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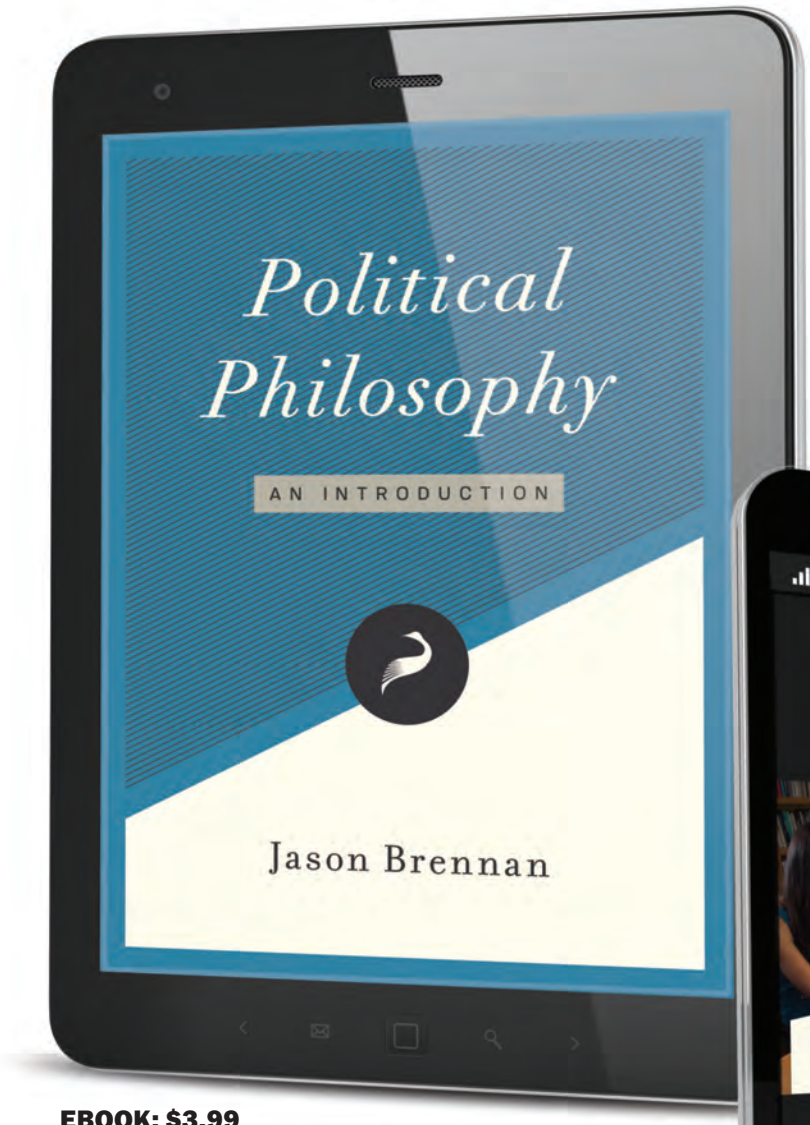
HIS PEOPLE
PATRICIA LOCKWOOD

HIS POLITICS
BRIAN BEUTLER

HIS CULTURE
JEET HEER

What is Justice?



The goal of political philosophy is to determine the standards by which we judge different institutions good or bad, just or unjust. *Political Philosophy: An Introduction* serves as a primer on some of the major theories of justice, to the arguments philosophers have made for and against these theories, and, ultimately, to how to be more thoughtful and rigorous in your own thinking.

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MAY
2016

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL ZENDER

FIELD PORTRAITS

The NEW REPUBLIC's series on the indelible political figures of the 2016 election by leading literary writers.

Patricia Lockwood, a poet, journeyed to the Live Free or Die state to chronicle Trump's triumph in the New Hampshire primary. During his victory rally she became a true American hero in her own right—coming to the aid of a fainting young woman. "She was swaying back and forth, obviously about to face plant, and the dudes around her were just watching with their hands in their pockets, with looks on their faces like, Let the free market decide!" LOST IN TRUMPLANDIA, P. 28

Clancy Martin, a Calgarian (like Ted Cruz), was raised by a questionably stable preacher (like Ted Cruz), is uncomfortable at parties (like Ted Cruz), and, due to his work on the philosophy of deception, has been referred to as "The Lie Guy" (somewhat catchier than "Lyin' Ted"). His most recent novel is *Bad Sex* (as for Ted Cruz... well, no one's saying). BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, P. 18

contributors

Michelle Dean, a contributing editor at the NEW REPUBLIC, felt very lucky when she stumbled on a cache of Adrienne Rich's letters to Hayden Carruth, like the scholars in A.S. Byatt's *Possession*. "I read them in perhaps two days altogether, all one thousand pages," she said. "I read a lot of letters; these are some of the best I've come across." THE WRECK, P. 58

Colin Dickey, author of the forthcoming *Ghostland: An American History in Haunted Places*, does not hear the mysterious auditory phenomenon known as "the Hum." But writing his story has made him "listen to the world a little differently," he said. "I'm more attentive to a lot of noise that I used to more successfully block out of my head." A MADDENING SOUND, P. 50

Jeet Heer, a senior editor at the NEW REPUBLIC, is a Sikh, born in Punjab, which influenced his decision to write about the long-term impact of Trump's presidential run. "I kept reading these stories about hate crimes against Sikhs mistaken as Muslim, and I realized there is a huge ripple effect from Trump that isn't being considered." REPUBLIC OF FEAR, P. 42

Alex Shephard is a news editor at the NEW REPUBLIC. Educated at one of the few public high schools that does not assign *To Kill a Mockingbird*, he read the book for the first time last summer. It was the mass-market edition. SCOUT'S HONOR, P. 11

Brad Temkin, a Chicago-based photographer, heard a story on NPR in 2009 about the city's initiative to plant more roof gardens. He set out to explore them for himself, photographing green roofs in about 20 cities around the world over six years. "I'm interested in how the urban and natural landscapes are integrated with each other," he said. "But nature always wins." PARADISE FOUND, P. 46

Anna Wiener, a writer living in San Francisco, is optimistic about our consumer future, but she is terrified of self-driving cars. Ellen Ullman, whom she profiles in this issue, told her she is even more cautious: "Why people put their thermostats on the internet, I cannot imagine." HACKING THE BOYS' CLUB, P. 13

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from the stacks

"FOUR HOURS A day of freedom" was all Alice Austin White wanted. A pseudonym for "a young married woman," White made this entreaty in 1917 when she could not vote, legally use birth control, obtain an abortion, divorce her husband without cause, or open her own bank account. As a married woman she had some control over her property depending on the state she lived in. Though she was published alongside Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf in the NEW REPUBLIC, and in 1932 wrote a humorous meditation on the relationship between mothers and their rebelling daughters for the political magazine *The Forum*, little else is known of White. Her plea, however, still resonates today: Women still do not have guaranteed maternity leave or access to reliable day care. American women almost received the "helpers" White asks for in 1971, when Congress passed the Comprehensive Child Development Act establishing universal child care across the country. But President Nixon vetoed the bill at the urging of his aide Pat Buchanan, who called it "the Sovietization of American children." Their goal was not simply to kill the bill, but to forever bury the notion that the government should be responsible for child care.

A mother with her son in 1902.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY

Alice Austin White

A Middle-Class Wife

JANUARY 20, 1917

I have two babies; I hope they may never know how warmly at this moment I hate them. I have a husband; we were married because we were very much in love—and him I hate too. I have a large stock of relatives, and them I hate with the heart and should hate with the hand if I had not the misfortune to be well brought up. ...

It is all the fault of the children. I wanted children very much; I am fond of children, mentally and physically; and the sheer normality of having them I rejoice in. ... But I find they commonly come rather hard and that I am not the only woman who, for months after a baby is born, has an aching body, a dull mind, and a defective sense of humor.

When I crawl to bed at half past eight, no thought save detail of housework and child-rearing has found a place in my mind all day; I have done no reading save snips from a book propped against the sink faucets while I washed dishes; and I have simply heard, not shared even mentally such stimulating conversation as my husband brings home to dinner.

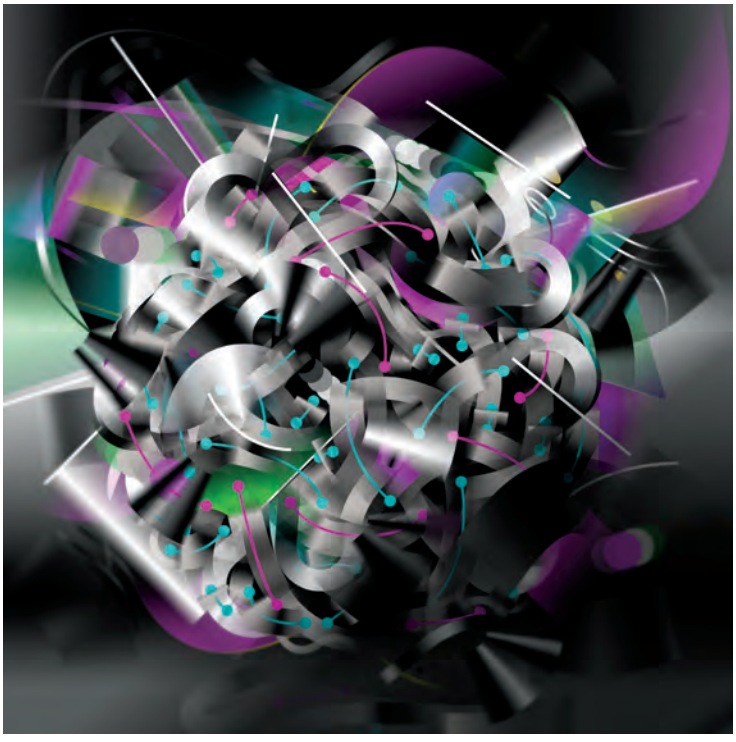
I know house and children ought not to take all my day and all my strength. If I had had special training in domestic science and child psychology and nursing I should doubtless be able to do my work in less time and with far less effort. But in college and university I flew straight in the face of providence, which is a war name of advising relatives, and worked at mathematics, while in the spare time which I might have devoted to stray courses in home economics as a sop to the gods, I took cello. Furthermore, I am glad of it. If I were to have a vacation tomorrow and a financial windfall, I should take two courses in mathematics at the university, and a cello lesson a week, and bask in it as my sister-in-law does in chiffon underwear.

If I happened to be male instead of female, which God forfend, I could double the family income by teaching at the university, but the university does not yet see its way to employing women on its teaching staff, and I therefore scrub the square of my kitchen floor instead.

The truth is, however, that it is not a floor scrubber and dishwasher that I desire. I could get along with that work or leave it happily undone. It is the care of two children under three that concerns me. It is unremitting and nerve-tearing, and the day in and day out of it is undermining mercilessly my ability to be lovable and to love. Furthermore, I have not the qualifications that would justify entrusting me with sole responsibility for the growth of human beings. Maternal instinct I have in normal amount; I could be trusted to rescue my infants from a burning building, but that is a very different matter from knowing what to do with 24 hours' worth of bodily and mental development every day. ... The helper for me should be a trained psychologist, a child lover, to be sure, but a child lover with expert knowledge of the needs of growing minds. ...

Such a woman as I have in mind, however, could take charge of a very appreciable number of children along with my important two. For five or six hours a day she could take care of a nurseryful and still have time for life and love; while the sigh of relief that a mother breathes when she ties her son's Windsor under his chin and posts him off to school would be breathed five years earlier. Indeed she might enjoy her children and the sigh be dispensed with. Four hours a day of freedom for us educated, reasonably intelligent, good-stock, middle-class mothers! The possibilities are limitless. We might even have more children.

BY PAUL FORD



Untangling the Data Knot

The internet makes critical information accessible. Now let's make it usable.

I HAVE A GREAT fondness for government data, and the government has a great fondness for making more of it. Federal elections financial data, for example, with every contribution identified, connected to a name and address. Or the results of the census. I don't know if you've ever had the experience of downloading census data but it's pretty exciting. You can hold America on your hard drive! Meditate on the miracles of zip codes, the way the country is held together and addressable by arbitrary sets of digits.

You can download whole books, in PDF format, about the foreign policy of the Reagan Administration as it related to Russia. Negotiations over which door the Soviet ambassador would use to enter a building. Gigabytes and gigabytes of pure joy for the ephemeralist. The government is the greatest creator of ephemera ever.

Consider the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, or FCIC, created in 2009 to figure out exactly how the global economic pooch was screwed. The FCIC has made so much data, and has done an admirable job (caveats noted below) of arranging it. So much stuff. There are reams of treasure on a single FCIC web site, hosted at Stanford Law School: Hundreds of MP3 files, for example, with interviews with Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase and Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs. I am desperate to find time to write some code that automatically extracts random audio snippets from each and puts them on top of a slow ambient drone with plenty of reverb, so that I can relax to the dulcet tones of the financial industry explaining away its failings. (There's a Paul Krugman interview that I assume is more critical.)

The recordings are just the beginning. They've released so many documents, and with the documents, a finding aid that you can download in handy PDF format, which will tell you where to, well, find things, pointing to thousands of documents. That aid alone is 1,439 pages.

Look, it is excellent that this exists, in public, on the web. But it also presents a very contemporary problem: What is transparency in the age of massive database drops? The data is available, but locked in MP3s and PDFs and other documents; it's not searchable in the way a web page is searchable, not easy to comment on or share.

Consider the WikiLeaks release of State Department cables. They were exhausting, there were so many of them, they were in all caps. Or the trove of data Edward Snowden gathered on a USB drive, or Chelsea Manning on CD. And the Ashley Madison leak, spread across database files and logs of credit card receipts. The massive and sprawling Sony leak, complete with whole email inboxes. These artifacts are not accessible to any but the most assiduous amateur conspiracist; they're the domain of professionals with the time and money to deal with them. Who else could be bothered?

If you watched the movie *Spotlight*, you saw journalists at work, pawing through reams of documents, going through, essentially, phone books. I am an inveterate downloader of such things. I love what they represent. And I'm also comfortable with many-gigabyte corpora spread across web sites. I know how to fetch data, how to consolidate it, and how to search it. I share this skill set with many data journalists, and these capacities have, in some ways, become the sole province of the media. Organs of journalism are among the only remaining cultural institutions that can fund investigations of this size and tease the data apart, identifying linkages and thus constructing informational webs that can, with great effort, be turned into narratives, yielding something like what we call "a story" or "the truth."

***SPOTLIGHT* WAS SET** around 2001, and it features a lot of people looking at things on paper. The problem has

ILLUSTRATION BY **LEANDRO CASTELAO**

changed greatly since then: The data is *everywhere*. The media has been forced into a new cultural role, that of the arbiter of the giant and semi-legal database. ProPublica, a nonprofit that does a great deal of data gathering and data journalism and then shares its findings with other media outlets, is one example; it funded a project called DocumentCloud with other media organizations that simplifies the process of searching through giant piles of PDFs (e.g., court records, or the results of Freedom of Information Act requests).

At some level the sheer boredom and drudgery of managing these large data leaks make them immune to casual interest; even the Ashley Madison leak, which I downloaded, was basically an opaque pile of data and really quite boring unless you had some motive to poke around.

If this is the age of the citizen journalist, or at least the citizen opinion columnist, it's also the age of the data journalist, with the news media acting as product managers of data leaks, making the information usable, browsable, attractive. There is an uneasy partnership between leakers and the media, just as there is an uneasy partnership between the press and the government, which would like some credit for its efforts, thank you very much, and wouldn't mind if you gave it some points for transparency while you're at it.

Pause for a second. There's a glut of data, but most of it comes to us in ugly formats. What would happen if the things released in the interest of transparency were released in actual transparent formats? By which I mean, not as a pile of unstructured documents, not even as pure data, but, well, as software? Put cost aside and imagine for a minute that the FCIC report was not delivered as web pages, PDFs, finding aids, and the like, but as a database filled with searchable, formatted text, including documents attributed to the individuals within, audio files transcribed, and so forth.

