

BELLINGHAM, WA

ISSUE 1

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ACTIVISM · SPRING 23'

COMMUNITY ARTS AND

archiving a world in transition

Located on the traditional territories of the Lhaq'temish and Noxws'á?aq peoples

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Intro

This publication has been produced and curated by *Uneven Ground Media*, and printed by the *Bellingham Alternative Library*.

Uneven Ground is a collaborative project and platform that aims to create/archive works of meaning in the spaces of worlds lost and re-imagined. We locate our creative body in the liminal space of climate collapse — focused on landscapes and communities who are living through, working with, and struggling against geo-political and ecological erasure.

The Alternative Library is a cooperative lending library and community arts center located in Bellingham, WA, on occupied Coast Salish (Lummi) territory. They operate a small-press bookstore, with a selection of international independent publications, alongside books, zines, records, tapes and prints made by members of our community.

This is a creative community magazine that offers a space for reflection and dialogue about issues present in the community, and highlights the artistic work which this generates. This archive is an act of resistance against forgetting — a recognition that our future is determined by who we are and what we do today.

We are interested in authentic storytelling, artwork, and news grounded in community empowerment. This is a recurring publication, and will be coming out every few months. You can check out unevenground.media on instagram to keep up to date with submission windows. If you have any questions or would like to collaborate, please email us at unevengroundmedia@gmail.com

Inside this issue you will find poems, prose, artwork, community engagement materials, comics, and photos. The photos in this magazine are from the archives of *Uneven Ground*. They are not directly linked to any individual pieces but rather are a thematic and aesthetic narrative to bind together the whole piece.



POEMS

right now you are living: one day you will swarm with life

The Dog

There are no bad dogs just
 Long chains in wet yards and
 When the metal rusts to breaking, who can blame him
 For sinking once-proud teeth into flesh worth biting?
 What happens to a bad dog put down?
 Not cremated, not
 Buried in dog-sized casket
 Like the good dogs, with their good dog balls
 What happens to the sorry body of the backyard dog?
 Skin tented over tendon,
 Mouth clamped around the hand of God
 What happens to an empty yard once
 Full of one forgot?

— *Maya Gudapati**Apocalypse Whenever*

Death hangs from my
 head
 Clogs up the drain
 Swirls of rain
 Rusted pipes

Prickly pear
 Cactus teeth
 Naked no escape
 Ecstasy when

Turn on the boob tube
 Tits gone viral
 Innocence lost
 No escape

Cartoon violence
 Crushed skulls
 Old as time
 I would kill for that

Hips splayed
 Blood ingrained
 Divisible lips
 Hate only changed

Flys circle shit
 Squirrel guts exploded
 A Gnat kissed my
 cheek
 A Dragonfly dances like
 flames across the sky

Swamp scum up to
 necks
 Tadpoles scutter
 Bumble bees sip
 From the blades of
 honey

Mold eaten lily pads
 Frogs cracked croaks
 Dogs smoked choked
 bark
 Obsidian static hangs in
 the air

Maple leaves
 Weeping from the trees
 Watercolors leaked
 Swirl in the hazy winds

Drops of heat
 Drip from the heavens
 Grounds starved
 A thirst for the heavens
Apocalypse whenever

— *Grant Rierson*

Forgotten Hands

There are cities inside of cities
we never touch as
bodies with floating hands
made of carbon.

The city of webworms has walls of silk, which wrap around
the apple tree branches like smoke or armor, a womb.
You google 'How to get rid of webworm nests' and bend to scratch the moth tattoo on
your ankle.

The glow flashes back:
"Using a rake or long pole, simply pull down the webs and destroy the webworms
by hand. The pest can also be eliminated using biological methods by tearing a
hole in the delicate sack and allowing natural predators like yellow jackets, paper
wasps and birds to kill the caterpillars within"

Disembodied hands say:
thesmokeisreallyacocoonandwhatdothecaterpillarsthinkabout
while they melt and become moths ?

The body of capital constricts.

There is a metal city behind the Walmart on Meridian.
The people there are sleeping, brushing their hair, arguing, and cooking
behind walls made of shopping carts.
The cops haven't burned this city yet,
they're happy that no one in the high rises or hotels can
see it, taste it, hear it.

That is, until the shopping carts are piled so high they break through the green canopy
and a forgotten hand reaches into the sky.
It will hold a letter that says:
Thehouseofmoneywillfallandwhenitdoestherubblewontreachhere.

The body of capital is aging.

I live down the road from a sewage plant surrounded by a chain link fence,
the smell reaches all the way across the freeway
where in the shadow of an overpass hundreds of ducks are swimming,
and just downstream the salmon run in tens where there used to be
thousands;
bodies throwing themselves against the force of water and towards an instinct.

A man I met there had wonder in his eyes as he motioned towards a spider
dangling from an invisible thread over the water.
Turned his head, exclaimed that it was a 'damn shame' that the tents set up next to the
river blocked the walking path.

The river is loud but
if you listen you will hear:
Thisplaceisahomethisplacecanhold

The body of the world is breathing

— *Sophie McMahon*

A song called Baraye

A song called 'Baraye' caused a man to go to jail

It means 'for'

He says, "for dancing in the streets,
for the fear when kissing,
for my sister, your sister, our sisters.."

For the women who are fighting for their rights
For the women who feel as though it will never change
For the women who ran off long ago and look back now
For the women who have died fighting

For. Four.

Four seconds go by and I'm refreshing my feed
Another four seconds and I do it again
Waiting for the next death
For the next post
For the next arrest

A song called 'baraye' won a grammy
It means for

It won for the people of Iran
It won on a stage in front of millions
And yet there are not millions fighting for Iran
Often it even feels like only four
Four voices who care and speak up

A song called 'baraye' was written for women
It won a grammy
And no one is talking about the women

— *Kimiya Fanaeian*

The earth and the humans

The rain glosses over every leaf, every blade of grass creating a symphony of emerald so rich the pitter patters sing.

