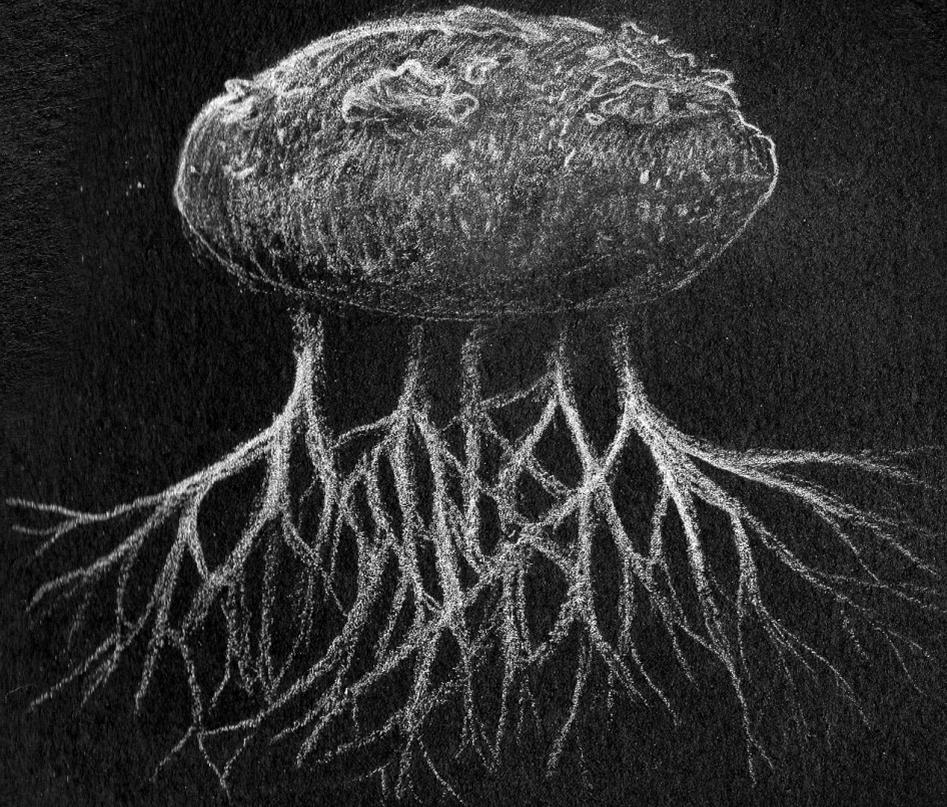


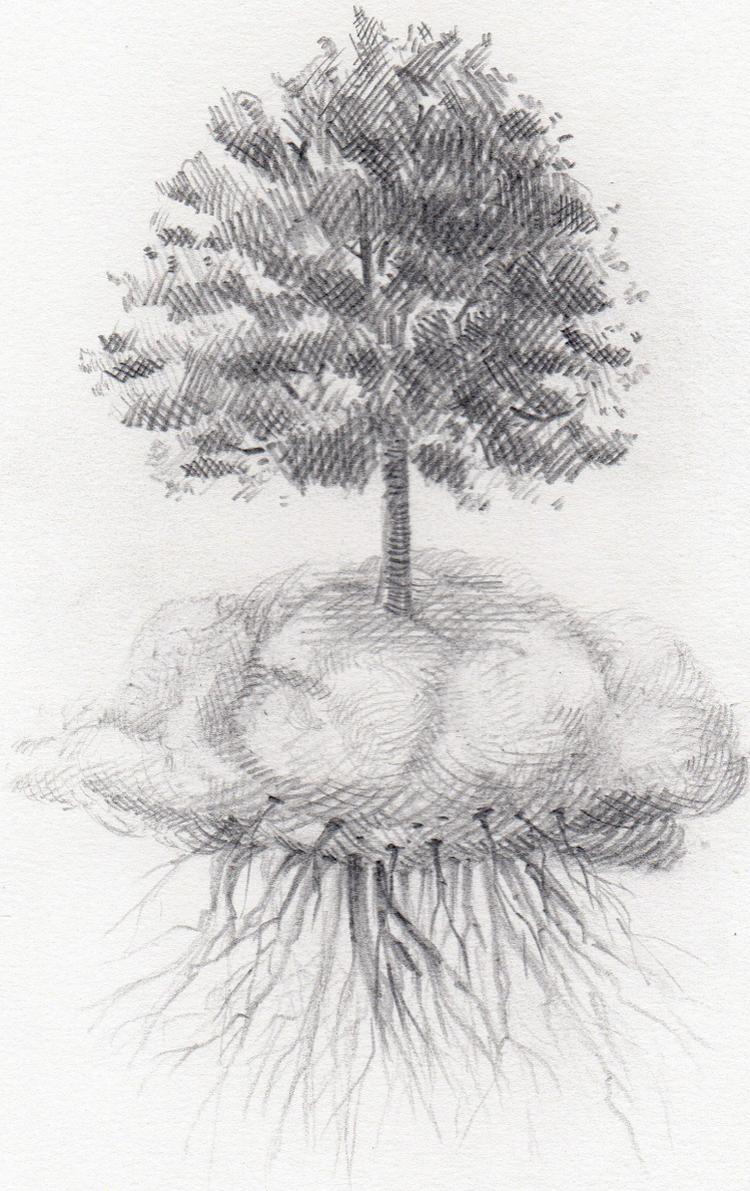
CRITICAL BASTARDS

Issue 14



Issue 14 — Hope





Critical Bastards is an Irish magazine of creative criticism that engages with national and international contemporary visual art.

