply moving.

Is *The Day the Clown Cried* a good movie or a bad movie? I have no idea. But I know it is a profoundly personal and powerful work of art. William Faulkner was once asked which author he preferred: Ernest Hemingway or Thomas Wolfe. Faulkner said he preferred Wolfe. Because with

Hemingway every sentence is perfectly constructed. You know he understands the meaning of each word he chooses. Whereas Wolfe reaches for something that he can't quite pull off. And that, in Faulkner's mind, was something noble.

It seems to me that America should be ashamed of itself for ridiculing a once popular and spectacularly inventive movie clown who reached for something beyond his grasp. So he failed. So what? At least he had the courage to attempt something audacious and pregnant with risk. Where is the crime in that?

Even though the movie failed to cohere, the final sequence is the most powerful thing Lewis ever achieved. It only exists in rough cut form. It's ragged and haphazard, and yet extremely affecting. Lewis, plays a former circus clown interred in a concentration camp for throwing a liquor bottle at a portrait of Adolf Hitler. He performs comic

routines for the Jewish children of the camp and they adore him. Consequently, a sadistic SS officer orders Lewis to lead the children into the gas chamber.

Watching it, I thought of the children Lewis featured on his annual Muscular Dystrophy Telethons for more than 40 years. All the poster children—the ones who came on stage with their families to tell their stories,



the ones who lined the lip of the stage reveling in Jerry's clowning—died. Many times Lewis flew to cities to perform for the dying children. Often he remained at their bedsides until they drew their last breath. My wife and I had dinner with Lewis in 2010, and while talking about this, he laid his head on the table and said, "Oh god, it was so difficult."

In *The Day the Clown Cried* he cannot save the children. All he can do is make them laugh until they step into the gas chamber. In that final moment, a young girl takes Lewis's hand and smiles at him and he makes the decision to step into the chamber and die with her. The moment is harrowing. Searing. One of the bleakest in all of cinema. And Lewis's finest achievement as a filmmaker.

David Weddle wrote the critically acclaimed biography, *If They Move... Kill 'Em! The Life and Times of Sam Peckinpah*. He has served as a writer/producer on such shows as: *Battlestar Galactica*, *CSI*, *The Strain*, and *For All Mankind*.

It seems to me that America should be ashamed of itself for ridiculing a once popular and spectacularly inventive movie clown who reached for something beyond his grasp.

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Sophie's Choice
The Day the Clown Cried
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—David Weddle



Harry Smith, Magician by Carol Shenk

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The Nutty Professor, 1963
The King of Comedy, 1983
The Bellboy, 1960
The Ladies Man, 1961
The Errand Boy, 1961
Cinderfella, 1960
Rock-a-Bye Baby, 1958
The Disorderly Orderly, 1964
The Patsy, 1964
The Day the Clown Cried, 1972

—David Weddle



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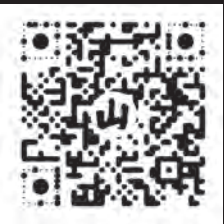
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Killing Amazon

End Amazon’s war against your household, community and culture

Amazon arrived with an amazing promise: You can now buy any book online and have it delivered to your doorstep. From this simple value proposition, our individual entanglements with the company grew. We started buying more than books from Amazon, graduating to clothing, sporting goods, music, lawn furniture, and hardware. Later we signed up for Prime. Looking back, it seems absurd that so many of us decided to pay a considerable annual fee, up front, for future purchases. But we told ourselves, shipping is free and it arrives in 1-3 days. Amazon became a habit.

However, as this habit became increasingly ingrained in our daily lives, doubts emerged. We learned that fast delivery came with a human cost. We heard stories of Amazon delivery drivers urinating in Big Gulp cups to meet aggressive delivery schedules. We learned that conditions in Amazon warehouses contributed to an injury rate nearly double that of competitors, such as Walmart. Our beloved bookstores and small retailers began closing, unable to compete against Amazon’s predatory pricing and our own newly formed Amazon habit. Perhaps we also noticed that Amazon’s prices were no longer very good and that much of what we were buying was junk. More recently, our lingering doubts have turned to alarm. Amazon has too much power and the value we once perceived is no longer there. We wonder, Why am I giving these assholes my money?