The humans sharpen their sorrows and count their things.

The flowers sip on the ancient drops, when they've had their fill, they let the rest drip to the patient growing ground.

The humans drown in medias so loud they can't hear a sound.

The bunnies nibble, filling their tummies before taking shelter in their burrows storing their scraps for winter, not a crumb is wasted.

The humans consume packaged food after packaged food craving the peace they've never tasted.

The rivers dance to the beat churning, laughing, partying all the way to the sea.

The humans hiss, hit, scream, in search, learning what it means to be.

The trees lovingly converse with the wind, and after fruitful discussion they breath deep, exhaling long and sweet.

The humans suffocate in the city, oozing with insecurity so lost they cry to each other
"am I pretty? Am I pretty?? Am I pretty?!"

The sky ebbs, its clouds spreading, shrinking, posing, taking the time to make art.

The humans' pain seethes, insisting they are better or worse than each other all with the same longing in their heart. Missing the crucial piece. A forest without trees.

— *Shira Williamson*

The truth is too much with us

the first poem that really struck me
 was 'The world is Too Much With Us'
 I do not remember the author
 but that feeling
 that overwhelming anxiety of the illusory
 intoxicating erotic, the holy tryptic -
 the is-is-not triad of being, knowing, and acting,
 that feeling, that dizziness of freedom as Kierkegaard says
 has never left.
 but it has transformed.
 for the world is indeed too much with us.
 I see it in the trees
 slowly being removed from 542 to allow for new fiber optic lines
 as I see it in the fake pine branches clumsily hung from 5G towers along the guide ~
 for even though there are no pines around the tower - it doesn't matter
 the disguise isn't working because it's actually disguised
 it's functional because we see the sign attempting to be something that hasn't freely
 existed in that place since before we were born.
 It is more a display of power than one of form:
 for it yells,
 'I don't need to be what I am obviously not, look what power I have, that form hath no
 pull on me to exert illusion'
 The world is too much with us.
 And In so saying, too, the truth is too much with us.
 As Zarathustra stumbled down his little hill he proclaimed what we all live
 every day, every second
 basking under the weight of futility
 even under the momentary light of dance, joy, song, and feast.
 For not only is god dead
 but dead he has been
 and we have not just killed him
 but the echoes of the beating of the carcass of divinity
 holds not even a spark in the dimmest corner of any of our minds
 we have exported and sold off not just truth
 but truth production
 to unspeakable monsters -
 machines with not just a divinely putrid benevolence of their own
 but a destiny of their own



beyond what can and cannot be uttered within the chasms of Babylon there exists another
 tongue

the tongue of truth which is now.
 Which has been becoming and which truly is becoming still.
 The world is too much with us, the truth is too much with us.
 The truth in this overwhelmingness - this anxiety
 the absolute explosive realization of The Truth
 the inherent implication of the logical conclusion of every dialectic
 every force, every movement rising and falling, both molecular and communal
 following every trail to its end
 meditating upon any piece of being or moment of now
 inevitably
 results in this truth.
 This unbearable truth.
 for the world is too much with us.
 for the truth is too much with us.
 for this truth is dizzying in its reality, as it is our unconsolable fate
 and yet it is beyond fate
 it is possibility, yet reality.
 Together -
 beyond contrast, in perpetuity.
 You can smell it in the oil that pools
 in concrete cracks on the sidewalk
 next to the homeless camp;
 hear it now amidst the cries of alienation
 the wails of the pathological individualization
 of each and every one of our collective sufferings
 our unbreakable sober witnessing to our eternal crucifixion of our hopes
 our dreams
 and our naivety.
 the truth is too much with us.
 you can taste it, this fate,
 this all encompassing end all be all of dialogues,
 of conversations benign and academic,
 the glossed over syllogism of every text of the channeled word.
 yes you can taste it, this truth
 on the wind as it blows
 hot and dry in late November,
 you can taste it in the springs
 fed by melting glaciers never to return

The Cat's Meow

you can taste it in the air
 as you lean out into the road
 as you sit in the back of a pickup
 as you long for that pure and true action of the
 free
 american
 man
 and it stings the back of your throat with the bitterness of knowledge
 that myth was never true, never righteous.
 just myth, and it is bitter indeed.
 you can taste this dizziness, this truth - on every breath
 on every street corner, within every city
 the world is again too much with us.
 the world has always been, too much with us.
 for underneath every rock unturned
 even the tiniest microbe calls out for it to stop,
 the great cacophony of exodus,
 the crash and bang of the colossal orchestra of the end
 dragged on its deafening roar of silence
 the weight of this sound of knowledge of truth
 breaks every hair
 in every ear
 of every being who sees it
 who breathes it
 who tastes it amidst the microplastics in the air
 who touches it
 who fucks it until it cannot give them fleeting glimpses of meaning anymore,
 we are fucked.
 and that is the truth, the truth that is too much with us.
 The world has gone and left us,
 shortly after god did,
 for we killed the world as we now kill ourselves
 and all we are left with is this truth.
 in its persnickety pervasiveness, the truth is too much with us.
 the truth, is too much with us.

