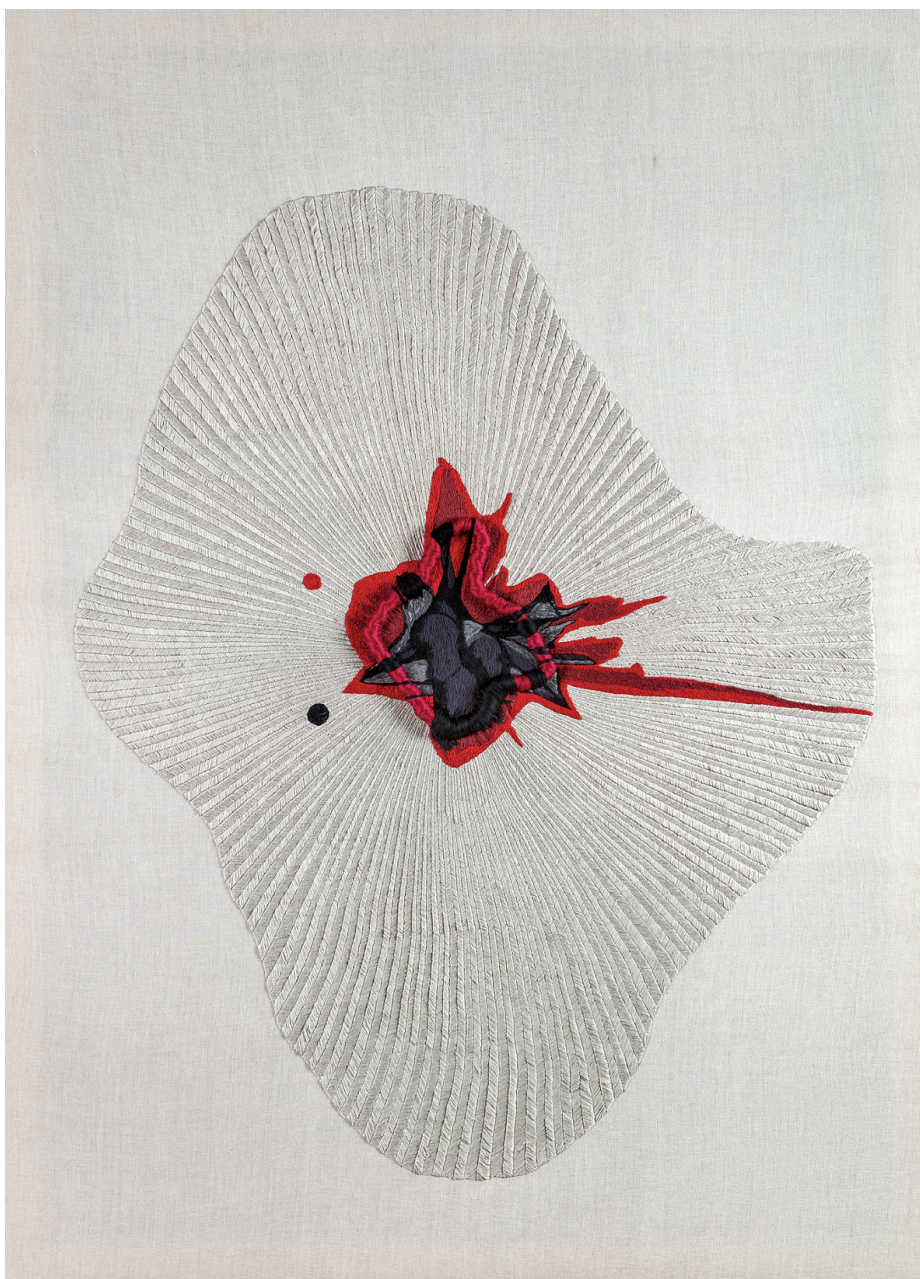




the  
signal house  
*edition*

#2



*emotional field - LOVE II*  
hand embroidery, cotton and wool thread  
on unprimed linen, 2018

carolina mazzolari

*issue two | july 2020*



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rory foster

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# welcome

Welcome to Issue 2 of The Signal House Edition.

In Issue 1 we wrote that "We hope this journal will be a heddle on the world's loom, where stories small and large can change, and change, and keep changing." In addition to publishing stories, we also have to acknowledge that we are already in a story that is, at times, deeply upsetting and unjust. The death of black people at the hands of the police is devastating and unacceptable. So, too, the killing of trans people, especially black trans people, both at the hands of the police and by fellow civilians.

As human beings watching these stories unfold, and as editors of a journal that actively seeks to publish underrepresented voices, we have to make it clear to our readers that we believe black lives matter, that trans lives matter, and that the stories told by black writers and trans writers need to be heard, read, seen, listened to, and reflected upon and believed. We are committed to implementing an editorial policy that is inclusive and anti-racist. This policy will be published on this platform and will be under constant review.

This issue, we are thrilled to announce that Erica Gillingham has joined us as Poetry Editor. Raised in California and now based in London, Erica is a poet, writer, and bookseller. She is currently accepting poetry submissions. Her input to the journal has already been significant and we are excited to be working with her.

Space (private and public), subjectivity, selfhood, manipulation, and emotional pathways are themes woven throughout Issue 2. We hope you enjoy this pattern, and that you will share the work with your community, wherever you are.

