

TRANS FUTURES



a zine by Shapeless Press



**Shapeless Press stands in solidarity
with the people of Palestine**

in their struggle to survive genocide and colonial oppression. Our organization is founded on principles of anti-colonial thought. None of us are free until all of us are free, so we encourage our readers and collaborators to get involved: find an action near you and protest, call your representatives, donate eSIMs to people in Gaza.

Use the tools you have to help make the future you want.

TRANS FUTURES

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Preface / Glen K. Rodman, Editor

“When we talk about a world without prisons; a world without police violence; a world where everyone has food, clothing, shelter, quality education; a world free of white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, heterosexism; we are talking about a world that doesn’t currently exist. But collectively dreaming up one that does means we can begin building it into existence.”

— **Walidah Imarisha,**

“Rewriting the Future: Using Science Fiction to Re-Envision Justice.”

What is FUTURES?

When we take the chaos and boredom of living and set it in order, interpret its meaning and render it stylized, we are making art. When we believe a different kind of living could be real, we are making futures.



How will FUTURES make me feel?

Yearning. For safety, for liberation, for peace, for understanding, for justice.

The Present informs how we imagine FUTURES.

FUTURES is inseparable from the pain of now. Our present suffering influences the content of our dreams and our capacity to dream them.

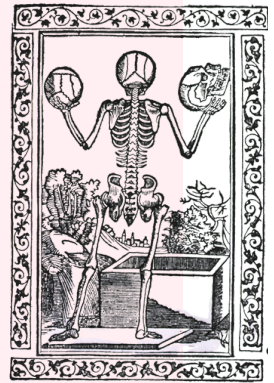
We imagine futures as an act of survival. We have to believe we will be here tomorrow, next month, next year, ten years from now. Otherwise, how can we make plans and prepare for a life lived long-term? We must exist and work and grow old in a world that is hostile to our existence. We create that imagined future in the present with our actions, patience and resilience.

Preface (cont'd) / Glen K. Rodman, Editor

The Past informs how we imagine FUTURES.

Histories of domination, exploitation and resistance are the context that shape our present. It is impossible to build a liberated future without an understanding of these systems of oppression. As a white person and a citizen of a colonizer nation, I continue to learn to see the secret violence in the stories I and all my peers were told as children. To tell new stories, I look for what can be repurposed. Cast a wide net, find what is useful to you and recycle it, make it your own.

FUTURES and Shapeless Press is indebted to the future-making work of our artistic and pedagogical ancestors. We seek inspiration and guidance from teachers who've worked for decades in hope of a better future. This project could not exist without the visionary thought and writing of Walidah Imarisha, Samuel J. Delany, Sandy Stone, Angela Davis, Sayantani DasGupta, Ursula K. LeGuin, Paolo Freire, Susan Stryker, Edward Said, and many, many more.



FUTURES is Trans.

Transition itself is speculative fiction: imagining a future me that might be, and then living and hurting and healing into that person. The man writing this can look back at the girl he once was with compassion and gratitude, because that girl's capacity to imagine a better future brought him into being. Trans people know that radical change is possible. Our knowledge of this is a gift to humanity.

The vast complexity and diversity of the trans community is sometimes perceived as a source of discord, but I believe it is a strength. Through art, we learn about each other's place in the struggle. We share each other's pain and wonder. In the art we make, I see the infinite possibilities of human experience and expression.



Preface (cont'd) /
Glen K. Rodman, Editor

**What future does
Shapeless Press imagine?**

Imagine a future where all trans people are freed from poverty, incarceration, medical discrimination, state violence and colonial oppression. All of us are safe and fed and nobody has to fight anymore. With our material needs met, we are free to be the meaning-makers we know ourselves to be, in solitude or a spotlight. Imagine a future of sustainable artmaking, where survival does not depend on capital and worthiness is decoupled from consumability. Our creative relationships are based on mutual trust and respect; compassionate communication instead of hierarchy and competition. Each of us is wiser and stronger for the skills, knowledge and passion we share with our collaborators.