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Passions Denied

Sue Rainsford

*Cynic. Even the word is serpentine.
It makes you hiss. Makes you the
snake.*

The Teachings of Aunt
Divine: book (iii) chapter (v)

○

When I first saw hope outside of a
body I almost mistook it for milk, or
cream.

This was before our glands dried,
when we still distilled their fluid and
poured it into jars we capped with
cotton.

‘Otherwise, you might
use it all at once.’

They dried up because hope was too
often proven naïve and not, after all,
of benefit to the species.

My aunt Divine extracted mine and
noticed I didn’t have as much as
she’d had, when she was a girl.

‘It hurts, of course, to have it taken
away. But we need a needle
long and thick.’

My dwindled supply: one of the first
signs we’d spend our days looking
for other cool, white to swallow.

‘Things not strictly
hopeful, but that share in its
property of white.’

Even things tough or slippery,
things in no way esculent, we eat
and trust our bodies to absorb the
nutrient we need.

‘Hope is the fact
of too much light.
That’s why it’s white.’

We’re meant to sip very slowly but
the year all her horses died Divine
drank so deep her mouth looked
smeared with moonshine.

‘The repeated
occurrence of
too much light.’

I like to eat lilies, but they’re hard to
find.

‘Eat enough white and the gland
will fill with hope again.’

I drink a lot of milk, which makes
my
mouth white and my
throat white before descending
the length of me as a cool dairy veil

‘It needs to be tricked
back into the body.’

and the sweet, small petals
off a daisy

‘Hope is the only
desirous activity permitted.
We do not wish,
and we do not pray.’

sun-bleached branch
marble-fleck

‘Can you think of anything worse
than
life without hope – with all the
days still ahead of you
unfurling like damp rope?’

Divine’s wedding dress
square by square –
the linen a long time in my mouth,
unwilling to soften

‘You’ll feel it working.
The gland will pucker.
Spark.’

the paint we used for the high back
wall
that keeps the unhopeful out of the
garden

‘Never mind
if something
hurts to swallow.
It only means
it’s good for you.’

During a spasm or a fever I smile
because I know that I’ve been
seeded with hope, with too-much-
light.

‘Think of
the silk worm.
It screams, when
its silk unspools.’

a plate I shatter on the floor and
grind
between my teeth

‘Screams,
because it’s boiling.’

the tooth-pick skeleton of a long
dead mouse

‘But you need to boil it,
to get at its silk.’

and, once she died, Divine’s
whitened hair –
the whisper-white of her lashes,
brows

'What else can you do,
with the days so grey?'

the white out of her unseeing eyes

'What else can you do
– your passions
denied?'

and today this little bird
born-too-soon bird
destined for mulch, for carrion
slips down my throat with its small
wings
folded – chirps,
one time, but is otherwise
unbitten
unresisting
unknowing

○



Modest Hopes In the Museum of Marble

Barbara Knezevic

Being raw

Dwelling. Not dormant, but being at a rate imperceptible to the makers and viewers. Passing with smooth indifference.

Being found

Cracked by insistent metallic incisions. Cold steel forces in, finding weakness. A final split, a cleave, then away.

Being made

Beside a mute clay shape. Duplicitous calipers decide what stays and what goes. Preliminary marks dictate cuts. A determination of volume, angles, vertices, concavities, convexities. Nothing incendiary, the makers cannot form this way. So brutal methods. Quantities scattered in chips, others in chunks. A haze of parts. Some more in dust that takes to the breeze and is carried away, dispersed on the breath, diluted and returned.

Being viewed

Now here, in chambers and halls filled with others similar. Lights above emanate weak heat. More in vaults, cosseted. What hopes for the new conditions? Under scrutiny

remain elusive. Be resistant and ambiguous.

Viewing pupils expand and contract to find focus, bodies move to accommodate scenes containing more, then less. Moist glassy eyes scan across smooth surfaces, pausing occasionally on a detail here, a shape there. Most gazes are indifferent. Occasionally one becomes intent, excoriating. A look that tries to divine, see beneath the outer crust.

Being silent

With force, the torrent of viewers pours out of the holes. Some lights are extinguished after the deluge. Green exit lights flicker and the chambers are silent for a time, save for some fluorescent hissing.

Then other sounds begin. Low and tentative. Furtive, fearful of discovery. In the pond-like gloom restraints are abandoned. The murmuring of surfaces builds to steady chattering of appendages then crescendos to a cacophonous din. A babel of stone and rock rasping maniacally against plinths. The morse of pedestals being

knocked against marble. Vitrines ring out with the reverberations of their captives. Those whose tongues are tied make do with more guttural percussion, scuffing their bodies atonally against whatever surface is available.

The dry chimes ring through the caverns, prospecting for responses. Some converse, some make pinging rhythms and others trill lithosonic scapes of affirmation against the walls only for the pleasure of hearing them echo back. These passages are for the joy of being free from being looked at, free from the drip, drip, drip of glances that wears surfaces.

Sometime around dawn the sounds diminish then abruptly die out. The tomb's silence is reinstated in time for the arrival of the first of the keepers.