Until Issue 3, stay safe and strong.

With solidarity,

The Editors



# euston station

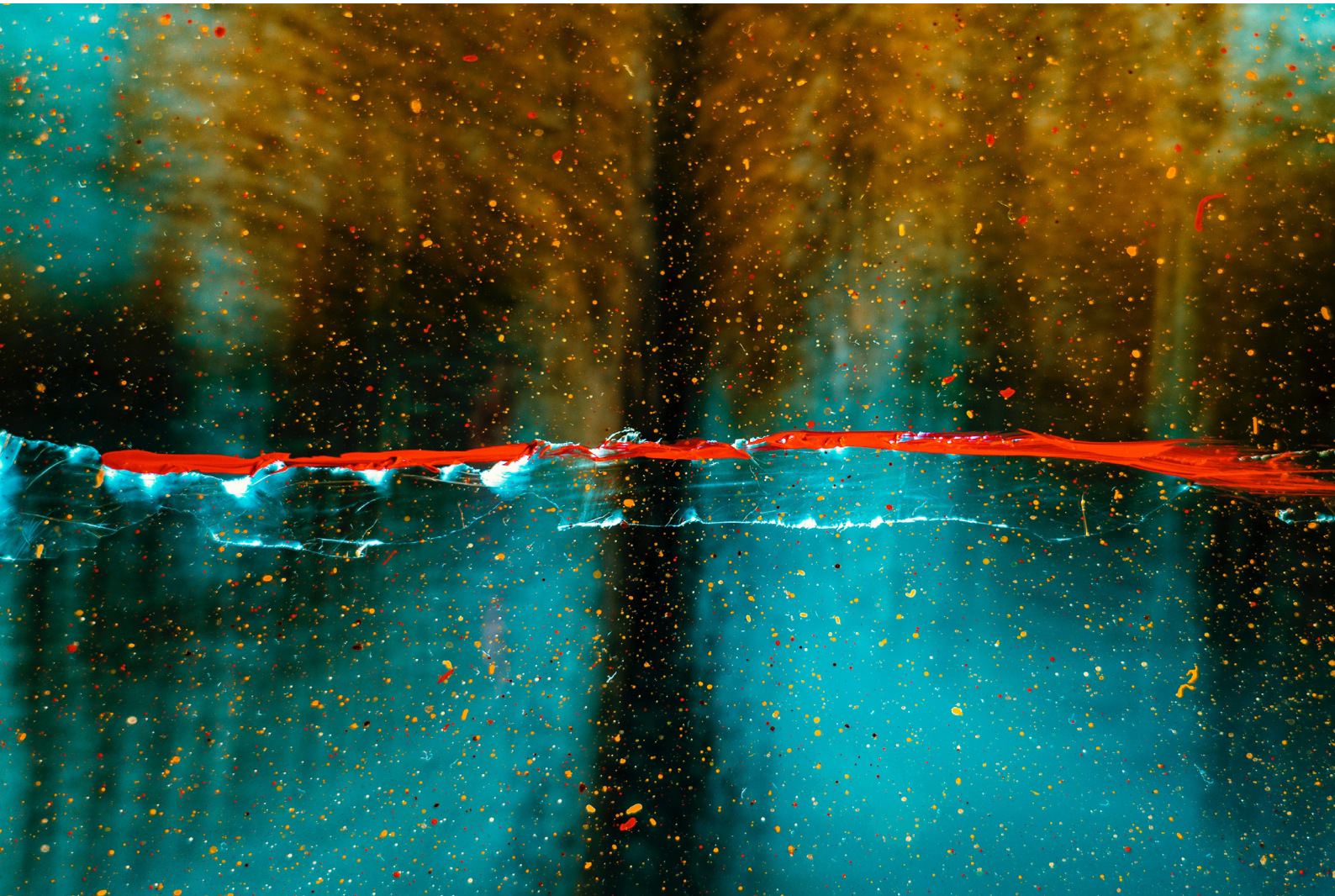
POETRY

golnoosh nour

---

If you're not too unfortunate, false accusations don't land you in jail; they only break your back. You stare at your own voice but can't hear. Everything is too loud. Everything explodes your wound like sirens in spring. Like Euston Station at midnight when you caught three white officers interrogating a black boy. He was staring into space as if the police didn't exist, as if it was just him and the moon, his skin merging with the night. And you feel black with your back bent, decked with a sable bruise. You hold on to your books and nourish your bruise like it's your child, or that boy. Your bruise an ocean, and when it opens its mouth, you let it devour you, you hope it can drown you. It never does. It spits you back into your white room, snickering, just a false accusation. Why is your back bent? Why are your eyes red? Why do you care? False accusations come and go like period blood. That black boy is probably free now – like you are.

But if you could face the police one more time, you would open your ashen mouth uttering that you could just tell he was falsely accused by something more sinister than his skin colour. That you had no evidence, no corroboration, and you didn't even know why he was arrested but you could taste his innocence and it was bitter like yours. But you whirl and turn in the gym mirror, getting fitter, supposedly stronger, and everyone says they're glad you got well and you hope you can turn into steel, with a metallic touch like a second-rate Midas, because by now you know steel is better than gold for it shines less and is more resilient, but there is no steel, no gold, and the black bruise on your broken back gazes out like that boy shouting.