I started using Amazon in the late 1990s for the same reasons as everyone else. But in January 2025, after some deliberation, I deleted my account. Although I had considered quitting many times before, caution prevented me from acting. I reviewed my historical purchases on Amazon and was shocked by the amount of money I had spent. It was clear to me that all the purchases I made on Amazon could have been made elsewhere, and likely at a better price. Amazon was an objectively destructive force, and I was financially enabling it. This relationship had to end. If you are still reading, it is likely that you also have substantial concerns about Amazon. Perhaps you are alarmed by

the ecological damage, the abusive labor practices, or the unseemly political alignments or perhaps you simply miss your local bookstore. I am here to persuade you to delete your account. If you are unable to delete your account, I encourage you to stop buying from Amazon and using the company’s services. At the very least, I ask you to cancel Prime. Amazon is hurting you, me, our respective communities, and our shared culture. If we can’t vanquish Amazon as a global menace, we can at least stop giving the company our money.

Amazon is scamming you

All the e-books you bought from Amazon? You do not own them. The movies? Sorry. Music? Forget it. You are locked in and potentially locked out. If you decide to delete your Amazon profile, you will quickly learn that your investment in Amazon digital media was an illusion. Amazon wraps your books, movies, and songs in Digital Rights Management (DRM) software, which limits your files to the Amazon platform. This was never really ownership at all. This lock-in effect is why many people stay on. Once I left Amazon, I began buying e-books from a German bookstore chain and was surprised that I was able to select my preferred file format and use the file in any way I wanted. It was like I owned it.

Prime is the bigger scam

Amazon managed to persuade us to give a giant monopoly \$100 up front with a vague promise of better prices and fast delivery. While the delivery is fast, it is not much faster than that of independent online merchants. If you subscribed to Prime for better prices, you have been scammed. Let’s say you search for an item on Amazon and select “Prime.” You will receive a long list of results. The top results reflect the merchants who were willing to pay for placement. On average, the first four offers listed are 25% more expensive than the best-priced item. And where do you find this “best price?” On average it lies 17 offers down the list. Chances are you never see it. For this “service,” Amazon earns a tidy \$50 billion annually in product placement fees. Amazon wins, you lose.

Amazon is scamming its merchants

As we see above, merchants pay handsomely for the privilege of appearing at the top of your search, no matter what their price is. Naturally, you are the one who pays these product placement fees through higher prices. But the fees—and the inevitable price increases—do not end there. Merchants must pay a substantial fee to be listed as Prime. Amazon makes merchants without Prime status nearly invisible. In

addition, Amazon pushes its merchants to use its own Fulfillment by Amazon logistics services. Amazon’s logistics are generally more expensive and less flexible than other alternatives, yet merchants sign on anyway out of necessity. Like Prime, opting out of Fulfillment by Amazon means you are difficult to find on the platform. The trap set for merchants is structurally similar to the trap set for consumers: You must be there. Of course, the result of this arrangement is that Amazon takes an astonishingly large percentage of every purchase for itself. To survive, the merchant passes these onerous costs on to you. It does not end there. Because it is generally illegal for a merchant to charge a different price online than offline, the inflation manufactured by Amazon seeps into the physical world, driving up prices everywhere.

Amazon’s privacy trade-off is a bad deal

Over 600 million people globally use Alexa-enabled devices, including the Echo Smart Speaker, Echo Show, and other associated products. Consumers use voice commands to summon weather reports, traffic updates, launch a playlist or set a reminder. We understand that the device is active day and night, listening for the word “Alexa,” which serves as a prompt. Until recently, Amazon allowed local audio processing, but in 2025, the company revoked that bit of freedom. Even if you had already purchased the device and believed that you “owned” it, Amazon now mandates data processing in the cloud, where it can be stored, and analyzed, indefinitely. The implications are serious. Amazon’s stated reason for forcing its users to process audio data in the cloud was to train the AI for the upcoming Alexa Plus. Although Amazon says it will use the data to train AI, then delete them, there is no reason to believe this claim. Why is this such a priority for Amazon? The AI in Alexa Plus is, of course, a growth story. More importantly, the data will be used to sell you more stuff through predictive analysis. And those are the best-case scenarios.