Being kept

The brief phase of display concludes. Restored, then invisible. Tended by dust and other shrouds.

The Future Without Hope

Fintan Neylan

One of the most provocative claims of the late philosopher Mark Fisher was his call to “abandon hope.” This came not, however, in response to recent events, but in the aftermath of the May 2015 Tory victory. Having exacted years of austerity on the public, how, the left asked, could the conservatives be voted back in? Fisher provided an answer: the electoral result was a product of successive neoliberal governments whose project had “largely succeeded in its aim of disabling the mechanisms of mass democracy.”¹

Within neoliberalism, he claimed, inequality has not only increased, but also mutated in nature to render inert mass public movements against it. It has created individuals who are too drained from living precariously to either reflect on their working conditions, or to determine a political cause. If they do identify with a class, it is with the class of their parents, and has little to do with their own grim situation. Fisher claimed that hope within

this political matrix could only be minimally effective, for it arises from our inability to act, rather than from an opportunity to act.

However, Fisher hinted at a further reason: the possibility of hope can inhibit transformation of one’s political horizon. Fisher argued that what possibilities we think are not neutral, but are susceptible to, and in fact have been colonised by capitalism. This situation is what he referred to as Capitalist Realism, whereby Capital has in advance determined what is deemed achievable within the political imagination; a pathology of the left, within it the options provided by capitalism seem to be the only “realistic” ones, and any engendered by popular revolt to be delusions. Tomorrow may see change, but only an incremental one; and to imagine it as radically different appears naive.

This “sober” or “pragmatic” understanding of the future only through presently available possibilities is what Nietzsche warned about when he decried the tendency to view the future in terms

of the present, and not attempting to understand the future as such – as a domain utterly incommensurable to the present and not merely as our current situation with the addition of a certain amount of elapsed time.² The danger of it being that such sobriety forecloses any element of surprise: because possibility is always of the order of the *predictable*, i.e., what states we may foresee based on current information, it excludes surprise as a rule.

The point is that possibility is only ever local, though it gives the appearance of being global: a feature from which Capitalist Realism profits. To view the future, as Capitalist Realism does, only in terms of possibilities amounts to what Fisher and others have called its cancellation: the future is no longer a place of surprise, but of what is predictable.

This is not defeatism, however; it is rather pointing out that

emancipatory politics always has metaphysical work to do. Politics becomes first effective by confronting and undoing the distribution of the possible and the necessary: as such it brings forth possibilities excluded from or which are incomprehensible within the current framework. It is this metaphysical work that brings Fisher’s politics into conflict with the possibility of hope, for hope inadvertently fortifies the current distribution of options: it enables the belief that new concrete possibilities may emerge without changing the current framework. “Abandon hope” is not then a moral imperative, but forms part of Fisher’s strategy to break out of the framework of possibility Capitalist Realism prescribes. It encapsulates a metaphysical imperative to overturn.

One does not need to hope for a better world, as if it was a type of afterlife: one fights for the betterment of *this* world. What is needed now is confidence. Fisher wrote that confidence is a “virtuous spiral” which “immediately increases the capacity

¹ Fisher, Mark “Abandon hope (summer is coming)” *k-punk* (blog) May 11, 2015, <http://k-punk.org/abandon-hope-summer-is-coming/>

² Nietzsche *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Cambridge, 2006) 36

to act, [and] the capacity to act increases confidence, and so on.³ Unrecognisable to Capitalist-Realism, we draw confidence from those moments whose capacity exceeds their determined possibilities. Beyond the locality of possibility and predictability, these are what Fisher called 'the weird': to think them is to think the Nietzsche's 'future as such'. For if the predictable is the projection of the present onto the future, then the weird and the untimely are the injection of the future as such into the present. Confidence is what is injected by these moments into the present: engendering action on those events which are real but not predictable.

Thus when Fisher enjoins us to abandon hope, it is to discard its sober and pragmatic forms; allowing us to reclaim what is potent about it, and purpose that beyond capital towards surprising ends, towards a radically different future.

³ Fisher "Abandon Hope"

Excerpt From the Diary of Frank Wasser



The following piece is an excerpt from the diary of Frank Wasser who travelled to New York to conduct research for a new work in March 2017.

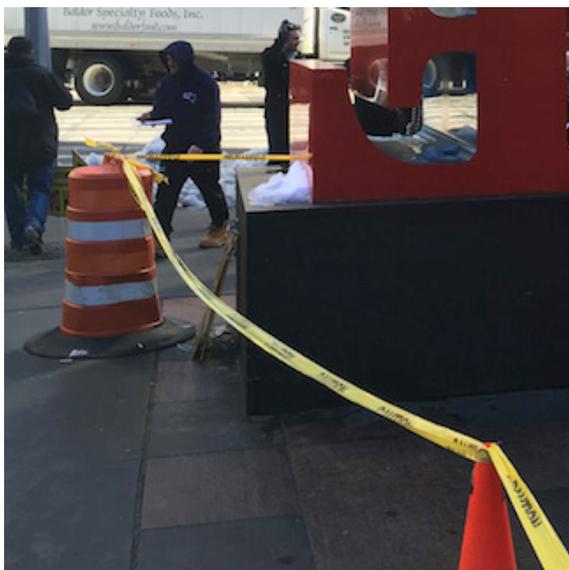
New York, Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn: 17.03.2017.