Now listen, if you work in this field I can hear your near-hysterical laughter: What I'm talking about is culturally impossible. I'm asking for people to hack on huge pools of data like they might hack on an app at a startup. It's like asking someone very drunk to put the books back onto the library shelves.

Imagine the specifications that would need to be written, the meetings that would need to be held, the document entitled "Findings Release Format Specification 1.0" that would itself simply be a list of further modules that would need to be created. How do you deal with foreign languages? With right-to-left character systems? What exactly is the definition of a document? How do we indicate that something is a transcript, or an email, or a what-have-you?

I look at that FCIC data and see at least 300 hours of audio. That's $18,000 worth of transcription. Those documents could be similarly turned into searchable text, as could any of the PDFs. We can do the same for emails. These tools exist and are open. If there are any faxes they can be OCRed. In this case we'll assume it's all in English. And we'll aim for internal consistency. We're talking gigabytes, not terabytes, of data, at least so far.

Chop it all up and put it into a database with full-text search. I'd use SQLite3. Its code is in the public domain and is so widely deployed as to be ubiquitous. It even runs on phones. Make a giant SQLite3 file. Then release that. You could put it on a peer-to-peer network like BitTorrent.

What would that mean? It would mean that instead of pawing through a giant PDF that points out other documents, and then finding those documents, anyone with a few minutes of training could download the file, start up a database client program, and start searching through the documents. If they had basic skills as a web developer, they could make new and novel interfaces for that data.

What would happen if the things released in the interest of transparency were released in actual transparent formats?

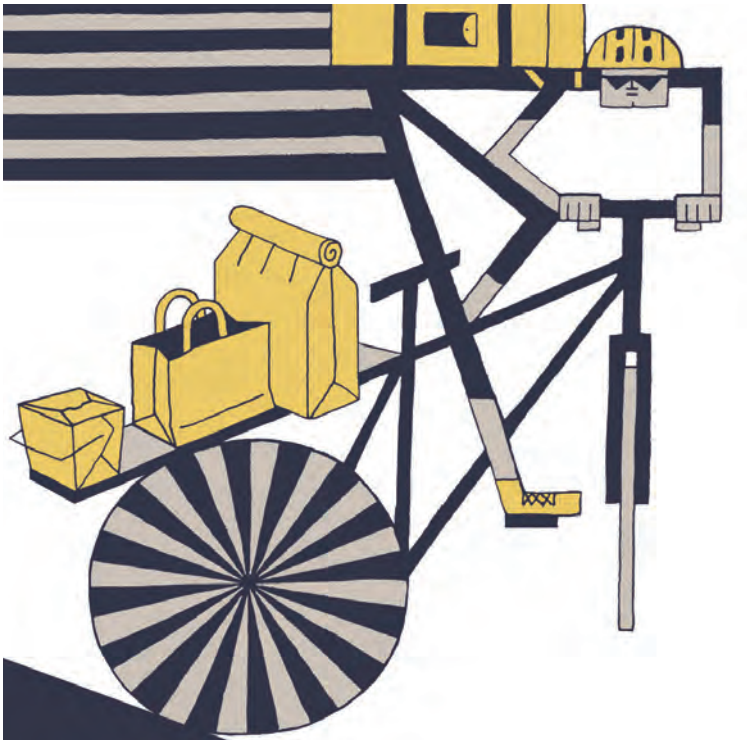
They could even start exploring large data dumps right from their phones. Without the internet. I know this is not the source of joy for all. But there are some of us, a few at least, who would enjoy drifting off to sleep browsing charts and graphs, listening to Jamie Dimon explain himself, and thinking about the world as it was in 2008.

In the world of software you have to ship products that people can use. You gather feedback and iterate on it. Otherwise your product will be subsumed by its competition. This is why we are on version umpteen of Microsoft Word or Excel, and why there are such regular updates to the Facebook app on your phone. But the same norms and rules only barely exist for data. The media has been thrust into the role of data keepers, because only it has the time to unpack the schemata that define a given file and turn it into something usable and newsworthy.

You don't need a web professional to make a book or make a magazine, you don't need them to publish a web site or tidy up a picture. But you do need them to clean up data and make it easy to explore. And as the data dumps keep happening, our reliance on the media to make sense of them—legal or not, structured or not—will only increase.

I'll be completely, well, transparent: I don't think we're ready for highly searchable, easily accessible, leaks and data dumps. We are not a particularly measured society, and this sort of information actually rewards a sense of historical context and measured analysis. We like to validate assumptions, not explore corpora. But the data keeps falling off the back of the truck, or is released by some august governmental body, or sneaked out of the country on a mislabeled compact disc. A transparent society is one that makes data not just available but usable. What use is a window if you can't stare through it?

BY CORBY KUMMER



A Table to Go

Home delivery is the new frontier for restaurateurs.

LIGHT STREAMS INTO large windows on three sides of the lower Manhattan loft space where Maple, a meal-delivery company that started last year with no less an icon than David Chang as chief culinary officer and investor, has its offices. It looks like the very well-funded tech startup it is: It launched in April 2015 backed by $29 million. Using a "bundling algorithm" of which the company's tech-minded founders are inordinately proud, 50 bike couriers, all full-time employees, collect lunch and dinner orders and speed to reach customers in lower and midtown Manhattan within a fairly narrow promised window. Maple is a vertical service: It plans menus, cooks them in a central commissary, takes orders on its apps, and assembles and sends out meals from its four satellite kitchens. There is no table service. There are no tables.

The food is good—a good bit better than it needs to be when your marketing promise is reasonable prices (a straight $12 for lunch, $15 for dinner), ease of ordering, and sticking to a delivery time. It's not the pork-fat umami bliss regulars at Chang's Momofuku empire of restaurants might expect. In fact, there are few traces of his Asian fusion trademarks, and he doesn't write menus. Instead the food is overseen by Soa Davies, who worked for six years at Le Bernardin, a restaurant about as far from quick-serve or takeout as can be imagined. Much of what Maple delivers fits the genre the critic Jonathan Gold has called Things in a Bowl, meaning healthful grains, vegetables, and zippy sauces—what you find at the hugely successful Sweetgreen, Lyfe Kitchen, even Chipotle, all of them making careful sourcing and everyday food-with-a-conscience part of their value proposition.

Maple aims to provide meals you would eat every night or run across the street for if you had time. Thus the flavors are clean, not amped up as restaurants feel obligated to do for a you-can't-get-this-at-home experience. Chunks of chicken with a light, gingery tomato sauce; spicy broccoli that has been fashionably charred before being glossed with a Thai chili pesto; cool, appealing shrimp with a cucumber-dominated Asian-themed salad—everything the founder, Caleb Merkl, and Davies gave me to try from the day's offerings on an early spring afternoon tasted fresh and carefully, simply prepared. I could tell from the dressings on the side and thickish sauces in sparing quantities that everything was engineered to withstand a delivery person who "pops a wheelie," as Merkl says. So far no cars, no delivery in Brooklyn, or even above 42nd Street. But all that is in Maple's plans—as well as expanding into key cities across America and then other countries. Maple is the most visible of a new model of online meal-delivery services that underprices the restaurants whose fixed costs it bypasses. It's the logical next step in the evolution of online ordering.

FEW RESTAURATEURS, PARTICULARLY small-scale owners, have the time or expertise to build apps and find fulfillment services, let alone hire people to make the deliveries and hope they don't rob or murder customers. Nor are they wise to the ways of SEO, Google AdWords, social media, and the other ways to make themselves visible—and therefore profitable—online. So most restaurants turn to the main players in the market: GrubHub, Seamless, and Caviar. Seamless started very early, in 1999, before smartphones, to give big law firms and banks a way to expense meals delivered to employees working late at the office. In 2005, when those corporate customers wanted similar service on the weekend, Seamless added home delivery. GrubHub started in Chicago in 2004 as an online menu service, expanded into delivery orders, and gobbled competitors until it merged with Seamless in 2013 (although they still maintain separate sites).

ILLUSTRATION BY **MATTHEW HOUSTON**

GrubHub and Seamless are straight marketplace services: They deliver customers to restaurants, which still need to deliver the food. As their market power has increased, so have their commissions: 20 to 30 percent according to restaurant owners I spoke with (the company doesn't disclose its business practices). The higher the commission, the better the search ranking, which can make all the difference in what a hungry, distracted diner sees and orders. But restaurants have complained that high fees won't guarantee a visible spot in search results. "Even by paying over 30 percent," one restaurant owner told the Tribeca Citizen recently, "we're only on the second or third page." The problem? "Thirty percent is our break-even point." Restaurants also complain of having no control over the information in their listings, saying they need to wait on customer-service lines to change their own menu and prices or even announce they're closed for the night, and they, not GrubHub, get blamed for glitches.

Caviar, like DoorDash, PostMates, and others, caters to restaurant owners: Not only does the company take all the menu photographs, it supplies restaurants with iPads to accept and track orders and allows restaurants to instantly update their own listings and prices. Most important, they provide deliverers who, using Uber-like software, are notified of and accept orders according to how near they are to a restaurant. This can give customers sticker shock. Like me: Delivery fees and the 15 percent tip, which DoorDash adds at the end (you can opt out of a tip, but that would be churlish), brought a $29.95 dinner I recently ordered to a quick $42.95.

OUTSIDE OF DENSELY packed cities like New York and San Francisco, you can tell these businesses are still finding their feet. When I recently searched for something to eat in Atlanta, where I divide my time with Boston, the restaurants on offer were instructive. Caviar, which began in 2012 with $15 million in financing and was sold to Square in 2014, markets itself as a curator of exclusive restaurants, but I'd heard of none of the ones I saw, and I'm the restaurant critic for *Atlanta Magazine*. We settled for an Italian place whose menu and pictures looked decent. Seamless and GrubHub offered a nearly identical selection of restaurants that were C-list at best, with a taco chain and a California Pizza Kitchen ranked high, along with Indian restaurants that shouldn't have gotten through the filters I set. DoorDash, by contrast, offered by far and away the most restaurants I recognized, including several quite high-end restaurants I had reviewed favorably. The $29.95 meal I ordered was the "Sunday Supper" from JCT Kitchen, which friends said was among the most genuinely Southern meals in Atlanta.

The results? What came to the door in the promised 45- to 60-minute time frame was … OK. Kind of. The Italian meal was colorless and flavorless, if warm. The Sunday Supper had identity and integrity: You could sense the vision of the chef. But both meals had too much restaurant goosing: slicks of butter in the sautéed trout from the Italian restaurant; liquid smoke and way too much salt from JCT Kitchen. These are absolutely standard restaurant-food tricks. They're noisy and unwelcome at home. A comparison in Boston yielded similarly uneven results, though octopus, salmon, and garlicky wilted greens from a neighborhood favorite, Fairsted Kitchen, arrived via Caviar not just hot but somehow appealingly presented in their plain brown boxes. That felt closest to a restaurant experience—maybe because the restaurant was down the street from the friend's house I ordered from.

New kinds of online-only meal-delivery services are underpricing the restaurants they compete with.

My mixed experience aside, is the deal worth it for a mom-and-pop? Not according to restaurant owners I spoke with, many of whom feared being named lest they fall in the GrubHub and Seamless rankings they depend on. One Manhattan restaurant saw its orders immediately go up 400 to 500 percent when they went on Seamless. But its profit margin was 20 percent, and soon enough that's what they found Seamless was asking them to pay, as they "changed their structure and offered different levels of service." And this was in addition to the money the restaurant paid for its own deliverers, which Seamless didn't provide. A pilot delivery service it tried was a disaster. Drivers weren't able to navigate Manhattan traffic, causing their quoted wait times to be as much as 150 minutes. "Do you think anyone would order delivery if it said two and a half hours?" the still-steaming owner asked.

As an eater who wants a decent delivered meal, what to do? First, call the restaurant directly using the number from their web site, not the middleman number GrubHub posts; that way they can save the commission. But for healthful alternatives to the Whole Foods prepared-foods aisle and salad bar, I'd go with a service like Maple and Savory in New York, or its San Francisco analogues and likely future competitors Munchery and Sprig. The food is made from the start to be delivered and to be, or at least seem, healthful.

As for independent restaurants, I'll always want to visit one first (even if it's a simple Sweetgreen, where I'm a lunchtime regular), as I hope other diners will too. Unless you have whiny kids, or are stormbound, or recovering from a hospital stay—all good reasons to order in—going out is always the best way to try a chef's food. For the food presented as the chefs and owners want, yes. But most of all for the community and communing that only bricks-and-mortar restaurants can supply.

ACTIVISM

What's in a #Name?

Social media has made it easier to organize activists, and even harder to hold them together.

BY **NAVNEET ALANG**

BLACK LIVES MATTER: A TIMELINE

February 26, 2012: George Zimmerman fatally shoots Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teen.

July 13, 2013: Zimmerman is acquitted of second-degree murder. On Facebook, Alicia Garza writes, "Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter." It inspires the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter.

GENERALLY WHEN WE name something, we delineate it, conferring the thing with characteristics and a definition. But that's not always true of online movements. Their names have become familiar (#BlackLivesMatter, Bernie Bros, Gamergate, Men's Rights Activists, etc.), though their borders are less clear. Because the barriers to acting in the name of a group—using a hashtag, writing an article, or reacting to others on social media—are low, coherent definitions of what a movement stands for can get muddied.

Gamergate, for example, began with sexism and has since aligned itself with reactionary politics. Today many members actively ridicule notions of social justice. But when it was founded, Gamergate's members said they were concerned with the ethics of the gaming press and wanted to do something about it. "Doing something about it" often meant doxxing and harassing their perceived enemies—mostly female game creators and journalists. The woman at the heart of the initial firestorm has, out of sheer exhaustion, abandoned the harassment charges leveled at her ex-boyfriend, the man who started the hate campaign. Now the movement's borders are much more porous. Its members are mostly composed of white men against any kind of social progress.

Bernie Bros—some aggressive, mostly white male supporters of Bernie Sanders—are similar to Gamergaters in their demographic makeup, but decidedly less toxic. Their crime is mansplaining to women, as opposed to harassing them off the internet. Are Bernie Bros a manifestation of online sexism or a reflection of misogyny in leftist movements? The answer is both. Existing ideological trends can coalesce around new expressions of ideas. The line is fuzzy.

#BlackLivesMatter was meant to be less prescriptive in its membership: Anyone who believes in racial justice and tweets under its hashtag can be a member. The very ease of entry into the movement has helped BLM become a significant force in the current election. Under the radical clarity (and, one would hope, the inarguable premise) of the hashtag, a wide umbrella to gather under was formed, for participants and allies alike. Part of the power of the movement is the broad singularity of its purpose.

ILLUSTRATION BY **JAMES GRAHAM**

The openness of these movements is a gift and a curse: It's easy to mobilize and scale them, but it's difficult to determine who's really a member. How do you rally around something that is constantly morphing?

MOVEMENTS ARE HARD to sustain. Typically, a groundswell emerges and coalesces; its influence grows; and then disagreements about ideas or tactics happen, and a split or disintegration follows. It was common among leftist movements in the 1960s, feminists between the second and third waves, and even white supremacists. But once protest movements were born on the internet, their nature changed, even if their trajectories did not. The main question, though, remains the same across all movements: How do you keep them together?

One answer is to abandon coherence entirely, which is what is both promising and terrifying about Anonymous, the scattered group born on 4chan that went on to commit acts of "cyber-justice" and harassment. But clarity of purpose is what allows momentum to build around ideas.

The momentum is sometimes hard to maintain. Occupy Wall Street used social media to gather steam; over the past five years, it has splintered into many online and offline subgroups. As scholar Judith Butler argued, articulating demands and then occupying space until those demands are satisfied is absolutely vital for successful activism. Occupy's legacy is ambivalent: The financial industry is still ascendant, but there have been, for example, successful campaigns for an increased minimum wage.

Perhaps the porousness and malleability of online activist groups needs an ongoing counterbalance—a kind of vigilance that might police what is and is not part of a movement. Online activism is not unique in its need for an animating spirit or a sense of collectivism; rather, its uniqueness is found in the necessity of constantly defining itself against its own dissolution, etching out in pen the borders of a movement.