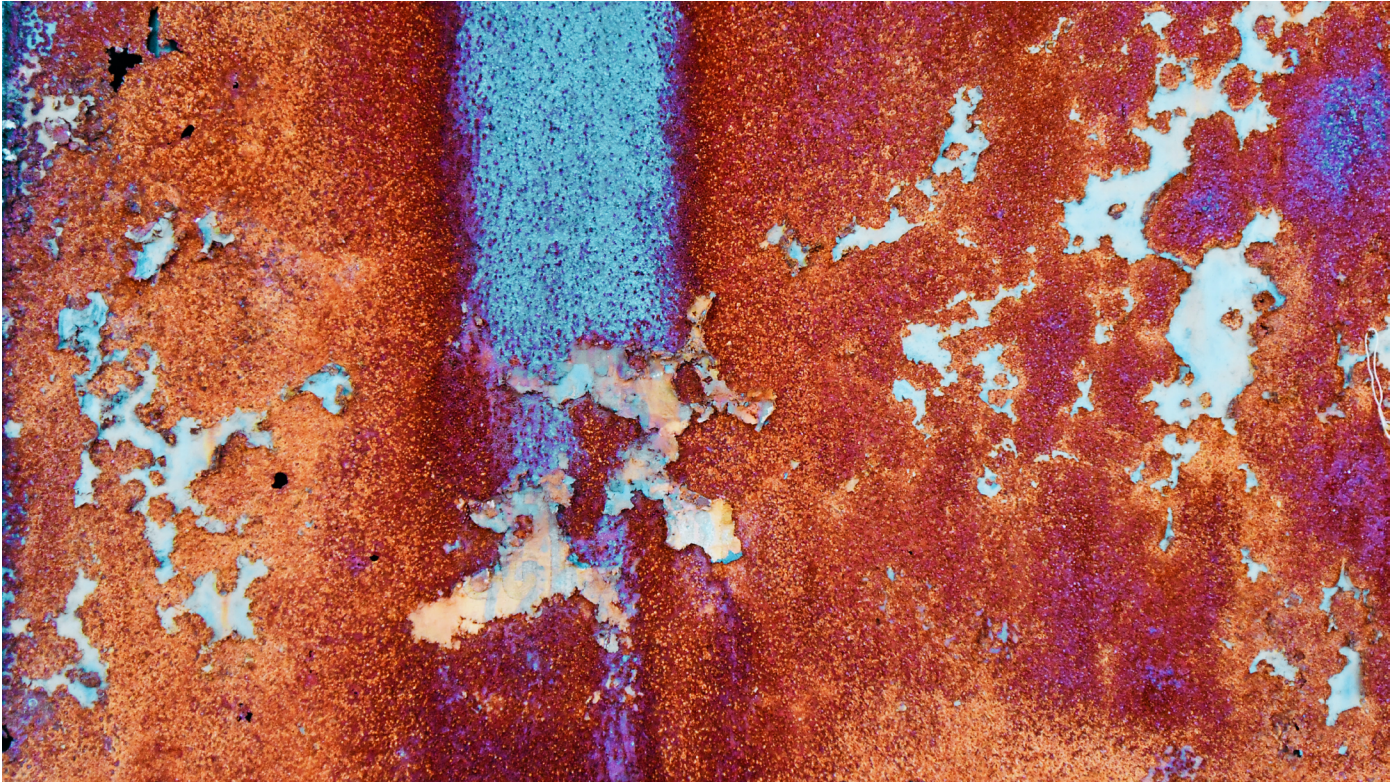
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*(Image credit: JR Korpa, 2020)*



# ode to self

---



*We survived and survival breeds desire for more self – Audre Lorde*

I am that  
the fatigued knight wading through the morning light  
like Moses gazing the Nile

I am that  
the black rose in winter, dead  
butterflies dripping from my bruised petals.

I am it

The 'it factor', the cool factor minus, the cold factor plus, the hot mess, the browned flesh, the queer crushed by Authority, forever refusing to agree with anything other than my own elegant violence, my autumnal tendencies that I catch in the river of my mirror – the only truth teller

for I am that,  
the breathing painting in the attic  
the 'darling' collector  
the cold sore in summer  
the sore throat in spring  
the allergy screeching at the skin.

I am it  
the blue silk with a scarlet kernel,  
wrapped in my gold cape, embroidered by thorns, I pounce  
over the fence into the abyss to caress  
my horns, and to plant myself in fertile soil, roots hard in the ground;  
shaking off tornadoes from my trembling naked branches, I grow tall,  
old, short, skyward, enamoured,  
pure.

---

*(Image credit: Jimmy Ofisia, 2018)*



# the sculptor and the skate rat

ESSAY  
seán fogarty

---



A patch of clean concrete, no bigger than a child's mattress, stares up blanky from the grounds of Dublin Castle, a complex of government buildings dating from the 1300s to the present day. Tourists trickle past this curious inverse shadow and as they do, some pause to read the discreet plaque embedded in the ground nearby: "UNBROKEN LINE Michael Warren 2010".

