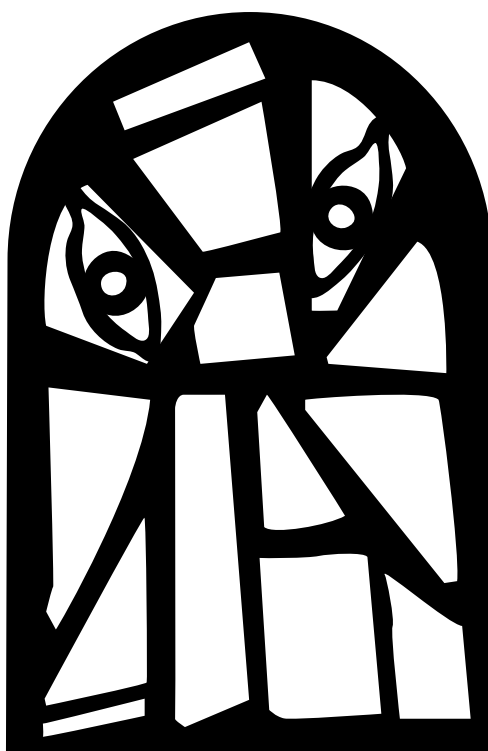


Emerging Writers' Festival and The Lifted Brow presents

RED EYE



**EMERGING
WRITERS'
FESTIVAL**

— THE LIFTED —
BROW

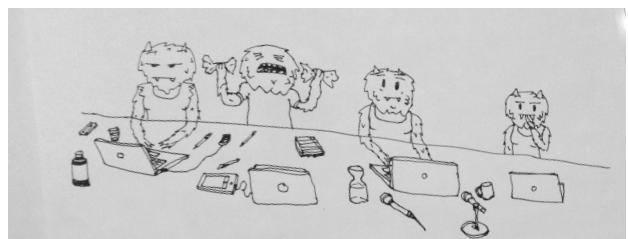


The Emerging Writers' Festival was excited to return to White Night for the third time in 2015. After an all-night writing camp in 2013 and a book produced in a single night in 2014, we wanted to expand what we were up to, and came up with the slightly madcap idea to create a magazine in a night, from 7am to 7pm. We invited the savvy editorial team behind (and bested friends) The Lifted Brow to join us and challenged them to twelve hours of writing, editing and general production madness. An air-conditioned paradise was created in the beautiful confines of The Wheeler Centre, as audience members descended on the space to submit their own writing to the magazine in progress. I haven't read a word of it, and am currently writing this at 4am – three hours before its final delivery. What will it be? I've heard rumours of the title 'The Red Eye' – but that's about it. Oh wait, not they've just shared the Dropbox with me and there's some indication of content there.

Sam Twyford-Moore
Emerging Writers' Festival

What is a magazine if not _ _ /?

It's just hit 5/6/7a.m., which means we have two/one/zero hours to wrap up this experiment in overnight publishing. We started out as warriors. We were starry-eyed, unstoppable. At some point in the night Cameron Baker transformed us into furry monsters.



And now? Following a suggestion on Twitter, we have named this one-off magazine ****Red Eye****, because that same shitty, blurry, weird feeling? That's us right now. We've hopped between time zones, from New York to Indonesia, to a world a thousand Red Bulls deep. Can you feel it?

Love,
Alex, Annabel, Zoe and James
The Lifted Brow

Smothered in the most exotic pomodoro,
scantily clad in twin basil leaves.

Twenty mouthfuls of mind-bending pleasure,
woodfired orgasm.

Pizza, you cheesy bitch.

xo

JACK LAWRENCE



6

by Cameron Baker

@finealright

An interview with May-Lan Tan

by James Robert Douglas

James Robert Douglas: I'm speaking with May-Lan Tan who is in Indonesia at the moment, she comes from Indonesia via Hong Kong via London. She has a chapbook called *Girly* and a book called *Things To Make And Break*.

I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about your life and how you came to be a writer?

May-Lan Tan: I trained as a visual artist before I became a writer. I went to art school at Goldsmith's in London and I made a lot of different art. I made clips in which I talked over pop songs with dialogues that I thought were more honest than the pop songs. I made soft sculptures, costumes, films in which I wore the costumes. I drew pictures and filmed them, controlling the way the eye moved across the page. I just played really, for three or four years, and then after I graduated I wrote a book quite quickly. In about a month I think and I realised that this is probably what I should be doing. It was certainly what I wanted to do, and probably what I should be doing.

JRD: Is there much of a continuity between you as a visual artist and your writing? In terms of your broader interests?

MLT: I think they definitely inform each other and I think that art pretends that there are no words a lot of the time, and when you make art less and less you have an accumulation of language, built up, and you need to do something with that language.

JRD: I wanted to ask you something about prose style in your work. The first thing of yours I read was the first story in *Girly*, which is called "Pacific", and your writing in it is imperative second person, the way you use this commanding kind of tone. I think it's a very tightly written story and very propulsive. But every now and then these special lines popped out for me. I'm thinking of one in particular where you write: "Peel off your clothes, the bodies will sit and your eyebeams clash like lightsabers." And I think that's a really cool line and it strikes me as one of several moments in the piece where the words

have this propulsive effect and they kind of pop out, and it's a really interesting image. What are the kind of things you like to achieve in any given line, or paragraph or story? What are the elements of writing you know that when you've achieved them that you're satisfied with what you've got?

MLT: I think I'm always striving to be communicating with the reader on several levels at once. I want to be engaging their imagination with the story, and the vision of the story. If possible, it should be like a film, where I'm really guiding their eye and they can see not just what I'm showing them in the story, but how I want them to see it. So, there's sometimes jump cuts or panning or I'll zoom and I feel like that's something people understand. Because the way we live and experience things is so influenced by the visual culture we take in every day. There's a story level, and there's also a language level. And I think that the language should be doing something separately from the story. I want it to feel like contact, and I think that's the reason for using short words and building them up, layering them up. Sometimes long sentences, sometimes short ones, but the components need to be small. So, I think there's a way of writing so that the reader feels you on their body as well in their mind. And if I can do all of that, plus make a person feel a little bit depressed then I'm doing what I want to do.

JRD: Is it something that requires a lot of revision on your part when you're doing compositional things? Do you spend a lot of time going back and making sure that it fits rhythmically as a kind of tie in? That's a quality that jumped out to me when I read the piece. It has a very musical, poetical pace to it, to my mind.

MLT: Absolutely. Rhythm is the other component, I think, of making a reader feel it on their body. Something I do when I'm writing is I often listen to one album on loop as I'm writing a particular story. And partly that's to draw me into the space each day. Each story, I think, has a temperature. And I often—this is going to sound really strange—but I play the music and I read aloud, the story

I'm writing over the music even if its got, lyrics and I'll do that again and again and again and I'll be checking it against the music. Because I want the piece to have its own music, so it shouldn't exactly mirror. It's very chaotic and very weird, but I think in the end it comes through. And the strange thing is that sometimes people can sense what I was listening to. There's one story in *Things to Make and Break*, called "101" that's a very Californian-summer, LA story. And I listened to the *Virgin Suicides* soundtrack the whole time I was writing it and was reading the story over it and I phoned my mother and said, 'I just keep seeing Sofia Coppola films.' So I think sometimes it does transfer onto the language.

JRD: I wanted to also talk about the thematic material in your stories. *Things to Make and Break* in particular, but also "Little Sister," the second story from *Girly*. I was thinking that a lot of your stories either focus or tangentially touch on this idea of a person struggling to differentiate themselves from a sibling with whom they share a close relationship. In the story "101" you mentioned, that protagonist's focus is the relationship she has with her sister, they both happen to be dating men from the same family, or brothers and that kind of causes a personal crisis for this woman. And it's something that kind of recurs across *Things to Make and Break*. I was wondering if that idea in the first place is true to you, or what sort of thematic material you're interested in, in your work.