Imagine yourself in that future. Imagine that future self remembering this present, now past.

Now. What will you write?

Love & Solidarity,
Glen K. Rodman



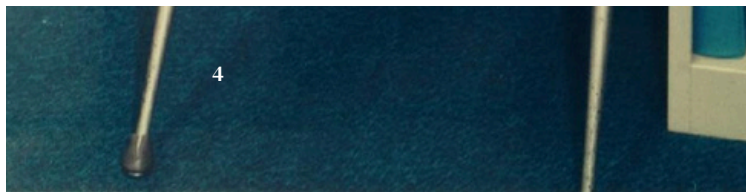
OUT OF OFFICE: OUT LIKE FREE / mieko ryu

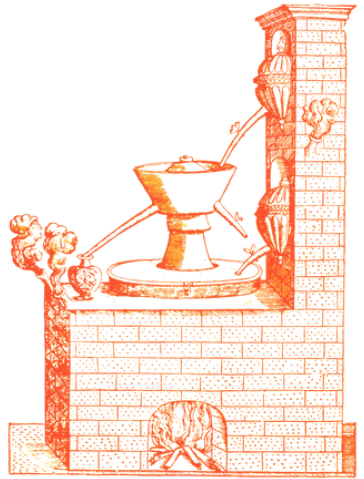
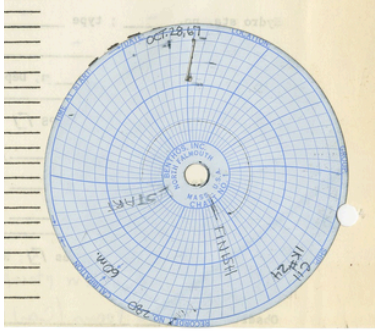
[SUBJECT]
OUT OF OFFICE: OUT LIKE FREE
[AUTOMATIC MESSAGE]

Hello,
Thank you for your message. I am out of the office [like, out out]

postcolonial out
out like favorite belly button outie kind of out
out like gay gay gay
out of the spoons required to make things nice
out of fucks to give about your acid wash explanation of my experience
out past my anxieties
out where a younger version of me with a bowl cut, red jumpsuit, and little white
sneakers, drags
me by the teeny tiny, dimpled hand to the ancestor place, the out place
out beyond death
out past our fears of being outnumbered
outstanding / out-rolling / out-lying down because maybe we need some goddamn rest
out like I needed out so bad I built myself a whole other universe where everything is
queer and
out of place
where my gender could never be snuffed out and
neither could my friends
where our bodies are ours and
free, really free
out like free
out like liberated
from ideas that (re)capture us into the very cages we are trying to abolish
out like abolition
like something-more-than-we-could-have-imagined
out like maybe we live on the margins
because we can't fit inside the suffocating space you imagined for us
out like we are out
and we are never coming back.

with love,
s.q.p.





cocktail / Charlie Jasper

i dream
of no longer needing to explain jack shit

i already practice a kind of telepathy
between myself and those who don't bother trying to stay in line
i have said before it's harder to try to lie
we only have one life, why bother pretending to be somebody else?

and it's usually they
sometimes he sometimes she
a cocktail, shaken
tasting all of its elements, blended in harmony,
the flavor lasts on your tongue
but might burn a little going down

my first sip tasted so lovely, too lovely and
i began to, weirdly, understand prohibition
because i became this bolder, fuller, more honest
version of myself which is always scary

turning inward all the time to figure out who i am felt so indulgent but once i settled into
ambiguity i learned how i was connected to a lineage a history, a culture, i am a new york
transsexual femme drag king genderfucker and

learning everyone had their own gender cocktail
and that these recipes are passed down between family,
backstage i give a sweet friend his first t gel,
and my friend's husband gifts me needles,
i cook for her and she gifts me fabric,
my trans family laces up my corset,

i need you and you need me and i am so happy you're
alive



you make it up as you go along,
muddled mint, sugar, a slice of lime
wax your body down but flatten your chest,
spiro, lip filler, buzz cut,
simple syrup,
estradiol, swallowed or pricked
testosterone, sticky, smeared or a shot
of rum and/or
tequila and/or
long hair, tattoos, button down buttoned all the way down,
cropped curls, eyeliner, thigh-high boots, and stubble,
soda (or seltzer, or bubbly water)
formless, shapeless, shapeshifting, vague, beautiful, handsome,
mirage, share our ingredients, we have enough, and it tastes better that way.