The plaque refers to a phantom presence; an artwork that vanished in 2018 from its public repository within a symbolic space that once represented the safest place in the country. Missing is Michael Warren's *Unbroken Line*, a collection of five folded steel sculptures which sat like unmelting icebergs between the castle's conference centre and gift shop.

In some respects, this vanishing act feels familiar; Dublin has a habit of repurposing its public artwork. Sculptures, in particular, seem to have a knack for losing kudos quickly and several now linger in cultural exile far from their original location. The unusual thing about *Unbroken Line* is that it was genuinely mourned after its disappearance. More interesting still is that the artwork's most stirring eulogies were penned on Instagram by the 13-year-olds responsible for its disappearance.

I am interested in public places like Dublin Castle's courtyard because I see them as continually contested terrains. To survive and remain relevant over a lifespan of centuries they must be able to adapt. Though their cobbled courts and crenellations suggest a certain defiance toward change they are also undeniably modern, deftly able to serve what Philosopher Marshall Berman referred to as the "maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal." The individual stones, walls and buildings remain in place but their social, political and even spatial functions fluctuate constantly as public consensus drifts and new value systems emerge. For instance, in the 16th century, forces loyal to Henry VIII displayed severed heads on spikes at the Castle gates to curb the natives' rebellious tendencies, while in contemporary times the castle functions as an

exhibition centre to celebrate this same non-conformist culture.

When the removal of *Unbroken Line* was chronicled on my Instagram feed it felt as though I was witnessing a sort of spatial evolution-in-progress. The dominance of certain city forces and their ability to shape the spaces we share was suddenly laid bare. As a citizen I feel that such events represent a good opportunity for the public to question the motives behind such change; motives which may not always be apparent when we experience them in their traditional, latent form, such as when a familiar pathway gets resurfaced or a traffic route is altered overnight. In the case of removing an artwork we may reasonably question who benefits from such an action? If it is removed because the space has been abandoned or deemed unworthy, then a commentary on the people who enjoyed its presence within the space is also implied.

I first met Oscar as I walked my children to school. Oscar was a senior student; not yet a teenager but almost divested of the dew-fresh innocence which most of the younger students still possessed. As we walked on the footpath, Oscar commanded the road from the authority of his thin plywood deck, before stopping to greet the lollipop lady with a smile. When summer came, he left for another school: his parents had separated and his mother wanted to move closer to her social circle on the other side of town. The next time I saw him was in the grasp of an angry shop owner. His blonde wavy locks had transformed into a tight glistening buzz cut. I spoke with the shop owner, explained that I knew the boy, and agreed to pay for the sugary swag Oscar was caught with.

Shortly after, during my lunchtime at work, he appeared again, this time on the Instagram feed of a local skate shop that I frequented with my son. Videos featuring Oscar began to appear on a weekly basis. Some formed a permanent archive on the accounts I followed, others disappeared within a matter of hours. Their content mostly concerned Oscar's progress on a



skateboard, difficult tricks mastered or new terrain visited, but there was also space for personal observations and vignettes of daily life in Dublin. His Instagram posts began to inform me of what it was like to occupy a city in a manner which eluded the typical justifications that others may be seen to rely on. I and most people I know, frequent the city to benefit from internal amenities such as pubs, shops, schools, restaurants, theatres and galleries, but Oscar's priority destination spaces are the city's external fabric: the streets, courtyards and pools of concrete space that hold the internal transaction-related amenities together. The city's agenda, the one I had come to recognize as normal, was being supplanted every time I checked my phone, dissolved by the will of penniless teenagers. It was on Oscar's Instagram feed, during the summer of 2017, that I first encountered the sculpture *Unbroken Line*. Since moving to Dublin, I had visited Dublin Castle on several occasions for lectures, family lunches and looping games of chase around the gardens of the Chester Beatty Library without ever noticing the sculpture's presence.

When the sculpture appears on my screen it is alone, but soon its taut white form is accompanied by the sound of rumbling wheels. The video's protagonist presents himself, eyes transfixed on the elevated surface of the artwork's upper face. Timed to perfection, and moving at speed, he snaps the board downwards with a tap of his back foot and controls its airborne trajectory with an angled scrape of his leading leg. Body and board land, supported four inches above the ground before rolling off again within seconds. The grey and black streaks left on the sculpture are of no concern to him. They are an acceptable by-product of an afternoon well spent with friends in the open air.

A few months after the first videos were posted, something unusual started to appear in my Instagram feed: the artwork had been removed from its location and Oscar had begun taking photos of the residual, empty space.



Captioned “Why they take away the spot” and accompanied by multiple crying emoji faces, it was hard not to adopt a told-you-so attitude in response. However, something about the circumstances made it feel less like a Visigoth bemoaning the lack of theatre options after the sacking of Rome, and more like a genuine display of grief. I began to wonder if these posts could be interpreted as an act of civic demonstration; the protest cry of anomic adolescents in response to public policy on decorum.

If the purpose of public space is to serve a community, then who gets to decide how the community is defined and how their needs should be served? I am thinking about this when I sit down in Oscar’s kitchen to interview him about the city he lives in. Behind us, his mother is busy cooking pasta for her hungry teenage son—she’s the one who introduced him to skateboarding by bringing him to a festival called Kings of Concrete when he was five. From this early age Oscar has been conscious of skateboarding as a phenomenon which belongs in his city. It isn’t foreign or trendy—it just is—and now he can’t live without it.

