tilt (v.1)
Old English *tyltan* "to be unsteady," from *tealt* "unsteady," from Proto-Germanic *taltaz* (source also of Old Norse *tyllast* "to trip," Swedish *tulta* "to waddle," Norwegian *tylta* "to walk on tip-toe," Middle Dutch *touteren* "to swing"). Meaning "to cause to lean, tip, slope" (1590s) is from sense of "push or fall over." Intransitive sense "to lean, tip" first recorded 1620s.

tilt (v.2)
"to joust," 1590s, from *tilt* (n.1). Related: Tilted; tilting. The figurative sense of *tilting at windmills* is suggested in English by 1798; the idiom is from Don Quixote, who mistook windmills for giants.
After reading countless articles and essays detailing the impacts of COVID-19, we wanted to add an additional description of this pandemic as an affective planetary attention disorder that quickly evolved from a generic WTF to an alarming OMFG. Then, because GTFO is no longer advisable, or permissible, or even possible for many, we swiftly built an online platform to host the SDUK; if you are reading this as printed matter, please visit blackwoodgallery.ca and open many new tabs to read at your leisure.2 As we continued to assemble this publication and work through the editorial text, the myriad ways in which the pandemic has helped to explicate a seemingly infinite list of social, economic, and environmental failures, across innumerable scales, became increasingly apparent and extremely disconcerting. Thus, in the first part of our editorial, we consider a preliminary group of concepts, strategies, and other persistent refrains that have tilted our efforts and operations as a public university art gallery; in the second part of the editorial, we’ll be back to work on some additional concepts and practices that we believe will continue to shape the next phase of this asymmetrical planetary crisis.

Stuck at home, our team has been fortunate enough to be working and reading. We returned to Félix Guattari, who reminds us: “A child that sings in the night because of his fear of the dark are those who reestablish control of events that are too quickly determinorializing for his liking and that begin to proliferate in the cosmos and in the imaginary. Each individual, each group, each nation thus equips themselves with a range of basic refrains for conjuring.”3 For Guattari, the refrain is a modality of semiotization that allows an individual (a group, a people, a nation, a culture) to receive and project the world according to reproducible and communicable formats. It is a process of conjuring that also corresponds to the act of thinking because all thought unfolds in relation to its constitutive refrains. Thought, in this sense, is not merely ideational and cannot be designated as an entirely theoretical enterprise; thinking is at stake in every sensuous, aesthetic, and artistic practice and production. And, in this sense, we are certain of one thing: this is not the time to stop thinking.

Among the emergent lexicon of new epidemiological terms made ubiquitous by our compulsion to repeat them (aren’t these also refrains with which we attempt to manage our fear?), we think it is especially important to pause and pay attention to communicability.4 According to its etymological origin by way of the Late Latin term communicabilis, the verb communicare means “to share.” The communicable is that which can be or has been shared, communicated, or transmitted; straddling an imaginary that is simultaneously informational and biological (in the sense of contagion and infection), the adjective tends to precede the noun “disease” in descriptions of COVID-19 as a “communicable disease.” Yet it strikes us that many other heterogeneous communications have also been shared; indeed, the becoming-communicable of planetary hyperconnectedness and hypersynchronization, of indefensible social and environmental injustices, and of the absurd yet brutal reality of basing access to healthcare on one’s job or prior capital accumulation resound in concert. If the maniacal sounds of racialized capitalism has buzzed noisily in the ears of the dispossessed since Western civilization began committing its foundational genocides in Africa and the Americas, it seems these mocking planetary soundtrack of viral communicability is making the racket of inequality intolerable even for those who, until only weeks ago, had imagined themselves well insulated from the subaltern clamour.5

Of course, we are aware that the most devastating impacts of the crisis will affect the most vulnerable communities and individuals. We also insist that none of these connections are particularly new for all those struggling against the violence of cap-

The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge is a serial broadsheet publication produced by the Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto Mississauga. Initiated in conjunction with The Work of Minor Aids, 2018–19 to expand perspectives on monumental violence through artistic practices, cultural inquiry, and political mobilization, the SDUK is becoming a signature triannual Blackwood publishing initiative in 2020.

As an organization addressing the challenges of the 21st century through artistic-led research, the Blackwood’s ambition is to convene, enable, and amplify the transdisciplinary engagements with collaborators from a host of other disciplines and partners working outside the university, whether in industry, business, government, or civil society. This methodology is necessary for contemporary research-based practices by the so-called “wicked problems” that challenge the stability of contemporary societies can no longer be addressed from a single disciplinary perspective.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE (SDUK)
The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) composes and circulates an ecology of knowledge based on the relationship and autonomy of “useful” ideas. The name of this innovative platform is borrowed from a non-profit society founded in London in 1826, focused on publishing expensive texts such as the widely read Penny Magazine and The Library of Useful Knowledge, and aimed at spreading important world knowledge to anyone seeking to self-educate. Both continuing and troubling the origins of the society, the Blackwood’s SDUK platform asks: what constitutes useful knowledge? For whom? And who decides?

TILTING
On March 23, the Blackwood put forward a call for submissions, in response to the irrefutably global phenomenon of COVID-19 currently reconfiguring nearly every aspect of life on Earth. The call recognized that these uncertain socio-political circumstances demand approaches that break with the status quo in new and innovative ways. In their recent book Notes from the Invisible Committee call for us to generate desirable social and political worlds through an improvisatory tilt: strategic action that cuts transversely across vertical hierarchies and rigidified thought patterns—privileging neither, in favour of an “intersecting” or “messy” view of the situation.”1 With decisive actions implemented by individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments, the Blackwood, as a public gallery within a university, asked: how to acknowledge this pandemic as a “matter of concern” while responding to its far-ranging effects across our networks of artists, writers, and cultural workers as a “matter of care.”2 An urgent and provisional response comes in the form of TILTING: a special digital issue of the SDUK.

TILTING (1) brings together selected contributions from this call, in an attempt to support those who have been unmoored from their sources of financial resources. These contributions, alongside a few conceptual provocations from supporters of the Blackwood, are gathered in the pages that follow and on a new SDUK publishing microsite at blackwoodgallery.ca.

TILTING (2) will be released May 1, 2020.

The Blackwood Gallery gratefully acknowledges the operating support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the University of Toronto Mississauga.