Amazon now captures, and stores, all the conversations it can collect from Alexa-enabled users, against their wishes, forever. How bad can that really be? One can imagine some truly sinister possibilities, but let’s instead focus on what we already know. *Bloomberg* reported that Amazon employees were required to listen to 1,000 Alexa voice recordings in a single shift for system training. These recordings included, as you might imagine, instances of domestic violence and sexual activity. Recently, Amazon sent 1,700 audio files of a stranger to an Amazon user in Germany. The company explained it away as “human error.” Amazon

has also provided Alexa voice recordings as evidence in a New Hampshire murder trial. For most of us, this scenario is remote. But imagine this: What if Amazon provided aggregated and analyzed audio data to ICE or the Department of Homeland Security? Of course, such an action would be illegal, but I am not sure that matters anymore. If Amazon provided an Alexa data feed to ICE, you and I would never know. And the Alexa-enabled homes raided by ICE would likewise be in the dark. If you have an Echo or Alexa device, today is the day to permanently dispose of it.

Let’s summarize the value exchange. You provide an endless voice recording of your household to Amazon that may be stored forever and potentially used against you. In return, you gain the ability to say, “Alexa, play ‘Yacht Rock Gold.’”



David Turnbull

Top Ten

Indo-European Horse Deities

- Ashvins & Nasatyas (Vedic)
- Castor & Pollux (Greek)
- Hengist & Horsa (Anglo-Saxon)
- Epona (Celtic)
- Rhiannon (Welsh)
- Sleipnir (Norse)
- Svetovit (Slavic)
- Ašvieniai (Baltic)
- Poseidon Hippios (Greek)
- Hayagriva (Hindu)

—David Turnbull

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For book lovers, Amazon is the enemy

Amazon now controls the sales of 42% of physical books, 72% of e-books, 40% of new book sales, and 85% of self-published authors. Amazon used its market power to dictate the release dates of books in electronic form and imposed uniform pricing for publishers like Hachette and Macmillan. Amazon sold e-books at a \$2-4 loss to build dominance for its Prime and Kindle platforms. The result was driving down what consumers were willing to pay for books. Amazon used its market power to extract “arbitrary and unexpected fees” from publishers. Publishers who resisted found their shipping times delayed by two to three weeks. If you have read books about the mafia, this might sound familiar.

Predatory pricing lies at the heart of Amazon’s domination of the book market. In the U.S., toothless regulators stood by while Amazon sold books at or below cost, driving 50% of independent bookstores into extinction. Anyone who travels in the EU has noticed a conspicuously large number of independent book merchants. This is not a coincidence. The EU forbids predatory pricing and conscientiously protects its book market from Amazon. Americans were not so fortunate.

The vulgar and barbarous kingdom

Making a bad movie is not a crime, and neither is watching one. But Amazon’s new Prime feature, *War of the Worlds*, is bad with corrupt intent. Ice Cube plays a family man and surveillance expert for the Department of Homeland Security. The plot is a clumsy remake of the original 1953 *War of the Worlds* which was expertly directed by Byron Haskin. The rot at the core of this film begins to stink in the first few minutes. The viewer is introduced to a side character who (surprise!) is a delivery driver for Amazon. The camera moves unsubtly towards the Amazon-branded uniform and truck. One quickly notes that “Amazon” is inserted awkwardly into lame jokes and stilted dialogue throughout the movie. Lines like, “Wait, give him an Amazon gift card for a thousand bucks!” or “You risked our whole lives to spy on our Amazon carts” land with a sickening thud.

