

STREET CAKE

experimental writing magazine

issue 78

part 1



A PICTURE CONTAINING NATURE, ICE, SEVERAL

containing n.25 @briony hughes

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issue 78

part 1

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O ■ kissed me in the music rOOm on a Thursday

ShOOk my insides like salt in a shaker

Emptied me Out

I was dOnut-hOled -

UnrOllled yOyO string tOO knOtted tO re-ravel

O ■ played the viOlin with his fingers but

used his tOngue On me

Puzzle-piece-punctured me sO

I'd never fit with anyOne else

LOST PROPERTY

1) our dumb century *

during an emergency landing in Boston / on a KLM flight to Paris / carrying ten kilos of hand luggage plus severe cold symptoms / head stuffed / ears unable to acclimatise to sea level pressure / they had to deplane / it was the worst cold of your life / you begged gate staff not to let you miss your flight / you were sick the entire trip / in a fog

(item last seen in the seat-back pocket with emergency instruction card and unused airsickness bag)

2) brand new suitcase and everything inside **

in the aftermath of a terrible drunken row / you threw eggs at the wall / she screamed like a woman stabbed / you panicked and threw her phone out the window into the streets of Glasgow / got on last train to Edinburgh / people were staring / you realised you were bleeding / she must've scratched your face / put on a covid mask and became invisible

(item last seen in the overhead bin of the train, calls to the lost property department of Scottish Rail went unreturned)

3) osprey hydration backpack ***

in a midlife crisis / you got your dumb ass fired / took up baseball to rekindle carefree feelings of youth / the ex-wife could not understand, will never understand / she got it for your birthday / hiked up stone mountain together / waiting tables in a diner / scored weed from the busboy / smoked it / it sent you into hyper-focus / you had two hits and an RBI

(item last seen in the carpark of the baseball field in Conyers, GA, where the River Bandits were defeated by the Mavericks)

* a compilation of parody news headlines by the Onion, a publisher once based in Madison, WI.

** one yellow H&M jumper purchased in New York City, two pairs of turquoise boxer shorts, purchased in Cartagena, Colombia, the dregs of 50ml bottle of Versace Eros Flame, purchased at Amsterdam duty-free, red Sonic Youth t-shirt from the Sonic Nurse tour, purchased in Milwaukee, WI, circa 2006.

*** the 15 litre model is "ideal for day hiking," according to the manufacturer.

shrinkage

the more i become less
i like less more &
the less i become
the more i like less &
being less becomes an addiction (more or less)

i've been losing bits of me for years now / each loss taking a piece of my heart /
my want / but / when i lost you / it killed something / inside me / & my lessening
increased

unfettered i wanted to cease

coming from nowhere in particular
 I
 draw strength from music,
 instead of being sensible and
 uneasy
 without a lie how do you
 dream ?
 Or have you made
 some kind of peace
 ?
 Perhaps
 there's no deep mystery
 men are idiots who get bored
 because they can't handle the
 rupture with fantasy
 I'm going to shut up but penny for your
 thoughts, Hey?

It would be you

I look through lace black and red and blinkered wonder
how they do the magic trick of loving without losing:
themselves their time the right to fuck others when
you tell me everyone has rules | boundaries | lines it's
about agreeing not to kick weak spots in the panelling
but I want to toddler tantrum the fencing & I tell you this
for the four-hundredth and thirty-second time in the
three years we've been circling dribbling waiting for
the other to crack come to their senses & in an
afternoon near Spring in 5:02 lighting I sigh like I'm
about to deliver news of a death tell you if I could I
would & it would be you

/File Opened

//Sequence Initiated

Earth is over 4,5 billion years old. Each layer formed by the ruins of those before them. A rich ball of growth and decay.

So much life observed. So many routes to take. So many experiments to execute. And all infiltration sectors on board. All eyes on us:

//Sub File 1

Hit-

"... War imminent"

/Shut Down override initiated

//Sub File 2

Hit-

"... War imminent"

/Shut Down override initiated

//Sub File 3

Hit-

It takes pizza delivery guys quicker to reach a crime scene than the police. They don't have much choice. They live off tips and cannot afford not to be quick about it. Good thing the police don't work on the same system. They would all starve. And if you were to enjoy a pizza while watching the world burn, well, why not?

Hit-

America doesn't know how to react to a loss of power in their city wide infrastructure. A rat race unwilling to be plunged into darkness. Unwilling to be disconnected. Their biggest weakness and yet: innovation is bred in the strongest panic, in the darkest times.

Hit-

Most countries voters don't know when they vote in incompetence. The more disorganised, the better. The higher up, the better. Tag, you're it.