Two Cicadas / Zhi Kai Vanderford

Over-saturated with regret
Forlorn man, I stand at my barred window
I hear the white noise of another cell
guard informs, rule violation issued.
A bug crawls on my bars, insignificantly
Bug seems unaware of its existence
and dismal chance of survival
Guard tells him to calm down,
threatens to spray harmful chemicals if he does not comply.
Prisoner yelling,
breaks his own belongings,
it is his last bastion of being heard,
before temporary insanity.

The bug is alone, but literally one of millions.
Bugs have survived cold, heat and hungry birds.
Bugs hit the windshield every day, get swatted, never knowing the dangers of the day.
Guard sprays control chemicals,
armored team forces entry.
Thrashing prisoner douses guards with whatever is near.
Prisoner is restrained,
carried out like a funeral corpse,
taken to isolation,
but squashed like a bug.
The fortunate bug is hidden
in plain sight,
quietly hopeful
the reason for existence is love
This bug will die trying to get home,
camouflaged next to the bars.



what makes a “Good Person” / Temple R. Loveli

I stand in front of a classroom
of 30 teenage boys
who keep repeating

“There are only two genders”

“You look in your pants and thats your gender.”

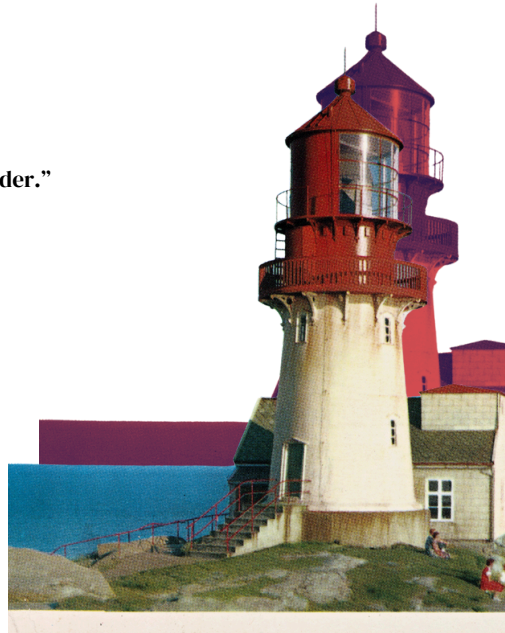
As if repeating themselves
will make it true.
As if repeating themselves
will make me disappear.

I am suppose to be teaching them about
Boundaries
about
Consent
but I did not consent to this.

Earlier,
I asked the boys to help me make a list
of what makes a good person.
One boy said a **Christian**.
I wrote the word **Faithful** on the board.

John 8 reads
“**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone**”

Over my entire life
more than enough stones have been thrown at me
But I refuse to carry them any longer.



what makes a “Good Person” (cont’d)