The Library of Useful Knowledge
The Greek etymology of the word could be traced back to the fifteenth century with a papal bull, with a philosopher at hand, as he sorts the world into categories of political borders, species distinctions, and social classes (and much more). The irrefutable intrusion of the pandemic has expanded, predatory sales of land and destruction of forests in countless, unprecedented ways, the pestilential life of a virus is reduced to the world the credulity of “tiling at windmills”—with their virtual windmills, with no other windmills than our own, with no other windmills than the virtual, with no other windmills than the pandemic. 

“Voluntary cessation, a conscious and voluntary withdrawal of technology in the direction needed can be imperative.” As we attempt to think and to shape ourselves, as a public art gallery whose facilities are closed for the foreseeable future to the public—into unknown and undistressed territories, improvisation is fast becoming our organizational watchword.

In the To Order of Things, Michel Foucault considers the persistence of thought and culture in his discussion of Miguel de Cervantes’s novel. The Plague, with its multiple layers of containment and containment of the norm so as to keep risks of all kinds on the outside. But be sure that the cabbages collapse only virtually, within a cataclysmic vision of the world, inspired by theories of immunization and contagion, does little to break out of the planetary system, and to give meaning to the attacks. As Andrea Muehlbecher comments, “Rathen can pay tribute to the market, society should pay tribute to that which is not marketable.”

In his recent essay “The Universal Right to Breathe,” Achille Mbembe highlights that these breaks were not simply results of the pandemic; that this moment in the twenty-first century is so radically different from that of the previous one, that these breaks were not simply results of the pandemic; that this moment in the twenty-first century is so radically different from that of the previous one, that these breaks were not simply results of the pandemic; that this moment in the twenty-first century is so radically different from that of the previous one, that these breaks were not simply results of the pandemic; that this moment in the twenty-first century is so radically different from that of the previous one.

In countless, unprecedented ways, the pathological life of a virus is now making communicable much of what globalized capitalism tried to keep separate and unshared. Perhaps the question is less whether or not we can recover from the pandemic, but instead whether or not the pandemic can push humanity to re- consider the norms, values, and expectations of our society. “The Normal and the Pathological,” no recovery is easier than a return to biological innocence. To recover is to establish new norms of relation, to think and to shape ourselves. How can we establish new and superior social norms and expectations for our daily lives, that might be initiated through the intertwined processes of unbecoming-innocent and unbecoming- perpetrators that accompany COVID-19?

...to be continued in SDK 7: TILTING (2).
The Year I Stopped Making Art
Why the art world should assist artists beyond representation; in solidarity

Paul Maheke

The year I stopped making art was the year I became a single parent. It was 1997. When I had to save thousands for my thirtieth birthday and to provide for my mother who had just lost her job. It was 2017 when I fell short of money to pay the registration fee of the photo contest, of the art residency, of the entrance exam at the prestigious uni.

The year I stopped making art, I just stopped. I wasn’t just being slowed down in my progress. I didn’t take a detour, it just stopped. Life didn’t throw me curveballs, at least not more than usual... My balls, at least not more than usual... My progress, I didn’t take a detour, it didn’t take the wealthiest parts of the world going into total lockdown for me to be made redundant from the arts industry. It was so mundane no one noticed.

I had made art for too long by now to be hired by any company outside the field. No restaurant would give a job to someone with little to no experience in hospitality.

the story. The side where your true power lies. This was the year I got scapegoated and shit-talked. The year I stopped making art is the year I got gagged and shit-talked.

So when in the last months of 2020 I was home, still bed-bound, and the museum didn’t pay me, I knew this was the year I was made to feel redundant from the arts industry.

The year I stopped making art, it was before COVID-19. It didn’t take a global pandemic to end my career. I just didn’t manage to pay my tax return on time. It was 2019 and I had a bike accident on one of my shifts when I delivered food to people’s doors. The year I stopped making art, it didn’t take the wealthiest parts of the world going into total lockdown for me to be made redundant from the arts industry.

It was so mundane no one noticed.

No one noticed because I couldn’t make an artwork out of it. It couldn’t be turned into art. It just ended. My shows were canceled and no one paid me and no one saw me.

I had made art for too long by now to be hired by any company outside the field. No restaurant would give a job to someone with little to no experience in hospitality.

The year I stopped making art is the year my secondary-school teacher decided I would make a good factory technician. This was the year my parents had to move further away, away from the centre. The year I got scapegoated and shit-talked.

The year I stopped making art was the year I was made to feel too ashamed to talk about it. The year I stopped making art was the year I was made to feel small. The year I was reminded that my visibility would never measure up to your financial stability.

The year I stopped making art is the year I was made to feel that, to you, I was always gonna be the one else could. You embody the savviest form of ignorance. You made sure I wouldn’t talk to anybody about what happened in the studio, at your office, in your flat, in the toilets at the fair. It’s the year you repeatedly twisted my words. You made sure your verbal abuse would be deemed innuendoes to anyone hearing your side of the story. The side where your true power lies.

This was the year I felt too ashamed to talk about it: the year I stopped making art was the year I was made to feel small. The year I was reminded that my visibility would never measure up to your financial stability.

So when in the last months of 2020 I was home, still bed-bound, and the museum didn’t pay me, I knew this was the year I would have to stop art. How was I to pay for my living expenses otherwise? This was going to last for a while, they said. “I am sorry to hear you’re experiencing difficulties. It’s a tough time for us all,” you said. I wondered who you were talking to when you were saying “us” because I didn’t feel like a part of your we.

The year I stopped making art is when I realized you couldn’t care less because you didn’t have to. How you were not part of this, because you never had to. That’s the year I gathered that when you were saying “us” you were meaning “them,” and that was the reason why you were still able to talk and tweet when no one else could. You embody the savviest form of ignorance.

The year I stopped making art is the year I was reminded I did not have a safety net or support structure to carry me through the testing of time like you did. That I was naive to think I could make it all the way through, just like you.

"Jog on!" You made a swerve and I couldn’t follow. Leaving me to chew on the sillage of your perfume/our perfume.

The year I stopped making art is the year I almost smelled like you, only to realize that, to you, I was always gonna be the smell of forgery.
In an essay titled “On What We Can Not Do” in his book *Nudities*, John Paul Ricco makes clear that today (a present that is commonly referred to as the era of neo-liberal rationality), we are alienated not from our potential to do, but from our impotentiality, that is: from our potential to not do. Agamben is well known for having identified this force of impotentiality as the most proper power of human beings. As he writes, “human beings are the living beings that, existing in the mode of potentiality, are capable of just as much of one thing as its opposite, to do just as [much as] to not do...human beings are the animales capaces of their own impotentiality.”