MLT: With *Things to Make and Break* I was thinking about threes, and the twos that fit into the threes. All of the stories are about two people whose relationship includes a third person. This ancillary presence can be an ex-lover, a future-lover, a past-self, a future-self; someone in their lives. I think that most relationships between two people are really between three people, and you use that third person to mediate or to communicate. And in that triangle, each of the pairs that make up that triangle are made of reflections, mirrors, doubles, doppelgangers. That was really the thematic link between the stories in *Things to Make and Break*. And when I sat down to write the collection I had had this idea in mind and thought of eleven situations where this could begin. When I begin a story, I don't begin with the story, I begin with a relationship. Because I always think, what if there was this person that meant there was this other person. For me, that's where it begins. Some kind of kink in the relationship. It's either a bend that they pivot on, or some kind of awkward connection between two people. That's where it begins.

JRD: It's interesting that you sat down with the particular idea in mind. I'm interested if that's a self-conscious approach you take to all of your work? Whether you sat down with a particular idea in mind for *Girly* and if that's

something you did in your early visual arts practices.

MLT: Yeah, I think that my writing practices are influenced by the way I was trained as an artist. When I sit down to write something I write a manifesto and that's something that artists do. I'm not sure that writers do that. So, I always have primary ambitions I want to achieve, as well as certain limitations, conceptual limitations, that I'll set out for myself. I'm sure most writers do that, but maybe not mapped out in that way. It is always something that preoccupies me at the time, so the doubles theme was something that was really interesting me at the time, and I was thinking a lot then about how all of human existence is about the distance between you and other people and trying to cross that rift. All the pleasure and pain in human life is about feeling that distance and trying to fill it. I'm over it now, I'm writing about other stuff.

JRD: Your work deals with a lot of sexual situations, which can be a complicated thing to communicate in prose. Do you set yourself any rules or goals when you're trying to communicate things of that nature? How do you know when something has been communicated successfully? If you were going to give someone advice about writing about sex, what would the rules be?

MLT: I think that when I'm writing about sex, the rulebook and the manifesto go out the window, because it's difficult to negotiate with all the other stuff. So, when it comes to writing about that, I just think, what would the character do? Who holds the power, who wants the power? And also, I try to write a scene I'd want to read, that I would find interesting and that I wouldn't find too empty. I try to make it have depth.

JRD: When I was thinking about asking you that question, I was really planning to ask how you would tell someone how to write about sex without being nominated for a Bad Sex Award. And then I saw that video on your website, where you actually were nominated for that ridiculous Bad Sex in Fiction Award. That really solidified for me the complete absurdity of that award existing and I just wanted to ask you what it was like to be nominated for that and what you feel about the existence of the award in general.

MLT: I thought it was really funny. I think it's funny that the award exists. And I think that the way I think about sex is very different to the way other people think about it. When I wrote the book I expected nobody to read the book, but I thought that if anybody did read the book I'd probably be nominated. So, I wasn't that surprised. I think you have to take risks and I see it as a sign that I took risks. If anybody had a problem with the way the scenes were written, then I feel like I was doing it right. To write a sex scene that is completely inoffensive, you'd be doing something wrong. I'm proud of it.

JRD: I can never tell how seriously that award is taken. It seems to be this weirdly storm-in-a-teacup style media sensation when this small group of people kind of cherry pick out these little sentences from normally quite well-reviewed books and open them up to scrutiny to people who have no idea what they're reading or encountering; inviting the newspaper readership to have a giggle about the idea of sex in literature, in general.

MLT: I think that what really makes sex sexy is character, and story, and plot. And even the cheapest porno, they make the story about the pizza delivery guy or whatever coming over or whatever, because even they know the story is what makes it sexy. That's what makes it erotic. So, I think that with my sex scenes, the sex scene itself might not be that sexy, but what makes it erotic is the way the characters are connected to one another. So, when the Literature Review takes the scene out of context and strips it of character and plot, I think they're the real pornographers.

JRD: I was interested to see on your website that you've been involved with the Marina Abramovic Institute, and I was just wondering what that's like and what you've been doing there?

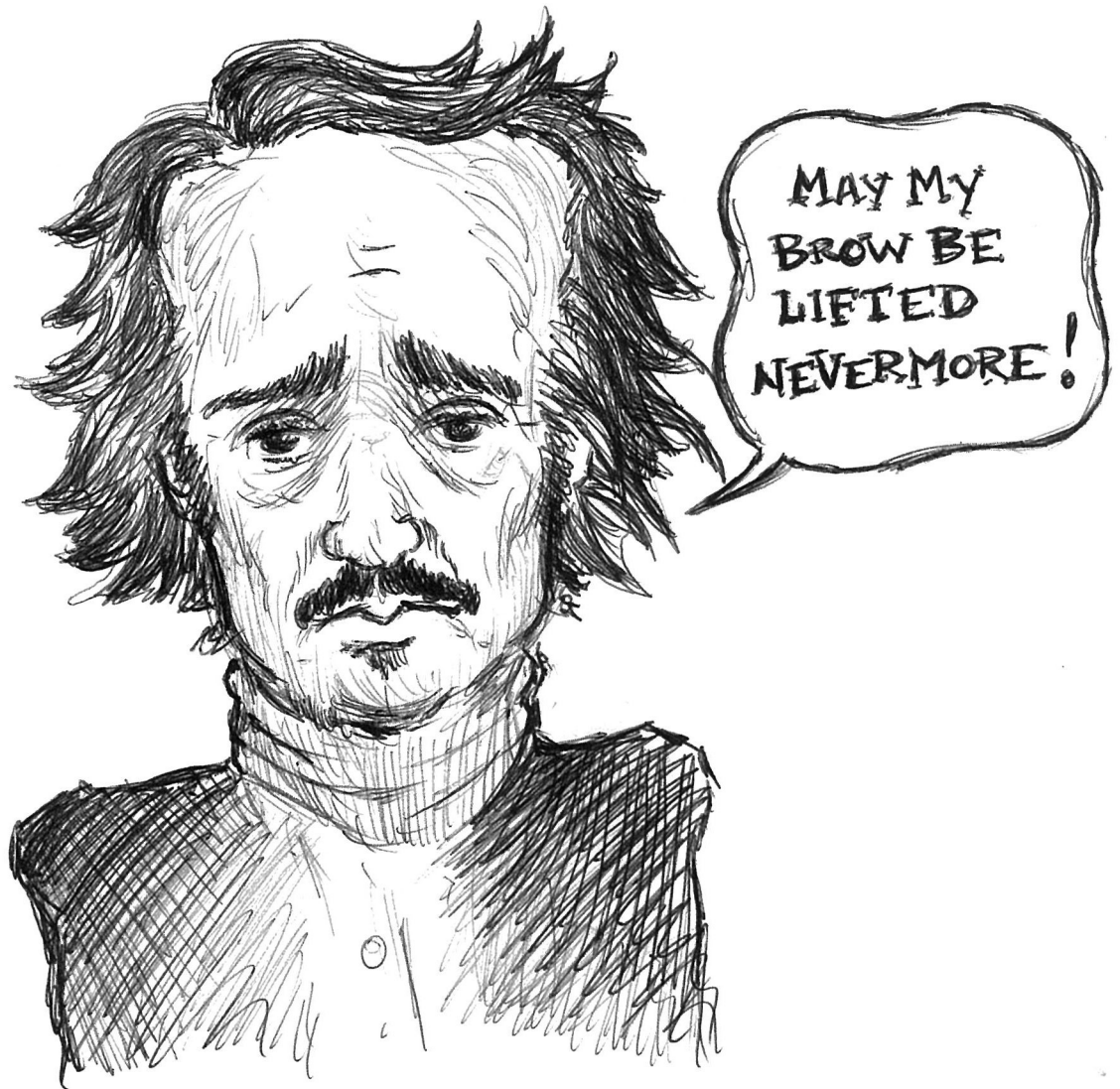
MLT: I've done one performance piece with Chelsea Hodson, we did a durational performance where we spent six-hours in a hotel room in New York, mirroring one another. And it's something that both of our work is about; it was about power, doubling, twins, and connections. And her work deals with a lot of the same themes. I was the original and Chelsea was the shadow, and everything I did she would mirror me, but she would try to do it at the same time that I did it. So she was trying to read the impulse and it actually reached a level very quickly. I thought it would take a few hours before we felt connected. But within about ten minutes I could tell that she knew what I was going to do and we could communicate without speaking. And it was really quite an astonishing experience. We chronicled it, and at some point we'll release it. At regular intervals we went and wrote little diaries about how it felt to be in this experience, to make this connection. It's interesting because we're not really dancers or anything like that, and a lot of this was to do with movement and dance, so that was really interesting, being out of our depth in a way. But we learned a lot from it and it was amazing that we could write something and afterwards when we went back and read it, I didn't remember writing it. It's really hard to talk about, but it was really quite magical.