Ambivalence is the fate of nearly every movement. Going online has only ratcheted up the pace at which it occurs: Movements begin as a grassroots groundswell and then splinter off, often in a matter of weeks. And the risk is always found in the nature of the mass group—that sometimes it is a collective that can effect real political change; but all too often, it is also a reactionary swarmlike mob, threatening to subsume change for the inertia of the status quo.

August 9, 2014: Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old, is shot and killed by white police officer Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, Missouri. The first in-person Black Lives Matter protest is organized in response.

April 12, 2015: Freddie Gray dies from injuries sustained in a Baltimore police van. Protests turn violent.

July 18, 2015: Black Lives Matter protesters interrupt Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley at Netroots Nation. O'Malley says "all lives matter."

POLITICS

Exhuming McGovern

The message from his disastrous 1972 campaign now seems prophetic.

BY **JOSHUA MOUND**

August 11, 2015: Black Lives Matter protesters meet with Hillary Clinton backstage at a campaign event and challenge her husband's mass incarceration policies.

A SPECTER IS haunting the Democratic Party—"McGovernism." In 1972, President Richard Nixon shellacked his Democratic opponent, George McGovern, by a 23-point margin in the popular vote. Following McGovern's defeat, Democrats began running toward the center and haven't looked back, even though that center seems to have moved further and further to the right with each passing election.

For the past 40 years, whenever a Democratic presidential hopeful has given off the slightest whiff of leftish anti-establishmentarianism, party leaders and mainstream pundits have invoked McGovern's name. In 2004, Howard Dean was the new McGovern. In 2008, Barack Obama became the new McGovern. This year, it's Bernie Sanders's turn.

But the Democrats' fear of McGovernism is misplaced. McGovern didn't lose because he was too far to the left. He lost because he was facing a popular incumbent, Richard Nixon, presiding over a booming economy. Moreover, the Democrats' belief that they need to steer clear of McGovernism—a belief that ultimately resulted in the Third Way neoliberalism of Bill Clinton—now looks increasingly misguided. With each passing decade, the types of voters drawn to McGovern's 1972 campaign have become a larger and larger share of the American

October 9, 2015: Hillary Clinton meets with Black Lives Matter activists ahead of the release of her criminal justice reform plan.

February 3, 2016: Black Lives Matter leader DeRay McKesson tweets he's running for Baltimore mayor.

THE NEW ELECTORAL MATH

1980
Whites are 88 percent of the electorate, and 56 percent vote Republican.

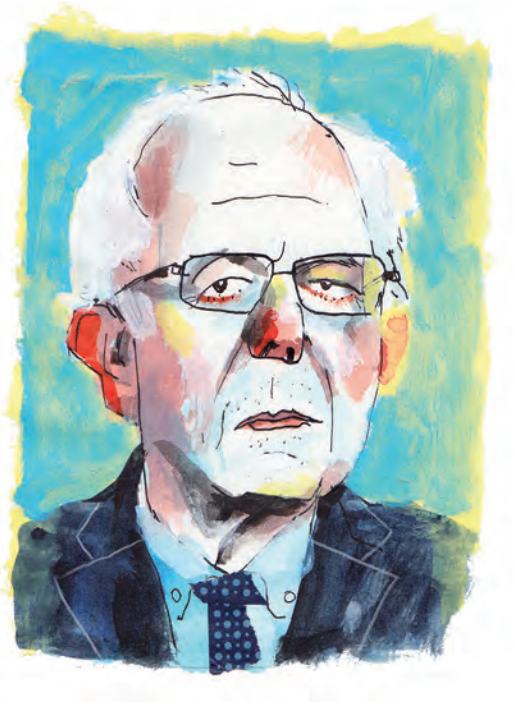
2012
Whites are 72 percent of the electorate, and 59 percent vote Republican.

1980
Hispanics are 2 percent of the electorate, and 56 percent vote Democratic.

2012
Hispanics are 10 percent of the electorate, and 71 percent vote Democratic.

1980
Blacks are 10 percent of the electorate, and 83 percent vote Democratic.

2012
Blacks are 13 percent of the electorate, and 93 percent vote Democratic.



electorate, while the issues championed by McGovern have become more and more salient.

McGovern's dark-horse 1972 bid to win the Democratic nomination employed a two-prong plan. First, McGovern would align himself with recent social movements to a degree that no previous Democrat had contemplated. This meant courting members of movements dismissed by many Democrats as mere "identity politics," including African Americans, students, women, and gays and lesbians. Second, McGovern would woo poor and working-class whites in the North away from conservative Democrat George Wallace with a populist pocketbook pitch that foregrounded issues of economic inequality and the political power of the wealthy. To the surprise of nearly everyone outside of the McGovern campaign itself, the strategy worked, even if, as political science models make clear, Nixon was destined to defeat any Democratic nominee in a landslide that fall.

It's hard to view the demographic trends of both the Democratic Party's electoral coalition and the country as a whole as anything other than "George McGovern's Revenge," in the words of John Judis and Ruy Teixeira. The United States is well on its way to becoming majority nonwhite, while the support of people of color, women, and gays and lesbians—the political alliance mocked by conservative Democrats at the '72 convention—have become crucial to the victory of any Democratic candidate. Likewise, it's clear in retrospect that the seemingly quixotic appeal of McGovernism to white-collar workers was part of a longer trend in both the composition of the American workforce and the Democratic coalition.

From the vantage point of 2016, McGovern's message on economic inequality and the political power of the rich seems prophetic. In the decades after McGovern's loss, economic inequality continued to increase, economic uncertainty for most Americans grew, and real incomes and wages for moderate-income households and workers rose sluggishly, at best. Economic growth, which neoliberals are still urging Democrats to emphasize more than income distribution, has accrued almost wholly at the top, while the federal tax-and-transfer system actually did less at the turn of the twenty-first century to counteract inequality than it did in the late 1970s. Not coincidentally, recent research has demonstrated that the preferences of the rich almost wholly determine the direction of American economic policy-making.

The Democrats' post-'72 turn away from McGovernism towards neoliberalism ensured that the party was poorly positioned to counter these trends. In fact, the New Democrats' agenda of "free trade" deals, supply-side tax cuts, and financial deregulation actually served to make inequality worse, while the New Democrats' welfare "reforms" increased the number of Americans in deep poverty. Even when well-meaning, the neoliberals' incrementalist agenda of targeted tax credits and regulatory "nudges" actually damaged the Democratic Party's image as the party of average Americans. Unlike McGovern's proposals for single-payer health care and the "Demogrant"—a cash transfer of $1,000 per year for every adult, regardless of income—the neoliberals' small-bore tax credits render invisible government benefits for the middle class, such as subsidies for home ownership and education, leading many middle-income taxpayers to mistakenly believe the state's only purpose is to funnel money to the allegedly undeserving poor and the unquestionably undeserving rich. Moreover, each tax credit, nudge, and Obamacare-style public-private Rube Goldberg device only adds to the complex "kludgeocracy" of American policy, which itself fosters cynicism about the effectiveness of the government.

In contrast, McGovern's calls for loophole-closing tax reform, his proposal to use federal aid to curb hikes in regressive state and local taxes, his support for payroll tax-funded single-payer health care, and the Demogrant plan all would have done much to combat inequality. Moreover, contrary to the neoliberals' insistence that McGovern's platform was little more than warmed-over big-government liberalism, proposals like the Demogrant actually

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **PHILIPPE DE KEMMETER**

contained more than a little tinge of libertarianism, thanks to the simplicity of cutting every American a check, rather than forcing them to navigate a complex bureaucracy.

This year, Bernie Sanders is the closest thing the Democrats have to McGovern, though not because Sanders is a sure loser. Sanders's attention to economic inequality and stinging denunciations of plutocrats not only echo McGovern's rhetoric in 1972, they also speak to the concerns of average Americans, who are increasingly worried about inequality and income stagnation. The Vermont senator's platform of progressive tax redistribution and single-payer health care is undeniably popular and shares much with McGovern's own proposals. Likewise, Sanders's political strategy of energizing young and working-class voters and soliciting large numbers of small donations is McGovernism at its best. However, whereas a key demonstration of McGovern's viability was his late-primary success in persuading African Americans to abandon Hubert Humphrey, Sanders has not yet had success wooing black voters away from Hillary Clinton, a shortcoming that may ultimately decide the fate of his candidacy.

But whether it's carried by Sanders this year or a candidate like Elizabeth Warren or Keith Ellison in a future election, both demographic trends and the political realities of rising inequality suggest that a McGovernesque message of economic populism and social liberalism represents the future of the Democratic Party.

Though Democratic leaders and pundits are fretting about the "electability" of a candidate with a message like Sanders's, the same realities that faced McGovern in 1972 will face any Democrat in November. Most of the factors that will determine the fate of the Democratic candidate in the general election—particularly the state of the economy and the incumbent's approval ratings—are out of the nominee's control.

Despite this, the echoes of neoliberalism's past in the Democratic Party establishment's dismissal of Sanders's candidacy suggest that if the Democratic nominee loses this fall, the explanation offered by party leaders and mainstream pundits will be the same one that has been trotted out after every Democratic defeat since 1972. If Sanders wins the nomination and loses in the general, it will be because the public wouldn't stand for Sanders's populist radicalism, and if Hillary Clinton wins the nomination and loses in the general, it will be because Sanders damaged her centrist credentials in the primary by pulling her too far to the left.

That is, it will be because of McGovernism.

1980
Voters aged 18 to 29 are 23 percent of the electorate, and 44 percent vote Democratic.

2012
Voters aged 18 to 29 are 19 percent of the electorate, and 60 percent vote Democratic.

1980
Ronald Reagan gets 56 percent of white voters and wins 44 states.

2012
Mitt Romney gets 59 percent of white voters and wins just 24 states.

PUBLISHING

Scout's Honor

Harper Lee's estate has shifted from protecting the author's legacy to profiting from it.

BY **ALEX SHEPHARD**

HARPER LEE NEVER could understand why young people liked *To Kill a Mockingbird*. "The novel is about a former generation," she told *The Plain Dealer*, "and I don't see how this younger generation can like it." The year was 1964, just over three years since the novel had been published, and the book was already being taught in 8 percent of America's public schools. By the late 1980s, that figure rose to 74 percent. In the five decades since Lee expressed her doubts about her novel's appeal, the affordable mass-market paperback of *To Kill a Mockingbird*—the one most frequently assigned in schools—has sold 20 million copies.

The novel's mainstream success required tremendous vigilance, and Harper Lee had help keeping the world at bay. For much of her life, Alice Lee guarded her sister's legacy, keeping her away from hucksters and opportunists. As Alice's health declined—she passed away in 2014—her responsibilities were taken up by lawyers and agents, and the careful stewardship of the Lee estate began to crumble. Lee died on February 19, 2016. Ten days later, a Monroeville judge ordered her will to be sealed.

The decision to seal the will became public on March 4, and the act was immediately controversial. This has been true of almost every legal move

JANE AUSTEN:
After Austen's death, her older sister Cassandra burned many of her letters and censored others by cutting portions out. Only around 160 of Jane's missives survive, many of them mangled by dear Cassandra.

LEWIS CARROLL: Only five of the original nine volumes of Lewis Carroll's diaries survive, many with missing pages. It is assumed that some were removed by family members, others by the author himself.

JAMES JOYCE: Stephen Joyce, grandson of James Joyce, forcefully guarded his grandfather's work after his death—motivated, in part, by a biographer who quoted Joyce's lewd letters to his wife.

SYLVIA PLATH: Ted Hughes was put in charge of his estranged wife's estate after her suicide. Hughes burned one of Plath's diaries, lost another, and lost an unfinished novel. He blocked the release of her unpublished work until 2013.

involving Lee's estate since Alice's passing, even before the furor following the announcement, in February of last year, that a lost sequel *To Kill a Mockingbird* had been "discovered."

We may never know what Lee's will stipulates, but her estate's public actions following her death have been both bold and baffling. The NEW REPUBLIC obtained an email from Hachette Book Group,

sent on March 4 to booksellers across the country, revealing that the estate will no longer allow it to sell the mass-market paperback edition of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. (The move appears to be rooted in a 2011 decision by Lee's former literary agent to cancel and then renegotiate all of the book's licensing arrangements.)

According to the email, a variation of which a number of booksellers in multiple states have confirmed they received, no other publisher will be able to produce the edition, meaning there will no longer be a mass-market version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* available in the United States.

Smaller and significantly cheaper than trade paperbacks, mass-market paperbacks are typically available in non-bookstore retail outlets, such as airports and supermarkets. Another place people are likely to encounter mass-market paperbacks is in schools, where they are popular due to their low cost.

The mass-market paperback of *To Kill a Mockingbird* had been published for years by Grand Central, an imprint of Hachette, under a sub-license from Lee's longtime publisher HarperCollins. Hachette's mass-market paperback of *To Kill a Mockingbird* retailed for $8.99, while trade paperbacks published by Hachette's rival HarperCollins sell for nearly double the price. This licensing arrangement meant Lee split her mass-market royalties with HarperCollins, likely earning less than a dollar for every copy.

Unsurprisingly, the cheaper mass-market paperback sold significantly more copies than the trade paperback: According to Nielsen BookScan, the mass-market paperback edition of *To Kill a Mockingbird* sold 566,543 copies in 2015, while HarperCollins' trade paperback editions sold 394,328 copies. (BookScan tracks most, but not all, physical book sales in the United States, which means total sales were almost certainly greater.)

Of course, the book will still be available in almost any public library in the country, and used copies are available on Amazon for as low as one cent, plus shipping, but the disappearance of the mass-market edition could have a significant impact on *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s cultural importance, which has been driven largely by the fact that it is both so accessible to young readers and so widely taught in American schools. According to a 1988 report from the National Council of Teachers of English, "Only *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Huckleberry Finn* were assigned more often." Today, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has almost certainly surpassed the controversial *Finn* as the most assigned novel in America's middle and high schools.

Schools typically receive a bulk sale rate that gives them more than 50 percent off of the list price of a book—they most likely pay less than $4.50 per copy for the mass-market paperback of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, whereas a copy of the trade paperback would cost $7.50. Given the perilous state of many education budgets, forcing schools to buy the more expensive edition could very easily lead to *To Kill a Mockingbird* being assigned to fewer students.

In response to the uproar over the end of Hachette's cheaper mass-market edition, HarperCollins is offering a promotion that allows schools to "effectively purchase the book based on an $8.99 cover price." This means that for the foreseeable future schools will not have to spend more money than usual to purchase and teach *To Kill a Mockingbird*. But promotions don't last forever. When asked how long it would remain in place, a HarperCollins spokesperson informed the NEW REPUBLIC that this promotion is "open-ended" and will be evaluated "on an ongoing basis as [is done] with other sales promotions."

What is certain, however, is that Lee's estate will continue to face publicity problems even as

it's shielded from scrutiny. Without knowledge of why Lee's estate has radically altered the publication arrangements of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it's only possible to speculate as to who is pulling the strings—and to what end. This will be true of any decision made by the estate, so long as Lee's will is sealed. It's an unfortunate twist in the legacy of one of America's most beloved writers. For an author whose reputation in life was similar to her character Atticus Finch's—noble, high-minded, resistant to trouble and chaos—Harper Lee has, in recent years, become one of America's most controversial writers. It is a striking change, but one likely to be permanent if her estate continues to operate in secrecy.

TECH

Hacking the Boys' Club

Ellen Ullman argues that Silicon Valley culture is embedded in code.

BY **ANNA WIENER**

CODE IS NOT neutral. It can't be; it's a creation. "The engineer's assumptions and presumptions are in the code," writer and programmer Ellen Ullman wrote in a 1995 essay in *Harper's*. "The system reproduces and reenacts life as engineers know it: alone, out of time, disdainful of anyone far from the machine."

