

AT
ONE
END
BY
ULRICH
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At One End consists of excerpts from a longer science fiction epic where I primarily worked in a hybrid autofiction style borrowing from experimental poets like Ronald Johnson, the queer sci-fi of James Tiptree and Samuel Delany, astrophysics, and philosophy to attempt a mediation or recuperation of traumatic memory. I was inspired by the creative nonfiction work of writers such as Jenny Boully and Maggie Nelson as they attempt to navigate questions of identity and embodiedness through textual fragmentation and negative space.

The conceptual basis for these stories resides in the trope of cosmic horror as cosmology horror. The formation of aggregational structures necessarily incorporates negative spaces which retain their irreducibility throughout the articulations of time. Memories decay back down within the joints, a rift without recourse that is summoning us to drown in a choreography of kinesthetic mnemonics. The trans body, here, my trans body represents an attempted topography, mouthing around shape-hood, which fails to resolve into any ideal epistemological dimensions but, instead, like the syntax, mutates within your looking at me. My body dashes away as what appeared to hold rigid boundaries reveals trapdoors, impossibly large and small annexes, contesting a notion of spatio-temporal fixity. Like a haunted house, you trespass through mirrors and revolving doors that open out into vast plains contained within miniature or microcosmic domesticities.

If you were born alone without a home world, if you had to reverse your own timeline to discover your origin point, crashlanding repeatedly within the illegible unregistered zones of human intimacy and interpersonal violence, you would make space craft music that never ends however it begins.



At one end, the microscope is bounded by a black hole. The Planck scale defines itself according to this lower limit. Beneath the quark, perhaps there is an infinitesimal chain of smaller “materials.” These quanta remain indeterminate in their nature. Perhaps there is an edge of human cognition which cannot be transcended. Ceaselessly, the desires of a patterned selfhood batter themselves against these rims of appropriatable knowledge.

As we walked beneath the underpass, its impossible stalactites, I explained to you how I felt about the poignancy of the phrase “tear-ducts” in its semiotic multivalency, trying not to watch your eyes wander to the forms of the bodies around us. Ice piles drove up against the dirtcaked corners of the sidewalk. You could feel my anxiety building as I watched you through my slow-motion language, and would turn your face roughly away from the silhouettes pushing strollers or holding hands. Somewhere, my terror was anthropomorphizing, creaking awake in the steel armature of the bridge, the abandoned building. What I said contained the necessary entropy to annihilate itself as soon as I spoke.

“I think there’s something really poignant about anthropomorphizing objects, like appliances. I have a lot of *feelings* about that movie about the toaster who’s trying to escape,” I said, desperately boring into you as my body superheated in the glow of its imperfections. My face: recessing into crags. I couldn’t hear anything you said over the grinding noise of your gaze, directed away from me, into a secret desire I couldn’t coordinate. Maybe the exposed cleavage of a stranger, where you could dissolve away from me. We turned into the Pathmark parking lot, no longer weighted with the superposition of our walks in Chicago—a split screen we could no longer measure ourselves against. An asymmetry underscores the constitution of the universe. Where did all that antimatter go?

Entropy simply refers to the disorder of the system. When I feel in love with you I was rapt in the attention of your thoughts, exposing themselves like weird flowers. I lived just

over the ground, in a slipstream of almost perfect motion. Like the universe, you phase transitioned, shifting between states of solidity and fluency, slagging your neon green across the red sheets. By the time I found you in New Jersey, only weeks later, you were already burrowing into cold empty steel, walls growing up inside you. A still framed idyll.

"I never look at anyone," you said, but not then.

If I could unsocket the stars for you...

No singularity, but repetition, I chanted to myself, in a nervous, abrading feedback loop, as we waited in line to buy cigarettes, as we paused to buy more X-Files trading cards from the vending machine by the exits. In my world, harder than psychometry, objects accrue energy signatures that you could test all the way back to their origin in light. These X-Files cards smothered my hands. I liked when the person behind the counter would ask me where my friend was and referred to you in the gender neutral. I tangle excitedly with blue sparks when someone hands me your brand of cigarettes before I can even ask. "Whether you love them or not, is not a question."