— Morgan Scott

I know someone who

Says everyday he
 Hops in his 64 ford ranchero with a shiny pair of keys around his finger,

And the keys have ridges smooth like the waves when they're about two feet high on
 south beach and he turns those keys towards god to get a glimpse of those south beach
 waves before he puts them in the ignition and tries for a start

And when it turns over he says that it sputters at first and then when he finally decides to
 gas it it'll sputters and scream and sputter and scream

And it Sputters and screams down the Rickenbacker causeway and makes people turn
 circles towards it and give there graces to whomever takes them

He tells me that one day he decided it was time to get a cat so he got one, got one too
 soon to have a place for a cat so it lived in the ranchero and he had no better way to take
 care of it so it lived in the well of the passenger seat

Now he tells me his ranchero sputters and screams and purrs and purrs
 and screams down the Rickenbacker and occasionally it will meow too and this makes
 him smile even though it shouldn't,

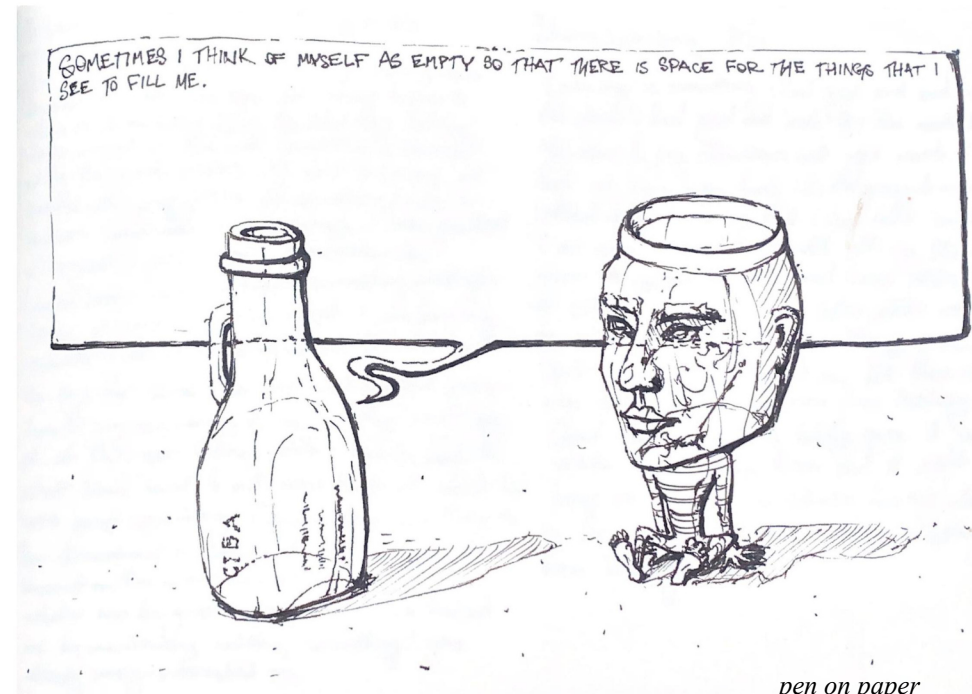
a lot of things makes him smile without reason and perhaps others would be annoyed by
 the facts of his life but to him they seem far more entertaining than they ought to be and
 perhaps there is something to be learned from that