The people who build (and fund) technology products in 2016 look largely the same as they did 20 years ago, when Ullman's essay was published. White men still dominate the industry, as do white interpretations of diversity. Technology doesn't exist in a vacuum, however, and it would look very different if it contained the "assumptions and presumptions" of multiple demographics. Software products would be more powerful, more accessible, and more democratic—Twitter, for example, would look a lot different today if it had been built by people for whom online harassment is a real-life concern.

Ullman was not the first to acknowledge the need for diversity in technology. But as a literary writer, a systems engineer, and a woman who has spent decades working in Silicon Valley, Ullman is that rare member of the coding tribe. She is a translator who deeply understands the world we live in and the worlds we build with software. She stands in sharp relief to San Francisco's newer batch of residents, who, by and large, are backpack-burdened young men pursuing the next overvalued opportunity.

Ullman is petite and very thin, with short curls and enviable bone structure; her clothing is tailored, chic, and tasteful, mostly in dark colors. As a woman in her sixties, she looks notably adult amid the Valley's boyish, postgrad milieu.

The generation gap is also what makes Ullman's perspective so valuable: She's lived through a tech boom or two, and she has seen that they are cyclical. "What happens to people, like myself, who have been involved with computing for a long time is that you begin to see how many of the 'new' ideas are simply old ones coming back into view on the swing of the pendulum," she said in 2002, "with new and faster hardware to back it up."

As a writer, she is the author of numerous essays and two novels, *The Bug* and *By Blood*, as well as a well-received memoir, *Close to the Machine: Technophilia and Its Discontents*. Ullman's writing is as rare as her place in the tech community—and it's not just because literary work about technology is almost entirely the domain of male authors. Her insights are finely wrought, philosophical, and lasting: In 2000, Ullman predicted that the internet would eventually replace human interactions with purely digital ones. "In the internet age, under the pressure of globalized capitalism and its slimmed-down profit margins, only the very wealthy will be served by actual human beings," she wrote then. "The rest of us must make do with web pages, and feel happy about it."

It's important to understand that Ullman isn't a technophobic scold; she's as intoxicated by code as anyone else in Silicon Valley. But like most women in tech, she experienced some pushback. "I was a girl who came into the clubhouse, into the treehouse, with the sign on the door saying NO GIRLS ALLOWED," she told me, "and the reception was not always a good one."

***Hackers* (1995)**
A punky techno thriller in which a tween is arrested for writing a computer virus and banned from computers until he turns 18. With his hacker friends, he uncovers a plot to release a dangerous computer worm.

***eXistenZ* (1999)**
A sci-fi body horror film in which a female game designer is nearly assassinated when she premieres her new virtual-reality game. She convinces her new bodyguard to implant a gameport in his spine.

***The Social Network* (2010)**
The story of Facebook's creation portrays its founders as supersmart, socially awkward, and cutthroat.

***Silicon Valley* (2014)**
An HBO comedy about awkward tech bros working on a startup with an investment from an eccentric venture capitalist.

When *The Bug* was first published in 2003, *The New York Times* ran a review that called the novel "thrilling and intellectually fearless," noting that Ullman herself was an "indispensable voice out of the world of technology." But after a man shared the review on Slashdot, a technology-focused news site, the abuse began.

"It started: 'Ellen Ullman, I think I saw her naked,'" Ullman recounted. "My response: Get over it, guys. What are you, nine years old? You saw a girl's underpants? Grow up. I am not intimidated by puerile boys acting like preteens," she said. "Then came a barrage of more and more ugly postings. More and more pornographic." Ullman didn't return to Slashdot for years.

"It will not work to keep asking men to change," Ullman told me. "Many have no real objective to do so. There's no reward for them." To be perfectly clear: Ullman isn't anti–geek culture; she's not anti-technology; she's not anti-men. She doesn't want to raze the clubhouse. She simply wants those inside to open the door.

SAN FRANCISCO'S SOUTH of Market (SoMa) neighborhood is the heart of the current tech scene, and it has always reflected the city's shifting fortunes. Historically industrial, all kinds of people—gold rush prospectors, immigrant farmhands, merchant mariners, leather daddies, nightclub impresarios, collective-living Burners, artists, hackers, and the homeless—have, at one time or another, called the district home. SROs abound, as do repurposed factories now studded with startups; above and around them, condominiums bloom. "I had this 'crane index' during the first boom," Ullman said to me, peering up at the sky. "How many cranes will tell me that it's all coming to a bust?"

"I was a girl who came into the clubhouse with the sign on the door saying, 'No girls allowed.'"

It was a warm weekday afternoon in December, and Ullman was taking me on a walking tour of SoMa, where she has lived since 1996. In the '90s, she said, the tech industry's influence on the neighborhood was just beginning, with startups tucked here and there "like sparrows roosting in abandoned barns." Twenty years later, it's sparrows all the way down. Ullman navigated us past Instacart (grocery delivery), Scribd (digital library), and WeWork (real estate), pointing out both household-name tech companies and startups fresh out of the incubator. "Now, it's ridiculous because there are cranes everywhere," she said.

Ullman has lived in San Francisco since 1972. Raised in Flushing, a neighborhood in Queens, New York, by adoptive parents uninvolved with technology, she studied English at Cornell. There she became interested in television and video art, and after graduation she struck out for San Francisco to become a photographer. But first she needed a job, and she was good with hardware. "There were big opportunities for anyone who knew what a compiler was," she said, matter-of-factly. "I knew what a compiler was. I got hired."

Ullman went on to work for a number of startups—including a nascent Sybase, where, as the first engineering hire, she wrote software to manage relational databases. Her later work included building a web portal for AIDS patients and graphical interfaces for the Unix operating system, pre–Microsoft Windows.

Today, Ullman has a front-row seat to the latest boom, the evidence of which surrounds her home—the proliferation of startups on her block, a "food truck lounge" around the corner, grown men riding scooters on the sidewalks.

I asked Ullman whether she still enjoyed living in San Francisco; she took some time to respond. "Elliot and I, we talk about how much longer we want to stay here," she replied. (The Elliot in question is Ullman's husband, the artist Elliot Ross.) "It's like being professors on a college campus, where you get older and everybody stays 28."

Two feelings emerged simultaneously: an irrational guilt that I, myself, was 28; and a deepening self-consciousness at the realization that Ullman was the first person I'd spoken with in days, my own parents notwithstanding, who was over the age of 40.

WHEN I WAS 25, after reading *Close to the Machine* for the first time, I wrote Ullman a fan letter. At the time I was considering moving across the country to take a job at a data-analytics software company. We corresponded over email, and eventually she invited me to her airy, bookish apartment for a party she was hosting for a local literary journal. Writer types, draped in diaphanous linens, boots, and slim trousers—San Francisco elegant-casual—filled the loft, and there was a wealth of snacks and good wine. They talked about books, about rent control and the Google buses. They skewed middle-aged. I found it a relief to be among people who were invested in art and who had nothing to say about retention charts.

When I found myself there again last August, it was the same as I remembered it: minimalist furniture, wall of books, full of light. Ullman was the same, too—we chatted formally until she uncorked a bottle of white wine. We exchanged stories of sexism in the workplace and the isolation of being a literary writer. "When I am writing, and occasionally achieve single focus and presence, I finally feel that is where I'm supposed to be," she told me. "Everything else is kind of anxiety." It is cathartic and unnerving to realize that it's not as easy as it looks, holding both worlds in your hands. It is also inspiring.

"Ellen Ullman's frank prose and dauntless ambition showed me a new way to survive the world of technology and make it my own," Diana Kimball, product manager at the productivity startup Quip, wrote to me recently. "*Close to the Machine* moved me, but it was her 2013 *New York Times* op-ed—"How to Be a 'Woman Programmer'"—that electrified my entire social circle. The example she set, of resilience through realism, helped me to find a way to stay in the arena." Without that kind of predecessor, staying in technology—and in the Valley—is difficult, if not impossible. And without people committed to bettering life in technology, who are themselves close to the machine, nothing can change.

"I am dedicated to changing the clubhouse," Ullman told me. "The way to do it, I think very strongly, is for the general public to learn to code." It doesn't have to be a vocation, she said. But everyone, she argued, should know the concepts—the *ways* programmers think. "They will understand that programs are written by people with particular values—those in the clubhouse—and, since programs are human products, the values inherent in code can be changed." It's coding as populism: Self-education as a way to shift power in an industry that is increasingly responsible for the infrastructure of everyday life.

"I keep hearing over and over, *we want to change the world*," Ullman told me as we walked down Second Street. "Well, from what to what? Change it so everyone gets their dry-cleaning delivered?" Who will build the future we'll live in? What will it look like? Right now, the important thing is that we still have a choice. "That's why I'm advocating that everyone should learn to code at some level," Ullman continued, "to bring in their cultural values, and their ideas of what a society needs, into this cloister."

The current tech boom appears to have more staying power than the dot-com bubble of the 1990s: People rely on technology in a way they didn't 20 years ago. Software is finally both ubiquitous and indispensable. "The first boom, from 1995 to 2001, was kind of punky," Ullman told me as we sat at her kitchen counter. "If the first boom was like a disobedient band of dreamers and hackers, the new boom is more like a well-drilled army on maneuvers," she said. And indeed: It's hardly a revolution.

***Mr. Robot* (2015)**
A USA TV series in which a programmer with social anxiety disorder falls in with a group of anarchists that seeks to cancel all debts.

Though she hasn't worked in the tech industry since the end of the last boom, to read Ullman's work is to remember she's been with us all along. Code, for all its elegance and power, is just a tool. "The services are enormously convenient, but then there is the culture left behind," she said. "When we receive the dry-cleaning delivery, we no longer see who does the work. We don't see the tailor in the window, the presser surrounded by steam. When you order food on your phone from GrubHub, you don't see the cooks and helpers in the hot kitchen." The question of who delivers to whom, she continued, is directly related to inequality at large—it's essential that the technologies we create and use are also building a world we want to live in.

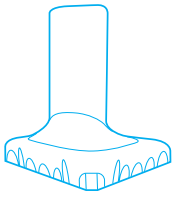
One afternoon last summer, I invited Ullman to my workplace. Within minutes, she and two young engineers were debating the merits of strongly typed languages, a conversation they've had many times before; it quickly became clear that Ullman had tipped the scales. "See? I told you so," one said, vindicated. As enjoyable as it was to watch her, I was in over my head. Ullman noticed immediately. "Sorry—you must be bored," she said. "This is fun for me."

JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY; ILLUSTRATIONS BY VIC KULIHIN

Odd Ones Out

China's ban on "weird" architecture is a global power play.

BY **BIANCA BOSKER**



The LVMH building in Shanghai is officially called L'Avenue, and was built in 2013 to resemble a cascading waterfall. But due to its resemblance to a white-fur Ugg, it is better known as the Boot.

VISITORS WHO TRAVEL to the Minhang People's Court in Shanghai will find themselves staring up at the U.S. Capitol building. This courthouse, like half a dozen others around China, is an almost exact replica of the Washington, D.C., landmark, with a few flourishes cribbed from the White House. It is a short distance away from Thames Town, a British-themed gated community built for 10,000 people, complete with a cathedral copied from Bristol, England. And from there, it's an easy trip to the Boot—locals' ungenerous nickname for LVMH's sparkling headquarters, which towers over the city like a white shoe.

China has long been ground zero for daring and sometimes bizarre architecture executed at a scale and speed that would be impossible anywhere else. City skylines have come to resemble a trophy case of architectural marvels: There is a teapot-shaped museum in Zunyi, a stock exchange modeled after a coin in Guangzhou, a copycat Venice complete with canals in Hangzhou, and, in the capital, the $900 million Rem Koolhaas–designed CCTV tower, which Beijingers derisively refer to as the Giant Trousers.

These eye-catching edifices began as China's way of announcing its arrival as a powerful player on the world stage. Now, however, the Chinese government has changed course: It has officially declared this to be "weird" architecture that must be stopped. The country's leaders have turned their backs on these structures, a shift that underscores China's new conception of itself and its ambitions for the future.

In February, China's cabinet and the Central Committee of the Communist Party released a sweeping directive that prohibits the construction of "oversized, xenocentric, and weird" architecture lacking cultural tradition. The guidelines also forbid gated communities—presently the de facto template for upscale residential compounds—and call for future building designs to be "suitable, economical, green, and pleasing to the eye."

China Daily, a state-run newspaper, trumpeted the guidelines as measures to address mounting urbanization woes, including the snarled traffic jams and noxious smog that have plagued cities as their populations have swelled.

But the government's mandate seems intended to go beyond improving the quality of life. The end of "weird" architecture ties in to the government's recent efforts to champion frugality, revive traditional values, and keep foreign ideas at bay.

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST Party has always been keenly aware of the propaganda value of architecture. In the 1950s and 1960s, following Mao's rise to power, bureaucrats took wrecking balls to traditional homes under the rationale that the nation needed new buildings to match its fresh ideology. The old structures were replaced with Soviet-style apartment blocks, wide boulevards, and imposing halls that embodied the socialist spirit. "National form, socialist content" became the planning motto of the day.

Thirty years after China's sweeping economic reforms, the 2008 Summer Olympics—China's coming-out party as a global leader—proved a boom time for "weird" architecture, as bureaucrats rushed to approve starchitects' expensive and impressive plans for buildings that could double as monuments to China's superpower status. Pritzker-prize winning architects like Jean Nouvel, Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Zaha Hadid all won major commissions. Since 2005, Hadid alone has been awarded more than ten projects throughout China (not including a knockoff of her design built in Chongqing). Meanwhile, in the suburbs, local officials chose to house their headquarters in iconic buildings evoking power and prestige: the U.S. Capitol, the White House, even the Palace of Versailles.

Of course, it can be easy to mock piano-shaped museums and Eiffel Tower replicas. But they reflect a specific time in China's post-reform evolution, when the country was grappling with how to assert itself. And they evoke the minor but significant liberties the government is now poised to claw back. Architecture was strictly Soviet and tightly controlled under previous regimes. These "weird" buildings are testaments of the freedom people have had, for the first time in a generation, to experiment with design and, in the domestic sphere, see individual fantasies become reality.

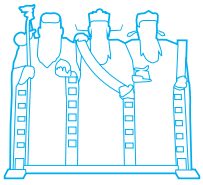
Today, the state's priorities have changed yet again. Deng Xiaoping's supposed maxim, "To get rich is glorious," has been replaced by President Xi Jinping's command to bring "honor to frugality and shame to extravagance." The decision to outlaw "odd-shaped" buildings suggests an effort to solidify China's war on luxury in concrete and stone. The gated communities the government aims to eliminate—well-manicured compounds that look like oases against the nation's industrial landscape—have sequestered the upper- and middle-classes behind layers of fences and security guards. They are stark reminders of China's growing income inequality and run counter to the socialist ideals Xi has stressed. Not only will these isolated and ostentatious developments be banned in the future, but existing gated communities will be opened to the public.

At the same time, the government seeks to shift construction methods over the next ten years to ensure that by 2026, at least 30 percent of new buildings will rely on prefabrication. The policy promises to flatten the differences between buildings and bring a more uniform appearance to China's cityscapes, one that harks back to the Mao era, when design was considered an unnecessary extravagance. (It remains to be seen whether this will apply to private homes as well.)

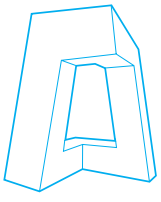
THE LATEST DIRECTIVE also reflects China's renewed wariness of Western ideas. More than past leaders, Xi has turned toward nationalism and encouraged China to reconnect with traditional values as a way, some speculate, to combat the cash-centric mindset that has contributed to corruption. "We should be more respectful and mindful of 5,000 years of continuous Chinese culture," Xi declared in a 2014 address to the Politburo. The push to block architecture devoid of "cultural tradition" echoes Xi's exhortation to artists, in another 2014 speech, to "disseminate contemporary Chinese values" and "embody traditional Chinese culture" in their art. Architecture is apparently no exception.