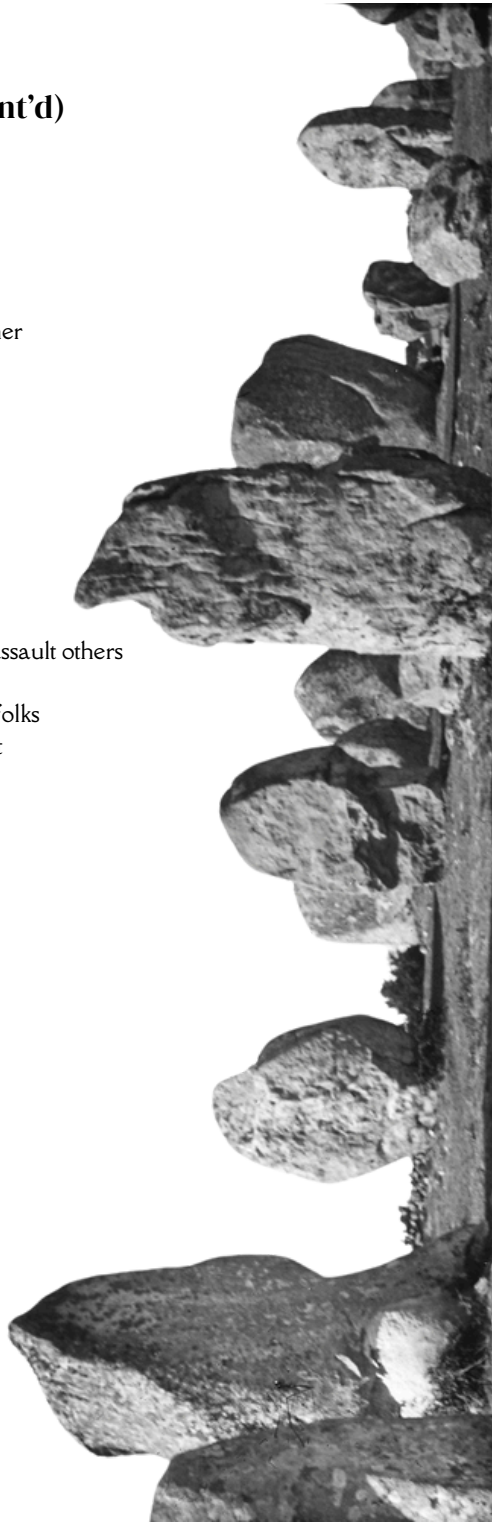
I am handing those stones back.
You can have them,
Father.
For it is you who has sinned
not me.
You who has taught the children to eat each other
To tear each other apart.
Bit by bit.
Stone by stone.
You,
Who made me swallow so many stones
And tried to put them in my hands
To hit others.
Some of the boys argue
that a trans woman is a man
and that “such people” go into the bathroom to assault others

I forget to tell them that one in two transgender folks
will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. I don’t
tell them that I was.

Instead
I think of the weighted stones in my stomach,
how I must fight for acknowledgment
everyday.
even with myself
And how it makes me cry,
alone for weeks,
talking to no one
not even me.

I think of the woman I love
and how everyday
she must be so brave

She must watch every corner in the bathroom
for someone trying to throw stones
and no matter what bathroom she choses
She is not safe.





what makes a “Good Person” (cont’d)

I want to tell them how brave she is
how brave I am
I want to tell them
what I am is not a burden
or threat
but contains more joy than they can imagine and I try
But I can hardly speak
over the sound of stones
being thrown at me.

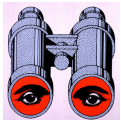
I don't blame them.
They are children.
But still
I am

At the end of the class
some of the boys who said nothing but looked at me directly
say

Thank you.
They say
Thank you,
Miss

I don't correct them.

(untitled) / Rho Chung





letter to an auntie's friend's teen child who just got top surgery / mieko ryu

1. some fruit is pinched at the stem
others are twisted and pulled close to flesh
at times, I forget my root stems— think myself dirt-locked
until I remember there is no pace truer
than an ant climbing tall on the camelia at my doorstep
2. if there is a drought
just know
my body is thirty percent made up of water you can have
3. some herbs stop growing when they flower
ovaries flushed with desperation,
but not you
4. have you ever asked the algae why they sing?
5. we open ourselves as an offering
not an invitation,
remember that—
6. some trees find a lover in fire
let the embrace of a flame mean the potential for a future





Trans Dreams of Critical Care Futures / MK Thekkumkattil

Previously published in “In the Future There Are No Hospitals,”
a zine of writing by care workers.