We talk about the removal of the “white metal ledges” from Dublin Castle. Security men have always had a presence there, and typically Oscar would only get a few attempts to land his trick before he was moved on. Sundays were the best for filming it. As we speak, I begin to wonder what a Dubliner like Oscar thinks about the cultural heritage which surrounds him. The truth is simpler than I expected; he doesn’t think about it: “If it looks fun to skate, then skate it.”

For Oscar, the city exists as a matrix of “spots”, micro-spaces capable of hosting the spectacle of skateboarding, which link up through the movement of his body. No single location holds a primary importance. Ejection from one location just leads him onwards to the next. Seemingly unprogrammed destinations are frequented according to their capacity to thrill and delight and by such the city is transformed into a playground. For many adults there is a tendency to observe this coloniza-

tion of urban space by unproductive others as unwarranted. “Why don’t they skate in the skateparks we built for them?” is a common refrain. The logic of this argument is reinforced by the spatially segregated patterns of culture which exist elsewhere. Patterns which have done little to stem the rise of childhood obesity, currently at 25% in Ireland, or combat the rate of Irish teen suicide which sits among the highest in Europe.

A few months after I interviewed Oscar, and six months after the sculpture was removed, I found myself in discussion with a member of the Art Management Department of Dublin Castle. She is sympathetic to skateboarders, having driven her son to skateparks on plenty of weekends, but considers the removal of *Unbroken Line* as somewhat inevitable. To her, the will of the artist must be respected and if a piece is not being afforded the respect it deserves then something has to happen. There is a decency in this approach which is difficult to argue with but it is a policy-based response. If a sculpture gets scuffed in a city, and nobody notices, does the city still deserve sculpture?

About two years after it disappeared, *Unbroken Line* cropped up again. This time on the surface of some glossy postcards that I was browsing in the Visual Arts Centre in Carlow. As heavy rain began to fall outside the crystalline interior of the gallery, I wondered how the sculptor feels about his work being experienced in 2D form. Would it comfort its creator to know that its precious white shell no longer bore the brunt of public exposure, that the dignity of its unblemished skin no longer depended on the diligence of security guards in Dublin Castle, a corps of bodyguards-to-the-inanimate who regarded *Unbroken Line* as “a bloody nightmare” to protect? For me, it is hard not to view the act of removing *Unbroken Line* as being a negative outcome for both the sculpture and the skate rat. The former is denied the potency of its visual impact on the space, while the latter is the victim of a spatial sanction, resulting in one less reason for his presence to be welcome within the public realm. If there is any positive result to be gleaned from the affair it is

that *Unbroken Line* may live to see another day, but the impact it once had on the space it occupied, whether scripted or not, is lost to us.

On the March 27, 2020, all buildings overseen by Ireland's Office of Public Works, including Dublin Castle, shut their doors as part of the country's lockdown measures to combat the spread of Covid-19. As I write this, on a warm day in June, the Castle's gates remain shut, though the air outside invites me to explore the city as it gradually awakens from the depths of pandemic slumber. As I walk, I can't help but speculate on what lessons the country has learned from the recent savage exposure of our city's fragile inter-dependencies. Will Ireland emerge in a world where the attraction of external visitors still trumps most other considerations concerning the management of important spaces, or will we envisage a better home for Dubliners? Perhaps now is a time for hope, a unique time to question whether a city's population should be rewarded instead of punished for making their home meaningful to them.

---

*(Image credit: "This plaque and shape are the traces that remain in Dublin Castle of Michael Warren's sculpture Unbroken Line, 2010." Photo by Seán Fogarty, 2019.)*



In episode two, the loss of Martin leads Gran towards a problematic fixation with a neighbourhood cat.

# the empty cage

AUDIO DRAMA | episode two  
*kit brookman* | *andré jewson*



[click here to listen](#)



*(Credits: Image from Natural History of the Animal Kingdom for the use of Young People," by Kirby, W.F., (E. & J.B. Young & Co., 1889). Music by The Erlkings, used with their kind permission. Music by Robert Schumann, arranged by The Erlkings, translation by Bryan Benner, songs: Hör ich das Liedchen Klingen and Zwielight.)*



# four excerpts from a charity shop purchase

FICTION  
seanan mcdonnell

---

## Exercise 3

Following the ingestion of 200 mics of 5-MeO-DMT, you sit before a landscape of ambiguous darkness. Within moments, a flash of lightning illuminates its hidden features and with each successive flash, you gather a more complete picture of the landscape itself: a wavering line of mountains bisecting the sky; a rocky outcrop to the left; a wooded area to the right. However, as the intermittent lightning continues, your understanding of the landscape shifts: the rocky outcrop assumes a more central position; the wooded area becomes flattened and indistinct. Soon the landscape has assumed the shape of a man. He is either inexplicably giant or threateningly close and both possibilities terrify you. With the next strike of lightning you become certain that, whatever his nature, he is approaching you. Do you:

- a. Rise to leave, reasoning that your safety is best secured by adding as much distance as possible between you and the approaching figure.
- b. Turn to a friend to verify the sight, recognising that while this is a poor protective measure if your perceptions are correct, the sight is sufficiently dissonant with your lived experience of reality to feel it worth querying.

c. Gaze and tremble, overcome with a paralytic sensation that renders logical thought not only insensible but imperceptibly distant. It is understood that this sensation renders the decision-making inherent to this exercise impossible and therefore the choosing of this option paradoxical.