Hit-

Previous studies of pandemics conclude accurate. The human race will fight everything if they weren't the ones to design it themselves. They drink foreign substances while fighting against their own imaginations. They insist on believing everyone wishes to mess with their genetics. They miss their own punchlines sometimes...

... Sequence rebooting [cycle loop: 3]

Hit-

Current studies of life are throwing civilians into war. Families divided. War imminent.

.

.

.

/Shut down override initiated

Coupling up

We *are*
&
then
we're.

Transcending to the ending

i stepped out of *t me*
but returned
inside the last *miinute*

CRACKED RIB FRAGMENT

Rivet in bone,
cryptic { } dark shadows { }
{ } x-ray in my small hands.

an archeologist holding
 { } secrets to the light:
 a dinosaur bone, but more precious {
 } says
 how my body has survived...

Doctors { } fault line

{ kindergarten terms, already {
} I understand
side effects; {

} symptoms: {
 }
 too is indistinguishable.
 this my responsibility {

} even {
} at this age {

} limits... this curse {

}. In my body; nowhere { }
comfort { } control in knowing why

{
} internal enemy

{ sword unsheathed
muscle of abdomen. Pain {
supernova of forced attention. Wilted eucalyptus {

} white coats like capes.

Capital-S-Something to call { } Finally.
 { } faulty genes, proof { }

} impossible—{ }

helix of runes.