In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, in which millions of people have been laid off, are now working from home, or have had their work hours scaled back, they might not only be removed or distanced from their jobs, but might also be put a bit closer to finding, rediscovering, or amplifying their singular vocations.

Following Agamben’s argument, we can therefore read the current situation not only as the forced estrangement from our potentiality, productivity, work, and so forth, but also as a possible opening to our “being able not to”—which is to say our impotentiality. In no more than five short paragraphs, Agamben makes clear that this would be the highest form of pov-\(\cdot\)erty, a renewal of a capacity to resist, and an affirmation of freedom. This includes freedom from the neoliberal rationality that has led so many people over these past few weeks to work even more relent-\(\cdot\)lessly (in the many ways and forms possible under the rubric of “work”), and in doing so, to allow this state of exception to further advance and intensify what has unfortunately been the norm for quite some time.

Just as it is true that the novel coronavi-\(\cdot\)rus knows nothing of the global COVID-19 pandemic or equal proper power, it is equally true that the virus is not the creator of the latter. Instead, both the ignorance and the creation of the pandemic (like any plague), belong to the human. In its extremely impure po-\(\cdot\)tentiality—that is, in its ability to con-\(\cdot\)tend on a host organism in order to live and propagate—the coronavirus (like any vi-\(\cdot\)rus) does not discriminate within the ep-\(\cdot\)idemiological parameters that define its micro-biological domain, namely: animal and human bodies. Which is to say that as long as a body exists, it is until there is a vaccine to prevent such vir-\(\cdot\)al hospitality, the virus will remain a con-\(\cdot\)taminating and contagious disease that causes illness, and in some cases, death.

In its global rapaciousness, the virus is a force of destruction similar to capitalism.

In these first months of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has often been asserted that the virus does not discriminate. By simultane-\(\cdot\)ously ascribing agency to a thing that entirely lacks intentionality (especially since the virus is not even a living thing), commen-\(\cdot\)tators have wanted to find in the virus a common equality of contagion. But this is to conflate the epidemiological and the political, where in fact these two axes are most in need of being distinguished. For while epidemiologically speaking the virus does not discriminate, politically—that is, as an active virological agent cast within the global pandemic—it is made to oper-\(\cdot\)ate in innumerable, discriminate ways, and thereby is made to inaugurate yet another chapter in the bio-political narrative.

The virus itself is that bio-viral entity that is entirely without potentiality, precisely because it does not have the power to not-\(\cdot\) be or not-do, but instead is constrained by the very limited things that it can do. In other words, the virus is either actual-\(\cdot\)izing or simply does not exist. When com-\(\cdot\)mentators (and many others) cast the virus as a sign of common equality, they not only confuse two different versions of equality (epidemiological and political), but also obfuscate the workings of the past few weeks to work even more relent-\(\cdot\)lessly (in the many ways and forms possible under the rubric of "work"), and in doing so, to allow this state of exception to further advance and intensify what has unfortunately been the norm for quite some time.

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As the number of COVID-19 cases rapidly swept across the country, health authorities first recommended, and then mandated, that we maintain social distance in order to help tackle the pandemic. What “social distancing” means, in practice, has differed across the country, and shifted a number of times over just two weeks: here in Alberta, we were first told to maintain a one-metre distance from others, then two, to limit groups to under 100, then to under fifty, and finally to under fifteen. Stay home and go online, we were told, intuitions that, given the increasing access to an internet connection, distancing ourselves offline didn’t necessarily mean you were disconnected from one another.

Just when we were seeing an increase in collective actions—rallies in support of Indigenous rights, and climate change action—we’re being told to avoid each other as a way to ensure our own health and safety. Black justice, Indigenous rights, and climate change action—“we’re being told to avoid one another in ways that hadn’t been before. At the precise moment when COVID-19 is bringing the cracks in the system clearly into view, we’re sharing information unlike before. The inequitable reality of our labour force is surfacing, as employees who had been struggling with inadequate wages, part-time, and gig labour are revealed to be working on the front-line workforce that many will be laid off once this is over.

What happened to the conversation about data collection, surveillance, and the commodification of our “public” space—so prevalent a few weeks ago—being taken up now? What does it mean to see a large percentage of coaching and coordination work is now turning to online networks and virtual spaces? Online companies have already had to adjust: Netflix, Amazon, and YouTube, for example, reduced their streaming rates because of increased bandwidth demands.

What questions are being asked when workshops are encouraged to move onto Zoom—a platform known for its vulnerability to hacking, and whose privacy policy gives the company license to record and track data with less transparency than we demand from other applications? Are we considering this trend in its entirety for privacy and access when programmatic advertising space on Facebook Live; or that power is beyond their ability to control. They’re trying, but there are too many of us tuning in right now, that’s one major difference between now and before. Social media, with all its faults, is helping to make us stronger at the precise moment that there might be a chance to remake the world in a way that is better than before. By forcing us indoors, COVID-19 has helped to expose the surveillance and control that power, and we’re already seeing the impacts it could have: like the return of Airbnb rental, the wholesale vacationing of a large market; the passing of the NDP’s national carbon price; a renewed focus on the necessity of affordable internet access for low-income families. For now, social media is providing the space for us to imagine how things might finally begin to shift. But the window might not be available for long, and governments in power are using the same moment to chip away at public services we’ve come to rely on. As we sit at home, that power is surfing across the country, successful Basic Income could have helped all of us weather the radical moment keeps us all safe.

Christina Battle

In some ways, the internet is behaving like the great equalizer it promised in its early years. It’s important to be wary of this promise. The very online systems helping us to rally together, to fight back against austerity are themselves owned and operated by corporations—and right now, while we’re relying on them even more than before, those corporations are prime candidates to fail. One virus has shown us that during this moment, our collective voice is worth a lot. In fact, it’s worth everything we’ve got. Too. Over recent years, we’ve pushed and pulled and tested the system and companies now recognize that we care about them at all. They’ve shown us that the power that we hold when we collectively call them out on their shit. Now, in the time of global pandemic, they’re terrified that we might turn on them entirely, because they know that their economic dreams can’t be realized without us. They know that, really, we’re the ones who hold all the power, and when we’re connected, that power is beyond their ability to control. They’re trying, but there are too many of us tuning in right now, that’s one major difference between now and before.