Please mark your answer and proceed to Exercise 4.



### Exercise 67

Following the inhalation of 25mg of 4-HO-DMT fumarate, you sit before a landscape of kaleidoscopic colour. From it, a woman emerges. She informs you that she is a time-traveller from 150 years in the future and that in this future, a dearly- and unreservedly-held political belief of yours is viewed with universal and abject contempt. Contemporaries

of yours prominent for espousing this belief have become, in the popular imagination, avatars of humanity's capacity for evil; descendants of yours characterise you through this belief exclusively, regarding you with a mixture of willed forgetfulness and disgust; individuals, when gathered together at solemn memorials and dinner parties, voice their inability to comprehend the scale and depth of monstrosity required to sustain this belief. Upon hearing this, you are shocked and distressed: you had always felt this was a progressive opinion whose veracity and goodness would be upheld by history. Suddenly, and without opportunity to further speak of the circumstances which led to this social change, the time-traveller disappears. Do you:

a. Do nothing. Your belief is not the product of social pressures nor will it be influenced by prospective ones. Rather it was derived from thorough-going, far-reaching and dispassionate collation and analysis of relevant data made in reference to unassailable scientific and/or metaphysical truths. The opinions of those yet to come are irrelevant.

b. Gently adjust your position. While continuing to maintain your belief, you now argue it is necessary "on balance" rather than "on principle". When in conversation with like-minded individuals, you resist caricatures of your opponents' positions, introduce countervailing perspectives at opportune moments and speak of the necessity of encouraging a plurality of voices.

c. Radically adjust your position. While you are certain that this will incite confusion and opprobrium among your contemporaries, you see this as insufficiently discouraging given the benefits that may accrue to you, reputationally, if your superior progressivism and moral courage are recognised in the future. You have never considered yourself beholden to the vagaries of the crowd and know that a durable and worthwhile legacy, which you had always intuited as being within your reach

but to which a path was unclear, are not secured by being an agreeable voice among many.

d. Do nothing. 150 years from now you will be either entirely forgotten or an abstraction whose relationship to reality will be incidental at best. The advantages of changing your position are negligible. The opinions of those yet to come are irrelevant.

Please mark your answer and proceed to Question 64.

#### Exercise 114

Following the administration of 125 mgs of ketamine, you become aware of a communal presence surrounding you. While you cannot tell the group's size, its members are numerable to the point of innumerability; while you cannot tell these members apart, the features of those you know best – parents, lovers, respected authority figures – pass momentarily across the faces around you, gnarling each in an expression of revulsion. You are brought before a figure who is both ungainly and diffuse. You perceive, in the absence of words, that you are being judged for having committed a crime: the act for which you are being judged is unknown to you; the law which you have broken has been hidden from you; – but the means by which you are to be judged are clear. You glance about the crowd and see the disbelieving raised eyebrow of your third-grade teacher, the rippling upturned sneer of your driving instructor, the raised fist of your last great love, the sum total of humanity's distaste for the weak and corrupt as understood through your life lived so far. You look to the ungainly figure. You will be soon found guilty and allowed a response. Do you:

a. Resist. The means by which you have been found guilty are ill-considered, incoherent and unjust, A thorough-going and clear refutation of these means will illuminate their



shortcomings and render them indefensible. This may be supplemented by an analysis of the likely group dynamics that have caused your accusers to see you as anything but innocent.

b. Resist (alternate). The means by which you have been found guilty are ill-considered, incoherent and unjust. However, you believe that the group dynamics that have brought you to this point are inhospitable to reason. Spurred by the iniquity of the judgment, you will resist through behaviour reciprocal to your accusers', ranging from non-compliance to violence.

c. Plead your guilt. The means by which you have been found guilty are ill-considered, incoherent, and unjust. However, you believe that the group dynamics that have brought you to this point are inhospitable to reason and that resistance will be ineffectual and taken as further evidence of your culpability. Adopting a long-form view, you decide to accept the judgment in this most febrile of moments, in the hopes that you will be able to adjust others perceptions and recover your good standing in time.

d. Plead your guilt (alternate). The means by which you have been found guilty are ill-considered, incoherent, and unjust. However, this is incidental. You have long known the relationship between one's behaviour and the treatment one receives at the hands of others is elastic at best; if this group composed of all those that have ever known you and all those that yet might, are unanimous in their consensus of your guilt, you are, functionally, guilty. You have stood in judgment of others similarly and now appreciate the fearful symmetry, for in your tenderest moments, you have imagined this situation and known its outcome to be true.

Please mark your answer and proceed to Question 115.