— Axel Greening

VISUAL ART



Jarhead



pen on paper

— *Jack Kingsley*

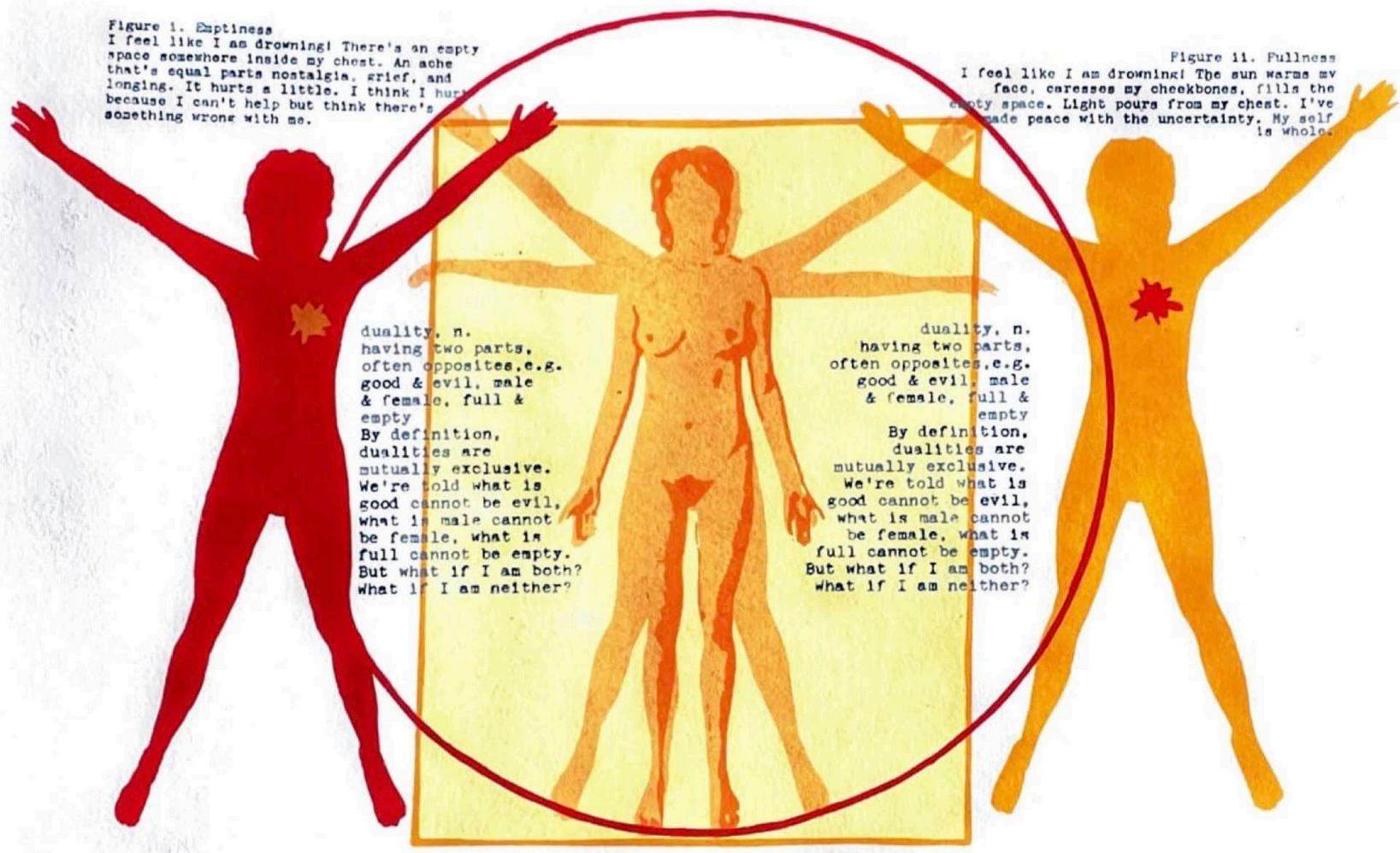


Figure I. Emptiness
 I feel like I am drowning! There's an empty space somewhere inside my chest. An ache that's equal parts nostalgia, grief, and longing. It hurts a little. I think I hurt because I can't help but think there's something wrong with me.

Figure II. Fullness
 I feel like I am drowning! The sun warms my face, caresses my cheekbones, fills the empty space. Light pours from my chest. I've made peace with the uncertainty. My self is whole.

duality, n.
 having two parts, often opposites, e.g. good & evil, male & female, full & empty
 By definition, dualities are mutually exclusive. We're told what is good cannot be evil, what is male cannot be female, what is full cannot be empty. But what if I am both? what if I am neither?

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Multiplicity

MULTIPLICITY

7 layer silkscreen print

— *Kate Conway*



acrylic on canvas

From the Fire

“These paintings were inspired by the recent wildfires in the Pacific Northwest and the idea of how we display compassion, or grief, in times of cataclysm such as displacement from natural disaster. Our skies turned orange for a span of days while nature was tested by spreading fire consuming homes, wild and domestic. What might it take to displace us from our own refuge to become like a refugee? Nature reminds us of how equitable we are in our residence in this provisionally balanced and ever Changing ecosystem.”

— ***Luuk Honey***



collage and pencil

Lore

“I made this with magazine cut outs and colored pencils. It kinda came together on its own; but you see this guy, dancing on this cosmic stage, leading towards the end. It’s pretty existential, and if there’s anything we can or should do, it ought to be to dance. That’s what I believe.”

“If I can’t dance, I don’t want to be part of your revolution” - Emma Goldman

— *Oliver Gibbons*

**Bulldozer**

digital art

“I was inspired to draw this after I heard someone in an interview at Stop Cop City say “sometimes bulldozers trip and fall”. It’s kinda akin to when cops say a person tripped and fell when we all know they got beat up by the police.”

— *Hemlock*

COMMUNITY PROJECTS



Shred the Contract

Mission Statement:

- Aramark operates all dining services on campus except for vendor's row. We are currently at the tail end of 12 years of Aramark operation (10-year contract + 2-year COVID extension)
- WWU contracted with another big corp, Sodexo, for 50 years before switching to Aramark in 2011. Now, Western is looking to renew the contract, either with Aramark, or a new dining service. What's wrong with this setup? Aramark contracts with over 500 prisons and jails across the entire country, profiting off incarcerated individuals. There have been multiple reports of maggots and rocks in food, as well as inadequate portion sizes and health concerns here at Western. Another issue that arises with Aramark was that the company sued in 2019 for involuntary servitude in Santa Rita Jail, Alameda, CA. We aren't against Aramark because "we don't want prison food"; we are against them because we believe that everyone, including prisoners, deserves healthy food; Western should not be supporting a corporation profiting off of a racist, sexist, violent system that perpetrates harm on vulnerable populations.

Why we participate in Shred the Contract:

- We participate in Shred the Contract because we believe in true justice. Aramark is a monopoly when it comes to campus dining services. The inequality is furthered by union busting, forcing employees to come in sick, having a contract that hinders flexibility and innovation, along with poor quality food for students. Aramark gets discounts by guaranteeing it will purchase the vast majority of its food from large suppliers. These savings are not passed onto WWU. Sustainable sourcing is virtually and contractually impossible since it pushes smaller suppliers out of the equation. Currently, the committee has decided not to invest in a student self-op dining system, but our efforts will not end there. We hope to help organize the student workers on campus by creating a union; this will allow for the voices of the workers to be heard by the university.

How to get involved in Shred the Contract:

- Instagram direct messages @shredthecontractwwu
- In-person meetings
 - Currently held on Tuesdays from 4-5 pm in CCF 224
- Meal train volunteering for BOP (Bellingham Occupied Protest, or Bellingham Mutual Aid)

Abolition movement/student unions:

- Organizing is in the works for creating a student-worker union. If you are interested in helping support our efforts, feel free to send us a DM on Instagram.
- Happy Valley may be receiving a food pantry! Reach out to us and we can put you in contact with the people behind this operation.

C2C (Community to Community)

Community to Community (C2C) is a woman of color led grassroots organization based in Bellingham which is dedicated to issues that relate to and intersect Food Sovereignty, Immigrant Rights, Participatory Democracy, and Ecofeminism. C2C draws inspiration from the community organizing models of Cesar Chaves and the Farm Workers movements of California and Washington, and the successful participatory democracy models of Porto Alegre Brazil.