In the future, there are no hospitals. The government doesn't exist as we know it today, there's no regulating bodies or evidence-based practice or widely disseminated protocols. People die, young and often—elders die of sepsis with no antibiotics or ventilators, kids die of fevers and seizures and neurological complications, mothers die during childbirth with fetal cells entering their bloodstreams and setting off a cascade of clotting disorders that make them bleed out in their homes, in front of their children and husbands.

In the future, death is all around us. It is not cordoned off in sterile environments where the ill are disappeared. The ill are all around us. We cannot forget the poison in our waterways and soil when we help our neighbors, dying of cancer, to get to the bathroom; we cannot ignore the thickened air of pollution when our children can't get care for the cough that won't go away. We never forget our mortality—there is no distinct class of caregivers and healthcare providers, we are all caregivers and healthcare providers. There is no distinct class of patients, either. We are all both, the cared for and the one who gives care, the dying and the living, the survivor and the dead.

When there are no hospitals, there will be no prisons, either—state apparatuses to control and disappear people are gone. Instead, we must see the ugly, the decay, the crazy, the ill, the traumatized, the hurt, the abused, the violent, the dying. We learn to accept what is without controlling it—to accept the pain of death and chaos without believing there's a form of life that can exist without its opposite.

Gender Vender / Andi Benet



an excerpt from
Fruiting Bodies / jay griffith



Read
the full
text
here!



Tugging at the bottom of her dress, Jordan made her way to the elevator of the address Jen had sent her. Lee was set up at home, three humidifiers humming and the bedroom door firmly closed. The warmth had made Jordan nostalgic for her college friends, now loosely scattered around the city and often absorbed in their own lives. She was grateful for the chance to see them again. Alone in the elevator up to the rooftop, Jordan examined her reflection in the metal doors. She looked pretty tonight, the way she looked when she was twenty. When the doors slid open, she saw her friends waving from a table near the bar. A round of hugs, then compliments, then important reports; Christine had been passed over for a promotion at work, Cindy had a publisher expressing interest in her manuscript, Bea was thinking of moving to Boston. Jordan was impressed by how adult all these women seemed, how self-possessed and sure.

“How have you been, Jordan? Are you still seeing that same person you told us about?” This from Cindy, a mousy English major who had lived across from Jen and Jordan’s dorm room freshman year. Jordan smiled shyly.

“Lee, yeah, I am. They’re ~” Grasping for the words to describe Lee to her friends, Jordan paused and looked around the table. “They’re actually living with me right now, at least for the moment. Just while they figure things out.”

Cindy reached out and touched Jordan’s elbow. “Jen told us a little bit about it earlier,” she said gently. Jordan jerked back in surprise, then turned to glare at Jen. She had forgotten the conversation they had over the phone weeks ago, when Jordan was feeling particularly frazzled; she couldn’t remember what exactly had been said. Avoiding Jordan’s eyes, Jen spread her hand out on the table and examined her nails.



an excerpt from
Fruiting Bodies (cont'd)

“Actually, Jordy, we’ve been meaning to talk to you about this whole situation.”

“I don’t know,” added Bea. “It seems kind of, ugh, co-dependent?”

Christine now: “I get that you want to help, but also if they can’t even communicate what they need from you, then why are they expecting you to just figure it out?”

“It’s totally manipulative,” said Jen. “Like, you’ve been seeing them for what ~ six months? Less? And now they’re just bumming around your apartment, not working, keeping you from going out with your friends. We’re worried about you, Jordan. You’re not obligated to just cater to their every need.”

The table spun as everyone else leaned in and nodded.

“It’s not ~ I mean ~”

“It’s okay.” Jen wrapped her arm around Jordan’s shoulder. “Just, when you’re ready to prioritize yourself, we’re here for you.”

Jordan looked away. Off the edge of the rooftop, the hazy city skyline flattened like a cardboard cutout. “Yeah,” she said. “I guess.”