But the government's new approach to its skyline is more than an attempt to celebrate the nation's cultural heritage, or make a few aesthetic tweaks. Instead, it represents a shift in how China conceives of its place relative to other global superpowers. With design stunted under Mao and planners racing to accommodate an influx of urbanites, developers in the 1990s and early 2000s eagerly tapped foreign architects in the hopes of absorbing their knowledge. In its justification for building Thames Town in 2001, for example, the Shanghai Urban Planning Bureau stressed the opportunity to "draw on the successful expertise of foreign nations." (The project was completed by a British firm.) Now, the buildings that grew out of these collaborations are being dismissed as "weird" and "xenocentric."

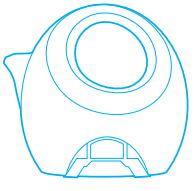
The government's reversal on architecture thus seems to contain a larger message about how it views China's development: The nation has surpassed the need for foreign input and knows better than outsiders how to conduct its own affairs. China will lead, not follow.



In a small town in China's Hebei province, **the Tianzi Hotel** is made up of three ten-story tall figures—the gods of fortune, prosperity, and longevity. The best suite is in a peach held by one of the gods.



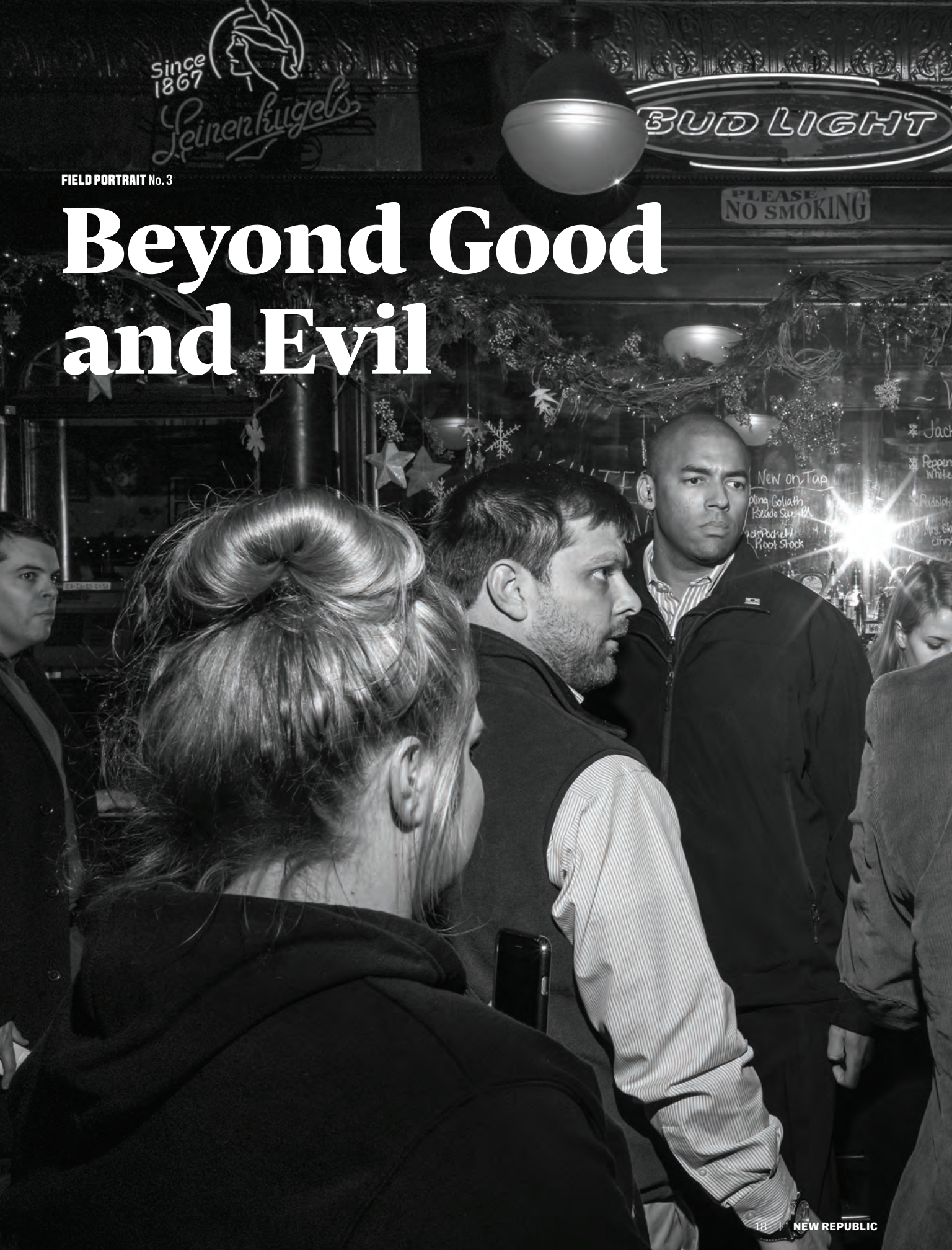
The CCTV headquarters in Beijing is known around town as the Giant Trousers. It has inspired several copycats throughout the country.

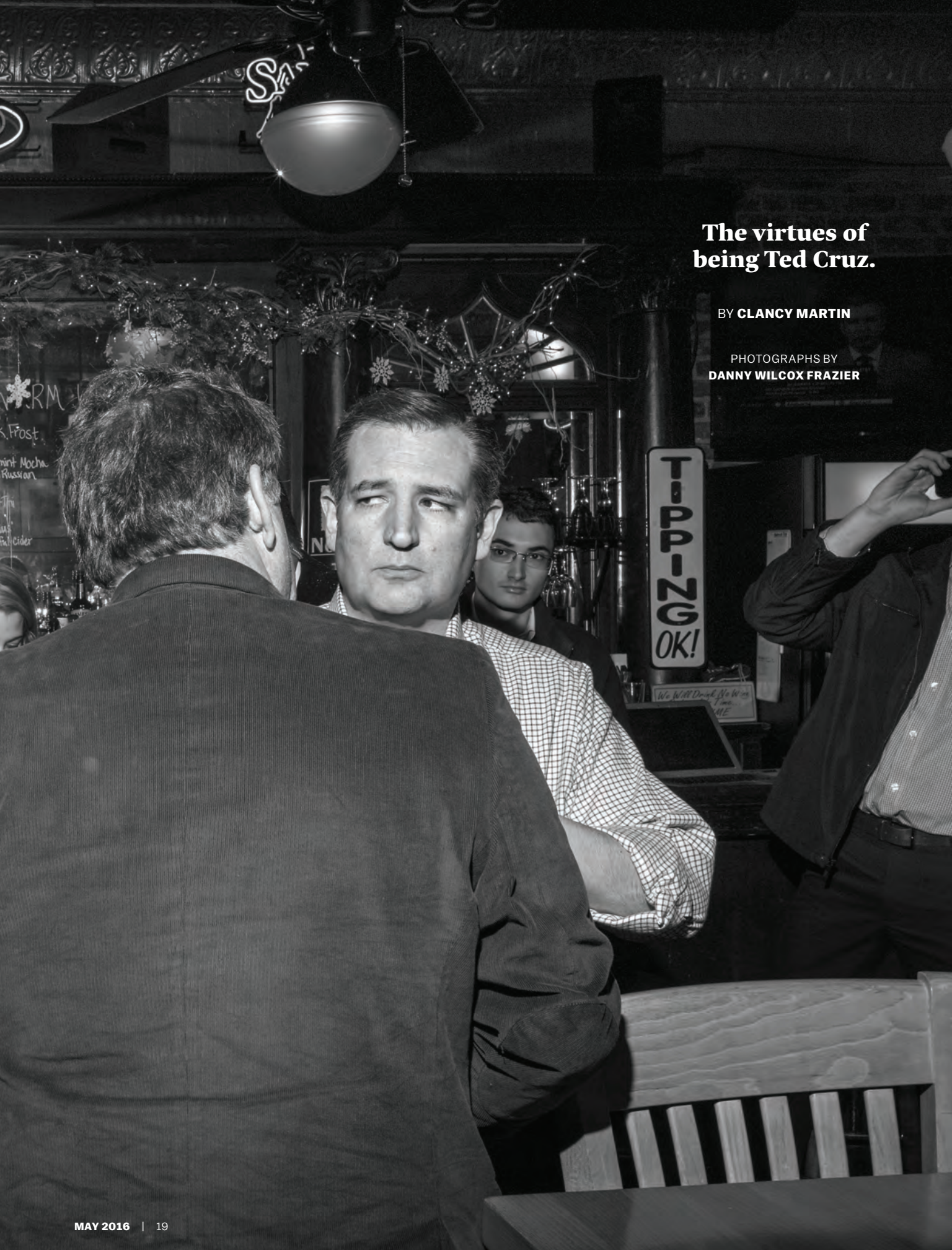


The Teapot building in Wuxi is in the shape of the iconic red clay teapot that the city is known for and houses its tourist information center.

FIELD PORTRAIT No. 3

Beyond Good and Evil





The virtues of being Ted Cruz.

BY **CLANCY MARTIN**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DANNY WILCOX FRAZIER

I HAD A TERRIBLE realization while watching a widely viewed YouTube video of Ted Cruz at age 18, valedictorian of the class of 1988, sitting in front of a fountain at Second Baptist School in Houston, joking with a friend about his aspirations to "be in a teen tit film"—Ted Cruz and I are just about the same age. Some other things we have in common: We are both from Calgary, a gas-and-oil town in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Western Canada. We are both the sons of alcoholics who abandoned their families early and then turned things around through religion (Cruz's father became a Christian evangelical, mine a Rosicrucian). We are both Texas boys: He moved from Calgary to Houston when he was four, I moved from Calgary to Fort Worth when I was 16, and both of us have spent much of our adult lives in Austin, Texas. We both have daughters: Ted has two, ages five and seven, I have three, aged 21, eleven and nine. As a professor of philosophy at a Midwestern university, I believe I am a reasonably intelligent person, and I have no doubt that Ted Cruz, a Princeton and Harvard graduate and champion debater, is exceptionally smart.

I mention these strange affinities because I struggle to understand why Ted Cruz and I have fundamentally different worldviews.

There is a mistaken idea popular among liberal pundits that we are presently witnessing a race to the bottom between Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, and that the craving for authority driving Trump's popularity among primary voters is the same primal force behind Cruz's candidacy. On this account, Trump and Cruz are appealing to the same voter—Trump is besting Cruz because he is better at playing the fascist. Trump understands populism while Cruz does not; Trump can evoke and articulate our ugliest xenophobic fears (The wall will be 30 feet high! Fifty feet high!), while Cruz ineffectively appeals to his track record of combating the Gang of Eight. (Who are they again?) Trump speaks in the vernacular of a third grader, bad versus good, winners versus losers; Ted Cruz, despite his best efforts to impersonate a good ol' boy, winds up showing off his Ivy League credentials and alienating his own base. Despite, or perhaps because of, his nerdiness, he just can't figure out how to become the demagogue the Republican Party so ardently desires.

But Cruz and Trump are in fact appealing to different segments of the Republican Party and they know it. Trump is the candidate of the disoriented, the confused, the needy; Cruz is the candidate of the dogmatist, the moralist, the doctrinaire. Trump gets the voters who fear and adore, Cruz gets the voters who hate and resent; Trump is all show, Cruz means what he says; Trump wants to be everybody's boss, Cruz wants to be everybody's master. Ted Cruz is much, much more dangerous than Donald Trump.

But I only realized this after following Ted Cruz for a month or two. I began with an uninformed repugnance for his views, with which I had only a vague familiarity; then I got to know him, a little bit, as an unlikely presidential candidate, a probable third- or fourth-place finisher. I watched the dark horse win in Iowa, and somewhere along the journey I came to understand that, in my opinion, no one currently running for president would be worse for the country than Ted Cruz. Not necessarily because there's something wrong with his policies, though I consider them to be completely misguided. But because there is something frightening about this person, and there is something frightening about the way he can make people feel.

On YouTube, 18-year-old Ted is slender, handsome, buoyant, even charming. In only a few months he'd enter Princeton, and somewhere along the way—during his undergraduate years as a wily, winning debater, his successful but unpopular Harvard law days, his time as a Supreme Court clerk in which he recited to his peers the gory details of murders committed by death-row convicts, or his boom years as a senator who displayed consistent social contempt for his colleagues—a nastiness coalesced and hardened in Ted Cruz.

But here, with an easy, youthful grin and open, expressive face, he has none of the sleazy, predatory, pockmarked and malignant qualities of the candidate I'd come to know. This is what happens to you when you argue that a man who was convicted for stealing a calculator should spend the next 16 years in prison, I thought. In the video, young Ted makes an awkward, oddly prophetic joke about his "ass-pirations"—it's the kind of joke no one laughs at except the lonely guy who made it—and for a moment I glimpsed the part of Ted Cruz that would come, in its way, to win my own parsimonious liberal heart. He goes on to explain, now notoriously, that he aims for "world domination—that sort of stuff." Eighteen-year-old Ted is able to articulate what the 45-year-old dares not explain, or no longer feels: that he understands the irony of trying to become the president of the United States of America. He's 18 and smart enough and even good-humored enough to know that it's more than a little outrageous to hope to become the president of the United States. He must have cherished these kinds of crazy ambitions in his heart, or he would not be where he is today. And he's also sincerely joking about it.

But somewhere between teenage Ted and the candidate we know today, the sense of irony was lost. The lanky high school senior in the video was probably always a misfit, and he may always have been a bully, but it took that kid years to recognize that being a misfit and a bully were political virtues—and that he, Ted Cruz, was uniquely virtuous.

At 4:30 p.m. on the eve of the caucus in Marion, Iowa, a side door opened to the assembly room of Grace Baptist Church and Ted Cruz entered along with a chunky bodyguard and 30 or so of his team members in their signature, dark navy blue jeans. Cruz stood quietly as the pastor introduced him. He wore a blue zippered sweater over a button-down shirt, brown leather work boots, and new-looking Levi's. A few people in the first pew, near the door where Cruz stood, rose to shake his hand. Some handed him campaign posters to autograph. One parishioner passed up a leather-bound Bible, and Cruz took time to write something long in the front pages. A second Bible

was handed to Cruz, who again paused to write something thoughtful. More posters and more Bibles were passed up, and Cruz didn't have time to write a message in each Bible, so he started simply signing them on the page that was held open for him: on the fly page, where a book's author would sign.

My wife and I sat in the second row. We had driven up from Kansas City a few days before to see Cruz in Iowa, a state that he would win later that evening, besting Trump by three points and Marco Rubio by four. It would be a month before he would win another primary, his home state of Texas.

I watched him autograph the Bibles.

"There's something weird about Ted Cruz and boots. He's always talking about kicking in doors with jackboots, like he wants to wear a pair," my wife said.

"I get you. Trump wears shoes. Cruz wears boots. What are jackboots?"

"They're knee-high patent leather," she continued. "Like the Nazis. Then he has those black ostrich boots he calls his 'arguin' boots.' He was the first one to make fun of little Rubio's high-heeled boots. Look, he's wearing farmer's boots today for the Iowans. I'm telling you, he has some weird sexual thing with boots."

I turned to the couple beside me, who were in their early sixties, attractive, and very fit, to ask what they liked about Ted Cruz.

"He's a good Christian man," the woman told me. I noticed she wore black leather riding boots and a smart, close-fitting outfit from what seemed to be J.Crew or Banana Republic. Her husband smiled politely at me and then ignored our conversation, turning his eyes to Cruz. "He's passionate, and he's a viable option to Trump. We won't vote for Trump. It's between Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, and we haven't decided yet."

Cruz took the stage. In the friendly, intimate atmosphere of the small church, he was comfortable. I'd been to many Ted Cruz events in the past couple of months, and it was the only time I'd seen him genuinely at ease. He seemed happy and not at all exhausted from the grueling schedule of his 99-county Iowa tour. Though rested, his face had an unfortunate lizard quality to it—adult Ted Cruz can never overcome the Komodo dragon quality of his skin and chin—but he wasn't repellent. He spoke with the almost squeaky register he adopts in a religious setting, waving his arms evangelically when appealing to Christian scripture and stabbing a finger down in his debater's manner when making a political promise. He didn't have the chip-on-my-shoulder-but-quick-on-my-toes expression that he wears during televised debates, and he was neither obsequious nor smarmy—two typical Cruz styles I'd come to expect since following him.