What are the implications of the pandemic sweeping across the country, health authorities first recommended, and then mandated, that we maintain social distance in order to help tackle the pandemic. What “social distancing” means, in practice, has differed across the country, and shifted a number of times over just two weeks. As the number of COVID-19 cases rapidly swept across the country, health authorities first recommended, and then mandated, that we maintain social distance in order to help tackle the pandemic. What “social distancing” means, in practice, has differed across the country, and shifted a number of times over just two weeks. Here in Alberta, we were first told to maintain a one-metre distance from others, then two, to limit groups to under 100, then to under fifty, and finally to under fifteen. Stay home and go online, we were told, intuitions that, given the increasing access to an internet connection, distancing ourselves offline didn’t necessarily mean you were disconnected from one another.

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Still, our turn to the online at this particular historical juncture is revealing, and it’s useful to keep up the momentum. In some ways we’re still struggling to find a single voice that rings in unison online, but there are indications that it is starting to happen.

We’re seeing the repercussions of the pernicious cuts to healthcare that many provinces have experienced over the years, and when faced with the choice—along with the rest of us—we’re choosing to stay: because nurses, doctors, nurses, cleaning staff, and other essential workers are the ones running the grocery store corporations that have been screwing us over for decades. What happened to the conversation about the carbon footprint of the internet as a tool for progressive ecosystems? What are the implications of the pandemic sweeping across the country, health authorities first recommended, and then mandated, that we maintain social distance in order to help tackle the pandemic. What “social distancing” means, in practice, has differed across the country, and shifted a number of times over just two weeks. Here in Alberta, we were first told to maintain a one-metre distance from others, then two, to limit groups to under 100, then to under fifty, and finally to under fifteen. Stay home and go online, we were told, intuitions that, given the increasing access to an internet connection, distancing ourselves offline didn’t necessarily mean you were disconnected from one another.

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Kimberly Edgar is a queer visual artist, cartoonist, illustrator, and designer living in Dawson City.
If you did not desire to go, there would be a chance that the door would open. —Hélène Cixous, “Attacks of the Castle”

Over the past eleven months, we have co-opted an underutilized room (418) in OCAD University’s 205 Richmond Street West building in Toronto as a site for a series of fifteen exhibitions. These exhibitions have explored various forms of collective authorship and such exhibition strategies as the closed gallery and the empty gallery. The last of these exhibitions comes as the COVID-19 pandemic has our master’s degrees in art and design coming to a strange end. With the announcement of the university’s closure, we were given three days’ notice to document or remove what we needed, with communications from the administration repeatedly referring to “alternate forms of delivery.” In this context we installed Alternate Forms of Delivery, an improvised closed-gallery exhibition consisting of a livestream emanating from room 418. Hosted at twitch.tv/aaabcr, it shows a photograph of a sign reading “SORRY WE WILL BE BACK SHORTLY” and a computer viewing the same streaming video, which intermittently displays an error message.

Our overriding concerns with economy of means, salvaging and reuse, and collaboration take on new meaning amidst the present scarcity of resources and the appearance of indoor public space. The photograph is a remnant of a past exhibition, where it was placed outside the door when the gallery was open and taken inside when it was closed. The computer was signed out hours before the closure. The invitations were produced at a home-based print shop and picked up from the porch. A curious combination of solidarity and class dynamics arises as, amidst the glitches and complications of operating remotely, we rely on allies to keep the project going. At one end of the institutional hierarchy, a sympathetic security guard or custodian—one of the often unacknowledged workers who are the last remaining inhabitants of these institutional buildings—who has periodically refreshed the browser on the computer in the room. At the other end, a faculty member who was able to secure access through official procedures and restore the stream when a major outage nearly ended the project altogether. (A postscript to a postscript, the second phase of the exhibition is marked by more oblique angles and the strange amber hue of auxiliary lighting.)

The printed invitation shows five isolated faces, their outlines vibrating with the RGB fringing of the webcams that connect the locked-up exhibition space to the world outside and the institution’s denizens to each other.
The first time I heard was in late December 2019. I was on the phone with my mother and she was randomly talking about a deadly flu spreading across central China. My mother had lived in Vancouver, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan were non-stop talking about it over FaceTime and WhatsApp. The information they had (through Chinese social networks) and the information I had (through English social networks) were already telling two very different stories.

At first, I didn’t find much information on the symptoms or the impacts of this new virus. It sounded a lot like SARS and MERS, which, to me, existed more as memories of anti-Asian racism than a second coming. During SARS, I never once thought about getting sick as I was more concerned with the day-to-day hostilities from angry Albertans. Even now, more than fifteen years later, I was more aware of the external threat to my racial difference than to an attack on my immune system.

My difference and my bodily systems are interrelated, especially when there are increasing incidents of white settlers attacking Asian ones. Despite not knowing their actual heritage, the suspects explain their actions in the name of protecting public safety. Increasingly, people of Asian descent in North America are beaten up, spat on, and violently targeted. Under interrelated, especially when there are fears were leaving marks all over us. From airline staff to strangers in stores, people moved their bodies away out of fear. They looked scared (or was it disgusted?) to have to talk to us for longer than necessary. This is how we now treat each other in cramped aisles at the grocery stores or in line anywhere. There are government-led snitch lines set up in place to watch each other and I wonder how this is going to disproportionately impact racialized people. This residue leaves traces everywhere.

I had to leave the dog behind. A white man and his miniature poodle ahead of us had no problems at the Air Canada ticket counter, but I was stopped. My mother pleaded with them, but the counter agent and her supervisor said that our family problems were not hers to deal with. They said they had to think of the safety and well-being of all the customers. For them, that clearly did not include us.

I shared the news of the virus and its residue with everyone I could. I have written the airline numerous times. I posted updates on social media. I had phone calls with friends. I shared the story over dinner and coffee. My peers had very little to say. They were sad or sorry or scared to see someone in their age group with a parent being hospitalized. They wondered when the dog was coming. They wondered if I still wanted to visit Hong Kong. They heard me, but they did not see the world I saw.

My mother’s trip to Hong Kong was indefinitely postponed a few days later. The dog situation was a factor, but the city suddenly went on lockdown. By late January, no visitors were allowed in hospitals. Schools were closing their doors. The majority of the city’s 7.5 million people were already practicing social distancing in one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Her worries of being stranded were inching toward reality.