Then Cindy, gracious Cindy, always ready to defuse the situation, clapped her hands. “Enough, okay! Jordan looks upset. Let’s go dance.”

It must have been four when Jordan slunk, steaming drunk, into her kitchen. The night was hot, too hot for November, and dry. From under the bedroom door, she could see Lee’s gentle, bioluminescent glow. Tomorrow, she’d have to make sure that the room was moist enough, maybe change the curtains so the windows wouldn’t let in so much sun. Despite her best efforts to ignore them, her friends’ words crashed around in her head.



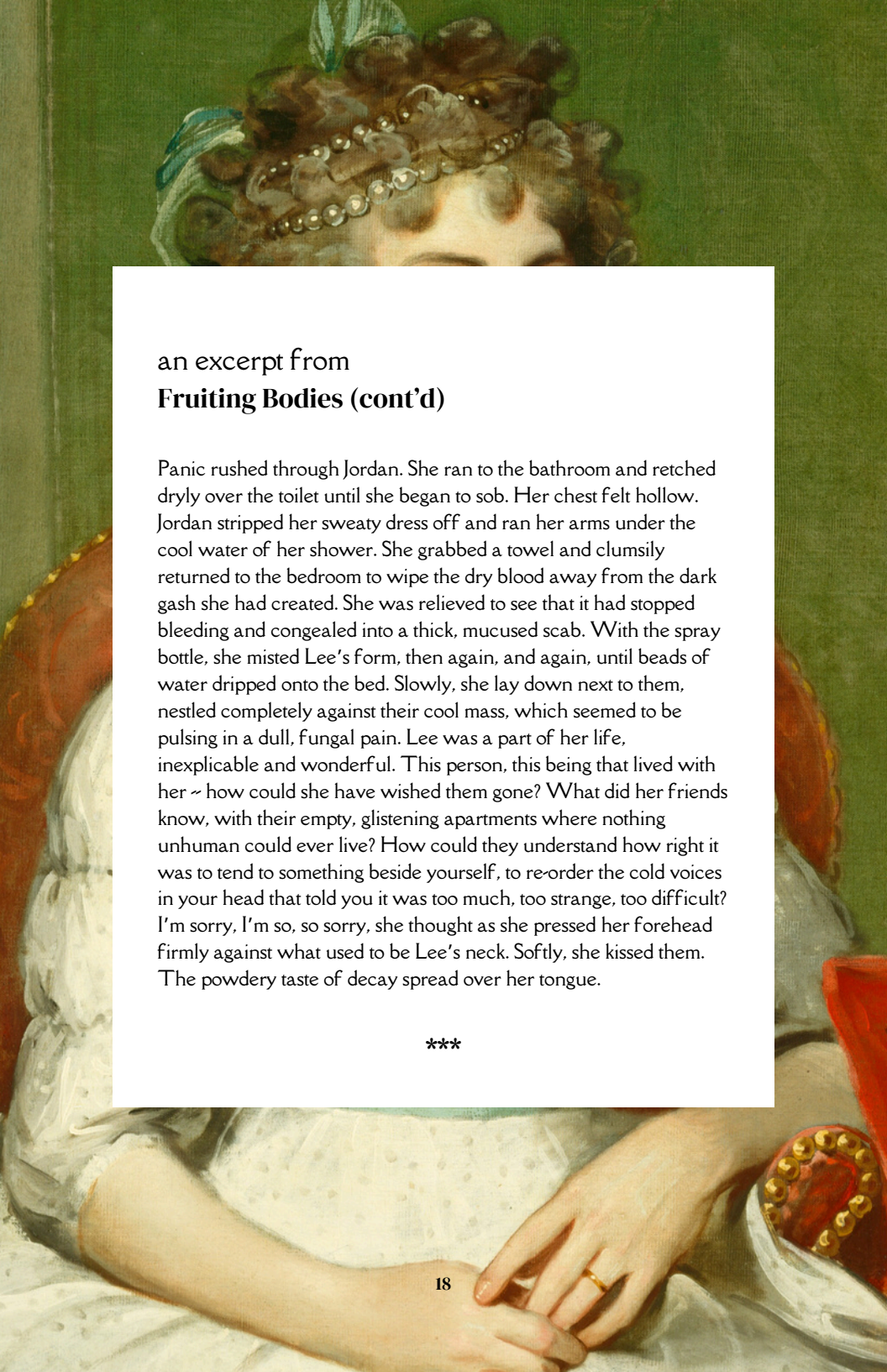
an excerpt from
Fruiting Bodies (cont'd)