## Exercise 151

Following a three-day period of sobriety, you are presented with a book. The book is a self-help guide that advocates for the use of perception-altering substances to further one upon one's journey of self-discovery. The guide is primarily composed of exercises: each exercise poses a set of circumstance to "you", then requests you to select a response from a list of options: Do you:

a. Answer as "you", which is to say "you, an individual uniquely positioned in space and time, singular in your subjective experience and constituted through a genetic, developmental and circumstantial history unavailable to any other". For example, "you look nice today".

b. Answer as "you", which is to say "you, a linguistic unit constituted by its context, and applicable to every individual who does not possess the position in space and time, the singular subjective experience and genetic, developmental & circumstantial history 'you' (See a.) possess, but never, by definition, 'you' (See a.)". For example, "you look nice today" - "You look nice today?" - "No, you look nice today".

c. Answer as "you", which is to say "you, an ever-shifting presence contingent on the perceived intent of each exercise and the judicious weighting of each response to match it, being 'you' (See a.) when the scenario allows for a response that will please the perceived intent and being 'you' (See b.) when it does not". For example, "I know you are but what am I?"

d. Answer as "you", which is to say "you, the God-like being that would result from 'you' (See c.) answering each exercise, were there an infinite number of exercises, the perceived intent of each exercise was correctly adduced, the response to each exercise unambiguously satisfied that intent and the exercise-setter was singular in intent but infinite in number."

For example. “You look perfect today and for all days forever”.

Please mark your answer and proceed to Question 152.

---

*(Image credit: Pawel Szvmanski, 2019)*



# pizzeria

POETRY  
šime knežević

---



The person pointed at me their finger  
and so I found him, on a chair in a pizzeria.  
*Gotcha*; you I know. I had seen you before.  
You and I, we both wore the same idea  
of anonymity, like a woolly blanket in summer,  
an air of suffocating stupidity about us.  
In a chair where I sat for one large capricciosa,  
the person beside me pointed at me their finger.  
Anonymity is to sit in a pizzeria and be set  
apart from your body, from your hunger, aloof.  
At the point of the person's finger, the inflated  
idea of my anonymity hissed to a slump  
in the chair of a pizzeria. Who was this person,  
and why were they pointing their finger?

(Image credit: Carl Nenzen Loven, 2017)



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the beast - iro tsavala

2021

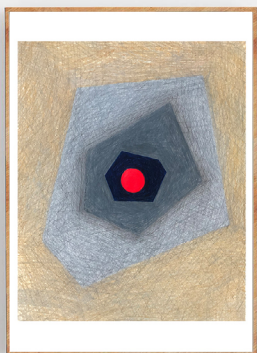
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## submissions

*We accept submissions in non-fiction, fiction, essays, visual art, and audio. Follow us on social media and subscribe to our newsletter to hear of submission deadlines for other categories, such as poetry.*

*We encourage submissions from individuals from backgrounds and identities underrepresented in art and writing, particularly with regard to race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability. We welcome works translated from other languages into English where both writer and translator hold rights. Contributors retain copyright of their work. Please note, we are currently unable to pay contributors.*

*We read all the work sent to us and aim to respond within two months if we feel there is a place for it in the journal. As we are a small team, we do not respond to each individual submission.*

*submit work*





# 2nd arrondissement paris, june 2020

PERSPECTIVE  
hetty kate

---

Life in Paris has taken a turn for the better since I've found myself somewhere to live, and it only took three years to the day. It's not what I dreamed of, it's not what you'd expect of a woman in her 40s, but I tell you it's positively glorious to have an address,

and to only pick my own hair out of the shower drain.

Only a year ago I was staying in a musician friend's tiny room, sans musician friend, who'd told me he was away on tour for six weeks and needed to sublet. His version of "away on tour" was gigging in Paris and sleeping rent-free in the lounge. I'd regularly be startled

awake by his foot next to my face as he strode across the bed to get something from his room.

Before I signed this lease, I spent a week in a 2-star hotel in Les Halles, and pretended to be a tourist. After a flurry of desperate Facebook messages, this apartment arrived at the eleventh hour, furnished, though frayed, and foot-free. It's a small, square and squat studio, up in the Gods with a view of the roofs of the 2nd arrondissement. The laminate floor slopes at exactly 4 degrees, a perfect monument to the Sisyphean effort required to survive with any dignity in Paris. Pens habitually roll down the incline to huddle against the dusty skirting board, so I gather them up to place them back on the desk again. 'Office chair on wheels' is crossed off my Ikea shopping list. I make a mental note to practice my yoga downhill.

*'Office chair on wheels' is crossed off my Ikea shopping list. I make a mental note to practice my yoga downhill.*

There's an accursedly soft bed with broken slats, a pine side

board holding an array of The French Owner's junk, and to make up the quorum, a large, unfortunate-looking wardrobe hulks mammoth-like in the corner. I purchased a long white Ikea box to hold The French Owner's junk and I placed it on the top. The French Owner's junk is a deluge of dried up black, green and orange watercolour paints, unused diaries from 2016, Lonely Planet guides and someone's university papers, amongst other things. Things I'd like to throw out, or possibly use for a ceremonial burning in my darker moments, but I'm too chicken; upon the lease signing, The French Owner instructed me the junk "stays with the apartment" as it "may be useful". The rebel in me says burn, the wretch says keep, and I listen to the latter, as would you if you'd slept on couches for three years.