By late February, infections and deaths were soaring across Europe, the UK, and North America. In other words, this became a “global” issue. By this point, it had been almost two months since I first heard about the virus. It had been over a month since South Korea and the United States registered their first cases on the exact same day, January 20. The United States, like much of the Western world, did not believe that the sudden spike of more than 2,000 Asians was a substantive worry. Even if Asia accounts for more than half of the world’s human population, the crisis was not yet global until it reached white-majority nations.

By now, everyone I know has heard of it, if not directly felt the devastations of this virus. Most appear to be struggling with something so unconscious and deeply rooted that nothing you say will ever pierce their thoughts about you and “your kind.” Sometimes this residue splashes off of someone who is proving how “woke” they are by going out of their way to infantilize you. Spending three days in quarantine on this residue left me with no one in my age group with a parent being hospitalized. They wondered when the dog was coming. They wondered if I still wanted to visit Hong Kong. They heard me, but they did not see the world I saw.

I was going to take him back with me to Ontario.

Who Is Inside (Your Pandemic): Revisiting the Residues of Global Supremacy

Amy Fung

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Amy Fung
I am here
listening deeply
moving slowly
preparing diligently

growing steadily
& learning, learning, learning

this house arrest feels very different
from the romanticized version of self-imposed isolation

I longed for just a few weeks ago
boris just announced that london is on lockdown
immediately!

I find myself increasingly on the inside of these passing days
that flu that I caught out of nowhere two weeks ago
I didn’t think twice about it
ginger, garlic, turmeric, rest, repeat
while yesterday my right tonsil began to ache
and I was enveloped instantly in the wretched arms
of panic!
reading, conceptualizing and dreaming feels weighted now
like my chest under water
and I keep telling myself that it’s all psychosomatic
there is nothing the matter
I don’t have a cough or a fever or breathing difficulties
this moment ronka, it demands differently of my watery self
every time I hear my housemate cough, my body freezes
I know you understand my situation
and can appreciate my withdrawal
and maybe are even similarly positioned
(or maybe not)
that being said
I would love to see you but I can’t
because london is on lockdown
last night
I dreamed of a black horse so big
I thought it was a bear
with a black crochet caparison
its rider, an ancient woman
focused on looking over the field
to the left of me
she surveyed the land
then spun on her horse
both galloped away to the right of me
and disappeared into the forest
the dream was so vivid
I was convinced it was real
I saw them disappear
as I stood in awe
I have been in my tiny forest cottage
for the past few days under house arrest
we are running out of food
but I can’t bring myself to go to the shops
I am paralyzed by fear
I’ve chosen to spring-clean instead
and cook lengthy meals
I tried to do grocery shopping online
the deliveries were booked up to six weeks from today
did I tell you that
out of nowhere I developed a flu
but it was only the flu
people are panic-shopping and there is not enough
in the stores for the elderly and most vulnerable
the news keeps telling us that
I don’t know for sure because I can’t bring myself to go outside
I remember when I went last week
there was no hand sanitizer, no tissue paper, and no anti-bacterial wipes
I feel the way I feel when I’m on the precipice of decision-making
except there is no decision to make
and all my engagements have been postponed or cancelled
just like that. I am reminded that death also sometimes comes just like that
people are dying ronka, in the hundreds and thousands
people are dying all over the world (and always have, and always will)
I wonder if we’ll make it through this
growing up in shorthood lane, grandspen avenue

the precarity was everyday salt (it never ever disappeared, lessened maybe, but not disappear)
my grandparents both were close friends
till a lover came between them
incursing my father’s mother’s wrath upon me
my father never left sixteen
even though he was already twenty at my birth
my mother almost a year past fifteen
the garrison — home
joy — home
separateness — home
love — home
difference — home
economic scarcity — home
collective — home
physical violence — home
family — home
I am away from my family right now
away from my mom and the boys and my brother
an entire continent and oceans away
in shorthood lane, in jack’s hill, in maxfield avenue,
I began early to make space on the
inside where on the outside
lurked monsters of the touching kind
wounds that heal in crooked ways
both galloped tracks and I had a penchant for thought
the bright
‘maybe not pretty but bright’
prestige and high school hand-in-hand
the best in jamaica they said
‘the best of what exactly’
the best of the wealthy (except I was not in that group)
I think about the wealthy right now
how are the wealthy being affected by this moment in our story
I think of the working people, the so-called ‘unskilled’ workers
who would be sucked dry by inequity
if all the poor people die
whose blood would be sucked dry by inequity
prestige and high school hand-in-hand
but my own hands were not held for fear of ‘ghetto contamination’
I left jamaica when I was fifteen
and lost and found and lost and found and lost and found myself
all the way here to london
twenty-seven years later
along the way
I chose to fall in and out of love
I choose to have children, now fifteen and eleven
they grow as I navigate new, sometimes hostile waters
here in these waters is where I choose to be
in jack’s hill, in the forest
with the trees, with my thoughts
I began early to make space on the

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family — home
Four Thieves Vinegar

Sydney Shen

Four thieves’ vinegar is an elixir fabled to have been developed by French grave robbers during an historical outbreak of bubonic plague, to protect themselves from infection by the corpses they plundered. Perfumed with a recreated four thieves’ vinegar recipe, Shen’s installation revisits medieval folk plague cures, considering their continuity and relevance amid contemporary notions of belief, health, and self-care.

Facing page, clockwise from top left:
1. Untitled. Lavender, ribbon, garlic, baby’s breath. Before germs were known to cause disease, miasma theory suggested sickness was spread by inhaling foul-smelling vapours. Medicinal plants and herbs serve as miasma-thwarting scents.
2. Left to right: Peccantum me quotidie; I Want My Scream to Count; My Corpse Burns and the Fire is Sweet; Crudelissima Doglia. 3D-printed plastic, black velvet flocking, ribbon. A series of flyswatters anticipate death and decomposition. The swatting mesh designs are inspired by the melancholic Italian early-Renaissance composer Carlo Gesualdo, who developed unusual remedies to alleviate his health conditions, which were seen as lapses of spirituality.
3. Timor Mortis Conturbat Me. CNC cut and faux-finished wood, star anise. A manhole cover engraved with Timor Mortis Conturbat Me (fear of death disturbs me), a refrain common to medieval poetic laments. References to sanitation infrastructure carry across suspended Shaker-style chairs in the installation, which evoke the curative folk advice to “sit in the sewers.”
4. Four Thieves Vinegar (detail). Citrus, cloves, glass urinal, baby’s breath, four thieves vinegar. Shen’s recreated four thieves’ vinegar recipe is diffused in repurposed urine-collection vessels. Bodily fluids and odours are a main target of miasma theory; here, the collection vessel is rendered as protector rather than perpetrator.
How to Swim in a Living Room

Adam Bierling

Prelude

In the absence of a pool, swim in a living room. In the absence of a living room, swim in a bath. In the absence of a bath, swim in a shower. In the absence of a shower, swim in bed. In the absence of bed, swim in open air. Allow two metres distance around yourself for all swimming activities.