Réquiem

by Jesús Sepúlveda

for Paul Dresman

We awaited the news
Years of rain and words
 behind curtains of smoke

The candles are lit
 the boat begins its journey

I dance alone
The old sailor departs

A photograph of a garage
 that never quite develops

In the river of dreams
 Lorca's duende
 recites its last verse

Fireflies light up the night
 A certainty that could not be

There was a geograph
 and a few books

What is the purpose of poetry
 if not to remember our dead?

The ornithologist plucks the feathers
 of the bird of illusion

Legend says the magicians
 followed a star

Dazzling light of poets
 or a drifting flame

Where will those creatures
 drawn on the bark of a ceiba tree
 lead you?

That night I screamed
 angst of my heritage

Esperábamos la noticia
Años de lluvia y palabras
 tras las cortinas de humo

Las velas alumbran
 y la barca comienza su recorrido

Yo bailo solo
El viejo marinero parte

Fotografía de un garaje
 que no termina de ser revelada

En el río de los sueños
 el duende de Lorca
 recita su último verso

Luciérnagas que encienden la noche
Certeza que no pudo ser

Hubo una geografía
 y unos cuantos libros

¿Para qué sirve la poesía
 sino para recordar a nuestros muertos?

El ornitólogo le quita las plumas
 al ave de la ilusión

La leyenda cuenta
 que los magos siguieron una estrella

Luz fulgurante de los poetas
 o llama a la deriva

¿Adónde te llevarán
 esas criaturas
 dibujadas en la corteza de una ceiba?

Esa noche grité
 ideologizado por mis herencias

We were actors
 in an unfinished play

You won't know the author's name
nor the date of its premiere

There was a paper helicopter
 and a somber hotel
 that you illuminated in another tongue

Oh, damned English language
in the *American labyrinth!*

History of an empire you knew how to document
Conscientious objector
friend
and *traduttore*

The book of Rastafarians will be opened tonight
Let no page remain without a purpose

Your image radiates throughout the dining room

I will go to St. Petersburg for you
 and watch the sky unfold

The specter of poetry haunts the world
Magic potion with Mozart in the background

In the patio of memories
 the Wurlitzer spins

It plays the same music over and over again

Éramos entonces
 actores de una obra inconclusa

No sabrás el nombre de su autor
ni la fecha de su estreno

Hubo un helicóptero de papel
 y un hotel sombrío
 que fuiste alumbrando en otro idioma

¡Oh, maldita lengua inglesa
en el laberinto americano!

Historia de un imperio que supiste documentar
Objetor de conciencia
traduttore
y amigo

El libro de los rastafaris se abrirá esta noche
Que no quede ninguna página sin destino

Tu imagen ilumina el comedor

Iré por ti a San Petersburgo
 y miraré el cielo extenderse

El espectro de la poesía recorre el mundo
Poción mágica con Mozart de trasfondo

Y en el patio de los recuerdos
 el Wurlitzer gira

Toca la misma música una y otra vez



Ty-ku

History repeats
again, again and again—
and it won't shut up
—Ty Connor



Submit!

*Not to our greedy
neoliberal overlords
who care not
one whit for your
flesh-and-blood life—*