"When I'm president you can bet there's going to be some changes in Washington! On day one in the Oval Office we're going to prosecute every member of Planned Parenthood who has committed criminal acts!"

"Yes!" the husband of the woman in the tall leather boots shouted, pumping his fist in the air and rising to his feet.

This is standard Cruz rhetoric: He has five items on his "first day as president" checklist: Repeal all of President Obama's "illegal and unconstitutional executive actions"; investigate and prosecute Planned Parenthood; notify the Department of Justice and the IRS they can no longer "attack religious liberty"; "tear up this disastrous deal with Iran"; and move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

"Now that's a busy first day!" someone shouted, and Cruz's self-conscious, thin-lipped grin came out as he nodded and started on the agenda for his second day in office. Obamacare: gone. IRS: abolished. Common Core: canceled. "Everyone will be able to do their taxes on a postcard," because of his flat tax.

"If we get a president who appoints a left-wing judge..." Cruz said.

"Stone him!" someone shouted out from the crowd.

"I'm a true conservative!" Cruz shouted. Suddenly I understood something about Ted Cruz and his followers that I hadn't clicked into before: The proof of Cruz's merit, as a candidate, was that he ought to be at the bottom. The proof of being "a true conservative" is that everyone is against him. Being hated is a mark of entitlement.

Friedrich Nietzsche made the argument about the triumph of "ascetic morality" and the Christian reevaluation of values 140 years ago in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Imagine you feel oppressed by a culture and a political system that has

consistently ignored you and the things you care about. (For today's conservative, these values might include the definition of marriage as being "between a man and a woman," the idea of an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, or that life begins at conception.) Now imagine someone promised to overturn all of the prevalent values of the day in favor of your own, opposing values. For Nietzsche, this meant the value of being wealthy would be reversed into the virtue of being poor; the value of being proud would be upended by the virtue of humility; the celebration of the body would be transvalued into the virtue of sexual restraint. Having power, on this account, would mark the powerful as morally blameworthy; being powerless, by contrast, was a guarantee of righteousness. And this, according to Nietzsche, was the only way a system so contrary to natural human flourishing as that taught by Christianity could have, and did, take such a powerful hold on our collective consciousness. These were the deep psychological roots of the Christian revolution that began more than 2,000 years ago (and may now be coming to an end). Were it not for the apostle Paul, "We should scarcely have heard of a minor Jewish sect whose master died on the cross," Nietzsche elsewhere observed. It was Paul and his astonishing insight into the psychological needs of the powerless of his time that accomplished this transvaluation of values, the very same psychological needs that Cruz hopes to tap into now. Of course Ted Cruz is despised by the ruling elite. So was Jesus.

This is the dialectic of Ted Cruz: Either you are bullied, or you are the bully.

It was only natural, indeed desirable, that the media and the entire Republican Party had consistently fought against Ted Cruz, and he against them: He represents morality, which is the opposite of everyone at work in Washington today, everything we see in our degenerate age. But you, the voter, know what the truth is, and so does God. That's why Ted is winning against all odds. You feel resentment about the way this country is headed? So you should! Because the values represented by our leaders—even the values represented by the Republican Party—are the opposite of *your* values. You feel excluded, you feel ignored? You feel bullied, even hated? So do I!

He finished to wild applause and invited questions. News had broken early that morning of Cruz's fraudulent "Voting Violation" mailers, which warned many Iowans that their district had a shamefully low-voter turnout and listed a voting "grade," alongside the recipient's name and the names of their neighbors. One of the audience members asked Cruz to explain. Cruz said the mailers had been sent out since time immemorial, that one of the men who'd condemned him in the media had sent out the very same mailer. It was classic kindergarten Cruz: He admitted he did it, but only because Marco Rubio did it first.

"That's crazy," I said to my wife. "He's saying that two wrongs make a right. That's the opposite of what he stands for."

At the end of his remarks, Cruz changed a bit: He seemed more thoughtful, more determined, and less scripted, less polemical. His face opened and I thought I saw a gentleness in his eyes.

"I don't care if it is Donald Trump who wins tonight," he said. This surprised me. It was the first time I'd heard him consider the possibility he might not take Iowa.

A voice from the audience: "We'll pray for him!"

We all laughed. Cruz came down off the stage for pictures, and my boot-wearing neighbor on the pew and her husband turned to me with radiant faces. "We're not undecided anymore!" she said, before rushing up to meet him.

The day before, the Cruz campaign held a rally at the fairgrounds on the outskirts of Iowa City in a large white aluminum hangar that smelled like cow dung, sanitizing wash, and Skin So Soft. All of the folding chairs were taken, and behind the chairs, it was a tight, standing-room-only crowd.

A hangar at the Iowa fairgrounds is exactly the kind of space Cruz should avoid: There must have been nearly 1,000 people in attendance. It had the circus atmosphere of a Trump event, but Trump knows how to stage these vaguely Wagnerian affairs—the grander the atmosphere, the more they glow. Cruz and his team do not glow.

A few other things Ted Cruz should avoid doing: Shaking people by the hand in a crowd (he always looks past you to the next person); talking to a gaggle of reporters (he stays on script rather than relating to the particular individuals); telling jokes (he tends to be the only one laughing); hugging (no one wants a hug from Ted). This is starting to sound mean-spirited, but I understand where Cruz is coming from. He has a mild form of social anxiety disorder; we all sense it. People upset him. This is not an insurmountable handicap for a politician, but it is the real reason he is losing to Trump, despite the fact that his core message is aligned with the vast majority of the Republican base. He simply doesn't like people. And so it goes, they don't like him.

In this way, as different as their politics are, Ted Cruz on stage reminded me of Richard Nixon—canny, but inept at the theater of politics. Cruz has an air of persecution which, in a large setting, comes off as arrogance. He can be surprisingly charming when he lets his guard down. Cruz is the kid who gets picked on at school and tells himself that he's unpopular because he's smarter than everyone. I could see this

vulnerability in Ted at 18, but at 45, I got the feeling the snot-nosed kid we've read about has had a lot of the snot beaten out of him. It was all too easy to imagine Cruz's farewell address, if not during this campaign, then perhaps the next: "You won't have Ted Cruz to kick around anymore!"

At the Iowa fairgrounds, there was a run-up of speakers that felt cobbled together: Cruz's Iowa campaign manager; the nephew of a member of *Duck Dynasty*; anti-immigration Representative Steve King; and Heidi Cruz, enjoining us with a wife's earnest but obviously furtive, unconvinced, and unconvincing optimism to "fall in love with Ted, like I did."

Then Glenn Beck appeared—the crowd had been whispering he might be coming—and there was a widespread shift of disorientation in the room. Everyone went wild.

"Beck for VP!" someone shouted.

Unsurprisingly, Glenn Beck is a tremendous public speaker. He appeals to the intellect like a talented elementary schoolteacher. For the past 20 years "we've really screwed things up. And it's our fault … We keep sending clowns to Washington." He was heavy on textbook U.S. history: Thomas Paine and George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Pearl Harbor.

What does he love about Ted Cruz? "Everybody in the press hates your guts!" There was applause and shouting. "Everybody on the Democratic side hates your guts! And all of your so-called friends hate your guts!"

All of your friends hate your guts?! I looked around, astonished, but the crowd was electrified—everyone was on their feet. This was one of my favorite things about Ted Cruz's campaign so far: He has made his persistent unpopularity—well-known even here in Iowa, a long way from Harvard, Princeton, or Washington, D.C.—one of his most winning strengths.

Another step forward in my understanding of Ted Cruz. There are those of us who vote for the candidate we admire (Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders). Some of us go down to the polling station to vote for the candidate whose policies we endorse (John Kasich, Hillary Clinton). Some of us vote for the least of all possible evils, rather than the person we think will actually improve our lives (Marco Rubio). But what gets us into that voting booth more than anything else is the feeling of identification. *He's like me.* I feel alienated, excluded, oppressed, even ostracized: Ted honestly confesses to the same. I don't trust the politicians in Washington: Everyone says that Ted, even though he's a Washington politician, is hated by his fellow politicians. Do you feel excluded? So do I. So does Ted. And he has been excluded. And that's a good reason to vote for him. He's one of us.

Nietzsche argued in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Antichrist* that the greatest creative moment in Christianity—perhaps even the greatest creative moment in the history of human thought—was when the priest class realized their power could come from celebrating the powerlessness of the mob. Misery loves company. Aesop's fox and the sour grapes. Thanks to the internet and its overnight millionaires and twentysomething billionaires, the cresting of American luxury, the likes of which has never been seen before in human history, there are a lot of very sweet-looking grapes being dangled in front of the electorate that are just out of reach.

The old Republican way of looking at the world, one might argue, divides it into good and bad, where good is what is good for me and mine (wealth, power, popularity) and bad is what we do not and are not (the poor, the downtrodden, the disadvantaged, the unentitled). But this new Republican brand of Ted Cruz's does not see the world in terms of good and bad—for Cruz, it's good and evil, where good is defined in terms of what is not evil. Evil is the rich, the liberal, the academy, the East Coast and the West Coast, the foreigner. And we who are good, we are the opposite of all that.

There's an unsurprising and familiar symmetry between love and hate, and Beck exploited it effortlessly. When we love or hate, we establish ourselves as equals. We neither revere nor despise, we neither worship nor condescend. For people like us, for the good honest folks in Iowa, for Christians who care about the way this country has gone so far astray, Beck explained, Cruz was one of them. And importantly, like them, he was being ignored. Suddenly, all of us were part of the same group, the Americans who no one else cares about, the Americans who know what's right and wrong, but no one listens to them. This is the dialectic of Ted Cruz: Either you are bullied, or you are the bully. The bully tells you what's what; the bullied are morally superior.

Beck was savvy enough to sell this point hard—if you feel hated, vote for Ted—but he also had the psychological acuity not to linger on that point. As soon as we were whipped up into a frenzy of resentment, he changed gears. He went positive. Yes, Cruz feels like you do, but he is also a great man. Frequently and elliptically during his remarks, he did his best to compare Ted Cruz to George Washington (a reach, even for Glenn Beck). But he circled back to Washington to tell the story of how the Founding Father came home to write in his diary after signing the Constitution.

"This was the entry in George Washington's diary: 'Finished the Constitution today. I pick up my copy of *Don Quixote*.'"

Beck said the entry had puzzled him for years. But instead of drawing the obvious conclusion—Washington was acknowledging to himself that the creation of a constitutional democracy was an unambiguously quixotic enterprise—Beck asked his daughter to hand him a leather-bound volume, which he held in the air.

"This … is Washington's copy of *Don Quixote*."

There was hysterical applause. The mood at the Iowa fairground had become pure theater, no longer having any relation to reality, let alone Ted Cruz's campaign for president. Beck was supposed to introduce Cruz, but instead he took the moment to turn up his populist rhetoric. "The caliphate is coming … an Islamist needs to be killed!" And then Ted Cruz took the stage.

It was an unfortunate anticlimax felt by everyone in the room. Beck had charisma; Cruz did not. Beck could whip up a crowd; Cruz could not. Beck had George Washington's

copy of *Don Quixote* ... well, enough said. Even Cruz could feel the change in the atmosphere, and he was clearly intimidated.

After thanking the previous speakers, Cruz tried to find his feet with some crowd-pleasers. He attacked the press, the academy, and Hollywood. He did a long riff on duck-hunting with *Duck Dynasty* star Phil Robertson. At a bit of a loss, he threw in some Cruz standards: "And God is great ..."

"All the time!" shouted back the audience.

Still blinking a bit from the bright light of Glenn Beck, he launched into his well-rehearsed stump speech. By the end, of course, he had found his game and the crowd was with him. Cruz stayed to shake hands, sign posters and ball caps, take photos. A man surged past me with a copy of Glenn Beck's best-selling book *Common Sense* in his hand, the title cribbed from Thomas Paine. He bumped into me and stopped to smile.

"Sorry," he said. "I just really want to get this signed."

One of the paradoxes of Ted Cruz is that despite the fact that he has never been accepted as a politician—until very recently, real political success has eluded him—I think it is the political process itself, and perhaps his struggle to be accepted as a politician, that has brought out his more repellent qualities.

I recently had dinner at a Mexican resort with a prominent Republican oilman who told me: "There's nothing wrong with Ted Cruz's policies, per se. I could just never vote for him as a man. There's something nasty about the guy." He went on to justify himself by mentioning Cruz's acceptance of an endorsement from the virulent, psychotic anti-Jewish pastor Mike Bickle (who seems, at times, to recommend Adolf Hitler), but my friend wasn't making a lot of rational sense, and he knew it. It was simple: He doesn't like Cruz. And if you never see Cruz in person, if you only read about him in the news or see him on a debate stage, it's true, he's hard to like.

When people ask me about Ted Cruz, I tell them at first I didn't like him at all, but as I've gotten to know him better, I find myself constantly vacillating. While following him in Iowa, my wife and I had identified a tick of Cruz's—when we saw him in person, especially when there were few or no TV cameras around, he followed a routine when he spoke: He made a point he felt passionate about while poking his finger, then he nodded sternly, making eye contact with people in the room. Then he smiled, looked at a new member of the crowd, and laughed. Cruz has an unusual and endearing laugh. He pokes his teeth out and sort of seems to retract his neck into his chest like a frightened turtle. His head bounces a little, almost imperceptibly, and then he puts the teeth away.

I'm describing it like it's a bad thing, but it was curiously disarming. "He's actually kind of cute," my wife said. Cruz looks like a kid when he does it—a sweet, lonely kid, whose

only friends are adults. He looks like the kind of kid who hangs out with the mom in the kitchen while the other kids are playing games in the yard during a birthday party; the kid who was abandoned by his alcoholic father when he was just a toddler only to be reunited with him two years later; the kind of kid who impresses his parents with a recitation of the Constitution. He looks like a lonely misfit.

Bertrand Russell, parroting Nietzsche, has argued that the desire to moralize is a desire for cruelty. If you'll allow me a little armchair psychology, I suspect that it is Cruz's failures in Washington—failures that began when he was passed over for choice appointments in the early administration of George W. Bush—that have solidified his worst qualities: his resentment, his anger, his hatred, his desire to fight back, his cruelty. All of those deeper feelings manifest themselves in the desire to moralize, to wave the banner of Christian conservative, to be the dogmatist ideologue, the one true good guy.

At an event in Adventure Christian Church in a little town in Iowa, Cruz came in from the back, behind us. He walked through the audience, shaking hands on his way to the front. I realized I was accidentally standing in the receiving line.

"Shake his hand," my wife said.

When he passed me, I took his hand and shook it. He didn't look me in the eye. My wife was behind us, filming the exchange and laughing. She was laughing more than was polite, in part because the atmosphere was getting hysterical.

Cruz opened with his standard lineup of the five things he'd do on his first day in office: Move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and begin a criminal investigation into Planned Parenthood. After each point, he did his routine: Gaze, point, smile, teeth. Little tucked-chin neck bob. My wife and I imitated him. Then something unusual happened.

We noticed that he was staring at us. Very clearly staring straight at us. As we—I'm a bit embarrassed to admit it—shamelessly mocked the odd way that he laughed. He had very clearly observed that we had been mocking him. More, he clearly cared that we were mocking him.

Of course it could have been in our imaginations. But in that moment, Ted Cruz became human. He was vulnerable, and for just an instant or two I saw a Ted Cruz who could be loved—who you wanted to love. It's a quality that both Rubio and Trump share that seems to have simply eluded Cruz so far. It's important, at least sometimes, to be vulnerable. Yes, everyone wants a strong leader—especially the Republican Party—but in all of his talk about being hated, being an outsider, Cruz never lets us know what it feels like to be the wallflower, the lonely guy looking for a few friends. He has, unfortunately, just the opposite tendency. He tends to make us feel like he doesn't want or need our affection or support.