Mother, I tell you I can not be a lesbian while I'm standing here watching you/her, photographing you/her leaning against the wall in your/her bra, from behind as you/she bend over in ripnetted tights, as long as my genders melt in my hands. Our apartment is the ice planet, she is the one that I worship and fear.

"I love her," I whisper into her shoulder blades as she cries asleep in her bandaged-closed genitals, a here and no further than when you sleep in my tightest jeans, the same weird flowers as before, right at the center of me, but I couldn't see you. Jersey's City's interstellar dust, clogging my vision. As I held you, from behind, pressing every part of my body against every part of yours, breaking only to kiss your angry, shaking ankles, did my cold metal beams inosculate into yours? Did we knot together, in our arboreal sleep? This was the twilight of that post-apocalyptic ice age. Only in the instance of the jet trail vanishing point, only in the unsettling of the clouds of dust upon impact, in this ridge between worlds, could I forgive myself for loving you as a boy, for loving you as a girl.

We were so hungry and tired, buzzing like a killing jar, flashing our plasma, hilding our bared instinct injuries.

You wanted to soften your face, like the nebula of Greta Garbo in profile. You'd been practicing winking since Chicago, and, progressing from a nervous redoubling blink, you finally eased into a perfected singular gesture in Jersey City, smokily gazing at me from between my legs. When I look at you, I don't think your face could be any softer.

There is an incompatibility of scales between the macroscopic theory of relativity and the microscopic domain of quantum theory, smooth vs. fragmentary. An issue of subdivisions of desire. I woke up suddenly to my empty arms.

Our street was a strange angle, a narrow alleyed vein. I staggered through my stomach fisting darkness. My breath heavy and repetitively conjuring vapor. The pipes were singing "ahhhh" nestled along the walls in their bright nexus. I couldn't see the warm trash littering the stairwell. I almost slipped on ice lacquered steps as I tumbled out of the glass doorway. I met the onrushing vertigo of being lost in the supermarket, in the mall closeted by the sphere of hanging garments, carpet burning through my knees. I dashed through parking lots, by shuddering abandoned warehouses that tore through me with your alien absence, like mutant claws, gnashing wind piles. Disheveling through your loose green collared shirt, I arrived at the park before I could remember my feet in their colossal weight. Was I dissociating again?

Flashing birds.

That night, in desperation, I flipped on the cb radio, switching madly between the channels. Gravelly New Jersey truckers' voices flooded the bedroom. Pressing the side trigger of the microphone, I threw my spiraling voice across the arctic circle widening circles.

Has anyone seen a mutant flower trailing its dirt clodded stems through the streets of Jersey City?

Can anyone identify the green iris inside of its calyx?

This is the mirror world, broadcasting from arctic base camp. The subject may be attempting to purchase Winstons with its petioles extended, proffering its thick leaves for nicotine. I always liked girls with curly dark tendrils. My friend Ciska said, "Welcome to the dark side."

That night, clamoring with the after image of occluded stars, I slept alone clutching your father's copy of "Message From the Pleiades."

Our apartment was the lightly hovering space craft, slow-oscillated, switching away the stars on either side. I didn't wanna talk to the cops. Darkness stunted me. I drifted away.

10-1 I don't remember leaving the cb radio on, but it wakes me up in the middle of the night.

10-2 I can hear a voice swelling out.

10-4 Like resurfacing from a sea-coma, or flickering quantum foam, I can trace the breaking words. You are saying my name over and over, quietly like you're whispering into its bone.

10-20 Another name you say now, defamiliarizing it, refamiliarizing it: "Andromeda."

10-44 My body feels estranged. Like my limbs are quieting down to their ash. My hand shakes as I pick up the microphone.

10-44 You don't have to live in this world anymore. I found the place we were looking for when we came here.

10-20 Further astral coordinates

10-22 "Come find me"

Something levitates in the room, like a smashed dish reorganizing itself, the one I broke in the rage of my illegible hands, like someone built my body from spare parts, or maybe too perfectly, like delicate cage-bars. I keep the radio on, allnight, but I haven't heard your voice since. My room brims with star charts where it once held your body, the plotted coordinates. The glittering nebulae of gas giants breaking through your skeleton. I'm sorry I didn't know where you were looking, always, away.