May-Lan Tan is the author of the story collection Things to Make and Break and the chapbook Girly. She is a collaborator with Marina Abramovic Institute's Immaterial.

Bert got the giggles when I read Anaïs Nin.
“Nin!” he’d say, and he’d be gone. And I’d
laugh at his wobbly belly. So we weren’t
great lovers but we had our thing.

HARRY SADDLER

@mondaystory



by Chris Murray

TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Mitchell Welch

“There are dead stars that still shine because their light is trapped in time.

Where do I stand in this light, which does not strictly exist?”

Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*

Summer night at Oxley Creek Common. We’re not here for stargazing – just to sit at a picnic table and drink cold, dry beers – but it can’t be helped. The catchment’s reserve is surrounded by a research farm, two golf courses, a produce market, a school oval, an airport, and acres upon acres of light industry all switched off for the night. The sparse and darkened infrastructure of Brisbane’s largest flood plain opens a rare window from the suburbs onto the deep night sky. This spot happens to be something of a haven for bird fanciers and their quarry: sacred kingfisher, sparrowhawk, variegated fairy-wren – even the odd spangled drongo (which is a real bird). But the most auspicious thing in the sky tonight isn’t any kind of bird. Midway between the lip of the first beer and the middle of its neck, a meteor streaks across the patch of sky over Jabiru Swamp and Pelican Lagoon.

The spectacle of a meteor is uncanny, and not something you want to keep to yourself. The combination of celestial improbability and impossible grace demands the attention of at least one objective observer, which is why I point my stubby heavenward and draw the gathered gaze up. But the moment has already passed and I must seem

to my companions just another spangled drongo. We go back to looking at our phones and arguing passionately and ingenuously about whatever seems important to early twenty-somethings in the summer of 2007/08: the ousting of Howard and the rise of Rudd; the imminent downfall of George W. Bush; the final victory over Voldemort in the last instalment of *Harry Potter*. The event of the meteor hangs unresolved over all of it like a speck of sand gradually pearled over with melancholy. I withdraw to watch the sky, conscious of a lingering need to find a means of communication abstracted from politics and pop culture.

Drifting off into the constellations, I’m put in mind of an article I recently read in *Fortean Times*, the periodical of unexplained phenomena that, in our age of undergraduate innocence, is considered borderline reputable. It’s a short missive filed under ‘archaeology’, and it outlines a fringe theory that suddenly, here under the stars and awash now with coppery beer, begins to make sense.

The hypothesis arrives via Dr Anthony Peratt of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, a researcher who combines advanced plasma modelling with data from extensive geographical surveys of Neolithic rock art. Although Peratt is neither an archaeologist nor an expert in pre-modern cultures, his credentials as a physicist specialising in plasmology are impressive, though admittedly at odds with scientific consensus (for example, he claims the Big Bang never happened). It is from this fringe perspective that he lays the groundwork for a thousand threads on r/

Conspiracy. He theorises a prolonged moment of celestial inspiration that gripped humankind over centuries; the kind of event that – like a meteor – demands recognition, but on an unimaginably larger scale.

In Palaeolithic cultures, paintings like those found in the Chauvet Cave were generally terrestrial, realist depictions of nature and life within it. These were the first Impressionists. Then, at the dawn of the Neolithic age, abstraction sprang spontaneously into the artworks of discrete cultures right around the globe. Recognisable subjects gave way to precisely etched non-linguistic signs and symbols, some of which seem to converge impossibly in form across vast geographic distances, between cultures with no known contact. The implication is some kind of transcendent, universal subject.

The theory holds that these correlations aren't the result of psychic connection, mass hallucination, or any of the usual paranormal phenomena you might expect to find on the Discovery Channel. Instead, they are accurate and compelling records of the various phases of instability of a massive cage-like energy system called a Z-pinch that might have once enveloped the globe (why it's called a Z-pinch, and what exactly is a Z-pinch are two whole other essays that I'll never be equipped to write). The psychedelic super aurora could have resulted from a monumental gust of the same solar winds that currently project the Aurora Australis and Aurora Borealis across our poles, but unlike the auroras known today, these plasmaforms would have been far brighter and structurally more cohesive. Discernible shapes could have been observed from any place on earth with a clear view of the southern sky, entirely without chemical or herbal intervention.

Researchers collected snapshots of the various configurations of plasma in a laboratory Z-pinch and, as the catalogue of images grew, it became clear that some of the shapes resembled symbols and signs. More specifically, they resembled the unexplained abstract petroglyphs of Neolithic art. 'Squatting man', for example, is a figure found etched from the Americas to Armenia, from Spain to Venezuela, Italy to the Middle East. If only I'd had my Sharpie on me, Oxley Creek could've been added to the list. Essentially he's a stick figure, but one invariably depicted with arms raised, legs in a squat, and two orbs floating on either side. Analysis of high frequency Z-pinch auroras reveals a pattern of electrified gas re-

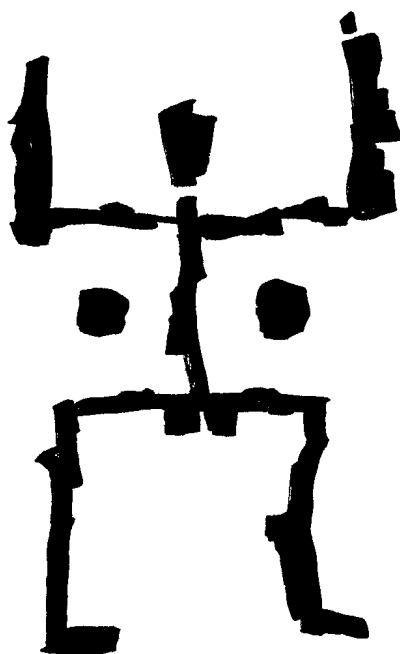
markably like this figure: a fluted top and a bell-shaped bottom that, from an earthly perspective, gestures at arms and legs, a cupola-like head, and two bright orbs.