And it was interesting, and maybe not so surprising, that it took being picked on to bring out this side of him.

As we drove away from the event my wife turned to me. "I'm a little worried about Ted Cruz. He seemed a little down today. He said the whole point of getting elected is to be hated."

No one supposed Ted Cruz was presidential material before he won Iowa. Now that Cruz is the clear number two for the Republican nomination, it also seems equally clear—as clear as the mud of politics can ever be—that Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee. But one thing that I want to emphasize here, a point that I think is appreciated by many far-right Republican commentators but missed by people like me on the left, is that Cruz and Trump are fundamentally different candidates with fundamentally different sources of appeal. Trump supporters don't care whether he is consistent or polite or cool or even particularly presidential. Trump supporters like Trump. In many ways, Trump supporters of today remind me of Obama supporters in 2008. Obama's mantra: "Change!" Trump's: "Win!" Cruz's supporters, as I've emphasized here, don't necessarily like the man, but I think they respect him. More importantly, they identify with him. And if you want to have your beliefs confirmed, he is, relatively speaking, consistent, reliable, even trustworthy.

At his Iowa victory speech, Cruz had on his politician mask. The aspect of Cruz that had appealed to me—the awkward kid, the nerd, the man who was upset when he saw we didn't like him—was already gone.

Standing in the audience, my wife and I realized there'd been a tremendous and perhaps crucial upset, and we sensed something we hadn't picked up on before: Victory affects Cruz one way and it affects his followers another. The speech went on and on, and so we decided it was time to go. Making our way out through the crowd, we perceived something new among Cruz's supporters: hostility. This was the first time we had worn press badges during our time following Cruz, and so we could be identified as the enemy—and the enemy had just lost.

My wife said later that it was the first time she recognized the very real danger of Cruz's candidacy. It was built, in subtle ways, on hate, on resentment. And when it gained momentum, those subtleties became unsubtle. And we could feel it. There was cruelty in the air, and it wasn't coming from Cruz.

Whatever your worries may be about the possibility of a Trump presidency, perhaps you can take comfort, as I do, that the confusion of the Trump supporter is less dangerous than the conviction of the voters who support Ted Cruz. Trump supporters are looking for answers, Cruz supporters already know the answers. A fearful person may be made dangerous, but a cruel person is already there.

DANNY WILCOX FRAZIER/VII

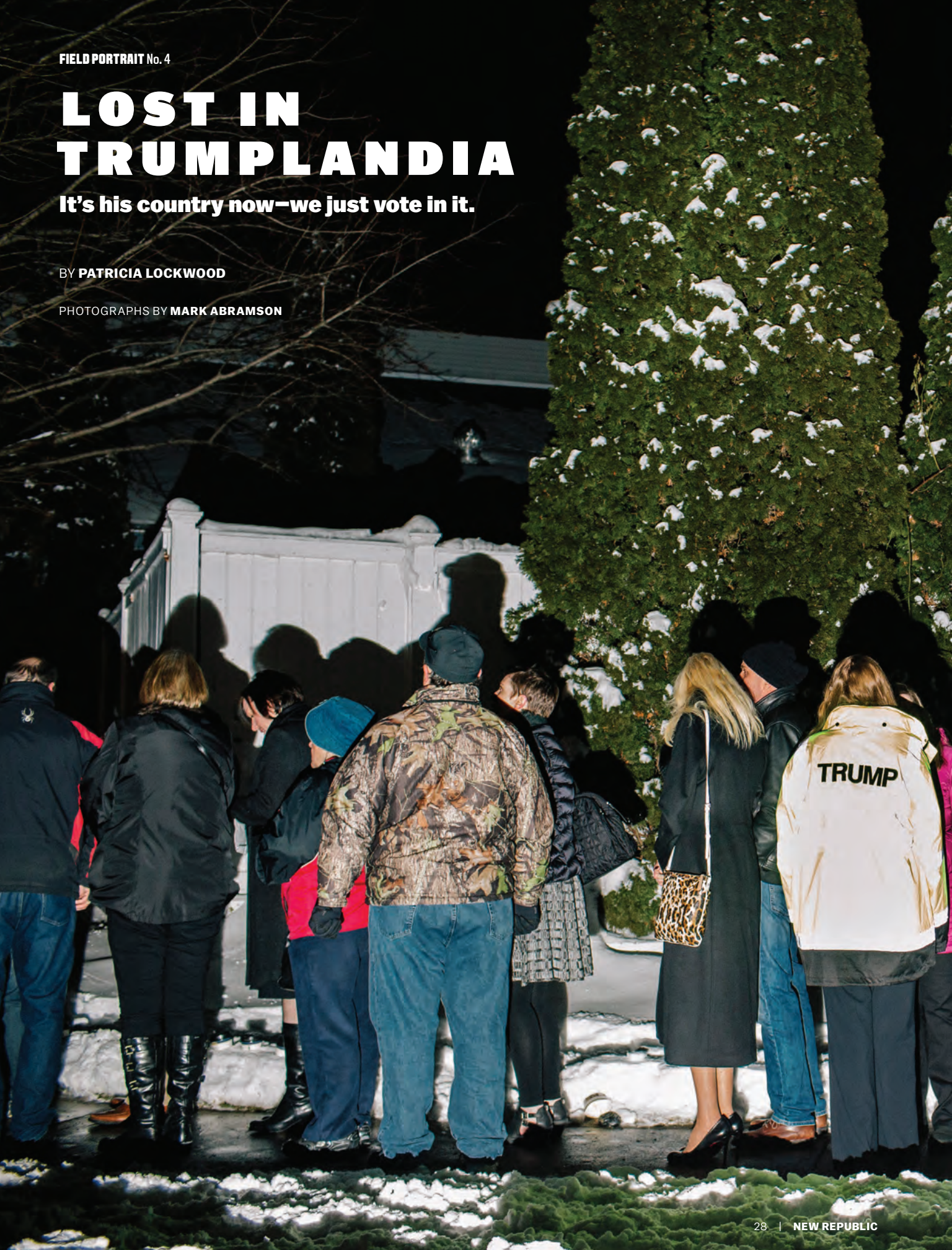
FIELD PORTRAIT No. 4

LOST IN TRUMPLANDIA

It's his country now—we just vote in it.

BY **PATRICIA LOCKWOOD**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MARK ABRAMSON**



Trump victory party, New Hampshire, February 2016. In the crowd: Rich, a former submariner (in camo); a great-grandmother named Diana Ross (Blossom hat); the author (pixie cut, no socks).

"THE FED OWNS COWS!" a protester bellowed at me as I moved blindly toward the doors of a Donald Trump rally. It was February 8, the eve of the New Hampshire Republican primary, and I was surrounded by whirling white. "Thank you," I said, shaking the protester's hand. "Good luck getting those cows away from them." Nice, I thought as I walked away. My interviewing skills were as sharp as swords from the mall. Discerning the true nature of the Trump phenomenon, one so baffling it's in the process of ruining some of the more rational minds of our generation, was probably going to be easy.

I had touched down in Manchester a few hours before, just as darkness began to fall together with snow. I entered the Verizon Wireless Arena, a 10,000-seat venue, to see a jumbotron projecting a photograph of Melania Trump in a bikini embracing a blow-up doll of Shamu. A hallucination? It was no longer possible to tell. The great crush around me seemed to be made up of two kinds of people: Trump supporters, and people there to goggle at Trump supporters. I flowed between both, listening. The second kind loved concession snacks. The first loved snacks and also hated Muslims.

Remembering my mission, I made my way to the media "pen"—a special zoo at the back of the arena for reporters, which was populated by a hectic collection of humans in black peacoats who seemed capable of watching C-SPAN without screaming—and took my place at a table among them, though I did not feel I belonged. I was there as a person who thought a great deal about farce, and where it turned into something else.

The pattern-finding sense goes wild in such a place. The corner of the eye takes over the whole. Language as I knew it had either ceased to exist, or else reverted to an automatic form. A phrase lit in a mouth was spoken, went looking for another. A different kind of thinking was happening—the kind you find around racetracks, casinos, the floor of the stock market. I had not thought politics was a physical pleasure. Feeling the air crackle around me, I knew it must be.

Trump was 15 minutes late. I sat, fidgeting, then stood. I tried leaning with both fists on the table in the manner of a news gorilla, but the posture didn't suit me. An investigative trip to the bathroom revealed an unlooked-for horror. "The largest turd I have ever seen in my life is in the women's restroom at the Donald Trump rally," I tweeted, then received multiple responses that suggested perhaps the turd was Trump himself. That's terrible. Terrible.

The word MONARCHS was printed across the top tier of seats, in honor of the local hockey franchise. Under its shadow, I watched who the crowd parted for, who they blocked, the nearly ineffable thickenings and thinnings among people. It was not anger I felt, exactly. It was volatility, a sort of revved and ready tribalism that waited and even wished to be disproved. All it would take to disprove it was the sudden and unexpected sight of an other.

From stage right, a man in a familiar gray sweater came toward me. My Uber driver, Babiker, slender, fortyish, with a slight Sudanese accent, walked past the media pen with a friend and gave me an incognito nod. He had picked me up earlier at the airport, and when I asked him to take me to the Trump rally, he glanced at me with careful assessment in the rearview, the flash of alarm in his eyes quickly painted over by diplomacy.

"*Not for that reason*," I hastened to explain, and he released a long breath. I inquired which candidate looked best to him, and he touched a professorial finger to his temple and told me he liked Bernie Sanders. "I like what he has to say." Still, he wanted all the facts at his disposal. "I might come check out the rally, when the lines are gone," he said, dropping me off at the curb. "I've never heard him speak."

I never suspected I'd be so happy to see any stranger and gave him and his friend a small wave. As soon as they were seated, they were immediately swarmed by interviewers tilting their microphones down, because, as Babiker and his friend would tell me later, they were the only black people there.

Thirty minutes. Occasionally people appeared at the podium to whip up the crowd, or to winkingly plead with us not to harm any protesters who might manifest. Still no sign of the man himself. The absence of his bombast created an actual vacuum at the center of the arena that Elton John rushed in to fill; his great 1970s hits played so repeatedly over the loudspeakers that "Tiny Dancer" began to trend on Twitter.

Finally, 45 minutes late, Trump appeared onstage, wearing a cobalt tie and with fresh comb marks in his hair. "It's a movement, folks," he told the 5,000 people who had turned out to hear him. Well, yes, if that turd in the bathroom has anything to say about it, it is.

A Trump impersonator came forth from the pit to meet his maker. "I hope you're making a lot of money," Trump told him, hugely pleased. "Melania, would you have married this guy?" he asked his wife, and I imagined Melania rearranging the diamond planes of her face to acknowledge receipt of the joke. She wore an outfit best described as Sensual Band-Aid and took small, ruthlessly edited steps. The last thing she ever tweeted was "Happy Fourth of July!" with a picture of an American flag, two weeks after her husband announced his candidacy for president of the United States.

Some of the darkest boos arose when he pointed to us in our journalistic zoo. "The Fed owns cows!" I almost volleyed back. Cheers arose when he mentioned Christmas, building a wall between the United States and Mexico, and the virtues of waterboarding. Trump appeared to wish something worse than waterboarding would be invented. He appeared to wish terror suspects would be placed under Niagara Falls and ordered to catch it with their mouths. The terms and exhortations blended together, until you thought, "Well, hell. Why not build a wall out of water on Christmas?" Solve all the problems at once. Did someone, somewhere heckle the idea of us building a wall out of water on Christmas, in order to keep America safe? Trump wagged his head. "The wall's gonna just get bigger when he has that attitude."

The protesters were halfhearted, perhaps because of the snowstorm. The lettering on their signs was illegible; their shouts never reached my ears. A young man was hustled out by security, but as far as I could tell it was just because he was wearing an exceedingly strange hat. Farce has not been able to

answer farce in the case of Trump. Nothing protesters do could be outrageous enough to meet the original spectacle. The ones who linger in the mind and narrative have been silent: a woman reading Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* behind the orange head; a woman standing in white hijab, "*Salam,* I come in peace," written on her paradisal turquoise T-shirt, until she was "escorted out" amid mounting cries.

It's us, was the undercurrent. *It's just us in here.* A handshake moved through the air as the speech walloped on, and then something more than a handshake. The more he spoke, the more Trump sounded like a rich man at dinner with a young woman whose passport is her face and her freshness, explaining to her the terms of the arrangement: that he would wear her on his arm, turning her toward the lights, that she would defer to him in public, that he would give her just enough of what he has to sustain her. I wrote in my notebook, "Trump is offering to be our sugar daddy? He wants to make America his trophy wife?" What he was really promising was freedom to move in the world the way he does, under his protection, according to his laws. Nobody owns me, he keeps telling us, not the lobbyists, not the Republican high-ups, not the Washington insiders. I'm not in anybody's pocket; hop in mine. His wives, you might have noticed, grow lovelier and lovelier. It is a practiced seduction; it has worked before. We ignore it at our peril.

The reporters around me entered a hive rhythm, interacting with the scene entirely through their laptop screens. I wondered what they were writing, what it was possible to write. Polemic has not worked, and neither has the I-know-that-you-know-that-I-know-that-we-know tone we've come to adopt in straight news stories. Trump presents a surface with no handle, a wall without a door. He is the opposite of nuclear physics but has the same effect: When you set out to think about his implications, your mind runs up against the problem of scope. "We either have a country or we don't," he told the crowd, as another news team dashed over and bent a microphone down to Babiker.

A flurry of movement in the pit: A woman in the crowd had called Ted Cruz a pussy. In retrospect, it's only surprising this hadn't happened sooner. It's surprising people don't congregate by the millions in sports stadiums and eat nachos as they call Cruz a pussy, while a life-size vagina mascot runs around the field with a megaphone. Trump pounced. He made an oh-my-goodness face. "She said, 'He's a pussy.' That's terrible. Terrible. What kind of people do I have here?"

My heart went into free fall. The laugh that went up even in the media pen was the reason he was there, the reason he was going to win New Hampshire without breaking a sweat—no one else in the race would have said that, and there is some apparent hunger among us to be represented by a man who has the seeming freedom to say anything, who moves with impunity in a world he as good as owns. "I love you all, I love you all," said the man who could say anything, before stepping

off the stage and vanishing into the white night. "You're special," he told us, to a wall of identical roars, where any sound of protest could no longer be distinguished."

"***ARRHAHAHA*, THAT'S VERY** funny," a journalist with broom-yellow hair and white lips told Babiker's friend, who was called Omar. "Will you say that again on camera?"

"I supported Trump before," Omar repeated, in a deadpan. "But now? I think he's a joke."

When it was over, Omar fanned his face and made a whooshing sound. "Was it OK? My heart was beating *so fast*."

"Let's get a drink," I proposed when Trump's speech was over, and the three of us made our way out together through the labyrinth of the arena. We scurried into the night, Babiker bracing me against his arm so I didn't slip on the slush, while Omar told me that he also emigrated from Sudan, five years ago, but hoped to move to Houston soon, where it's warmer.

"You got interviewed by three different news crews!" I exclaimed, settling myself in the backseat of Babiker's car.

"Yeah, four," Babiker said.

"They saw us and said, better talk to *them*," Omar said serenely.

"They were asking if you were Trump supporters."

"And I said *no*," said Babiker.

"And I said *yes*," Omar countered gleefully. "And then he told me that Trump said he will never allow any Muslims in the United States." He unfurled his voice into tremendous mock surprise like a flower, like a present. "And I said, 'Oh, he said *that*?' "

"OK, listen to me," he went on, with greater gravity. "I'm Muslim, OK? So when I see the news, ISIS, what they do, what they're doing right now, it's scary. I don't want to be a part of that. But they are not Islam."

Traffic from the rally choked the streets. Omar occasionally leaned over to speak intimately, authoritatively with Babiker in Arabic.

"We speak another language," he said. I asked him to teach me something, and he said, "I can teach you good or bad."