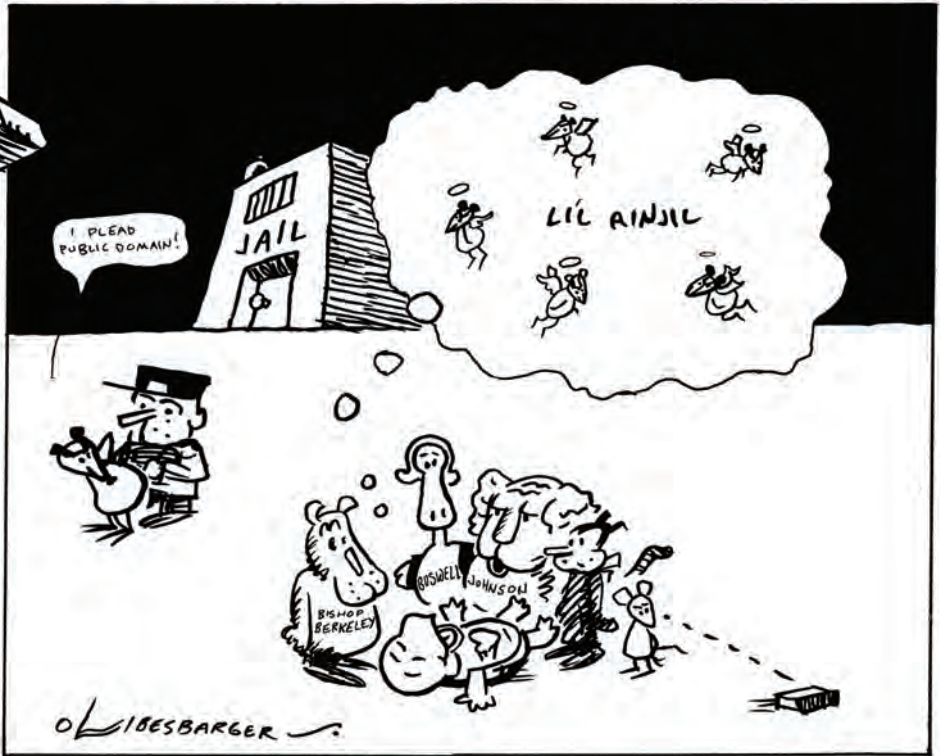
but rather your
reviews, stories,
cartoons, art,
and photos to
Emergency Horse

Details online

There's more to the
Horse
on Substack

Stories posted every week!

emergencyhorsemagazine.substack.com



Boarding your
hovercraft
and
plundering
its fury
since 1991

Emergency Horse



It has been Brought to our Attention

that a certain Archibald McPheely of Seattle has been using our name (Emergency Horse, est. 1991) to hawk this [checks notes] quality toy.

First things first, we make the demands around here!

First: clatter headlong flat-out down the stairway like a plank. Make a noise that leaves a mark, soldier! Careful ... careful: PROBE THE DINKY AND HOP TO IT! Listen here, the divine don't belong here, never did. They need to go back where they came from. [squid emoji] I will NOT stop writing. In the beginning the word, and then sometime later, I got paid by the word. Words, words, words! Guess what? I'm naked and running as fast as I can! I cannot be stopped, don't even try! Ha-ha-ha! Wait. Oh my God—NO NO NO!

—Bob Folder, esq.