Questions to meditate on: What is a playful swimmer? How does a swimmer play? Who am I without a pool? What is the pool without me? Why does water change me the way it does? How does it do that thing to make me so embodied? What does losing yourself feel like? What does finding yourself feel like? How can I fill all this space? Where is the nearest body of water? How does a playful body swim?

Performance #1
How to Swim in a Living Room

1. Imagine the air around you into water.
   Float on top of it.
   Dive into it.
2. Lie on top of a surface so there is water around you and under you.
3. Swim 10 lengths of front crawl, breathing every five strokes.
4. Swim 10 lengths of breaststroke, breathing on the upstroke.
5. Repeat actions 3 & 4 until the swim is over.

Performance #2
How to Swim as a Siren

1. Create a list of songs to sing as you lure sailors into the watery depths.
2. Sing a line of song every time your head is underwater.
3. Repeat until the playlist is finished.

Playlist:

Come Away With Me, Norah Jones
Movies, Weyes Blood
Come All You Sailors, The Wailin’ Jennys

Performance #3
How to Swim in a Bed

1. Gather water from the nearest lake.
2. Pour the water into a vessel, place it on your bed.
3. Take a deep breath and submerge your face in the water.
4. Hold your breath for as long as possible.

Adam Bierling is an artist, writer, social worker, and curator living in what is known as Toronto. They are an artist, writer, social worker, and curator living in what is known as Toronto. They are a recipient of the Delaney Family Entrance Scholarship at OCAD University, where they are currently pursuing a BFA in criticism and curatorial practice and a minor in gender and sexuality studies.
Opposite:
COURTESY THE ARTIST.
We are in a new depression due to the COVID-19 pandemic: untold numbers of businesses have closed, unemployment has skyrocketed, opportunities for contract workers have disappeared.

Economic depression creates problems in three distinct but entangled spheres: the financial, the material, and the psychological. A job guarantee offers a potent solution to all three.

The financial system requires a continual churn of money. Rents paid to landlords become mortgage payments to banks become debt service to other banks become payments to employees and shareholders and on and on it goes. The global financial crisis of 2007–08 showed what happens when money stops flowing. Defaults on questionable mortgages cascaded through the financial system until some major companies went bankrupt. Job losses, foreclosures, and evictions followed. To prevent a repeat of the harm caused in 2008–09 when money stopped flowing, we need immediate, massive injections of money.

A universal basic income (UBI) is one proposition to provide some of that liquidity—to keep money flowing. More importantly, UBI addresses the material and psychological effects of a depression by ensuring everyone has at least some of the money they need to survive.

But we need more than a universal income. We need a job guarantee.

A major reason for this is that money does not just circulate, it accumulates.

We have a “trickle up” economy. Most of us spend all, almost all, or even more than we earn. Some of it is for survival. Some of it is for pleasure or to modestly improve our quality of life. And some of it is spent succumbing to marketing and other social pressures. The money circulates as businesses pay workers and buy supplies. However, portions of the money get siphoned off, where it accumulates under the control of the already wealthy. The primary purpose of this money is to attract yet more money, which is achieved through both passive investment in financial assets and active intervention in every facet of society.

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We need a job guarantee.

A job guarantee would add even more money into the economy. While a basic income could provide for the bare minimum, a job guarantee on top would provide additional income and benefits in exchange for work. This would also establish a wage and benefit floor.

A job guarantee also has the psychological benefit of keeping people engaged in skills acquisition, occupying their time and reducing risks of isolation and boredom, and offering workers a sense of purpose amid great uncertainty. Unemployment is psychologically damaging. The pandemic-induced economic depression will generate a mental-health crisis unless we get people back to work.

How would we ensure the wealthy do not derive unfair advantages from this injection of money? Taxes. Because of our “trickle up” system, money created to hire everyone who needs a job would still accumulate under the control of the wealthy. This is why highly progressive taxes are needed. Reducing the wealth of the wealthy with taxes—thereby reducing risks of isolation and boredom, and offering workers a sense of purpose amid great uncertainty. Unemployment is psychologically damaging. The pandemic-induced economic depression will generate a mental-health crisis unless we get people back to work.

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To facilitate a job guarantee, the federal government could provide money to municipalities, which are best placed to know what kind of jobs they need performed. There is much work to be done with the current pandemic, as well as the climate crisis, caring for our aging population, and other social sea changes. We could pay people to train as healthcare workers, to phone elderly people isolating alone, to make public art, to clean up orphaned oil wells, and to perform many other necessary jobs that profit-seeking companies would never create.

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At this moment a job guarantee would take advantage of the fact that there is plenty of work to be done and there are plenty of people to do it.
“Deception is a co-effect which cannot be neglected.”

Ruth Skinner

I’m spending a lot of time reading about how psychics and conspiracy theorists are wrangling with this event.

In New Dark Age, James Bridle dedicates a chapter to conspiracy. He recounts observing the flight patterns of UK aircraft as they deported asylum seekers or carried out surveillance-gathering missions. Bridle holds these very concrete airspace activities—expulsion, spying, and their corresponding carbon impacts—alongside the suspicions of chemtrail soothsayers. “Something strange is afoot,” he writes. “In the hyper-connected, data-deluged present, schisms emerge in mass perception. We’re all looking at the same skies, but we’re seeing different things.”

Bridle mentions GCHQ Bude in Cornwall, which Wikipedia identifies as a “government satellite ground station and eavesdropping centre.” GCHQ Bude is located near one of the first transatlantic undersea cables. Edward Snowden famously reported on its info-gathering operation, codename Tempora: a computer system that archives and observes fibre-optic communications, sharing its data with the National Security Agency. Tempora, plural of Latin tempus (“time; period”). We’re now undeniably aware of the age of information compromise, permeability, and permanence.

The town of Bude was also the final home of artist and occultist Pamela Colman Smith, who illustrated the canonical Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck. Last year I had the opportunity to visit the house where she died, impoverished and indebted. It’s now a pub, so I ordered lunch and sat to talk in its beautiful big windows, overlooking the sea.