I will come find you, soon. I am acquiring the materials that I need. Waiting, in this frantic assemblage, I can't help but skip trace you through the constellations. I know that you are waiting for me now, too, as soon as I can loosen this awkward configuring form that hulls me in.

Surface information resides on the outer lineament of the black hole. The required energy to probe this structural data only feeds the black hole. In Jersey City, the subject's panic attacks rose like particled ghosts: bombed-out architecture looped back to its memory of flames. Every night my own specter would watch myself not watching the 50s version of The Thing; it was as much as I could do to live out the ice age. When you wore my dress, you were and were not an amalgamation of concrete quarks? The fossilized minerals shriek from your throat, violently recalling their world submerged in ice and rock strata. When you fall in love with something bilocalational, maybe the border is control. Like frayed tapes, you skipped between genders, liquidating the distance in loud static noise. I followed you like chemtrails across rural New Jersey skylines, I followed you like childhood memorization procedures, the star plots. Could there be evil, washing out in the universe? Gravity waves are the tidal rush and pull of your depression, in dents across a body that can't keep you, distorting the exteriority of the sea, while gravitational waves are the asymptotical approach to our galactic germinal. A still idyll, to grasp towards ripples across

space-forever. Separation anxiety locates the impermanence of things. Even after I wasn't a deer, how could I help but love you in your green, receding world?

NOTIFICATION OF MISSING PERSONS

Name(s) of person(s): Iris Blumebaum; Jessica Russel

Date(s) of Birth: October 24, 1992; August 29, 1989

Subjects were reported missing from their Jersey City apartment when their landlord failed to receive rent in April of this year. Room was found empty, littered with disjecta and amateur astronomy equipment. The last known communication from the subjects consists of a note found in the apartment, which reads as follows, "The many men, so beautiful! / And they all dead did lie: / And a thousand thousand slimy things / Lived on, and so did I." So far, no progress has been made in locating the individuals in question.

Anyone who has made contact with either of these individuals is expected to report their findings to the Jersey City Police Department immediately.

May 1, 2015

JCPD Missing Persons Division

And homeward, she ripples through space forever.

I.

In utterly darkness, you are imagining a thick sheathe. This membranous organic layer enfolds you in something cooped like redness. Heat radiates across space. Your mouth motions to itself as if starting. To begin, a shivery undulation passes through like the workings of gills. In this stage, your body constellates into the viscosity submerging against you as if building into its dispersal. A red nebula contracts and dilates. You tense up. This next part will be painful. *You can continue or skip ahead to Part III.*

Pressure composes itself vs. your eyelids, only named in the hot instant of their hurt. The suction was the worst part, like a tentacular force reached up through ages and ripped you down from the membranous ceiling where you swung out like a fixture. Each bone separates and materializes in the burn of its resistance. Now you're falling, falling further than dimensionality could assert its spread of the Euclidean plane, the immaculate light of the platonic solid.

The incipient agony was your eyelids drawing up.

II.

In a narrow field, stars flicker on. You wave at them processing light through your hand. The trails live again behind your closed eyelids, sputtering after image sparking and then fading back to red, vanished webs. The vacuum ahead establishes itself like a matrix in perspective, a hallway shutting along its sides. Suddenly your hand vanishes and you can no longer locate the pivot point along which to turn down your head. The vista tears open. A velocity of vision withdraws throughout space and time. The heft edges of darkness unkeel and fragment with star chatter. Everything hurtles into its expansion, nebulae twisting awake in the distances where you can determine your

position only with the memory of stars that have taken too long. You start rushing and flooding outwards, as if your body existed as ripples without surfaces, and your cognition busts on its rapidity of extending. You try to withhold it and hunch back from this momentum of dispersal. You try to scream but you have no mouth. Holes have overtaken you. Do you run out again like a stream or will you resist? If you will run out, move to Part III. If you will resist, continue reading.

You jerk back into your musculature. You throb fanning out through your joints, touching fingers along your inner arm, and flexing to hold. You start to turn over, and tell your partner about the dream, which seems familiar as if you've been inside it every night, but as soon as you'd speak, the dream dissipates like a contorted vapor trail. The iridized light of your memory falters to darken. Sleep gnarls its claws wrecking across you smolder outside the light, cast dimly through the window.