Their work is focused on developing projects that come from and are led by the folks from communities that need to affect change for improving the lives of their families and future generations. They work to identify common goals and actions among people from marginalized communities and those that believe in sustainability with social justice as a way of life. This is engaged through a myriad of projects which include farmworker organizing, leading and engaging in policy campaigns, food and climate justice coalitions, workers unions, immigration reforms, and more!

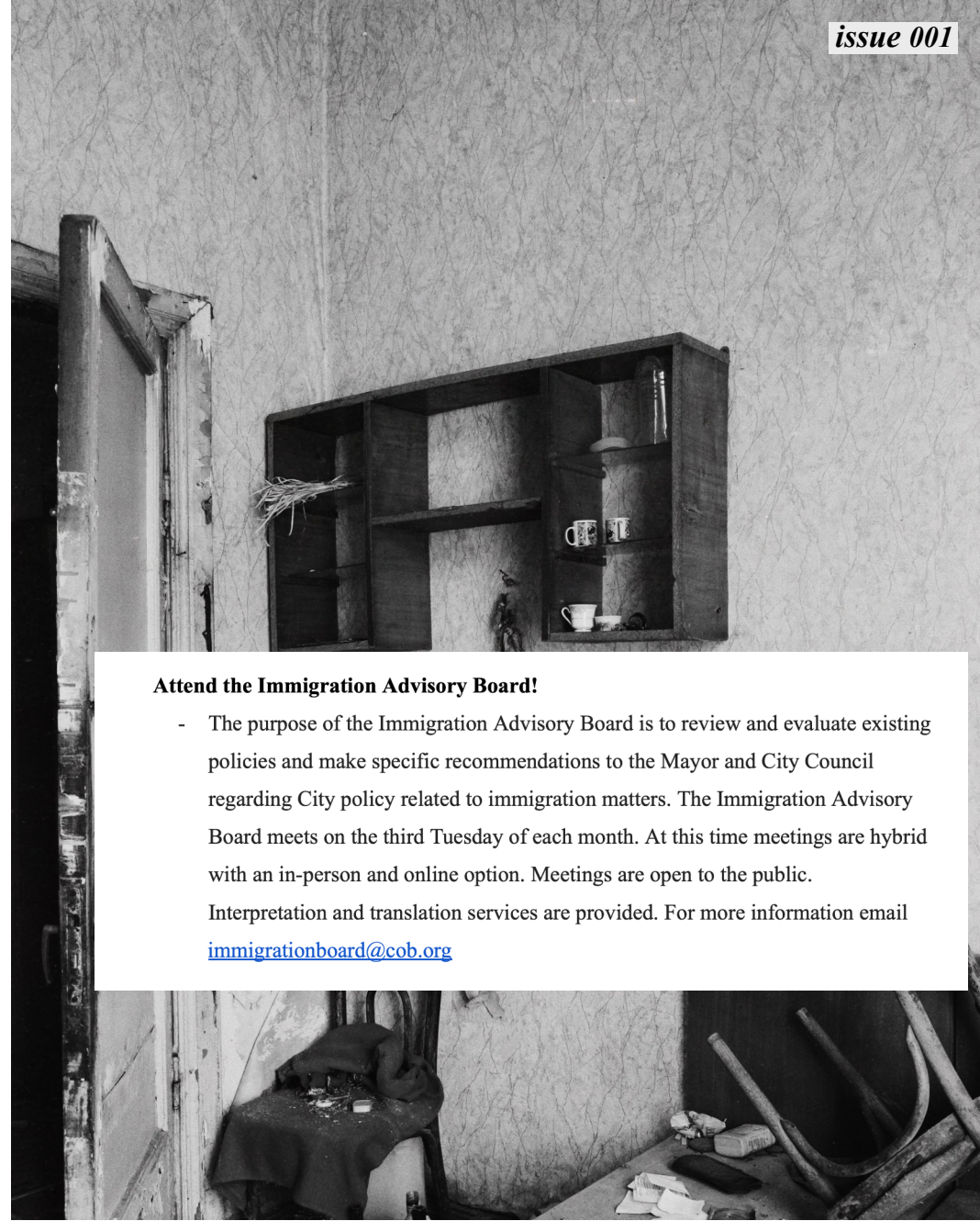
How to Get Involved:

-Tune in to Community Voz!

-CommunityVoz is C2Cs ecofeminist radio show which presents the grassroots work local people are doing across intersecting movements. “We believe in community radio and alternative media, which highlights the character, beauty and courage of the voices of people on the ground. Tune in for reflections and report backs from C2C organizers and allies on the frontlines of the struggle for farmworker justice”.

Recent topics covered include the Mt Baker Roofing work stoppage and Updates on the City Budget process to include an immigrant resource center.

- You can listen to past and current episodes of Community Voz on the foodjustice.org website, or at <https://communityvoz.buzzsprout.com/>



Attend the Immigration Advisory Board!

- The purpose of the Immigration Advisory Board is to review and evaluate existing policies and make specific recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding City policy related to immigration matters. The Immigration Advisory Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month. At this time meetings are hybrid with an in-person and online option. Meetings are open to the public. Interpretation and translation services are provided. For more information email immigrationboard@cob.org

- To volunteer contact c2cinfo@foodjustice.org



BOP (Bellingham Occupied Protest)

Bellingham Occupied Protest began in November 2020 as Camp 210, a community of houseless neighbors and local volunteers outside Bellingham's City Hall at 210 Lottie Street. Camp 210 was a place where people could set up tents to sleep in, receive food and supplies, and occupy space to protest the lack of affordable housing available in Bellingham. It was founded as a mutual aid group, where people in a community share resources to meet each other's needs in a decentralized, non-hierarchical group. Despite dozens of protestors, the City of Bellingham cleared Camp 210 in a sweep including over one hundred armed law enforcement officers on January 28, 2021. This was one day earlier than the deadline the city had given people to leave.