Northern hemisphere petroglyphs from this era often portray a sun-like figure, which correlates to an oblique view of the aurora's polar apex, like looking up from inside an electric birdcage to where all the bars meet. In lab experiments, Z-pinch plasma tends to stabilise around spheres in an arrangement of fifty-six columns. Take a wild guess how many arms these northern petroglyphs tend to have. And the evidence keeps mounting up. Another common Peratt instability looks suspiciously like a humanoid in profile playing a flute; one who can be found right across the African continent. The phrase 'blueprint for the gods' isn't at all infrequent in the literature on this.

And there is evidence here in Australia too, in the pictographs of the Flinders Range; white columns that seem to coincide historically with the formation of similar columns in the sky. Columns that were visible day and night for generations. If Peratt's theory is correct, dreamtime stories start to look a lot less like fiction than the creation stories of modern religions. The rainbow serpent slithers from fiction to fact, crawling on his blinding electric body across the sky. The legend of Inua's ladder is no longer an abstract parable, but a sense-making story to explain the huge, white ladder stretched over the outback.

Maybe I listened to too many Tool albums as a teenager, spent too many hours sinking into what I thought was spiritual meaning into their Alex Grey gatefolds, but out here in open fields, looking at the southern sky with no scientific training on which to mount my scepticism, I kind of get it, and I kind of wish there were gods and goddesses of pure solar energy in the sky right now. If a lone meteor implicitly requires its observer to reach out to fellow humans – to share the existential experience of it – then what kind of humanity must have been demanded by the figures scored into all those rocks? My kind of humanity, I think, reaching for another beer.

But here in Australia there is only the Southern Cross and the upside-down, joined-up dots of the ancient Greeks. From the whole cast of characters in the constellations, only Orion is obvious to me now, and I suspect we've seen just about all he has to offer in terms of spectacle.



As a writer rather than a scientist, the evidence I find most compelling for the idea of a massive auroral event is the evidence I construct in my own mind. The narrative evidence. At this point in my life I have met hundreds of people infected by a strong nostalgia for light shows. The people who bring lasers and strobe lights into their

Helsinki, Lyon, New York, Prague. And now we have the phenomenon of resurrection by hologram, and all of it in the pursuit of something long lost – not just the wondrous lights, but the wondrousness of them and what it might have meant as a force.



own homes in a vain attempt to prolong the magic of the nightclub. People who stand too long when the fireworks are over, waiting well into the New Year for an encore that never comes. It isn't too much of a stretch to imagine how the zeitgeist must have longed for enlightenment in those first dark days after the aurora finally faded. I wonder if this is why fireworks, why laser shows, why sound and light extravaganzas persist.

If such a thing existed, our constant attempts to project our dreams into the troposphere conform nicely to the logic of a broader narrative, which is what a writer always craves. From the stained glass that paints the holy sky outside the church auroral to the tragedy of fireworks' pathetic attempts to mimic the once-in-a-lifetime skyshows of nature, instead approximating nothing more spectacular than the sounds of war (which is why there are no fireworks on ANZAC day). Then Diwali, Hanukkah, Tazaundang, the Chinese lantern festival, the Fourth of July. Hitler's columns of light reaching to Valhalla. The liquid light shows of the psychedelic sixties. The disco ball. Waves of laser stroking the classical forms of so many bros muzzing out at Stereo. The son et lumière both of France's historical chateaus and Australia's premier goldfield tourist attraction, Sovereign Hill. Contemporary festivals of light in Amsterdam, Berlin,

All the while my drinking friends have been playing poker and smoking at the picnic table, and I'm still lying on a park bench looking up and thinking about what lights in the sky really mean. Have meant. Will mean. The next time Halley's comet comes around (2061 AD), will we still mint commemorative coins and print souvenir t-shirts, or will we be too jaded by whatever dazzling virtuality follows the hologram? And when a great solar flare throws the world once more into an era of auroral rapture, will it drive us towards another new dawn, or another dark age? In other words – is there some life left in light yet?

"What's wrong with him?" asks one of the guys, "He get eyeballs for Christmas?"

Slowly they follow my gaze up, and I realise for the first time that I've been staring at a full-blown Geminid meteor shower for who knows how long. I consider telling them about the ancient glyphs and the theoretical aurora, but they'll probably think I'm drunk, or worse – they might believe me. I don't want to detract from my enjoyment of either of life's two chief pleasures: drinking cold beer on a hot night in the company of good friends, and privately holding a secret and sincere belief in something completely, utterly preposterous.

Speaking at the 1955 American Medical Association Convention in Atlantic City, Dr. Lowry H. McDaniel predicted the following for December 31st, 1999:

A 90-year-old man would be considered “young”, while a 135-year-old man would be “more mature”.

Women will stay “young, beautiful and shapely indefinitely” – due to “proper hormone medication”.

In the same year, *Variety* magazine infamously forecasted the death of rock and roll music: “It’ll be gone by June.”

On this solid foundation of past predictions, I can confidently say the following of 2055:

Airplane and car travel will be passé, with horses the new dominant force in transport. King William I of Prussia called it way back when: “No one will pay good money to get from Berlin to Potsdam in one hour when he can ride his horse there in one day for free.”

Nutella will be the sole food in the ‘eat most’ layer of the food pyramid.

JAMES FOGARTY

West Gate

BY ELOISE GRILLS

I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT OF THE VIEW FROM THE WEST GATE AS ANYTHING MUCH.

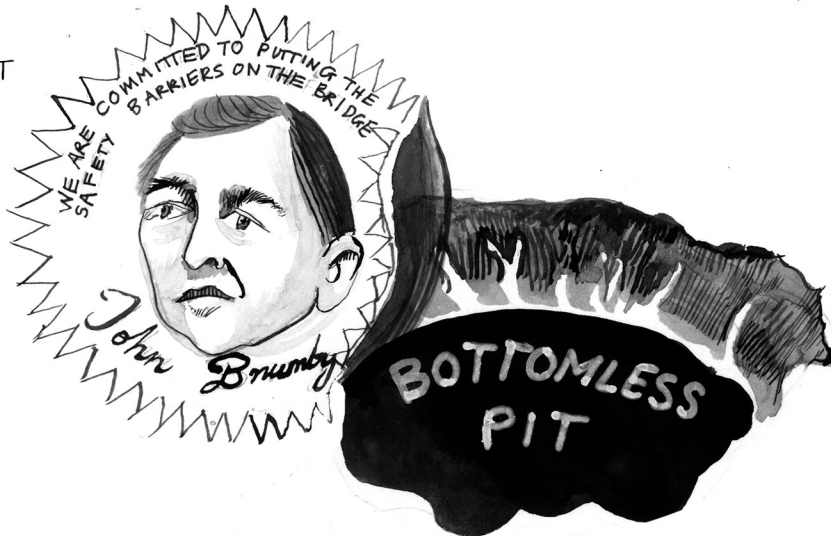
THE SHRUBBERY BURLS
UP IN SAD
PUBIC TUFTS...

...THE SKYLINE
HAS THE DISMAL OOMPH
OF A POLLIE'S SPEEDOS



NO ONE ACTUALLY PROTESTED- NOT THAT I KNOW OF ANY WAY

ON THE ONE HAND
I COULD SEE THE BENEFIT
OF IT- IT SEEMED
TO BE DEALING
WITH A REAL
URGENT CONCERN
IN A SUPER PRAGMATIC
WAY...



...BUT ON THE OTHER
IT JUST SEEMED
TO LOOK LIKE
WE WERE DOING
SOMETHING- A BIT OF
A BAND-AID SOLUTION
FOR AN UNDERLYING
PROBLEM.

TIMES LIKE THESE MY OPINION GROWS VAGUE AND UNFAMILIAR TO ME...