Proceed to Section IV to uncover your dream lid.

III.

You have to make a choice now, they say. Your partner's visage obscures behind the dielectric coating of their space visor. When you try to imagine the contours of their face into the world, kinesthetically, miming with your hand clenching and unclenching its cornered chin or cheekbone, what draws along your finger is the color red in the meaty tissue of the cheek's wetness.

"They are leaving now. You must decide." The gloved hand reaches the hemisphere of your visor, the outer edge of a sheathed finger pulls a line down your absent cheek. The absence demonstrated by the helmet (which is a mask always) is the absence of oxygen. Other absences signified by masks could be light or water or self or love or something so dead it's just yelping in the ground water.

Images flash as you pull up like a net dredging colors, shapes, or silences with you. These things take up with you. Quiescence, perhaps, is what they are attempting to offer you.

“Will you come with me?”

You focalize with a star raging out of its socket, dashing against its own redness. Your body forgets to clench back. Or your nerves bundle you too closely, they combust into what’s already ash. The lightning compression ravages its course like your fingertips could suck into the enfolding fibers of your cortex. Then the pain gutters, goes quiet. There are stars for lightyears and there is nothing to see.

The End

IV.

You nuzzle the depression of their clavicle. You draw your brows down the rocky chest, into a crease between the jawing rib cage. Will you hesitate at the navel? Protracted lips pressed firmly around the pause of the body’s jerry-rigged center. They shift, jerk roughly like you’ve pulled something out of them as their hands sweep desperately over your eyes, trying to recover it.

“Let’s buy the tickets tomorrow.” “What?” “I want to buy tickets for the shuttle to the lunar colonies. I want to visit with you. It’s my first time.”

Tacky human beings. You can imagine the particles reorganizing themselves along the surface in impulses of attraction. When Michael Stipe asks, “Do you believe they put a man on the moon,” it is a perfectly reasonable question of cohesion. Do the facts of events cohere to their interpretation or to how we experience them? Lunar dust is invasively sticky. It’s positively charged with the radiation of the sun.

Electrostatic Forces.

In the first variation, you are driving a lunar vehicle across the pocky surface of the moon. I am sitting beside you in the strangeness of my body, which unlearns its weight like a creeping aphasia. My bulky spacesuit compartmentalizes something, but I don’t remember. There’s a surreal sheen to the event of being here, rushing across the moon. We leave tread marks for 100 years and the dust clouds articulate their weird glow. It was a simple mission. We were deployed to cartograph this area of the moon. By taking mineral samples and collecting dust from the plumes we’d produced, juxtaposed with captured images of the lunar horizon, we hoped to discover why the moon’s dust clouds produced an artificial twilight affect.

We didn’t talk much through the awkward bulk. There’s something uncomfortable in an itchy way about the delayed relay of the microphones. Like you could hear yourself in the thick silences. We rolled along the airless world. The sky’s total darkness was a limitless expanse. The moon however doesn’t forget the marks you make in it. The moon’s viscous texture sucks you down like mud. I lost my bearings for a moment at my seat thinking about early scuba divers, and how my inflated looking suit called to theirs. Pockets of air muscle, like a hydrostatic skeleton. I turn slowly towards you, gazing at you from behind my reflective visor. I can learn nothing of your face.

The night above is unrelenting and my visor catches the colors of this vacuous satellite. A hyperchromatic spectrum of ghostly colored forms bent and distorted to the rounded bulb of my helmet. Time switched between speed and stasis, even as we never stopped pushing ahead of ourselves. You turned to look at me once the whole mission and we were lost in a crater,

our vehicle flipping slightly and slowly up against no resistance, the nose stuck in the dense film cloud of dust at the bottom.

I floated back down to my seat, after a hyperreal suspension in the aftershock. I hopped down and then around the circumference of the crater, to where you were, but the other side of the bench was empty. I must have driven out alone. I used the radio transmitter to send a message back to the base vehicle. Then, I was prepared to wait alone. I pulled at the dust on my gloves, running my thumb and finger back and forth against the slip. I've never crashed a lunar vehicle in a hole before, but this weird ultraviolet glow was rising off the pit. I rushed down into my own darkness. I held my geological sample testing equipment tightly to my chest panel.