Jordan overfilled a glass of water. Suddenly, she was tired of sleeping on the couch, tired of hearing the low rumble of humidifiers, tired of moving around her own home with the knowledge that something was laying in the room next door. She remembered desperately the simplicity of her life before Lee, without the nagging awareness of obligation. If only Lee could go back to their former self, the way they were this summer, then things would be easy again. They could still see each other. They could still date.

Jordan marched into the room. She put her hands on what she thought was Lee's shoulder and shook. Lee, as always, did not respond. Jordan shook harder, then harder still, until she found herself grasping at the carpet of white tendrils that covered them. She pulled. Beneath the first layer was more of the web-like substance. Jordan's teeth rattled. The strangeness of growths suddenly stung, and Jordan wondered if Lee had produced them just to see if she would do. She began to rip and tear, getting faster and more ferocious with each layer she pried off.

"Get out," she hissed.

Cream-colored spongy shreds littered the floor. One large, tentacle-like tendril seemed to lodge directly around their chest, and Jordan grasped it with both her hands. Bracing her foot against the bed she heaved, breathlessly, until it snapped with a sickening thwap. A hot, sticky substance coated its end. From somewhere inside the white mound came a high keening, a strange sound that writhed in the dark bedroom. Jordan clapped her hands over her ears instinctively. Her temple throbbed. This was wrong. Lee was hurt. Desperately, Jordan tried to place the broken pieces back, running her palm over Lee's form to calm them. It's okay, she insisted to herself. When she pulled away, her forearms were covered in blood.



an excerpt from
Fruiting Bodies (cont'd)

Panic rushed through Jordan. She ran to the bathroom and retched dryly over the toilet until she began to sob. Her chest felt hollow. Jordan stripped her sweaty dress off and ran her arms under the cool water of her shower. She grabbed a towel and clumsily returned to the bedroom to wipe the dry blood away from the dark gash she had created. She was relieved to see that it had stopped bleeding and congealed into a thick, mucused scab. With the spray bottle, she misted Lee's form, then again, and again, until beads of water dripped onto the bed. Slowly, she lay down next to them, nestled completely against their cool mass, which seemed to be pulsing in a dull, fungal pain. Lee was a part of her life, inexplicable and wonderful. This person, this being that lived with her ~ how could she have wished them gone? What did her friends know, with their empty, glistening apartments where nothing unhuman could ever live? How could they understand how right it was to tend to something beside yourself, to re-order the cold voices in your head that told you it was too much, too strange, too difficult? I'm sorry, I'm so, so sorry, she thought as she pressed her forehead firmly against what used to be Lee's neck. Softly, she kissed them. The powdery taste of decay spread over her tongue.

Poem I. / Zhi Kai Vanderford

Note: I find Christians are the most compassionate yet sometimes judgmental people. I based this writing on Bible verses Matthew 25:31-40, which in sum to me says, “feed and clothe the hungry and strangers, look after the sick and imprisoned. Whatever you do to the LEAST, you did for me.”

I AM LESS

I've served 37 years as #145673

Stripped, I am nameless

14,000 lives, in the sea of California incarcerated faces,

I am faceless.

I am censored and sightless.

I am a U.S. citizen but vote less.

I am on the U.S. census but worthless.