...LIKE MY ARM WHEN I'VE
SLEPT ON IT...
LIKE IT
BELONGS TO
SOMEBODY
ELSE.



icy pole

you electrocute my tooth
with your ecstasy of red

you colour in my tongue it drips
like a cling-wrapped slab of meat

and somewhere somewhere inside of you
is a homesick tree

transplanted to
stand in for your lack of spine

your flesh melts
I am left

to hold your matchwood bone
trace the oceanic swirls of grain

Jessica Yu

four haiku found inside my kitchen

1. chinese cabbage

whale-boned ruffles
and swirls kicked upwards like a
skirt underwater

2. raspberry

covered in hot pink
crocodile leather, couture
without a brand name

3. cauliflower blooming

chiselled marble clouds
grabbed by veiny tentacles
dinnertime nightmare

4. drip coffee

squid-ink escaping
through lung-shaped nets swirled by a
high-pitched tea-spoon

Jessica Yu

DRAWN BY
A 26 YEAR OLD



An interview with Chelsea Hodson

by Zoe Dzunko

Zoe Dzunko: I'm talking to Chelsea Hodson, who is joining us from Brooklyn. It's very early, it's 7.10am there. Chelsea is the author of two chapbooks, most recently *Pity the Animal*, which has received a heap of praise since it came out last year, has appeared on many of the best of 2014 lists, including those from *Entropy* and *Salon*, and *Dazed and Confused* named her one of the Top 10 American Writers we need to know about. Maggie Nelson called *Pity the Animal* "brazenly good—wild and chiselled".

How did *Pity the Animal* come to be? What was the idea or event that set everything in motion?

Chelsea Hodson: It took about a year to write. Something that set it off was this memoir by a porn star named Ashley Blue. It was called *Girlyvert*. She referred to her videos as performance art. I'd seen the videos and I didn't really buy that argument but I was interested in it. It got me thinking about how a body can be art versus how a body can be pornographic or just a commodity. I started researching Marina Abramovic's work through that and comparing the two, but I resisted telling my own story of it. I thought it was too embarrassing maybe. That's something that I struggle with – maybe not as much anymore – but overcoming that, you know, looking bad, revealing yourself in an unflattering light, because that's always the best option for art. That's the kind of art that I like. Once I started really delving into my own narrative of my inclination and desire to be commodified, to kind of resist against this feminist life I was leading; I was this strong, independent woman, but at the same time I wanted to be sold for money. So how do I reconcile those two? It's very odd and hard for me to understand. I didn't know the answer, so I thought through writing an essay about it maybe I could learn something.

ZD: You mentioned commodification, and *Pity* deals primarily with commodification, and especial-

ly how this relates to ideas of power and submission. This is really clear in the different examples of how work and visibility intersect in the book: from being flirted with as a waitress, being watched at American Apparel or being solicited on Seeking Arrangement.

I'm reminded of this comment Neil Lazarus makes: "Once society is defined exclusively in terms of consumption, those who are not consumers become invisible." How connected is commodification to concepts of power and visibility for you?

CH: Consumption is such a big part of, I guess, world culture, or at least American culture, the one that I'm most familiar with. Everything is how you sell something, how you package something, down to yourself now. Down to like, should I tweet that, because that's not consistent with my brand. In terms of power, as a woman once you offer up yourself in terms of money, that's an interesting power dynamic and you become this product instead of a person. That's something I tried to use with what's that line between a human, an animal and an object. If we can sell all three things then how do we determine the difference between them? I still don't really know the answer but I think it's worth asking. It's interesting in terms of how anything is packaged, especially a woman. That's my main interest.

ZD: Thinking about that power, *Pity* seems interested in this idea that the conscious surrendering of power is a power in itself, insofar as it is a choice made. There's a refrain in your book, "I am responsible," which comes up quite often. In many cases, we are responsible for the choices we make and the places we go. At what point do we accept that we're complicit in our decision-making? When do we understand that the choices we make are part of a greater landscape of choices that have been set out for us?

CH: Yeah, it's interesting and I talk about it in the chapbook. Even when I was trying to put myself in a sit-

uation where I was powerless, it became up to me determine the logistics of the situation, which was the opposite of the point. I had this desire to reach the furthest end of something. How can I be the most submissive person I could be, like at one moment. In that, I became very powerful. It surprised me and it disappointed me. I wanted to know what that was like and suddenly I became very dominant. In the chapbook I have the transcript of a conversation in which I have to navigate this conversation with this older man and I have to tell him all these things and lay everything out, and really that was the opposite of what I was looking for. I wanted to feel less human. Even just as an experiment. I never did it with the intention of writing about it; that was the real desire that I felt. In making the conscious decision to give up my power, I gained a lot. As a woman that's interesting. It's just always this give and take.

ZD: There's this line early on in in *Pity the Animal* that goes: "responsibility was the thing I wanted to be rid of—a desire to watch the world, admire it from a balcony that held no authority." That really resonates with me as a woman. This binary between being passive, and longing to be passive at times, and then longing for my own power. Do you think that's a gender thing? Or do you consider it more that we long for the things we can't have, that we're drawn to things that conflict with our nature, and that it's more of a personal preoccupation for you?

CH: All that I set out to write about was my own desire. I certainly don't want to speak for anyone else. The line that you mentioned, that I wanted to be rid of responsibility, it's kind of the same thing as the longing to be a child again, when things were provided for you or you know, you spilt something and someone else would clean it up. I think it's a similar desire that I had. I make so many decisions on a daily basis that at some point it became part of a fantasy for me to no longer have to make any decisions, even just in one room for one hour. That became really appealing to me. It goes back to what I was saying, how do I reconcile that as a woman, in which so many things are decided for me already and I can only combat so much of that.

Responsibility is a big part of the chapbook and what our role is as a woman versus what our role is as a man and how those can switch. Which leads back to what I was saying about submission and power. It's interesting to me to imagine what it's like to be a man dominating a woman. I'm very interested in the roles of switching.

ZD: I'm really drawn to the idea of extremity you raise. There's a desire for unimpeded control or, that failing, for complete passivity. There's no interest in anything in between. You say, "I wished his question was, Wanna know what it's like to be the one that enters? because I do... If I can't have that, then I can attempt to reduce myself to the most vulnerable object possible." What attracts you to the

limits of experience?

CH: I guess because I feel like I spend so much time in the middle, I'm always wondering what it feels like to be at either end of the spectrum. What is it like at opposite ends. I feel like I decide on an extreme and then swim to it, but then how do you know when you've reached it? There's no official cliff where it's like, okay now I'm here.

As a writer, I'm interested in the extremes of situations, the scale of desire and emotion, even negative feelings. It's interesting to me to feel the worst I can feel. Sometimes I feel like a scientist, moving towards, gathering data, and proving something to myself. Even if the outcome isn't worth the journey in itself. I just have to do it to see what happens. Someone asked me, did you do all of this so you could write a chapbook about it. I thought that was interesting. This stuff happened years ago but I still battle with the same desires and the same feelings. It's interesting to think back on something before I would have written about it, how I would have acted, and how similar it is to now where I'm gathering data and moving toward that extreme.

ZD: Your essays often juxtapose seemingly unexpected information, but then very quietly, very succinctly, it ties together the crux that you didn't realise was there. It's very powerful. It's interesting to me that that's also how they take shape in real life. That you're drawing from all these sources. They're illuminated for you. You find these connections that you didn't go looking for.