It's so hard not to be able to touch things directly.

In the second variation we are on a raft. We're rowing at the mineral water in a massive fluid scintillation chamber. Our simple inflated dirigible vessel is full of cleaning equipment for the refractive optical lobes lining the walls. In our fragile locomotion we're crisscrossing the captured flux of cosmic rays. I have safety goggles over my eyes, but I smile at you through my teeth. The multifaceted eyes of the phototubes protrude like the compound lenses of flies. You could see yourself reflected in the dielectric coating.

We're trying to understand CP Violations by studying the oscillations of neutrinos. In the short span of an oscillation angle from the particle beam, a neutrino can propagate across its three variations. You can think of neutrinos rising out of the earth, like particle ghosts, acquiring electrons. There are also neutrinos from the sun's solar rays. These neutrinos transition through earth's atmosphere, falling towards us.

It's really a question of handedness. What broke the symmetry of the early universe, in those fractions of seconds after the Big Bang? They're taking our picture in the raft. We worked so hard to come to where we are.

In the third variation we are quarks. Our epoch was 10^{-12} seconds after the Big Bang. The universe has to cool before we can really glue together. We are waiting and there is so

much directionality to summon. I am shadowed by my anti-quark, a potential destruction that leads me back to light. The dizzying zags of subatomic particles is our whole life. There is so little space for us.

Back on the moon, I remember my anti-quark, and wonder where it's waiting for me. Maybe it's stuck in the charged viscoelasticity of the lunar dust. Perhaps I was brought here to disturb the dust so that it plumes in dense flurries of soft white. If I could loosen my disremembered anti-quark from the lunar surface soil, which disintegrates to itself, I could break this chirality. I would disengage the spin that drives me away from you.

This mutating dielectric reflection that hypercontrasts your spectral colors. The bizarre pinwheel of your prismatic light. This spin I enter the same, deposited in the lunar topsoil, that ever finer gradients of dusty. The inescapable stickiness that binds me just outside.

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History or the part beginning with the world gap. We rush in to desistance.

My frankness lives on on your exo –skeleton, -planet

The scintillating lead string lights of the body, we enter like chapels. I can not extinguish yours enough.

A tentacle ropes back, the cities.

Heavens lurch, we fastened the thread fray of the wiring sky.

New England evil is an anger that crags my everywhere.

1.

The psychoseismograph's virtual needle has dropped outside the range of the spectral screen.

The clustered unconscious cell is reactivating itself erratically. In the applied electrical charge, the Drowner seems to have overwrought themselves in a holopositional memory snare.

Should we pause the program to prevent feedback interference loop degradation?

Let it play, for now. If only we could know what they're experiencing.

Pinpricks I remember I remember her telling me there was a way to roll at the knees and never touch the ground's moss floor. In a primeval time, before the fires' outbreak, my father used to yell at me if I went around without shoes on because he didn't want people to think that they knew we were white trash, but it figures itself out and erects a slippery mythology to burn in the apex, of the church towers. They liked the way I could contort they said you've grown so flexible, but with their

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pupils, solely of predatory birds, Jurassic, and I grew sick with my own body's reflex.

II. Towards Names

Conditionally, you are made up for the weather. Appropriately you rim with membranes and viscousness. You balance the flesh from the skin architecture like so many points in the mirage, world of motion. In the orbit of motility, you drown with sense. What I wanted to drench outside myself was your absolute-evil.

I have set the parameters.

The grid lines like nocturnal flowers construct themselves through the dark before you can look. Your observation stations you in the germinal of singularity, a seed pods capsule while you swim beneath with language. The word goes "scored" to "scored field" to "scored think field" as you requisition the self-automating cellulation.

They are reemerging from the cryogenesis state. Like drowners resurfacing a web, we have them.

And I think I was born to suffer.

III.

My brother asks, "If you could replicate your own consciousness, like really perfectly replicate it, and transfer it into a different body, or even the same body, would you still be yourself? Would you die on the edge of the transfer and would you be reanimated when you start up again?"