BOP Mutual Aid set up future camps in the next few months at Civic Fields and Laurel Park, both of which were swept by the city. Since then, BOP continues its mutual aid work through distribution (or "distro"), bringing food and supplies directly to houseless individuals throughout Bellingham. The group is supported by donations, and since it is run entirely by volunteers, everything BOP receives goes directly to meet the needs of the people they serve. Individuals can support BOP with financial donations or by signing up on the BOP Meal Train to make hot meals for distro. In addition, BOP receives supplies through partnership with a variety of local businesses and organizations.

To learn more or get involved, visit linktr.ee/bopmutualaid

No New Whatcom County Jail


This year, Whatcom County is trying for the third time to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a new jail. Whatcom tried in 2015 and we said no. Whatcom tried in 2017 and we said no. This time it is likely Whatcom officials, cops, and other fascists will advocate for the new jail under the guise of care. Let us be clear: in our understanding this is a lie. Any new jail is an expansion of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC), and the pain and violence it brings on our communities. Any new jail bed will get filled, every bed filled is a family torn apart, a life in peril, someone losing time. Expansion of the PIC and more funding to any actors within that complex function only to broaden the brutality. The jail is not to help people, but to disappear people, and with it the evidence of the pain capitalism enables to flourish.

The truth: Jails — and those that construct and run them — kill. Jails kill at every intersection of existence. Jails kill poor people. Jails kill trans people. Jails kill black people. Jails kill queer people. Jails kill indigenous people. Jails kill all those whose existences are criminalized, which is an ever expanding list too large to recount. In 2023 we must stand firm as we have before.

No New Jail.

For questions and concerns please contact NNWCJ@Proton.me





PROSE

Olfactory

There are places we allow ourselves to forget exist, places that shouldn't exist. Places where we hide things and people that we are scared to look at, so that the places we usually inhabit are prettier. Other Places.

There are righteous moments when Other Places sneak in and reveal themselves to us, lapsing their barriers, tunneling up spoonful by spoonful until we hear a trace of a tiny voice muffled by soil, hoofprint outside the slaughterhouse, clumps of hair caught in a fence, one perfectly round speck of blood on porcelain. Single parents hearing the faint wail of their children while they're at work, from an impossibly far distance it must be the wind. A glitch in the signal on the baby monitor.

Oh that smell? Well here we affectionately refer to it as the Tacoma Aroma! Which is a perfect reminder to please keep your masks on for the entirety of the campus tour.

When the wind blows Southwest, the wealthy neighborhoods of Tacoma, Washington are given a gift. A smell like sunwarmed raw egg from a factory farmed chicken blankets the streets and brings an unacknowledged but widespread anxiety. We try to alleviate it with jokes that time after time fail to make the smell any less nauseating. Who farted? That's Tacoma! Sharp exhale.

Fed by the toxic Puyallup River, the tideflats in the Port of Tacoma are the source of the smell, that is the name we've given to an Other Place home to many smaller Other Places. But "tideflats," "Port of Tacoma," and even "Tacoma" itself are names on signs above the freeway. Before they were written in white letters on green sheet metal, they were written by white hands in blood on cut yellow cedar. "Puyallup" is the remnant of the colonizer's bloated tongue half-trying to pronounce Spuyaləpabš, the literal translation of which means "people from the

bend at the bottom of the river.”¹ This name refers to the dispersed villages that spanned outward from the mouth of the present-day Other Place, which was then full of clean life-sustaining water. Before it was poisonous, the river curved into Commencement Bay (by nature’s mistake,) but luckily the United States Army Corps of Engineers quickly set to the job of straightening it out, so now the water flows perfectly straight (and much more efficiently without all those curves).

The stink is worst when the tide is low. Fumes rise off of poison sediment exposed to air where there used to be ocean. Mercury levels have made anything caught in the Port inedible, if you can find something living in the water at all. Not long ago, octopus, salmon, and shellfish populations were so healthy that early white historians of the area wrote “when the tide is out, the table is set.”²

Butter knife	dessert spoon	water cup
Bread & butter plate	dessert fork	red wine
		white wine
	Soup bowl	
	Salad plate	
	Dinner plate	
Napkin	salad fork	dinner fork
		knife
		teaspoon
		soup spoon

THE U.S. OIL & REFINING CO., SIMPSON TACOMA KRAFT PULP AND PAPER MILL, AND THE DARLING INGREDIENTS COMPANY ARE THE REASON THE PORT OF TACOMA SMELLS LIKE SHIT. THE U.S. OIL & REFINING CO., SIMPSON TACOMA KRAFT PULP AND PAPER MILL, AND THE DARLING INGREDIENTS COMPANY.

But it’s more than that. It’s the smell of the maggots in the food served to captives at the Northwest ICE Processing Center (which was formerly called the Northwest Detention Center,

¹Puyallup Tribe, “Puyallup Tribe: The Story of Our People,” The Puyallup Tribe of Indians, accessed 4/18/22, <http://puyallup-tribe.com/ourtribe/#:~:text=In%20our%20Lushootseed%20language%20we,site%20of%20the%20acoma%20Dome>.

² Puyallup Tribe of Indians, “We Are Puyallup: A Brief History of the Puyallup Tribe,” October 12, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MB3Omc1Qxw&ab_channel=PuyallupTribeofIndians.

but changed its name to keep the low profile necessary to thrive as an Other Place to store Other people). Visibility threatens profit for shareholders, so invisibility is the primary objective. They’ve piled forty feet of soil outside the prison to hide it from the highway. They moved the yard where the captives are allowed to see sunlight for some minutes each day back several hundred feet and added another fence after an incident in which an imprisoned man heard the chants of the protesters outside and threw a red dodgeball over the too-short-too-close wall, clearing the barbed wire. The crowd fell silent at the sight of that perfect red circle against the white sky.