CH: That's how life is. Once you start looking for something or start seeking a connection, you'll often find it. I love being able to document that. One of the first essays I wrote that was in that style, it was a lot of like eavesdropping on the subway, and these moments of overheard dialogue would resonate so deeply with me, as if it was meant just for me. I really like that feeling. I get a lot from researching now. With *Pity the Animal* I started thinking about animals and researching how people break in horses. Through that I found this other book about hunting wild animals in India in the thirties. That really resonated with me. He went through all these animals. The one that I included in the book was him tying a collar around your bear's neck so that you know it's *your* bear and the other people know it's *your* bear. There's so many parallels with marriage and all other kinds of constructs in humans that mirrors that. I love that feeling: oh yeah, that that's the feeling I'm going for and talking about and that guy's writing about hunting bears in India in the thirties! Everything's so connected if you look for it.

ZD: Returning to some earlier themes in our conversation, I'm really interested in the way *Pity* might expose the way the female artist is viewed. I mean that literally. In a recent interview one of the first questions you were asked was: "You're tall, you're striking, people your

whole life have probably told you that, no?" Do you believe that questions of physicality figure more into the work of the female artist than they do the male artist?

CH: Yes. Even for this, someone re-tweeted an announcement for this interview that we're doing right now, and someone tweeted that they hoped May-Lan Tan and I were in our bikinis or something. It's so prevalent I just like block, block, block whenever I see it and don't read it. I don't think of it as my duty to change anyone's minds. It's interesting that just by telling a very specific story, my own, it becomes viewed as feminist because it's a woman writing about sex. There's no outreach feminist in the chapbook. It's just still somewhat strange for women to write about their sexuality and so it becomes viewed as feminist, and I'm fine with that. I think that's great. But it just shows that it needs to become something that's seen as normal. It's not just an essay, it's a woman's essay.

Chelsea Hodson is the author of two chapbooks: Pity the Animal (Future Tense Books, 2014), and Beach Camp (Swill Children, 2010). A collaborator with the Marina Abramovic Institute's Immaterial and a PEN Center USA Emerging Voices Fellow, her essays have been published in Black Warrior Review, Vol. 1 Brooklyn, Sex Magazine, Sundog Lit, and elsewhere. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

TIMES EMMA + SIAN HAVE SEEN A DICK IN, LIKE, A NOT-SEXY WAY?

When Sian's brothers were little and wanted to show them off.

When Sian's ex-boyfriend had a "growth" and needed her to check for cancer.

When some guy thought it would be sexy to show it to Sian unaware on MSN Video?

When some guy outside the Subway near Emma's school yelled "how's this for a foot-long?!"

When Emma saw her dad in the shower.

When dogs roll over and it's gross.

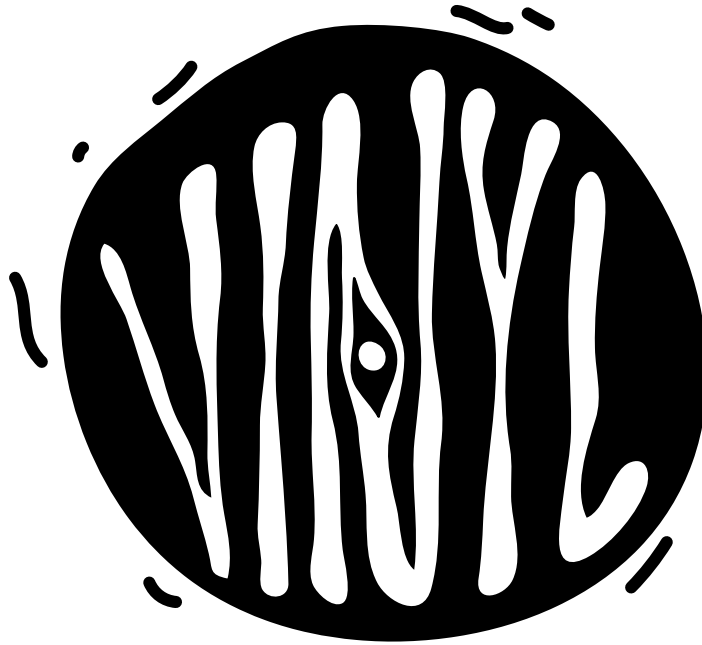
**SIAN CAMPBELL &
EMMA MARIE JONES**

@seancornball and @emmacones

THINGS I'M INTERESTED IN:

- DEATH
- MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY'S BUTT
- AGENT SCULLY
- SLEEP
- BOOB JOB?!
- MONEY
- SWEDISH LIFESTYLE BLOGGERS
- MVCHA'S 'THE SLAV EPIC'
- REGRET

- E.G.J.



by Jonathan O'Brien

Rob always said vinyl was better. Records had the finer sound. He said he reckoned he knew why, too. He reckoned it was 'cause records went on forever. Infinite. Rob reckoned what made records better was that they had no concept of time, or of memory, or of bits and bytes. A record spun. That's what it did. It spun and then it stopped.

One day, Rob stopped too. He'd been spinning, in his own way. Round the world on an aeroplane. He'd been racking up Frequent Flyer points like the Lions rack up goals in a premiership match. That's what he'd said, at least. But the Lions hadn't won in years. I know, he'd said, and then he got out of my car, took his suitcase from the boot, nodded goodbye.

Where's he gone this time? I'd asked Steve, who was riding in the back.

Dunno. Somewhere cold?

Why would he go somewhere cold? He's never gone somewhere cold before.

Saw him pack a sweater.

Fair enough.

We were always Rob's ride to the airport. He didn't own a car. We all reckoned that was reasonable; he'd

have been better off buying a jet, what with how much he used them. Maybe one day, he'd said. For now, I'm just lucky to have you guys.

Maybe.

It was easy for me to do favours like giving lifts from time to time since I worked from home. I did favours for Steve too, because Steve was unemployed, and because sometimes he needed a favour that the dole couldn't cover. Sometimes he'd come to me with a bucket of frozen eggs after sunset, a pair of oversized beanies with eyeholes in them. Go on, he'd say. For old times' sake.

Sometimes Rob joined us on Steve's escapades. He reckoned it was a way of winding down. Steve always made him bring his own balaclava. That's okay, Rob would say. I think I can afford it. And you know what? Afterwards, we'll have some beers by the pool. He was a generous guy, Rob, when he was around, in the country, on the ground. Though I guess he's in the ground now. Funny.

My wife's kid, who's not my kid, but who liked Rob very much, asked me: Why did Rob have to die? He asked it like he'd ask his teacher

about the ancient Egyptians. Curious and matter-of-fact—as though someone somewhere had a certain answer, and as though I would be able to give it to him.

I said: The music stopped playing, Ben. And that was all I said, and I think it was good enough for him; I think he understood. More or less. He's a clever kid, and liked planes himself, which maybe explains why he liked Rob so much. He was always folding paper planes, and he'd always bring out his best one whenever Rob came round, which was often. This was mostly because Julia was always trying to set Rob up with one of her friends, so we could all go on double dates, and take them to our dance classes—but it never happened. He was away too much; he couldn't commit. He couldn't possibly have been a father, which is all that thirty-two-year-old women care about, apparently. I know this even though I only have one source on what thirty-two-year-old women care about, and she's already got a kid, and he isn't mine. But that's okay.

Rob liked Ben too. He'd answer all the kid's questions about planes, and about wind resistance, and about

how it looks and sounds and feels when you're sat by the wing, shooting through the sky. All this made Ben glow, which made Julia glow as she nestled up beside Rob, talking about what a wonderful thing he was doing, how much of a catch he was, how she would try calling Melissa, or Samantha, or Rowena again. But he was always out of town the next week.

And even if Rob was sometimes hard to find, it still made sense to us that Ben had attached himself. And it made sense that, when Rob stopped spinning, Ben cried a lot. And that he'd asked questions with the word 'why' in it, which made Julia and I stumble over our answers, trying to remember what shitty things our parents would have said to us in the same circumstances. This was on the long car ride to the funeral, down the sterile outbound M2 toward Logan. Also on the long car ride was Steve, since he'd needed a lift, which was expected. Hell, I even called him in advance and offered. I told him I reckoned he needed a lift. He said he reckoned I was right.