I am writing in my diary. Yes, I am.

Shit. I keep forgetting to take my prescribed 125mg dose of Azathioprine.

Earlier, I read the literature that fell out of the box of tablets. This served as a distraction from actually taking the medicine. Procrastination. Despite clear instructions written on the packet to 'READ THE PACKAGAE LEAFLET BEFORE USE' today was the first time I had done so. Firstly, I read 'Rare Side Effects' which include acute myeloid leukaemia and toxic epidermal necrolysis.

I suppose it is better to take them to alleviate the complications of my illness. The less dramatic side effects make it difficult to concrete. I mean concentrate.



I have to finish writing a new performance and a short text for an Irish publication.

The snow is beginning to melt but I am still snowed in. I can see steam rising from the rooftops of the skyline.

I sent Joe a transcript of my submission last night. He had a lot of good feedback. He asked why in the writing I was separating myself from my body. For example the line: 'I pull my body upwards against the back of my seat and begin to assert myself'.

Today I checked my emails first, then the news, then my Facebook, then Instagram, then Twitter. #HopeDay is trending on Twitter and another (former)friend is defending the right of alt-right fascists. #fuckLD50

People are posting selfies with the Robert Indiana sculpture I saw uptown yesterday.

#yuk.

This is a piece of friction. I mean fiction. A piece of fiction that serves to present my immediate responses to an invitation to submit to this publication.

Pauline Kael — The Hopeful Cynic

Ingrid Lyons

I don't know whether any of this is going to work.

Better get to the pharmacy to see if I can get any Azathioprine.



Pauline Kael was a film critic for *The New Yorker* magazine between 1968 and 1991 and her tenure at the magazine is a testament to the contradictory nature of cultural criticism. Kael reserved the right to change her mind and throughout her career as a film critic, she retained an element of self-reflexivity in her practice, often including admission of digression within her reviews 'writing very fast and trying to distil my experience of a movie, I often got carried away'.

I initially arrived at Kael's writing via some extremely negative reviews of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Kael gained notoriety for her negative reviews in which she berated the work of some of the greats of 1960s and 70s Hollywood cinema. In her critique of Kubrick's science fiction epic, Kael described the film as having 'the most gloriously redundant plot of all time'. She also described the film as 'trash masquerading as art' and 'monumentally unimaginative.' This constitutes an obvious cynicism on the part of Kael who seemed to enjoy antagonising those whose films she reviewed.

Her understanding of the role of criticism was to meticulously scrutinise each film and to question every aspect of its production. 'A mistake in judgment isn't fatal' she declared 'but too much anxiety about judgment is'. The list of films that Kael has unfavorably reviewed is extensive and includes: *La Dolce Vita* (1960), *Badlands* (1973), *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *Wild Strawberries* (1957), *Red Desert* (1964), *Faces* (1968) and *Blow-Up* (1966). She believed, for better or for worse that neutrality within the realm of criticism was an unsustainable fiction and dismissed the position as 'saphead objectivity'. Kael believed that being afraid to pass judgment would lead to paralysis and she often penned her reviews quickly, usually after just one viewing.

Pauline Kael was disliked by many for her unrelenting style, though she thoroughly embraced her reputation noting 'not many reviewers have a real gift for effrontery. I think it may be my best talent'. It was Kael's belief that to retain autonomy and command respect as a critic, one had to win a following as an

independent thinker so as not to be at the behest of advertisers and editors. From her experience of working as a freelance film critic, she found that it was this independence and autonomy that separated criticism from advertising.

Today, the question of value judgment is a much-discussed topic in the realm of criticism and one that has equal measure in arguments for and against. In assessing Kael's approach in the context of her contemporaries it begins to emerge that it was not the issue of value judgment that defined her role as a critic. Rather it was the respect she garnered from filmmakers of the 60s and 70s to the point that they worked with her appraisals and often absorbed her observations into their work, bestowing on her the potentiality to exact real change and to directly influence the medium.

Her treatment of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), demonstrates the positive aspects of her approach. Her 6000 word eulogy on Arthur Penn's biographical crime/gangster film

prompted a reevaluation after Bosley Crowther, critic for *The New York Times* had branded it a failure, describing it as 'a cheap piece of bald-faced slapstick comedy'. Her essay greatly influenced the film's reception and ultimately led to its recognition as a landmark film that ushered in the American New Wave. Kael understood how to mediate between the films she commented upon and the audience she spoke to.

It was noted in her obituary in *The Guardian* that her style was not inimitable, as demonstrated by a group of young critics known as 'Paulettes'. The group emulated her style with relative ease though arguably - it was not only style that separated her from other critics, rather the collaborative and responsive role she played during what is now regarded as a pivotal era of Hollywood cinema. It was said that Kael became less influential later in her career and some noted that she had 'lost it', but Kael herself commented on the state of the American film industry in 1994 'movie criticism is now often a report on a vacuum'.

Newspaper articles still circulate lambasting Kael's hardnosed reviews, but it is true that she initiated many important debates on the nature of criticism, as one follower has noted, "if you write about movies in America today (and in the age of the Internet, who doesn't?), you define yourself at least in part in relation to Kael'. And so in response to writer, Maria Popova's summation, 'Critical thinking without hope is cynicism. Hope without critical thinking is naïveté', Pauline Kael's brand of criticism emblematises all of this quotes sentiments - she was acutely observant, rigorous, sometimes naïve and at once cynical and hopeful.