Psychopomp

My pants hit the ground

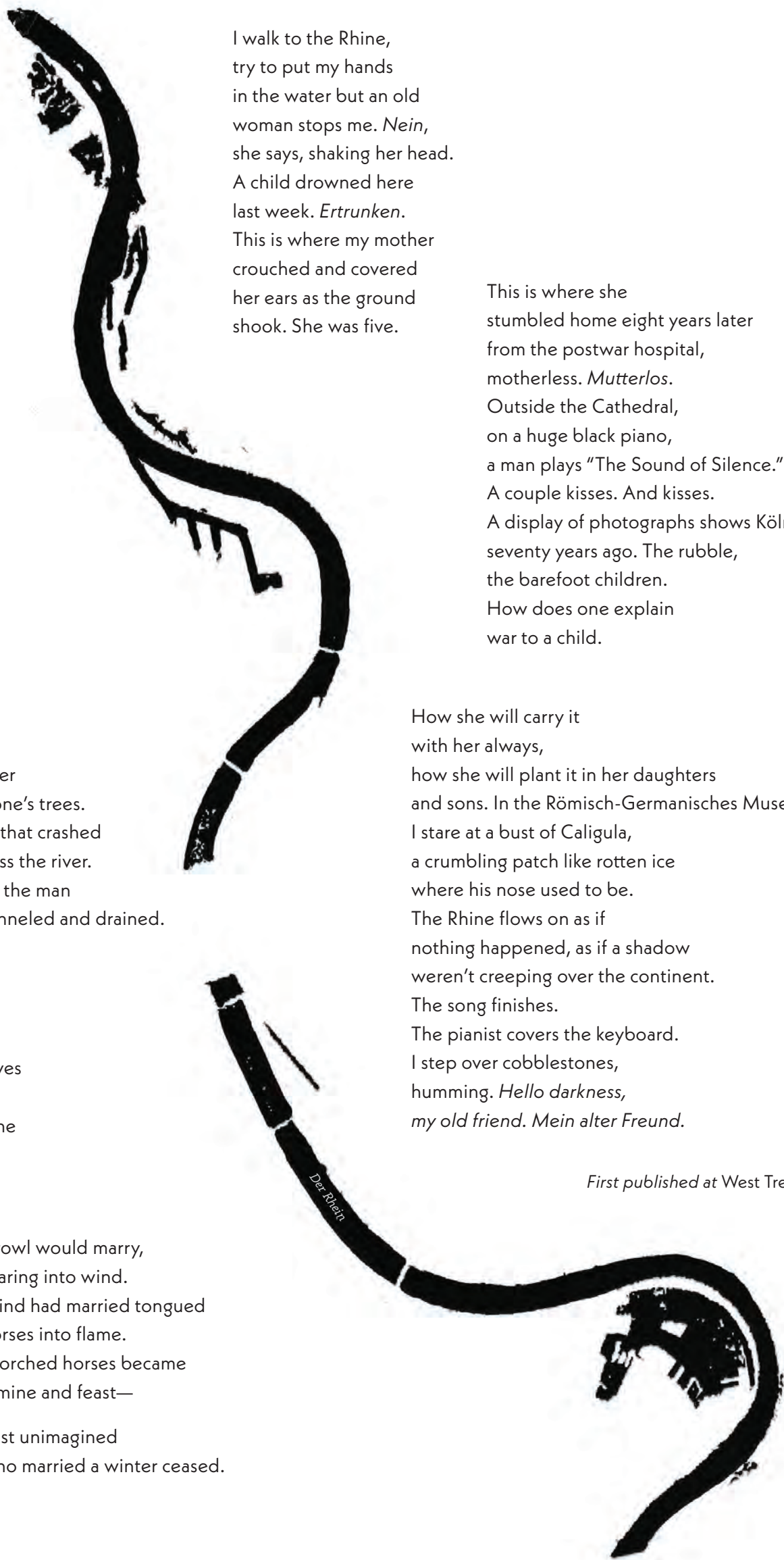
with a clang

and angels sang out

Bangstrom/Folder

Erica Goss

Köln Notebook



I walk to the Rhine,
try to put my hands
in the water but an old
woman stops me. *Nein*,
she says, shaking her head.
A child drowned here
last week. *Ertrunken*.
This is where my mother
crouched and covered
her ears as the ground
shook. She was five.

This is where she
stumbled home eight years later
from the postwar hospital,
motherless. *Mutterlos*.
Outside the Cathedral,
on a huge black piano,
a man plays "The Sound of Silence."
A couple kisses. And kisses.
A display of photographs shows Köln
seventy years ago. The rubble,
the barefoot children.
How does one explain
war to a child.

She could marry the winter
that broke everyone's trees.
She could marry the tree that crashed
unexplained across the river.
She could marry the river the man
dredged and channeled and drained.
She the river became.

She would carry the ice
calving a new story.
She would carry the story that cleaves
prey from polar bears.
She would carry the bears' final bone
shiver and quake—
She the hunger would marry.

She the growl would marry,
roaring into wind.
She the wind had married tongued
horses into flame.
She who torched horses became
famine and feast—

She, a beast unimagined
who married a winter ceased.

How she will carry it
with her always,
how she will plant it in her daughters
and sons. In the Römisch-Germanisches Museum,
I stare at a bust of Caligula,
a crumbling patch like rotten ice
where his nose used to be.
The Rhine flows on as if
nothing happened, as if a shadow
weren't creeping over the continent.
The song finishes.
The pianist covers the keyboard.
I step over cobblestones,
humming. *Hello darkness,*
my old friend. Mein alter Freund.

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She Could Marry the Winter

Jenny Root