A tired kitchenette rests against one wall, less ugly than the wardrobe, but also less functional. I glare at the drunk asymmetry between the bench-top and the sloping floor as I chock my desk to save the suicidal pens. For one industrious morning, I am consumed with correcting that uncorrectable situation. Pale cupboards, strangely level for the lopsided room, contain mismatched plates of glass and cheap china stacked next to a solitary saucepan with no handle.

I burn my fingers boiling vegetables on the camping stove, and discover the kettle has calcium stalagmites growing in its innards, like a geode. Paris water, like Paris, is astonishingly hard. As I begin tartar control on the angry kettle, I wonder why my nails haven't become as strong as my resolve.

Days pass here. Days where I begin to relish my solitude and this newfound security. The chocks are working. I buy a geranium. I await a springtime explosion of Parisian red, surely one of the most beautiful accents to the boulevards of this city. I delete links to real estate agencies. I file and sort documents. I hide suitcases inside the stocky wardrobe and breathe out.

The French Owner calls and sternly advises me to "keep the apartment clean" as apparently there is a mouse problem. Considering this sixth-floor-studio-for-one contains exactly twenty-four mugs of various sizes yet no covered bin, I'm hardly surprised.

He is as right about the mouse as he is wrong about my personal habits, and the sound of midnight gnawing heralds the beginning of our nightly sojourns. Although I am amply prepared with enough cups to host a whole army of coffee-

loving rodents, I am rewarded with only one. The mouse enters through a hole at the bottom of the front door with such unusual regularity I'm tempted to add a welcome mat. She is brave, small, sleek and round, and far shinier than is appropriate for vermin. Watching her go about her mouse-ly business is my new hobby now the chocks are complete, and my fondness blossoms along with my window box.

*She is brave, small,  
sleek and round, and  
far shinier than is  
appropriate for  
vermin. Watching her  
go about her mouse-ly  
business is my new  
hobby...*

I live in central Paris with a box of The French Owner's junk and a pet I didn't ask for. It's not what I dreamed of, it's not what you'd expect at my age, but I rejoice in my own way, as I clean my hair out of the shower drain. Under the watchful gaze of the looming wardrobe I continue to ponder the foibles of this dilapidated rental when they appear, like the mouse, on a daily basis.

*(Image credit: 1970s JEAN dolls house,  
[diepuppenstubensammlerin](#))*

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# contributors

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*Currently touring internationally as Zazu in Disney's The Lion King (Michael Cassel Group/Disney Theatrical), his stage credits include The History Boys (MTC), Heaven, As Told By The Boys Who Fed Me Apples (La Mama), Thérèse Raquin (Critical Stages), and East (La Mama/The Seymour Centre).*

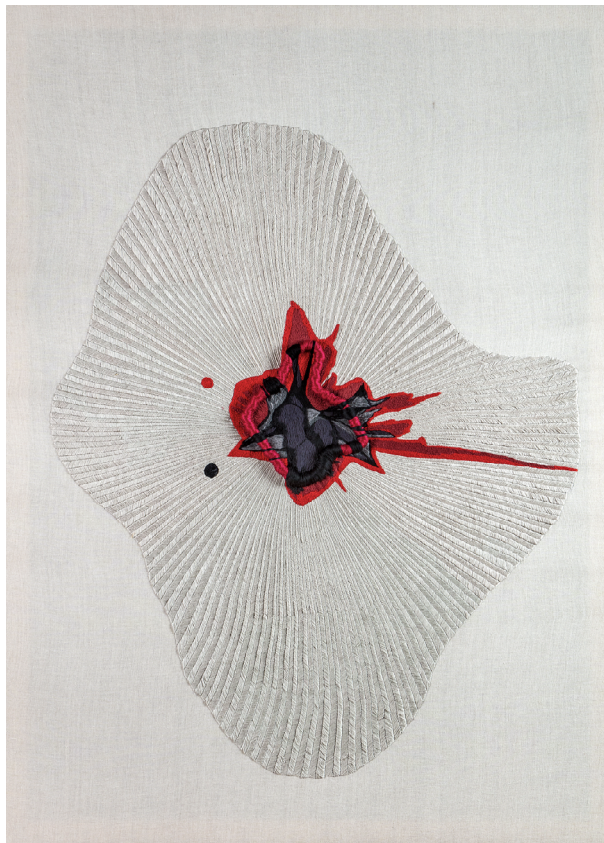
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PERSPECTIVE | **HETTY KATE**

*was born in England, raised in Melbourne and moved to Paris in 2017. She is a jazz vocalist and has performed across five continents. Career highlights include singing with eight international symphonies as part of James Morrison's award-winning concert The A to Z of Jazz, and portraying Ava Gardner in Eric McCusker's original musical Ava at the End of the World. Hetty has released nine albums, and appeared on TV in both France and Australia, including the relaunch of Australian music-themed quiz show Spicks'n'Specks. She enjoys writing acerbic Facebook posts, reading science-fiction, and teasing the French. It's likely she can beat you in Mario-Kart.*

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COVER ART | **CAROLINA MAZZOLARI**, our featured artist in Issue 2, trained as a textile artist at Chelsea College of Art, and at Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan. Living and working in London since 2014, her multidisciplinary practice involves textile manipulation, printing, painting, photography, video and performance. In 2019, Gli Ori published the monograph *Carolina Mazzolari: Emotional Fields*.  
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