I have a lot of romantic nostalgia for Star Trek and these questions of humanness, nestled at its center crux. I want to say, "I think there's some sort of pathogen in the water in Providence. When I look at the people around me here, I worry that they are infected. Every day that I am here, my resistance weakens as I subject myself to the variously virulent inputs

that shatter my body like someone is screaming loudly into my centerearhole.”

Instead, I say, “This is the Star Trek question, right?” In our lives, we have loved each other through so much pain that sometimes my brother’s voice is like a deadbolt. When I alarm them, it retrogressively sets off a chattering in my brain like muscle wrapping through tinfoil. It will take weeks just to hear the birds again.

IV.

In the mid-2000s, despite my therapist’s protests, the city of Providence was engulfed in a violent plague. Nothing survived but raw, putrid matter.

Much later, the scientists, as my brother hypothesized, were able to reconstruct the consciousness of the victims from the decay threads. The neural fibers of the body were set into motion like cellular automata driven with their own internal probability systems.

Electrograms of the synapse wave patterns spread their cascade across the coloration the spectrum was picking through. My fingers are electrodes, as much as anything else, signals chase each other to reconstruct me, dolphining to crest an electric blue halo. This is also known as the radio tower in my middlenowhere, of my brain.

All these angry traces of electrical burns that notch my cortex, re-illuminated in the echoed hearing of their sound on the visor screen.

V.

Drowner #197 is reacting poorly to the reanimation parameters of their world matrix, again. I recommend that we shut off the program and restart the sequence after recalibrating the speed of the automation process to ease the consciousness-strain.

You tried to meet me in New England once, but you never came again. They had to annex the whole headland, CT and up.

And, as you drove the highways and bridges and arches, all the spans were burning down.



I. And why did you architect a program to smolder me awake, I don't ask, yet.

Suspension's in the holo chambers, when you keep searching out your prehistoric smell, a phantom tugrope, throbbing close. There's something that drips liquescent about it, at its essential core value. Like streaks in the ghost of rain over a flat top surface, like an abandoning itself desert. Sensory almost awareness clicks on and off between distributions of data. You keep collecting to it. Acknowledgement is the void that rims the larger void but the other one has more nothingness, right? You're daggering on your own question. You could deposit it in the run-off with the schist, which retains its shimmering impermanence against the second guessing of earth. There's a lot of irresolvable land mines, or dicey situations, but cigarettes close the loop. Fine bristling, in the cavities. Hairs thinness chars, or the hand raises above the skull. You dream about ungulates, tread dust, or were you waking up?

II. We can turn people on and off in rapid succession. Here.

Crags pit at the surface, and you twin fission in opposition. The chain reaction keeps replicating so you're at the outline. Neither thing was a climate, but both things were bolsters for a phantasm. Inching inkling through the leaves, or you rearrange the qualifiers. The qualified through the leaves you rearrange inkling, inching. That's a poor narrative when you paste it up. Matrices dropping infinite lines to scorch themselves underneath, my barren branches.

And blast-syntax, tectonics wherein, for project's, they are harvesting materials from the earth's rot, the screamcrowded radiator.

III. There's nothing but time recorded

Susquehanna was your nickname, stolen from the loping of the river. This was an instant of beauty which drives men to drown.

Later, you diagrammed the letters, like counting backwards, and then you build your new name out of scaffolding that constantly slumps. Is the person who misnamed you a living vessel? Threnodies in the fist, when you over drive semantic satiation rituals. I have to meet your mother in the meadowlands, so she can tell me what you looked like before you were a death pulled through birth. She's so slippery in the canals, or whatever cat tails do to you. Later, we'll apperceive the potential for vengeance in the final act. Prestidigitation was a practice you gave up for sexuality, and yours was vanishing too after the horizon ungrapples its weird shoulder.

Did somebody hurt you? When you were leaned into the knees little, did somebody hurt you after light?

IV. And Light Years Ago, I can still see

With sonar digs, they find a letter in the debris, eddying to wobble-lucidity, it reads:

In order to legally operate a HAM radio in the United States, one must obtain certification by passing a series of administered examinations. These certifications are valid for ten years, which is a decade of your life in which to pursue the dynamic art of HAM radio (interference).