Deep Fear

Over

Lack of Deep Thought.

TO REVEAL MESSAGE HOLD UP TO MIRROR

-less Grand Myths & Ideologies

Donncha Donn
Mac Cóil

The original term is religious, Old English – *hopian*: a theological virtue founded upon a trust in God's word and in the possibility of salvation.

It is fitting to rediscover hope amid the return of history, a renewed discourse of unrest, upheaval, armageddon (Rev. 16:16) and the reinterpretation among powerful political actors of instituted patterns and tinderboxes of violent potential. We educated observers, we cognoscenti, we run to our almanacs and our zairja to divine what is approaching and foresee how next to *feel*.

To what end? What might we divine from them, except that old religious assumption, *hope*, etymology hidden yet still determinative? What use is such language to our secular class? What benefit is 'salvation' to me and others like me, when my universe is entropic, my cosmos godless, my upbringing existential? I am looking for hope. But hope in what?

Could it be the welfare of mankind, a universal socialism?

The achievements of humanity – scientific, astronomical, ecological, artistic? The installation of a perfect 'justice', or 'prosperity' or 'peace', or some similar rallying myth? Could it be any of those when I, six months ago, was decrying the inhumanity of humanity, two years ago condemning neoliberalism and the status quo, eight years ago experiencing firsthand the established order's talent for betrayal?

Grand myths and ideologies, and the abstractions they incur, lie behind the climate of political worry we now occupy. At their core is that religious whisper – hope: a belief, a balm, a *someday*.

But hope can also be a poison; as a dispensation, an explanation. Hope allows an imaginary future to be privileged above a present reality. Hope diverts impulses towards empathy, and girds resistance to solutions of compromise, exception or reconsideration.

Hopeful activists read all news reports sceptically, save one. They discern even in reasoned argument

only the persistence of an original creed. They accept fellow suffering as a necessity, not a tragedy. They see in politics and public life battle and struggle, rather than concession and fortification. They maintain themselves by practising daily ignorance on the world. We must not imitate them.

To propose hope is to devolve our secular morality and relegitimize suspect Christian soteriologies – 'martyrdom', 'atonement', 'absolution', 'intercession' – that raise result over effort, faith over doubt, judgment over accommodation. In a world of Truth, of divine revelation (Heb. 4:12) and observable teleology (Rom. 11:36), these *could* be noble attitudes. But in this world, this best guess universe, this 21st century, such acts of daring are futile. We must not succumb to hope. We must venture, tomorrow, to be -less.



Look Out! Look Out! Look Out! Look Out!

i
“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune
 mmm mmm mmm mmm -
And never stops - at all -

ii
I hope all the ladies in your life are
doing well
Serena started very strongly in the
third
Wozniacki is playing very well and
on a bit of a high
and maybe she will beat Kerber—
that would be great!

there is another player there
name beginning with a ‘P’
but I don’t know her at all
and I hope
at the end of the US Open
that will remain the case!!!

iii
probably scratch cards
not all the time but every
now and then
and win!
don’t enter the Lotto
that’s a real hope and a
prayer

and when you’re walking around
pick up the old scratchies
off the ground
and recheck them
 just in case

iv
Hope Solo hit another low
on Friday.

Hope Solo hit another low
on Friday.

Hope Solo hit another low
on Friday.

*We played a bunch of cowards.
The best team did not win today. I
strongly, firmly
believe that.*

v
I hope you don’t mind but
I found your address on your blog
the package was open though, so
I hope everything was in there
I know you expressed a hope for us
to do it sooner

but, honestly
the schedule is totally full
i hope that’s ok and i haven’t ruined
everything

vi
Hallelujah Baby!
— you might not remember that one

Hope Clarke played Tia Mowry’s
grandmother
you know Tia—from Sister! Sister!
the show with the separated twins
who find each other
and live together with their adoptive
parents
totally different personalities!

Ha!
Clarke also appeared in The
Jeffersons,
Three’s Company
and Jelly’s Last Jam

*wow wow wow wow
Oh oh-ohhhh
wow wow wow wow
whoa ho ho ho hhhhho whoa
yeahhh*

Julie Morrissy

Hope above helps & GOOD LUCK!

Symbolic Monarch Tells Women of Ireland to Calm Down... Wait... Really? Emma Haugh

Every sound we make is a bit of autobiography. It has a totally private interior yet its trajectory is public. A piece of inside projected to the outside. The censorship of such projections is a task of patriarchal culture that divides humanity into two species: those who can censor themselves and those who cannot.

– Anne Carson, *The Gender of Sound*

There is a portrait of gay rights activist, drag performer and businessman Rory O'Neill, AKA Panti Bliss, that accompanies an article about his call for calm in the abortion debate in Ireland. In the photograph he sits in an armchair, his chin resting on his knuckles, the studio light casts a somber shadow and he stares steadily and intentionally into the lens. The caption reads 'Caution: Rory O'Neill AKA Panti Bliss has called for calm.'¹ As a precursor, this image and caption set a commanding tone, and are followed by O'Neill offering this advice to Irish abortion activists:

¹ <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/cool-heat-on-the-abortion-debate-panti-35349620.html>

"It's very easy for passion to become anger, but that puts people off."