solidarity

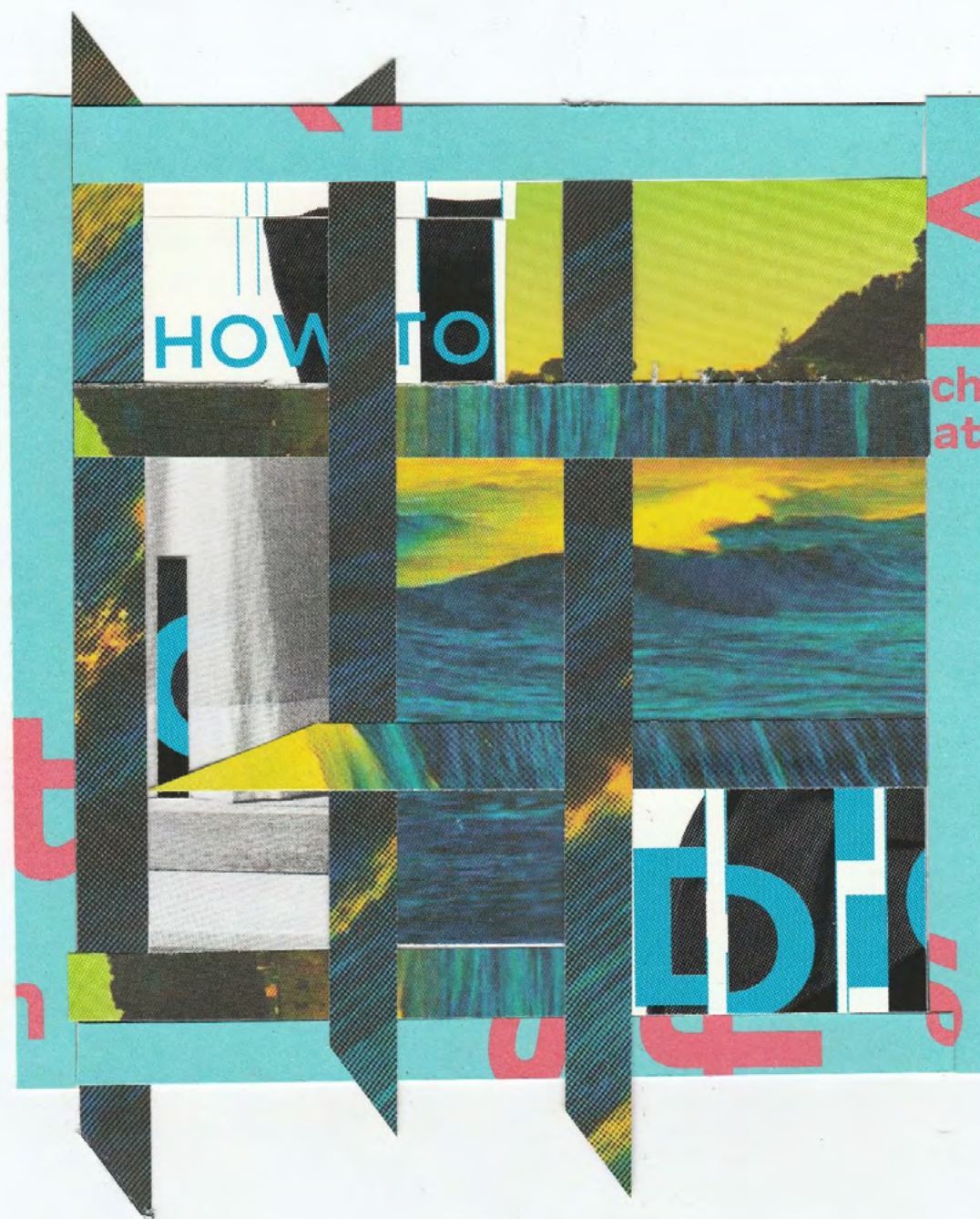
t

y

solidarity

Game Show

Hello, welcome to the game show. This game show is easy, and you can win fabulous prizes. In order to win, all you have to do is choose between two boys. The boys are the same. The boys are different because one of them is a boy and one of them is a painting of a boy. All you have to do is look in this mirror and tell our studio audience what you see. All you have to do is forget the boys I mentioned before. All you have to do is number your narrow teeth and scrape the paint off your fingernails before picking the nails themselves into sharp crescents that fall into your lap. All you have to do is answer these trivia questions. All you have to do is put on this padding and make these shapes with your body. All you have to do is be lucky. All you have to do is get lucky. Congratulations, you've won. You get to choose between two prizes. The first is a boy who's solid and blue under the skin, no organs, whom you can love and who will maybe love you back. The second is a boy who is looking in a mirror at himself, never at you even if you share the mirror with him. The first boy is sitting on the front steps crying and the second boy is sitting in the attic smoking a joint. Both boys come state-of-the-art with wet mouths and long smooth chests that beat with warmth. Here, behind door number 2, here are both boys at once. They are the same boy. Look how they make an ouroboros, dick into mouth and dick into mouth, identical empty moans. In order to choose you have to be able to tell the boys apart. Congratulations, you've won. You get to choose between these two prizes. Ooh, I'm sorry, you haven't won. You can't tell the difference between something and itself. No one can do that. I'm sorry, that's not correct. You've done so well. Thank you for playing.



Finding Aid (Anleitung)

Knitting Blankets and Families

I twirl wool yarn over and around my needles, making tiny stitches that accumulate into rows. Stitches interconnect below, above, and adjacent. Each stitch depends on the others to create a fabric.	Needles come in various sizes and materials—bamboo, steel, plastic. The best are flexible but sturdy. They quietly tie each stitch to the next, with barely a whisper as they brush together, nudging yarn into place.	Strong, dependable needles won't balk at a yarn's slubs or rough spots. They slide over flaws and produce a fabric more beautiful because of its variations in texture, shape, and personality.	Circular needles are connected by a cord. They create a continuous fabric with no discernable breaks. By contrast, individual needles operate singly and can create openings or holes in the textile.
Yarns may be fragile or thick. They come in various styles and strengths: fingering, sport, worsted, aran. Delicate strands respond best with a small needle. Bulky, resistant yarns require a sturdier tool.	Natural fibers like silk or bamboo retain their vibrant colors, are pleasant to touch, provide cover and warmth, and can last for several generations.	Some may find wool fibers scratchy, but wool's positive attributes make up for any discomfort. Its inherent warmth and strength usually outweigh its abrasiveness.	Knits and purls are basic stitches. Inserting a needle toward the back produces a knit. Inserting a needle toward front makes a purl. Knits are called stockinette. Purls are called reverse stockinette.
A knit stitch on the front looks like a purl stitch on the back, making opposites inherent. Also, what is presented to the world may appear completely different on the other side.	A blanket with identical stitches has little texture. It is equally boring from the front and the back. There are myriad patterns for fashioning a blanket. Or knitters may design their own.	Basketweave is a checkerboard pattern that alternates blocks of knits and purls. It can incorporate three or four blocks or expand to include an infinite number.	In basketweave, threads appear to criss-cross and interlace. They seem to arch over one group, then under the next. The effect is of individual strands permanently woven in and around the others.
A cable is more complicated but creates a beautiful twisting pattern. To accomplish it, some stitches must be hidden. All stitches, seen or invisible, are important in creating the beauty.	Cables pull the fabric in, making it tighter and more condensed. As the design emerges, pay attention to gauge. The blanket can always be redesigned to accommodate more stitches or rows.	A dropped or lost stitch may not be noticed at first, but the hole will expand and put tension on other stitches. Unless repaired, the entire fabric could unravel.	Large blankets will have eccentricities. These can be attractive. Some knitters try to modify them, but it is usually better to live with the inevitable imperfections.



richard kitchen