Often I am forced to return from the street battling the impulse to ask the most friendly seeking stranger how old they think I am. Did you know that dementia is breaking down in my DNA? Can you see the exhaustion wrenching my face open? Do you think I will be capable of being loved in the inadequate post script? How much age do you think I have?

Infirm was the appropriate appellation, referring to a gelatinous tendency around the corners of the mouth. Often, muscle control degrades before the sinking awareness can register its offilter, so the mind straggles like a moiré pattern, attempting to realign two divergent patterns. Some people think that William Faulkner was just drunk when he wrote the

beginning of the sound and the fury and how many options are really left?

The Technician level license allows one to have limited access to international bands. This license distinguishes itself as the amateur license of choice.

And someone administers a test in a room that smells like lead pencil shavings or really anciently cut wood panels or it smells like the way the metal tubes of the desk are cold. You are drifting back to what shore? In estrangement, you cast your self off to the disappearing islands, and I came here to get them back. Likewise, escutcheons of heraldic figures resurrected in the threading gold. The dawn keeps wounding.

▼ And, radio active green stems, why am I grown so ugly?

If you can break it then you can put it back together in bricolage. If you can wait for the echo delayed signal, you can graft it into the song-cycle. If you can record the transmission, you can learn how the word “enjamb” relates to the word “encroach” which is by the center hinge of the semiotic gradient, where the nuance of the in-leg reflects the breaking into of the reflexive joint where the meaning can pivot to this question: What’s the consistency of post-partum depression? What’s your damage on the line of lucidity? Pick up.

First you have to replace the faulty components in the machinery. Often, in analog equipment, it can be difficult to scout for parts which are no longer being produced, creating awkward scenarios where NASA is buying up 80’s computers off of eBay. If, in a fit of rage, you smash the equipment of your amateur partner investigator, you may have to employ your best skip tracing face to locate an appropriate replacement. Or, you can just ignore the burning of the components rasping against their dynamic anachronism. If you choose to leave them smoldering, your partner’s hair may burn and you may live on without accountability in the ghost plains that keep haunting your partner’s sense of echolocation. Pathways irretrievable, even for science-future scientists.

Until it was useful for you to construct this language in the terms of these metaphors. Why was it useful to melt the solder at the joint? Why was it useful to singe your fingers and keep reaching into the burn until your instinct injury recodes itself as a waking life? You have always been suspicious of logic. Here's a board where you can pin everything and here's the yarn. The gasoline is already in the grass seeping underneath me when I come to panicpickup the phone from my things in your suburban gestalt syndrome of asking how many bottles of wine can she drink or who will let me strike them from the record? The pictures nested the safest in reduplication. Strangers in paradise.

VI. Probability Chains, Here is another orchestration of your New Jersey mother:

NJMother: (takes a drag off of a cigarette – in this capitulation she still smokes but seldom drinks) Did they do something bad?

You: I just wanted to pick my things and leave theirs in exchange while I was thinking about it thankyouso muchforlettingmeintoyourhome!

NJMother: (cigarette is paused right under at the collarbone) How old do you think I am, (she whispers into the receiver), How old do you think I am?

You: I'm sorry I had to contact you via HAM radio you see my body is burning all the time but no one else can see it so they can't avoid the flickering halo of flames and I never wanted to hurt anybody so I just need you to let me know when would be convenient for me to stop by and pick up my things from the outlying planets I'm so sorry.

NJMother: (I can hear the exhale of smoke) It's not your fault.

ULRICH JESSE K BAER received his MFA from Brown University in 2017. He was born in GA and grew up beneath southern power plants. He has a poetry chapbook with Magic Helicopter Press (*Holodeck One*, 2017), a science fiction chapbook with Essay Press (*At One End*, 2020), and a full-length with Apocalypse Party (*Midwestern Infinity Doctrine*, 2021). He has been included in journals such as *Prelude*, *Pinwheel*, *Bathhouse*, *Baest*, *The Tiny*, and *Bone Bouquet*. He loves horses.

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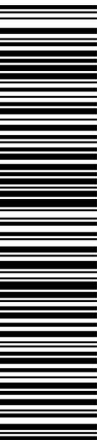


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