The walls are opaque, and there are many. So we’re left to imagine what it’s like to exist within them. The ballthrower sitting in solitary confinement: Cold, in thin gray linen pants and a white T shirt. How would one’s conception of time change in that windowless room? We could imagine it slowing to a stop, a bonedeeep stuckness. We could imagine it speeding like heartrate in the back of a pickup truck, huddled with silent strangers under a blue tarp, looking for a safer world. The ICE prison for Other people in the Port of Tacoma is within the blast radius of the Liquid Natural Gas Plant. If the LNG plant explodes it will be a force ten times more powerful than the atomic bomb that leveled Hiroshima³. When we have fire drills, we practice walking calmly away from the inferno and gathering into neat lines so that everyone can be accounted for. When a real disaster strikes it’s like Disneyland, the rich get to skip the lines. ICE has no evacuation plan, there is no question about who will escape the detention center and who will be left to become fumes. Do the people inside know that they’re in the blast radius? How does that knowledge shape the passage of time in a windowless room? The detention center will be destroyed in our lifetime, either by explosion or by abolition.

³Native Daily Network, “Ancestral Waters (2019) A Northwest Tribes Fight for Survival,” Youtube (Native Daily Network, May 22, 2019), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NFPMnF9hhQ&ab_channel=NativeDailyNetwork.

The New York Times published an article in 1988 about the smell of Tacoma in which the author described the bay as “a toxic nightmare, full of deformed fish and sediment thick with chemicals that have been dumped in the water for more than a hundred years.” 1988 was the same year that the Pierce County Executive organized a task force to rid the city of Tacoma of its smell by the year 2000 because it was an “obstacle to economic growth”⁴. The land is crying gaseous tears. It has been begging us to stop since colonization and the air is getting thicker.

Smell is our oldest sense, it is the sense most powerfully linked to memory. Unlike any other human sense, our olfactory receptors are neurons themselves, meaning that the olfactory nerve is a direct line from the outside world to our brains.⁵ When you smell something, you are taking that thing from the air directly into the part of your brain associated with long-term memory. What used to be stored there? The strong smell of sticky cottonwood buds scattering on the forest floor in the first spring wind? The slow smell of sex before gender was binary? The mouthwatering smell of salmon skin roasted on a beach fire? The fresh smell of salty Southwest wind?

When that wind blows particles to my comfortable neighborhood and I inhale them directly into my hippocampus, one day in particular strobos like a migraine:

Winter, raining hard, trash everywhere, beside the gray Puyallup River, following the directions from Twitter, homeless eviction, stray animals, people crying and screaming, loud sounds of Earthmover crushing in tin roof, don't talk to the cops, help people get their stuff and move it under the overpass, it's state land so Tribal PD has no jurisdiction directly beneath freeway, Puyallup Tribal Police Department heavily armed, at least 5 squad cars, 40-60 homeless people

⁴Timothy Egan, “Tacoma Journal; on Good Days, the Smell Can Hardly Be Noticed,” The New York Times (The New York Times, April 6, 1988).

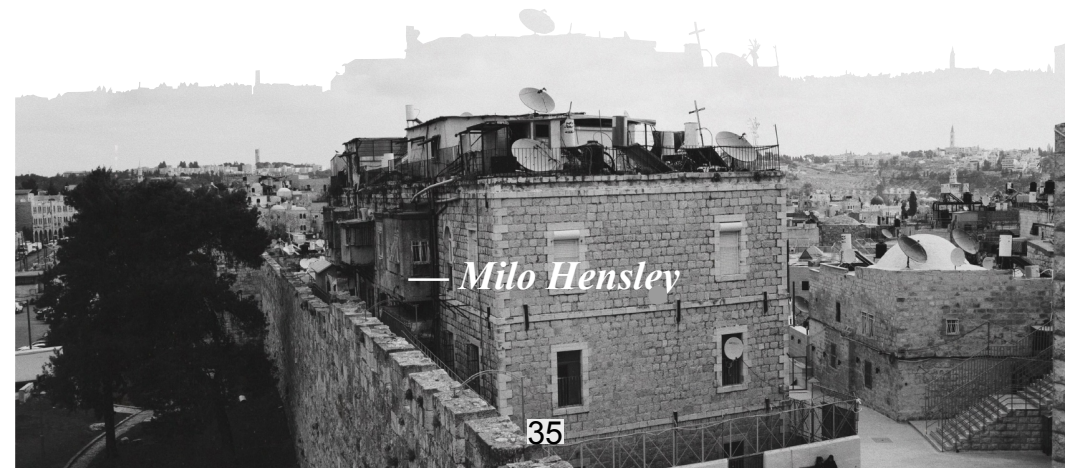
<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/06/us/tacoma-journal-on-good-days-the-smell-can-hardly-be-noticed.html>.

⁵Carl Sherman, “The Senses: Smell and Taste,” Dana Foundation (Dana Foundation, September 19, 2019),

<https://www.dana.org/article/the-senses-smell-and-taste/>.

dispersed across wooded area of the Gog-le-hi-te Wetlands, social distancing no longer an option, trying to outrun the demolition crew and gather people's belongings into shopping carts and wagons to bring beneath the overpass, anarchist I'd never met before gave me a nice thick pair of leather gloves so I don't cut my hands moving stuff and mentions that there's fewer of us here to help than they expected, most of the cars people have been sleeping in won't start so they are taking as many valuables out of them as they can before the tow trucks can get to them, I talk to the cops even though I know I'm not supposed to and I'm crying and I scream at them where are these people supposed to fucking go its illegal to camp anywhere in the city and the shelters are over capacity and people need space to stay safe from the virus, Puyallup cop yells at me to stay back and says that these degenerates are shitting and leaving their heroin needles all over his land and I remember he has a gun and I don't so I go back to trying to move people's stuff, elderly Asian man who doesn't speak English living in his car clearly suffering from mental illness gets out just before tow truck arrives and gets into his wheelchair piled with wet blankets he is sobbing and we wheel him under the overpass and give him some dry clothes and someone orders taco bell for everyone and he smiles a big toothless smile and I cry some more in my car on my way to work.