"...Sometimes you might want to stand up and scream your head off, but not when you are trying to speak to the middle ground. When it comes to abortion, it's sometimes forgotten that you can give someone all the facts as you see them but you won't change a mind that believes abortion is murder. They are not misogynists or monsters for [believing] that..."

To an abortion rights advocate and unwavering supporter of the campaigning/activism happening in Ireland right now, this has the air of authoritative finger wagging, a telling off from *the Queen of Ireland*. O'Neill has come to occupy a position of considerable public status, being billed one of the most influential people in the world by Time magazine.² While I do appreciate O'Neill's long term work regarding gay rights I find it misguided that he assumes a

² <http://www.dailiedge.ie/panti-bliss-time-magazine-2679297-Mar2016/>



X-Case protests, Dublin 1992. From left: Sinead Gray, Vicky Beggs, Emma Haugh, Mairead Dunne, Ocas Dilooney, Niamh Puirseil. (Published in Time Magazine 16th March 1992)

position of telling women and their allies how to go about their activist work.

It is not for O'Neill to surmise what does and does not count as misogyny in the abortion debate or what is or is not an acceptable amount of expressed rage. O'Neill cannot become pregnant, and in this instance he makes for a poor ally to those whose reproductive organs remain under state lock and key. It's

helpful to remember that misogyny need not be 'monstrous' or extreme. Misogyny operates in both overt and subtle ways at every level of society, culture and politics. Who exactly is O'Neill speaking in defence of here, and why?

Rational, cool-headed patriarchal discourse is the last thing that is needed when it comes to biopolitics and women bodies in Ireland. Let's be absolutely clear, abortion is not

a moral issue, it's a human rights issue that has been deliberately neglected by the Irish government for far too long.³ In a country with a shocking and continually unfolding history of institutionalised patriarchal control over women's bodies (through marriage, law, medicine, psychiatry, economics, church and state) the last thing women and their allies need is to modulate their politics towards a phantom middle ground. O'Neill's concern for an undefined middle ground is misleading as polls in Ireland show that steadfast anti-abortion opinion is in the minority. O'Neill's comments continue with a warning for abortion rights activists to avoid 'metropolitan elitism'. Considering that the Abortion Rights Campaign (ARC) is active across over seventeen regional groups, and that Strike for Repeal also organised beyond Dublin's borders, it is again a question of who exactly O'Neill is advocating for here?

3 The UN's human rights committee has called on the Irish government to reform its restrictive abortion legislation, after ruling that it subjected a woman to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and violated her human rights.

It is disappointing that in this instance O'Neill uses his sway and wide appeal to publicly counsel abortion activists about their tone rather than advocate for reproductive rights. The comments made in this article were broadly distributed and not surprisingly were read as a positive recognition by the Irish LGBT Pro Life group.⁴ When O'Neill says "You can be a gay communist and still believe life begins at conception," is he telling us that even politicised gay men find the anger expressed by abortion rights activists a bit too much?

A politics of compromise, a quieter more polite, conservative friendly politics, is not going to change any course of neoliberal, fundamentalist-right wing agendas. It may even unintentionally support them. I am in agreement with US whistleblower Chelsea Manning when she writes about Barack Obama's legacy as a warning of not being bold enough. Manning writes

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/09/ireland-abortion-laws-violated-human-rights-says-un>

4 On their Facebook page the LGBT Pro Life group posted the article discussed here with the caption

that we need to stop compromising and hoping that we will be met in the middle, that we need to stop asking for our rights and hoping that our systems will repair themselves. Rather we need to actually take the reins of government and fix our institutions ourselves.⁵

Hearing women and their allies express their rage, uncensored, gives me hope and energy, it is generative and contagious. Radical action and agitation does affect public opinion and empowers people, far more effectively than rational 'conversations'. The glittering rage and hard work of visionaries and activists is exactly what is needed to transform generations of accumulated abuses and humiliations into the kind of power that can bring about radical, emancipatory and lasting change.

'It's nice that Panti Bliss acknowledges that some gay people are Pro Life' <https://www.facebook.com/lgbtprolifeirl/posts/1728953160748982>

5 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2017/jan/25/compromise-doesnt-work-political-opponents-chelsea-manning>

Moving Bases

“Have you done the stocks today?”

“It’s all there.”

“Huh.” He slid a chair. Head bowed toward the newspaper. “Ryanair is up 0.5%?”

“Yeah, and Dalata is down by 0.5.”

Typically he would do the stocks alone each morning at his kitchen table.

He would start by scanning for the number five or hoped for five to make its way into his calculations.

In its form, the numeral varies on the lower half.

It has two bends of equal importance.

The muscle is in its curvy part.

The semicircle is generally drawn with affection. Its wheelie bottom, so sweet and precarious. He thought about how silly his legs were. How much more solid his singular upper body feels.

How every time the number five has a gracious dependence on its lower half, knowing there would be less risk, less stress if its straight edges lay in its foundation. But it knows that it works, each time grazing the newspaper column’s base.

In fact it is a curve at the bottom that distinguishes the number from the frame. These dependable margins, filled with one of nine forms, varying each time, delivering every time. Confident in evidence and hopeful in nonsense.

Four was a good one too. Comforting, dependable. For him it was a right angle held up by another right angle only the shorter part is shoved into anchorage and unseen.

It was the top half of five that informed his decision on what to invest in and the bottom brought them into action.