We got to his building, and he was waiting out front. He got in the car and, for a moment, everything changed, and it was like it was night time. Like it was night time, and Rob was there, and Julia had become Rob, and Ben had become a bag of cricket bats and narcotics and questionable intentions, and we were men on a mission, Steve's mission, a mission which Rob gave us strength in doing, and which required understanding to be completed, and which—

Julia and I had to laugh because of how hard it was raining that day. Because of the joke that came along with it. We heard the joke on the radio on the way in, over the fast, wet scraping of windscreen wipers on glass. They'd put the announcement out on every station. It was too windy. There wouldn't be any planes taking off for the rest of the day.

Everyone mentioned it at the funeral. Everyone said it was so fitting, that Rob had grounded a fleet. The airport was mourning their most regular customer. Even the priest said it, during his sermon. Praise be, said some of the older and more devout attendees. Looking around, there were a lot of people in the hall. Many of them had flown in themselves, a day earlier.

Where are you from? I asked one man, who wore a sweater vest and a receding hairline, and wore them both like choices he'd made.

England, he said.

You don't sound British.

I grew up here, but I live in Britain.

I smiled, offered to pour him a drink. He nodded. You knew Rob through work?

Heavens, no. I'm retired myself. Rob's just a friend I met in an airport terminal, who needed a place to stay. That was about twelve years ago. He was a good guy. He helped my wife so much with her garden. Showed her just where things should be planted, he said. The man looked across the room at a woman. We grow our own herbs now.

I'm sorry he had to stop spinning.

I am too, said the man. Like Ben, he knew what I meant.

No one at the funeral knew Rob from work. No one even knew what he did. They knew only that he had moved—that he'd spun and spun and spun, and that he'd had no concept of time as restriction, but had simply burst his pattern across the globe. We knew that he did not stop, that he had no concept of how to stop. Even as the circles he spun shrunk, and became less frequent, he did not stop. He did not know how.

There was something else he did not know how to do. Something which no one had any idea how to do. No one had drawn up plans or nodded at their computers while typing up instructional pamphlets. How To Get Arrested At A Funeral In Six

Easy Steps was not an article that existed online. But Steve still pulled the whole thing off.

Here's how it happened. It was after the priest had given his sermon and done the part with the coffin. Steve and I had been asked to do our bits around then. We'd been asked since, apparently, Rob had no family anywhere. If he did, they weren't the type to attend his funeral. It was up to us to keep his memory.

My speech was simple. I spoke about Rob, and about how he'd used my car a whole lot, and I listed some of the weirdest places he'd said he was going when I'd dropped him at the airport.

Hey, that place isn't weird, shouted someone from the audience. That's where I'm from! Everybody laughed, including me.

I spoke about how Rob wasn't given his time, about how unfair the world is, and about how a man as young as he was shouldn't have had to die just because he went somewhere cold and got pneumonia. But, I said, I think he did good in the time he was here. The audience nodded. They knew. These were the people whose gardens he'd fixed, whose fences he'd straightened, whose doors he'd oiled. They knew Rob, and they knew his qualities. So when I spoke about how he'd been with Ben, and about their shared interest in flight, and about the way he'd brought my family together, everyone smiled. He'd've been a good father, I said, if he'd been given the chance. Julia cried at that. Ben wasn't really looking at the stage. But the world, I said, the world's a little bit shit from time to time, and we've gotta take it, I suppose, and Rob did take that, and he made something good with it. He made music with his life, spinning in a way that only he could.

That last line was corny, I reckon. But everyone forgot it anyway, after Steve was done.

He got up to the microphone, stuffing his hip flask into a pocket on the way up. Heya everyone, he said. Listen, Grahame, that was a beautiful speech you gave just now. Real swell. I miss the bastard! Do you guys miss him?

He was asking the congregation. Some of them nodded. Steve's hand hovered over his pocket, but he hesitated and kept talking.

I miss him like hell. It's not even been too long. Shoulda thought something was up, I guess, when he didn't ask us to come get him from the airport. When he sorta just... came home. Ah. Ah well. Anyway, guys. Anyway. Let's not dwell on that, okay? The shit stuff. Let's not dwell on that, 'cause it ain't worth it. We got better things to do. Like tell stories of how great the guy was. How brilliant he was to everyone, 'specially for a rich fuck. And I know they can be scum. But he was the best to me of any guy I've ever known. So let me tell you all a story.

I shifted in my seat.

Rob 'n I were on a mission. My landlord, he's an arse, and he were raising my rent every coupla months, even though he knew I was struggling for work 'n all. So I come to Rob and I ask for a hand. I say: Listen, can we go give this guy a talking to, and Rob says: Sure, let's go do it. And you know what was so great about Rob? He didn't really ask questions. So when I handed him a crate of frozen eggs and asked him to grab his mask he didn't even blink. Not that I could tell if he were blinkin', because he had that ruddy mask on. Looked good in it, too. His beard stuck out the bottom all sexy-like.

So anyway, anyway, we get to the landlord's place, and we get real close, and I knock on the door, and I hear footsteps comin', and that's when I yell at Rob like NOW, and he throws those eggs through all the windows on the house and they all smash into a thousand pieces like CRASH and BAM and the alarm—

The church was fidgeting. There were people muttering at each other. The priest nudged me. Get your bloody friend off the bloody stage.

—is when we walk through all the glass and get the cricket bats from the car, two each, one for each hand and all so as to be—

I wanted Steve to be at peace, but I wanted Rob to be remembered well too, and since he was the dead one I walked up onto the raised platform. I walked up to Steve real close and stared at him. He stopped telling the story when he saw me come near him. Maybe he was worried; maybe he knew he'd gone too far. Everyone in the audience stared on. And when I got close to him, I was frowning. And then, when I couldn't hold out any longer, I hugged him. That was when the crying started.

The police showed up at the church soon after. Someone called them in. Steve went without a word. That isn't strictly true: he got to talk to me, at least, and we reckoned he'd be okay. Of course he would. Steve's a good guy. The kind of guy to give a confession at a funeral.

The cops drove away.

What an extraordinary story, said a young woman to me.

I'll say.

I had no idea Rob had it in him! Brilliant. Really shows how much it takes to know a man. Properly, I mean. Gosh.

You don't think it's kinda messed up?

I think it's just so cool—but Rob, wow. Gosh, he was always so nice—and now someone's called the cops on him at his funeral! It's a strange world.

I thought for a bit about whoever'd made the call.

I think it's thrilling that Rob had another side to him, don't you?

I looked her over. I reckon so, I said.

I'm an old girlfriend of his.

What?

We broke up a couple years ago.

Did he never talk about me?

No.

Oh, well, go figure. It was just a long-distance thing anyhow. Wouldn't have expected anything more.

Did you love him?

I suppose I did, yeah.

And then she walked away.

Everyone had left the church by nightfall. Most people didn't want the sun to set while they were mourning, which was fair enough. And the cop cars had made everyone want to leave even sooner. Most people didn't even come back to mine for a drink afterwards, what with after hearing Steve's story and all. I reckon maybe they'd stopped believing in Rob, because he had a crazy friend named Steve. But I knew Steve wasn't crazy—he was more sane telling that story than anyone'd believe, and more sober. After all, I was there, that night, with the landlord and the eggs. I was the getaway driver, but he left me out of the speech. So Steve wasn't as blasted as he had us reckoning. He just wanted an excuse to show he felt sad, the way he knew how.