He's found dead in his wheelchair a few mornings later by a friend of mine, likely from exposure to the cold overnight. That's what the smell reminds me of, that Other Place.





He has so much of the world in his throat. A bird's nest of wild, unbridled diversity. But all it is is an imitation.

He loves her with a desperate, fervent, heart pounding force. And he is afraid of losing.

With every voice he learns he understands innately what she is discovering. He does not know the words, just the vibrations through his bones.

She looks at him with willow eyes. *"There is a chasm so deep I feel wind coming from it. When I drop stones I do not hear them land. You said there were cliff bees in there, you knew from the sound. You don't even think long enough to know what I'm saying so how did you know that? When I laughed I felt the tears like tiny stingers behind the hive of my eyes."* When he doesn't answer she continues *"All these little knowings or askings are throwing stones"*
"But I hear them," he says. *"They are stone in deep water, stone on soft moss, and so many more. I can make their songs for you."*

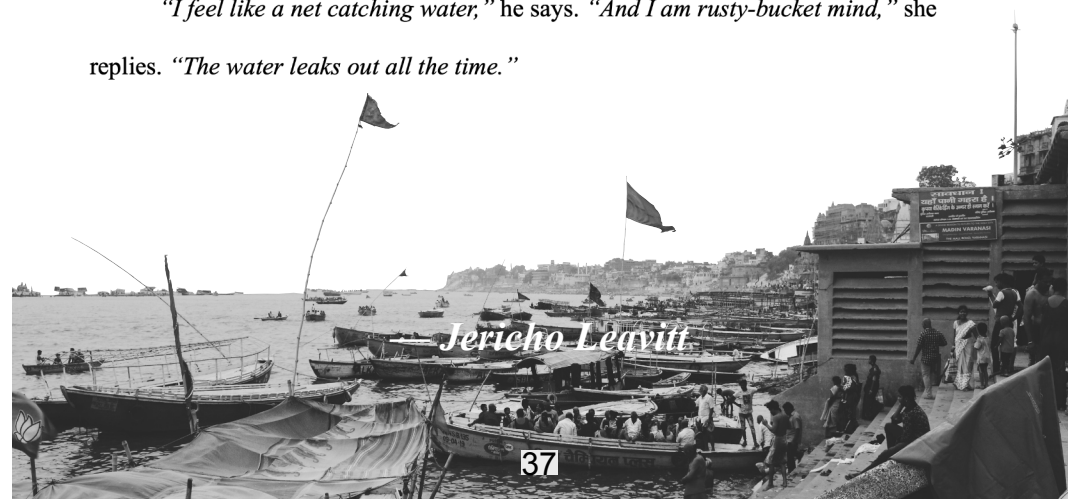
"I feel like a net catching water," he says. *"And I am rusty-bucket mind,"* she replies. *"The water leaks out all the time."*

There is a boy with 10 fingers and a girl with 2 hands. Their dog is yellow, has toes on each of his paws that live at the end of his legs. They go for walks together — around the block skirting the park with cottonwood and red alder trees. blackberry, nettles, willow. He sings to her all the lullabies she could imagine and she tells him of the little secrets she is learning — like how sometimes the moon gets too drunk to make it home, falls asleep in the sky and wakes up still there in the morning. He believes her unquestioningly.

Their dog yelps melodies from the record player and the boy learns to imitate birds and rabbits and the critters that live in and around their lives. The girl builds palaces woven of moss and branches in the spaces between her and him with ink stained fingers. He plays the palace music with the deep lonely sides of his voice. She fingers through planets like strings on the mandolin. He learns the black bear, the heron, the fox. She sits in the sunroom, and plays with her organs on paper. He likes the colors left on the sheets, shades and strokes of red, pink, and magenta. She tells him about the colors inside him. Tells him how each one — the lungs, the skin, the heart... the rest — each one has a specific tone inside it. *"A bird you could say. They all sing together on the page when they are plucked."*

"I know all the bird songs, but not which are mine."

"I will choose for you," she says. *"You are a flock, of course. But also a trembling. A siege, a quarrel, an unkindness, a tiding. An asylum. And more I think too."*



Details

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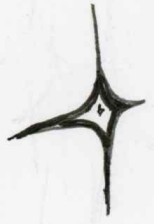
send submissions for our next issue to unevengroundmedia@gmail.com



Photo info

- 02 – 03, 28. protesters in Tbilisi, Georgia
- 04, 29, 35. neighborhoods of old Jerusalem
- 05, 16, 24, 27. room from abandoned soviet sanatoriums in Tskaltubo, Georgia
- 06 – 07. A person outline against the sky on Hai Van Pass, Vietnam
- 08, 37. the ghats along the river in Varanasi, India
- 09, 36. flocks of seagulls in Essaouira, Morocco
- 10 – 11. reflected hand thrown skyward in Subotica, Serbia
- 12 – 13. stragglers on the streets in Essaouira, Morocco
- 14. boats in the harbor in Essaouira, Morocco
- 15. empty highways in Northern Serbia
- 30. house through the fences in Yerevan, Armenia
- 38 – 39. Reflection in Tbilisi, Georgia

the moon drinks itself into a crescent alone in the sky



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