Surges curbed by right angle definition, ballpoint can bleed a little onto newsprint both uncoated and porous pen tip and paper meet

Jennie Taylor

and suspend particles before they settle.

Droplets make image.

Carbon black in its pen, and seen complexities when pressed in columns.

What was and what is side by side.

Simply in a daily newspaper collaged into reliable graphs from each day.

It is that we must remain fixed on a shifting ground. Depend on the relationship that is initiated by the unknowable. To connect with the verifiable and measured. Coexistence between an inconvenience and a known. Memorised marks that occupy a pin pointed space, ready to be attached to a wobbly beginning.

He wondered,

How far can a resemblance be pushed into a suggestion?

Even if it’s written in a rush a curve is clear.

When we draw the number five we repeat and create in one go.

There is one way to draw the right angle and more than one way to draw a curve.

Look no further than the stocks.

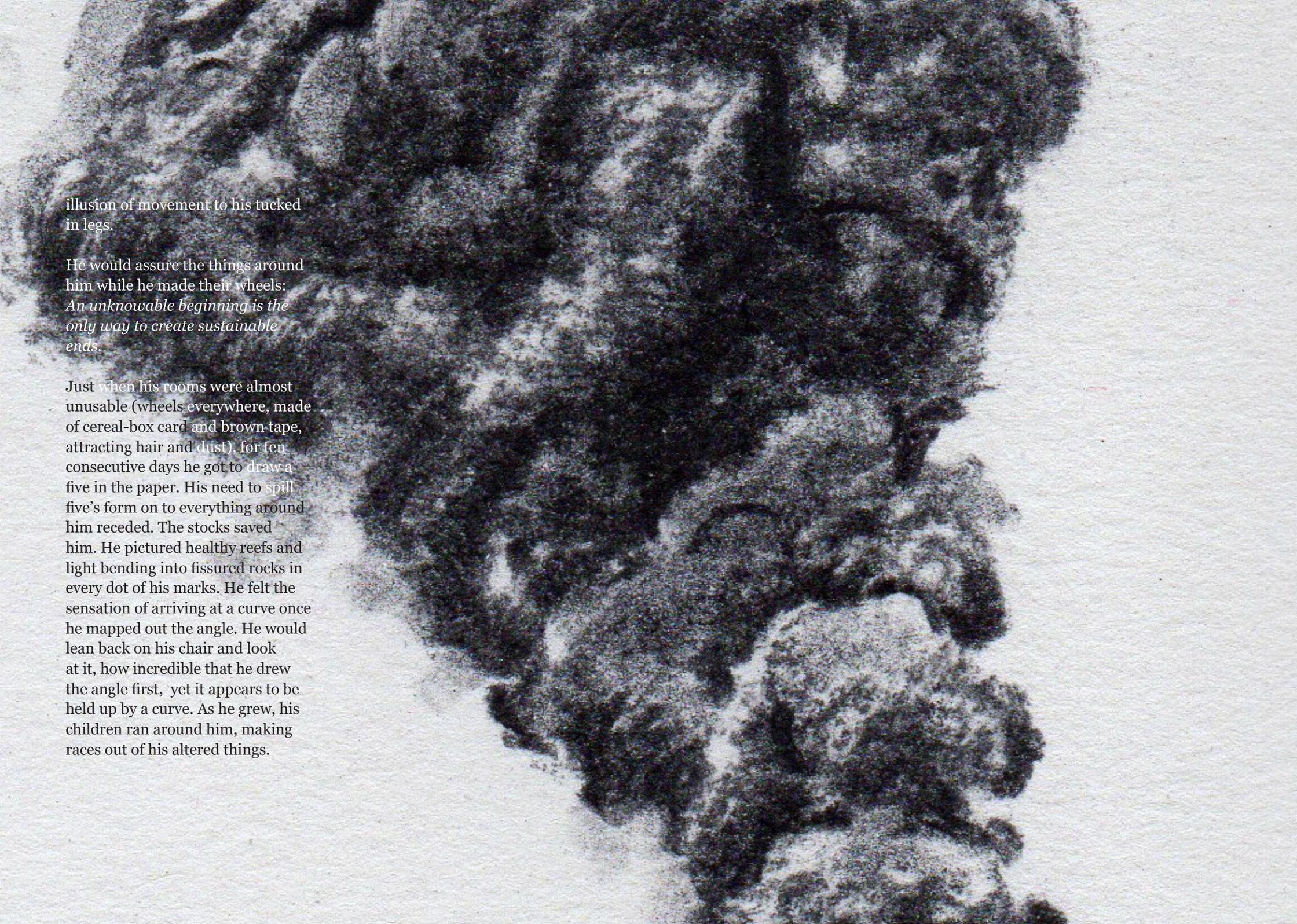
Ninety-degree angle.

Streaks.

Inside the ink a binary indicating a perfect pitch:

from coal and oil, his pen particles carrying an electrical charge and membranes smaller in dimension than molecules that try to move through.

On days when no fives were required, he started to attach handmade wheels to objects in his kitchen. Cutting boards, lamps, anything angular was given a wheel. He was badly hooked on the delight of the number five’s dependency on curvature. He needed it all around him. He embodied it too. If he was sitting still, he emphasised the solidity of his upper body to give an



illusion of movement to his tucked
in legs.