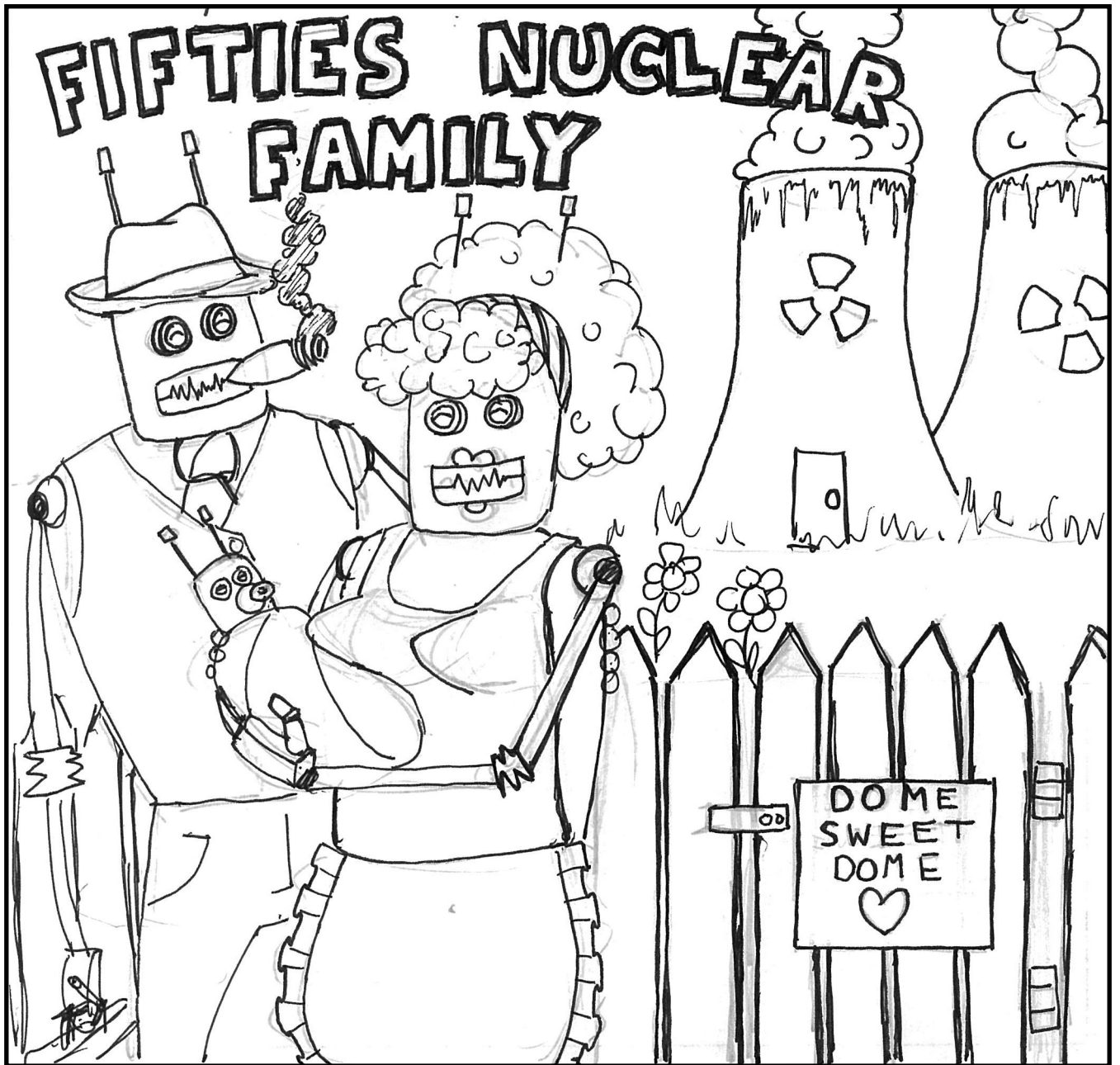
A letter came in the mail a week after. Just when everything had begun repairing itself, coming normal maybe. Just then—that was when things got sad again; that was when the letter came. Rob had left something behind, in his name, for us. Though technically, he'd left it for Ben. See, all the spinning Rob had done while being thinned out over time by the stylus of life, warped and scratched and beaten—it'd all added up to something. The time he spent up in the air, above the clouds, looking over the plane's wing, smiling down upon us. All of it accumulated to a certain degree. Those folded paper planes of Ben's had paid off in Frequent Flyer points.

This was the winner of the 2014 QUT Undergraduate Creative Writing Prize.

In May this year, *The Phantom Menace* will have been released closer to the release of *Return of The Jedi* than to the present day. As someone who grew up with *Phantom Menace* as their first *Star Wars* film, this freaks me out a little.

1955/2055—it took me a moment to realise that we're closer to the latter than the former. It shouldn't be so surprising. I'm not in some strung-out state where I don't know what year it is. And yet, the passage of time, which should be predictable, continually surprises me. People say that time sneaks up on us. They also say time runs away from us. Both are true. It's weird.

RAPHAEL MORRIS



by Hayden Browne

A late night bowl
of fishball noodles,
a tropical pitful of sweat,
Teletubbies at 4am
making me trippy,
and your voice tinny
over the phone.

My engineer's mind knows,
these signals are no longer
transmitted in analogue.

And yet, your tongue
in my ear sounds
a thousand miles away
and inspires mainly,
unerotica.

Darling, the porter is at
the door. Good morning.

Essie Foong
@waffleirongirl

Contributors

Cameron Baker is a writer and illustrator who makes regular contributions to Melbourne publications. He releases a regular zine called Mote that is sold in Melbourne and is currently in its eleventh issue.

James Robert Douglas is a freelance cultural critic and Interviews Editor at The Lifted Brow (jamesrobdouglas.wordpress.com)

Zoe Dzunko is the author of *All of the Men I Have Never Loved* (Dancing Girl Press), *Bruise Factory* (NAP) and *Wet Areas* (Maverick Duck Press). She is the Poetry & Short Prose Editor of The Lifted Brow, an Assistant Editor for Coconut Magazine and, with Sarah Jean Grimm, founded Powder Keg, an online poetry quarterly. She's online at: zoedzunko.tumblr.com

Eloise Grills is a writer of comics, essays, nonfiction and interviews. You can find her recent work in The Suburban Review, Killings (the Kill Your Dartlings blog) and on her blog, Grilling Me Softly.

Jonathan O'Brien is a Brisbane-based writer and he likes sitting on traffic islands in the middle of busy roads. One time a lady pulled over to yell at him for doing this. Read more stuff at www.jonobri.com

Jessica Yu is the recipient of the 2014 Young Writers Innovation Prize and the founder and editor of the upcoming interactive narrativity journal Betanarratives. Her most recent poetry, fiction and non-fiction can be read in The Best Australian Poems 2014, Peril, The Suburban Review, and Dialect.

Red Eye is a collaboration between
Emerging Writers' Festival and The
Lifted Brow.

Red Eye was edited by Alexander
Bennetts, Annabel Brady-Brown,
and Zoe Dzunko, and was designed
by James Nunn.

Special thanks to:

Adelaide Fisher
Izzy Roberts-Orr
Zoe Symbolon
Fiona Spitzkowsky
Eric Gardiner
Else Fitzgerald
Rebecca Varcoe
Connor Tomas O'Brien
Kate Callingham
Kylie Maslen
Sam Twyford-Moore
Simon Collinson
Martin King
Cameron Baker
May-Lan Tan
Chelsea Hodson
White Night
And everyone who submitted

theliftedbrow.com
emergingwritersfestival.org.au