I pay state and Federal taxes but I am useless.

I am LGBTQ transmale that some deem godless.

Now, my mother has passed, I am loveless.

Fed like cattle some go to the slaughterhouse now lifeless.

I have known those on death row, I am helpless.

My incessant apologies turn protest-

My tongue cut out and lips sewn shut-

Blind justice can't hear that I am hopeless.

Without you I am voiceless.



an excerpt from

Cumulative Realities / Stefanie Carter Cuthbert



Read the full
text here!

Between financial fraud scandals, sex trafficking gangs, and self-driving cars' habit of killing people, public transport is a nightmare. In the end, Navi and I decide to take a train. She packs mace in her handbag and I make sure I tuck a knife up my sleeve.

After an hour riding the train from Camden Town, we follow the directions to Derry's pinged location and find them with a laptop on the ruin of a public bench. A pile of plastic wrappers lies beside them.

"Can I bum one of your edibles?" I say, pointing to the pile.

"Oh," Derry says, smirking, "they're just cough drops. I got hooked when I had COVID way back when. They help me concentrate."

Probably for the best with the price of weed these days. I lower my backpack and sit down beside Derry. Unfastening the buckles and inside zip encourages Jojo to jump out and inspect her strange new surroundings.

"I'll need the cat's password and any encryption codes she's got," they say.

I give the codes over and that's it. Derry's inside the ones and zeroes of Jojo's brain.

We get plenty of hackers come by the shop, sometimes to browse or buy, other times for a safe place to be themselves without getting hate-crimed. This one woman, Imani, she came out pre-millennial and has hacked everyone. You name it, she's had a pop. When she's not at her computer, she's hounding us for obscure eighties manga. But I'm about as good at hacking as I am writing my own stories. So watching Derry makes my eyes glaze in about thirty seconds.



an excerpt from
Cumulative Realities (cont'd)

It must be fifteen minutes before they speak again. "And the cat's good to go."

I glance down at Jojo, still as a taxidermy. Only the flickering code in her eyes gives her away. "What did you do to her?"

"Smuggled her onto the Corsair's network and turned her into a walking storage device. And there's this."

Derry presses an arrow key on the laptop and Jojo moves forward. A thumb on the spacebar and she jumps. The shift key doubles her pace.

"Same controls as Quake," they said. "Neat, huh?"

"You hacked my cat!"

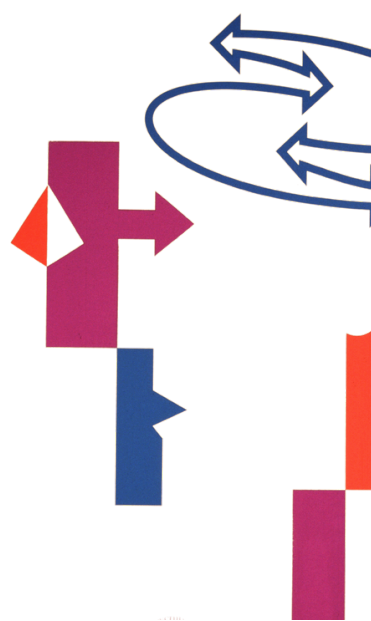
"It's only temporarily."

I glance disparagingly at Navi but say no more. Instead, I lean back on the barely holding-it-together bench to watch Derry's screen. The feed from Jojo's eyes displays with crystal clarity.

"Does she have any guns?" I say.

"It's your cat," Derry says.

"We found her actually," Navi says. "She was a mess, just lying there in the gutter. It must have taken eighteen months, but we've got some amazing customers. Everyone pitched in. They all knew how much we wanted a cat. But who can afford to look after a flesh and blood pet anymore?" *





TRANS FUTURES

was a zine by

Editor.....Glen K. Rodman
Designer.....Amalia Vavala
In conjunction with.....PRPL PPL
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“Close-up of Green Leaves of Hanging Plant” courtesy of [Cz.Jen](#)
(page 1.)

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