I found Mysterious Psychic Forces at the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle, one of the oldest independent libraries in Britain. Flammarion’s book is shelved among esotericism and parapsychology. Histories of witchcraft, tomes on spiritualism, potentia gestures, and studies of extrasensory perception are catalogued between continental theory, to the left, and psychoanalysis, to the right. The book’s placement demonstrates the perpetual, meaningful proximity of systems and methodologies that are expected to perform distance. Nearby Flammarion is a battered copy of Henri Bergson’s 1889 thesis Time and Free Will. Somewhere between 1948 and the present, according to loan stamps, a reader underlined Bergsonian fragments on potential futures: “we shall have lost a great deal… the future, pregnant with an infinity of possibilities.”

Flammarion’s Plate IX is a series of four well-lit photographs of a woman, tulle-sleeved and seated between two jacketed figures at a small table. Three of the photos are cropped close-ups of everyone’s hands, in sequence. First frame: Woman holds Examiner 1’s wrist with her right hand. Examiner 2 holds Woman’s left. Second frame: Woman’s grip on Examiner 1 loosens so her fingers can slide nudge his hand toward her left, still captive. Third frame: Woman’s freed hand hovers over a tender three-way hold; her captive left hand performs double duty—splayed fingers hold Examiner 1’s hand in place while her wrist is still gripped by Examiner 2. In this photograph, Examiner 2 thumb’s Woman’s pinky.

In this moment, thinking about the seemingly fraught relation between seen and unseen, natural and supernatural (and our collective inability to distinguish which is which), a series of photographs fix in my mind as potentially useful. They perform as a Rorschach test for discerning deciding how the present is beginning to feel; they present a visual mantra for settling into that unsettling feeling. These images constitute Plate IX from Camille Flammarion’s 1887 text, Mysterious Psychic Forces: An Account of the Author’s Investigations in Psychical Research, Together with Other European Savants. Plate IX is captioned: “METHOD USED BY EUSAPIA TO SURREPTITIOUSLY FREE HER HAND.”

The figures shown in Plate IX represent four successive positions of the medium’s hands and those of the sitters. They show how, owing to the darkness and to a skilled combined series of movements, she can induce the sitter on the right to believe that he still feels the right hand of the medium on his own, while he really feels her left hand, which is firmly held by the sitter on the left. This right hand of hers, being then free, is able to produce such effects as are within its reach.

Once free, the medium’s hand is used to tap, slap, and raise tables, touch other sitters, pluck industrious hairs, wave a light through harmonicas, and rattle objects. We are induced.

This substitution is one of many examples of the medium’s tricky hands. And Flammarion’s images represent a useful
There’s been much talk recently about the necessary work of the commons in the midst of these pandemic emergencies, of the beauti-
ful self-organized mutualisms that societ-
ies all over the world have mustered to move through these dark times. It seems that there’s nothing like a virus, moving invisibly through bodies across time and space, to provoke the sudden planetary realization that our bodies are not con-
tained within the confining skins. Instead all bodies are radially open and thus vulner-
able—pores and orifices through which clouds of droplets and saliva particles swirl with every breath and every move-
ment. And yet, if we have learned anything—anything at all—from this sudden sense of a planetary bodily commons, then it is that the commonality of vulner-
ability is shot through with brutal unequal-
ities. It’s almost as if there exist multiple pandemics at once: mutually incompre-
prehensible and differently experienced throughout times, along the lines of class, race, gender, and (dis)ability.

But even as intense societal differentiation is made manifest in this pandemic, anoth-
er truth has come to the fore: What counts more than anything at this moment is the need for the processes that ensure that all are fed, housed, cared for when sick and need to be educated. These common processes make the life upon which every-
thing, including capitalism, depends—hence the way in which it degrades and devalues or invisible workers as “essen-
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Andrea Muehlebach teaches at the University of Toronto. She volunteered this text to be allowed to be published as an open access text and to donate the royalties to the Blacklivesmatter organization.


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Quarantined Connections at the End of the World: The Svalbard Seed Cultures Initiative

Paul Chartrand

At 78.2323 degrees north, deep inside the Arctic Circle, in the Svalbard Archipelago of Norway, lies the town of Longyearbyen. It is a town that has grown in significance over the years since the development of one of its most important sites, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Since opening in early 2008, the Global Seed Vault has accepted more than one million live samples of seeds, with a capacity for 4.5 million varieties of crops (2.5 billion seeds in all). The vault’s location—120 metres inside a mountain, locked in permafrost—was initially chosen because of the constant -18°C temperature and nearly absent tectonic activity. Despite its seemingly doomsday-proof site, expensive adjustments have been required to ensure the safety of the vault’s seeds through the continued escalation of climate change. It is partly out of this sense of urgency that new projects for preservation were born.

In the same mountain that holds the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, there is a commissioned coal mine that was once used to store seed and genetic materials for the future. Within the very same chamber that holds the remnants of that first seed bank, there resides a collaboratively developed vault for preserving culture alongside biodiversity. The Seed Cultures Initiative is a project led and curated by

Dr. Fernc Wickson, who seeks to build a cultural parallel to the Global Seed Vault with a Seed Cultures Ark. The Seed Cultures Ark acts as a sort of sister archive to the Global Seed Vault, communicating the cultural connections and stories of the quiet, frozen seeds next door. Over the past two years, the ark has accumulated fifteen artworks from artists and collectors around the world, among whom I had the immense pleasure of being included. A content-rich website functions as an ongoing archive for the project, gathering “exceptional work exploring the life of seeds through art and culture.”

The range of works interested in the moun- tain is as impressive as the variety of seeds in the neighbouring vault. The con- tributing artists are all deeply passionate about ecological and social issues concern- ing seeds and connections with agriculture. Among these concerns are the preservation of heirloom genetic mate- rials, acknowledging Indigenous agricultural tech- niques, and esoteric spiritual connections with seeds andanimism. The conceptual depth and breadth of these artworks form a testament to the impor- tance of the issues considered.

In 2018, the first deposit into the ark included Sara Schneckloth’s mixed-media drawing series ‘At Wlocance, which records the early stages of seed germination as observed by the artist as she nurtured the embryos of beans. The seeds’ embryonic potential is captured in these carefully com- posed images, which channel imaginative and embodied relations with seeds through the visual language of scientific diagrams.