He would assure the things around
him while he made their wheels:
*An unknowable beginning is the
only way to create sustainable
ends.*

Just when his rooms were almost
unusable (wheels everywhere, made
of cereal-box card and brown-tape,
attracting hair and dust), for ten
consecutive days he got to draw a
five in the paper. His need to spill
five's form on to everything around
him receded. The stocks saved
him. He pictured healthy reefs and
light bending into fissured rocks in
every dot of his marks. He felt the
sensation of arriving at a curve once
he mapped out the angle. He would
lean back on his chair and look
at it, how incredible that he drew
the angle first, yet it appears to be
held up by a curve. As he grew, his
children ran around him, making
races out of his altered things.

Anyway, It is a beautiful day but bitterly cold. Tonight, I will cook a traditional Barmbrack for the Irish artist Brian O'Doherty and bring it to his house. He is 89 years old. I need to get the objects to bake into the cake. I need a pea, a stick, a piece of cloth, a small coin and a ring. Each item, when received in a slice of the cake, is supposed to carry a meaning to the person concerned. The pea means the person will not marry that year; the stick, means you have an unhappy marriage or continually will be in disputes; the cloth or rag, means you have bad luck or will be poor; the coin means you will enjoy good fortune or be rich; and the ring, that you will be wed within the year.





"the hopeless conditions of the society in which I live fill me with hope" Marx

Sue Rainsford is a writer & researcher based in Dublin. She is editor of the limited edition publication *Some Mark Made*, a Ploughshares blogger for 2017, and recipient of the VAI Critical Writing Award 2016/17. Her practice is concerned with hybrid texts and radical experience, the intersection between visual and literary arts practices, and fusing embodiment with critical inquiry.

Barbara Knezevic is an artist based in Dublin, Ireland. Her work is primarily object based, finding form both as individual, discreet artworks and more recently as complex staging's, formations of objects and image-making. Recent exhibitions include *City Agents* at EKKM, Estonia, *The Last Thing on Earth* at the MAC, Belfast and *Exquisite tempo sector* at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios. barbaraknezevic.com

Julie Morrissy is a poet from Dublin. Her work has appeared in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, *gorse*, *ASAP/Journal*, *Cyphers* and *Canthius*. In 2015 she was shortlisted for the Melita Hume Poetry Prize and selected for the Poetry Ireland Introductions Series. Her poetry pamphlet *I Am Where* is published by Eyewear Press (UK). Morrissy's debut collection is forthcoming with BookThug (Canada).

Jennie Taylor is a curator and writer from Dublin, Ireland currently based in Queens, New York City.

Ingrid Lyons is a writer and co-producer of *pseudophantomat*, an interdisciplinary publication that acts as a repository for the uncategorisable.

Donncha Donn Mac Cól is returning to the mountains from the city's steely roads. He is long-limbed and lonesome, and unlikely to be published.

Fintan Neylan is a writer who is currently completing his PhD in Contemporary French Philosophy. He lives in Montreal.

Fiona Ní Mhaoláir is a Dublin born visual artist living and working in Belfast since 1998. Ní Mhaoláir studied Fine Art in D.I.T, Crawford College of Art, and the University of Ulster. She is a former co-director of Catalyst Arts and Platform Arts, Belfast. Her PhD research is concerned with Agenda-Based Visual Art Production in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland.

Frank Wasser is an artist from Dublin, Ireland. Wasser is currently based in London. Recent shows and projects include the 'Inhabitation' residency at Villa Empain, Brussels, *Scene 93 Omitted* at Xero, Kline and Coma, London and Exhibition continues this way at Tate Modern, London.

Emma Haugh is a visual artist and educator based in Dublin and Berlin. She is interested in representations of desire and the examination of cultural structures (architectural, linguistic, spatial, educational) from queerfeminist perspectives. She works with performativity, publishing, installation and collaboration towards developing and proposing spaces of potential and alterity.

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Jane Locke (BA, MFA, BSc) is an artist, scientist and independent researcher whose practice is predominantly expressed through drawing and performative talks. Recent exhibitions include; *Futures*, RHA Gallery, Dublin (March 2017), *Tales from a Green Post Box* at The LAB, Dublin (September 2016) and *A Fascinating Guide to the Botanic Gardens*, Glasnevin (January 2016).

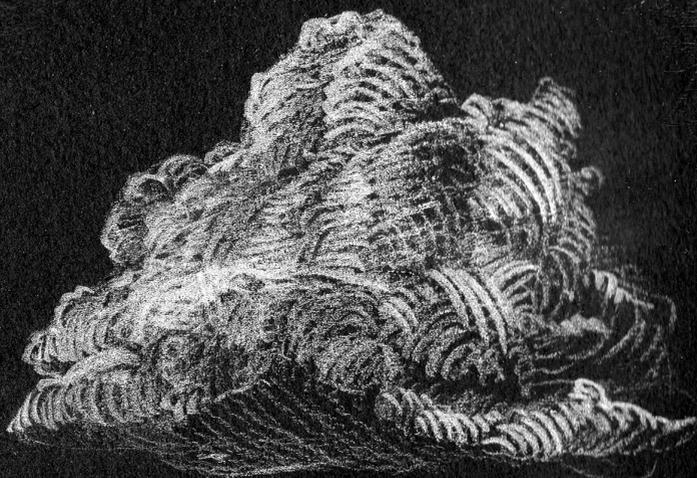


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