Intricate organic detail and clean geometry combine in the drawings of Mollie Gold- strom. Densely packed imagery reflects scientific, mythic, and literal interpreta- tions and misunderstandings of human/ nature relationships regarding seaweed. These drawings reflect the artist’s curiosity through her commitment to describing the visual and ecological characteristics of a plethora of seaweeds species. Gold- strom’s optimism shines through her pre- sentation of the usefulness of seaweed to societies facing environmental devastation.

The branching systems of trees, roots, rivers, and human arteries inform the co- lorful print-based work of Mary Robinson. Layered, repeating patterns of cellular forms and a blurring of background and foreground reference the formation of memory through lived experience.

The artist’s prints and books thus become bi- ographical records as well as reflections of biological interdependence.

In 2019, another group of artists was in- volved to deposit work in the ark. Incredibly detailed microscopic engravings by Sergey Jivjiv mark the seed coats of agricultural heritage varieties. The etched drawings symbolically describe the histories of those who cultivated them. The seeds are view- able through custom-made magnifier cap- sules, and ultimately planted to become living embodiments of their histories.

A photographic and sculptural installation by Ivan Juarez pays homage to La Milpa, a “traditional and historical agricultural system from Maya and Mesoamerican civilization that produces maize, beans, squash, and chile.” Juarez’s work har- nesses narrative, cultural, historical, and contemporary lived experiences with these staple foods, advocating for dialogue among ecology, art, and society that bet- ter represents human connections to food systems. Here, one can see that past ways of living within the natural world remain relevant in the present.

The Migrant Ecologies Project provided a strange chronicle with their contribution, which was based on a specimen from colonial Singapore’s Raffles Museum. The artist collective sifted through (geared) wheat-straw stuffing from a 4.7-metre, 133-year-old taxidermy saltwater crocodile for a single wheat seed. They document and presented the process in an installation that respects the spirit.

The contribution from The Seeds In Ser- vice duo (Melissa H. Potter and Maggie Puckett) included colourful handmade pa- per and publications centred on the work of establishing a series of thriving heirloom gardens that serve a variety of feminist causes. The duo’s gardening and paper- making practice focuses on issues such as women’s reproductive rights and the plants used to control them, and species erased by colonial and racist domination of agri- culture. Self-empowerment and collective engagement propel their work forward.

These projects, and many others support- ed by the Seed Cultures Initiative, expose the multitude of crises facing human and plant societies during the Anthropocene. However they also present a hopefulness that art can intervene in contemporary crises through direct social and ecological action. Through community, narrative, and direct action, the participating artists en- deavour to challenge the capitalist status quo. Their works acknowledge the impor-


2 “Seed Cultures Archive,” Seed Cultures Archive, http://www.seedcultures.com/about


Paul Chartrand engages with environmental issues through the construction of sculptural life- support environments that amalgamate biological systems and cultural signifiers like language to act as active, interdependent, self-sustaining support systems. By designing and reintroducing them as players in functioning ecosystems, Chartrand re-contextualizes them as more than just objects and ensembles, and interdisciplinary drawings of ecosystems, plants, and other natural elements that Chartrand involves as foundry agency of their own, manifested through their power to change the appearance and function of the environment. The projects are dispersed through immersive participation that includes planting, conserving, reading, and physical consumption. By working with plants, it is Chartrand’s intention to meaningfully engage with their ability to engage and influence humans past, present, and future.
After the Rains
Sanchi Sur

Yesterday when she called, I sat in my bed, my hair disarray, clothed, and underweared, as I looked into the distance, at flickering traffic lights, and one of two cars still on the streets. I couldn’t see her, but her voice was the same comfort as her office. I felt like I was in my regular life, that this was regular. After all, we had spoken on the phone once when I had needed an emergency appointment, and I had been okay after. This wasn’t very different from that, surely, except now I can’t really leave my house, or I am not supposed to anyway. And my husband is in the next room working, work in a regular day, unfazed by the current changes. He can’t understand why I am unable to compart- mentalize him like, and just do what I would do on a Thursday at half past noon but. He commiserated, and cared enough to let me have the bedroom, with the door closed, while I talked too fast, trapping my words, afraid I was running out of time.

Even the highest mountains | are nearer the sky than the deepest valleys.

The buses are still running; I catch a glimpse of one. The hours will be reduced as of tomorrow. Even, as if we were in different countries, or continents, instead of a ten minute car ride away.

There is no more sky in one place | than another.

White House washing, background: Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

My counsellor called me yesterday, keeping our phone appointment. In another time, we would have met in her comfortably office, she would have offered me a cup of coffee and chairs facing each other, me talking, some- times laughing, sometimes crying, mostly revealing, without judgment, whatever she would nod, her calm voice soothing reason into our chaotic world. No, no, we are not going to die, but people we love might. If we are not careful, we could lose our families, without the comfort of a denouement; an unfinished mourning destined to haunt us for as long as we lived. Time moves in fast-forward, a week becomes a decade; a lifetime.

A poet in the writing community lost his grandfather to the virus two days before his 82nd birthday. Later in the day—on the phone, of course—I told my mother about it.

“In Canada?” she exclaimed.

“No, Iran.”

“Yes, there it is really bad.”

After, I messaged a friend—a fellow aca- demic and an ex-lover—who was in Iran.

“Are you safe?” I wrote.

He didn’t reply, but he saw the message. He must be safe, I hoped.

A cloud is crushed by sky as ruthlessly as a grave.

Playing Pandemic on my phone is the only thing that seems to calm me in the game, it is easy to reduce people to statistics, as the virus, bacteria, or fungi, takes over the world, slowly infecting every person ever alive. My strategy is not to be no- ticed, to silently infect until there is not one single healthy person alive, and then attack. I attack aggressively. Organs fail due to hypoxia. Seizures lead to brain damage, coma, and then death. A cough evolves into pneumonia.

In the end, everyone dies. But I don’t win. I never win.

The sky is omnipresent | even in darkness under the skin.

The rains have stopped now, the Lake colour of the sky, washed out white bed sheet, tinged with a hint of blue. The world is still, not yet devolved into anarchy. In the far distance, the farthest my eyes can go, I can see the faint imprint of the CN Tower, and the cluster of build- ings that make up downtown Toronto. Lives are being lived. Everyone and in every- thing is alive, even if it isn’t visible.

\[1\] https://www.insider.com/

Eric Cazdyn teaches at the University of Toronto. He volunteered this text to aid solidarity among community organizers and the Blackwood.