I asked him to teach me some Arabic cusses and he fell sideways laughing. No, no. A poetic, high-minded language, he reprimanded me. Trump would have to call Cruz something else, because there isn't even a word for "pussy" in it. But later he relented and told me it is *kus*.

At the bar, we were seated at a round table in the corner, where we watched the snow intersect through two dark windows. Babiker ordered a Bud Light and Omar ordered a Coke, because he was practicing.

"Do you think the American people like Trump?" Babiker asked me.

"It's hard to know, always, with Americans ... whether we think something's funny," I hesitated. "Are we doing this because we think it's hilarious? Are we just seeing how far we can push it?"

"After I dropped you off," Babiker said, "I got three kids who said they really like him, and two who said they were going for fun."

"Right. They wanted to see."

Earlier, in the car, I had struggled to explain how America has always been willing to dare, and double-dog dare, and triple-dog dare itself. America has always offered to drink anything for five dollars, no matter how disgusting.

"It might be a cowboy thing," I had said. A sort of, fuck *you*, and while I'm at it, fuck *me*!, kind of thing. I watched a million cowboy movies growing up, and in the ones where the cowboy doesn't ride off into the sunset, he usually dies. Sometimes he dies *while* riding off into the sunset, slumped over on a horse. There has to be a better way.

Halfway through his Coke, Omar asked if he could read my palm, a request that surprised me. He wiped his rounded features to clear them of expression, composed himself, and looked down with a movement like diving into a pool.

"There's no men here," he said, genuinely astonished. "I don't see any men in your hand at all. You are ...?"

"Oh," I said, startled at either my own transparency or at the fact that palm-reading was true. Not sure of the word, I told him *queer*. He returned to my palm. "No, there's no men here at all," he repeated. Good news for Hillary Clinton.

"Do you think the first human was a woman or a man?" Omar asked me later.

"I think the first person was probably a little lizard creature," I said.

"There's a light that came through, a single cell ... went *bang bang bang bang bang bang bang*," he said, going off like popcorn. "The same power that made the big bang gave us the mind. The god, invented by our mind. The devil, invented by our mind. When you do a good thing, you think of something bigger, and that's God. *Everything* in us. In our minds, brains. What is human is very strong, and serious."

Tuesday, 22 degrees. The primary goers were still casting their votes, and hundreds of us were waiting in a ragged, obedient line outside the Executive Court Banquet Facility, where Trump was expected to make an appearance at his official watch party. People inched together for warmth. A straw-haired woman in knockoff Louboutins and a minidress stood with her knees knocking next to the muffler of one of the news vans. The doors were supposed to open 15 minutes, half an hour, an hour ago, but we were told the Secret Service was sweeping the place for bombs.

At the far edge of the parking lot, the tall, top-heavy pines were hatched sideways with snow. Color fell from everything like fruit, until the black of the landscape was so black and the white so white that everything around me seemed proofed and printed. Small-time operations moved at the margins; a father and son offered us limited-edition Trump buttons. "Two hundred fifty of these were made, no more, no less," recited the son, staring, his front teeth bucked and his cheap suit boxy, stumbling a little over the words.

"Oh, Jesus," I said, and Rich, a man standing next to me in line, looked after him too, wincing. "What is he, maybe 13?"

Rich's hair curled out black-and-white from underneath his cap; he was wearing a camouflage coat that would keep him warm to 25-below, and his eyes were the frank, warm shade of Bénédictine. He had the wide, relaxed stance of someone who has long navigated physical systems with his body, with perhaps the hitch of old injury here or there. When a hawker came by with bumper stickers—DONALD TRUMP FOR VETS—Rich reached to take a few.

I was there as a person who thought a great deal about farce, and where it turned into something else.

"I don't have to prove it to you, do I?" he asked.

The hawker whirled around and shouted, with the sort of intensity that prefaces a murder, "*Whyyyyy* would you? I'm not Obama!"

Laughing, Rich passed me one, too, with a gesture so familiar I thought Navy—a nuke, maybe—and it turned out to be true: He was on submarines, just as my father was. The things submariners say and do can surprise in either direction: They are not above a gestural fuck you; old-school masculinity coexists with a tendency to cry and drink Rumple Minze. Rich doesn't drink any more, though, he told me—he liked it too much. He's also been a vegetarian for 15 years, because when his daughter was little she was afraid of the toilet, afraid of something coming up out of it, "and so I said to her, well, I'll give up something I like."

I couldn't see how this connected, but, "Please, may I write that down?" I asked. And then the jig was up: I was there to write about it.

"Why Trump?" I asked him, too cold to be anything less than direct.

Rich weighed the question, then told me he was tired of the way things were; he wanted something different. "He's the only one who's saying what people are thinking." Rich was responsive to physical and verbal charisma, which he said Obama has, which George W. Bush and Bill Clinton had—and which Trump has, in abundance; he is neither beautiful nor a beautiful speaker, but he always looks and sounds exactly like himself. His reality show was successful because it confirmed a condition we always suspected: We see and hear him perpetually on television.

A great-grandmother barely five feet tall, with dyed dark ringlets and a half moon of melted mascara under each eye, sidled up alongside us as if she belonged there. She was wearing a denim Blossom hat she occasionally adjusted with

great care. She was born Diana Ross ("You'll never believe it! Wrong color, *and* I can't sing!") but had given up this glamorous last name after marrying. If you woke from a hundred-year sleep and chatted with Diana for five minutes, you would come away with an excellent gloss of current conservative preoccupations and catchphrases.

"I had a daughter said she was voting for Hillary. Hitlery, I call her Hitlery." Then, gathering her breath forcefully, she nearly screamed: "*The emails*!"

Diana swooped from one conspiracy theory to the next on the patriotic wings of an eagle. "Did you hear about Marco Rubio maybe having a gay thing in his younger days? They got a picture of him in a gay lake, you know, full of gay guys."

I suppressed an urge to grip her hand and ask, *Where is this gay lake, Diana Ross?*

"You can only see the back of his head," she continued. "So they don't know if it was him. I don't know if it's true!"

Despite the interminable, freezing wait, no one considered leaving, and there wasn't a breath of blame for the presumptive victor at that victory party. It was the principle of the thing, we agreed. We were doing it to say we did it.

The hawkers continued like stars in their courses; their uniform affect was that of hot dog vendors with meth psychosis. One held up a T-shirt where Trump had been pictorially reimagined as Dirty Harry, hollering, "Go ahead, ISIS make my *daaaaaaay*!" The hawker pointed to his colostomy bag and told us he could be "living it up" on $800 a month, except he never applied for disability.

"Good for you!" screamed a man in line, who presumably did not have a colostomy bag.

"Have you seen the other thing on YouTube," Diana asked, "about how Michelle Obama used to be a man? Oh," she said, gesturing to her pecs and trapezoids, "It shows the shoulders and everything. Then again, African women are big. You know, I don't know if it's true!"

Two and a half hours, and ahead of us we felt a flicker of movement. The line became liquid, solid, liquid. "I say what I think! You know, it gets easier as you get older," Diana reassured me, before trotting through the metal detector so enthusiastically she set it beeping. Rich wondered out loud if he was going to get frisked by security, like he always did at the airport.

"I get profiled," he shrugged. "I'm half Middle Eastern. When I grow the beard, I get it." Good thing, he added dryly, that he left his knife in the car.

As soon as they let us in, everyone flooded toward the bar, not so much because they were in the mood to party, but because it seemed like the most efficient way to get warm. I spotted Mark, a Man in Aerospace who was a few spots ahead of me in the line outside, and he ordered me a Grey Goose. He's a vodka snob, he told me conspiratorially, because he spent time in the Ukraine, and people there know how to drink. He had met his wife in Kiev, at a Christmas party when she was a teenager, and brought her back home with him.

We had just commenced to thaw when the primary results began to blare red-white-and-blue from the flatscreen TVs ranged around the room: Trump had won in a landslide. No surprise. We all expected it, but still the people tilted their heads up to the ceiling and released bright streamers and balloons of sound.

Mark had a trim, minnowish narrowness that suggested he moved swiftly, easily, and silvery through the channels of business. We scanned the crowd, speculating on who might be a plant, reporter, or infiltrator. "He's not a Trump supporter. That one is here ironically," I said, pointing to a young bearded man dressed as Uncle Sam.

"Is he?" Mark asked, interested, clearly unable to read my generation's comic signifiers.

"Oh, yes," I said, blushing. "The Bubba Gump Shrimp Company hat is how you can tell."

No wonder they believe millennials have fatally diverged from their path. How would I explain to someone like Mark the legions of teenagers who spend a significant portion of their free time tweeting "fuck me daddy" at Barack Obama and the pope?

The room was split between people already sitting atop their gold dragon hoards and those treating the very promise as riches, held in the hand, waiting only for the fingers to close over it. The atmosphere was bizarrely, insistently sexual. I had seen this even outside, as the cut-rate Ivana in the minidress nibbled the ear of her wind-reddened husband and he leaned back to nuzzle her with his mustache, both made insatiably horny by Trump's incipient victory. Inside, small dominations and submissions ran through the crowd, and one could easily imagine an after-hours version of that party where half of us were carrying whips, the other half were wearing collars, and the Bubba Gump Shrimp guy was on all fours dressed as a pony. In short, it was difficult to be there without imagining Donald Trump roaring "Wow—yes—wonderful, Melania" at exactly the same pitch and volume as he had roared at the rally "They're chopping people's heads off in the Middle East!"

When I found Rich again in the middle of the crowd, he hugged me. "A lot of people would describe this as a disaster," I ventured. "We waited in the freezing cold for two hours, now another two hours in here, and he'll probably only come out for a couple of minutes. What would he have to do to upset or disappoint you?"

"He would have to get up there and say, 'Screw the vets.' " Trump, Rich believes, is the only candidate making any credible promises about veterans. "These guys get home and there's nothing here for them. A lot of them can't even go into law enforcement because of what they've been through."

I nodded neutrally. My brother is a staff sergeant in the Marines, and since returning home he's worked in hazmat situations, cleaning up homes of hoarders and the dead, at a hardware store, and most recently for a train company that laid him off a week before Christmas—and he's doing well compared to others in his company who are dying of drink and suicide.

We took turns saying, "I don't know, I don't know the answer." Rich now works for a power company, the name of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DonaldjTrump.com

which is so locally reviled that people yell at him when he reveals it. "I'm about to start telling them I work at Wendy's," he said.

"You know, I'm kind of a Ted Cruz guy," Mark finally confessed, staring soulfully into his fifth Sam Adams Seasonal.

"Is he electable?" I demanded, my veins flooding with three sips of Grey Goose. "Is Ted Cruz *electable*?"

"Why wouldn't he be electable?" Mark asked.

"Because he looks like he was grown from fetal pig tissue in a cowboy boot," I hissed. Blood was coming out of my eyes, blood was coming out of my—wherever. I pressed my drink against my lower lip to prevent myself from releasing any more descriptions of the heinous pig-boot Ted.

I decided to propose a toast. "What do the Ukrainians say?" I asked Mark. He raised his glass and waited for our silence.

"From each according to their ability, to each according to their need!"

And so it happened that on the same night Bernie Sanders was delivering his victory speech in a jam-packed room in Concord, we raised our plastic glasses in a toast made famous by Karl Marx.

A curious fact you may have heard elsewhere: The most die-hard Trump fanatics I encountered did not hate Sanders in the slightest. Among that crowd, it appeared to be because they had college-aged daughters, and many of their daughters like Bernie; they like what he has to say. "They think he's gonna give them free college," the fathers said, rolling their eyes—though free college might be nice.

The theme of daughters had come up again and again. The night before, Omar told me his daughter was eight years old, "and she is so, so sweet," he said, placing a hand against his heart, "but I do not want her to be that way. I want her to be tougher." I thought how Hillary had rebounded in 2008 after she lost Iowa and cried on TV. At our watch party, they booed through the entirety of her white-turtlenecked concession speech, shouted "liar," told me they couldn't stand the sound of her voice. I wondered what it would look like for a man to vote in his daughter's best interest, what it would mean for the country if he did.

I heard a roar go up, *the* roar. I snatched my phone out of my pocket and propped my elbow high on Rich's shoulder so I could record Trump's victory speech with a steady hand. Rich bore this patiently, in the manner of a Saint Bernard who occasionally permits the household baby to ride it. The crowd swelled toward the podium and I stood on tiptoe, peering between heads and red hats and foam fingers to see.

I expected to feel his presence oppressively, but instead, in that small space, I registered him as being barely there—an empty vacuum into which the winds of whiteness, maleness, money, bigotry, and big talk were constantly rushing. Rather than being drawn toward a vortex of charisma, I found myself floating away from Trump entirely, preferring to apply my mind to anything else in the room—toward the people around me, who told me unequivocally that he speaks for them.

I focused on Melania's face, poised like an apple on the tip of a sword. It did not move; its stillness was preparatory to a performance that never came. She was wearing a black dress with a silver buckle at the center of it, perhaps chosen to recall a pilgrim's shoe. She was born Melanija Knavs in Slovenia, and now she stood at Trump's right hand, and hers was the head I wanted to be inside, even more than Ivanka's. Ivanka, the favored daughter, showered with gold from above, stood at his left hand. She was so, so pregnant—two weeks from giving birth, her proud father told the crowd at the rally the night before. She had been at the polls all day shaking hands. Her face was not quite as polished as her stepmother's; something occasionally fought in it, and from time to time she nearly mouthed a talking point along with her father, then gave a slight nod of relief when he had delivered it. But still she stood statuesque next to him, matched by Melania on the other side, so the two women resembled the twin female sphinxes in *The NeverEnding Story*, in the service of a power I could not quite identify.

"I'm so happy," said a young man behind me, sweating waxily like a farmer's cheese, the corners of his smile reaching toward his ears. "So happy right now," just a split-second before Trump literally told the crowd, "I am going to make you *so happy*," and there it was again, the kind of sentence you never hear in politics, the sort of thing you say to a woman when you are promising her everything—a promise whose falseness inheres in it, but perhaps you are so grateful to hear it at all.

I turned to look at Mark, who brought back his 18-year-old bride from Kiev. "My wife had only one pair of shoes, and they didn't fit," he had said to me earlier, vehement. "She had only one sweater for three years." But look, his face told me, what I have given her now. A whole country, an entire new life, a gift that was mine to give.

The center of everyone's attention, who started his speech the color of a sweet potato soufflé, had progressed to the unnatural, hectoring scarlet of a stick of sidewalk chalk. I found myself in the perplexing position of wanting to write a thousand words about the shape of his lips. Trump held up a theatrical thumb and hurried offstage, with the itching haste of a germophobe who has found himself in a close crowd of the contagious. Fifteen minutes and it was over. That was such a nothing, I think. But when I catch the speech again later, on TV, every smallest movement reads—as if he hadn't been speaking to us at all, but to those cameras that still followed him, in his mind and ours.

I moved toward the doors, and Rich trailed me with his hands in his pockets, telling me if my Uber driver were busy, he could take me home. "I'm safe," he assured me simply.

As we walked past the parked vans, we were stopped by another news crew, and Rich repeated to the bright lights that Trump is saying what most of us are thinking, that people are tired of career politicians and want something different, something new. He strode ahead of me toward the car, with that barely perceptible hint of ancient injury somewhere in his bearing, and I thought of the boy inside dressed up as Uncle Sam and felt suddenly ashamed: Votes, even ones incomprehensible to us, rise out of real lives, out of the distance between what we have and what we hope for ourselves.

Rich drove me the winding way back through the snow, occasionally slipping toward the middle of the road. He had turned a little melancholy, as men sometimes do at the end of the night, at the tail end of long conversations where you have asked them to tell you everything about themselves. A row of red hearts flashed; his daughter was texting him. He called her and they talked for a moment in a sweet private language, not baby talk, but in the same family, promising that he was on his way.

The next morning, softened snow slid off the roofs of the houses, each of which came to a neat point like a pencil. When Babiker arrived to bring me to the airport, Omar was sitting next to him in the front, smiling at my surprise. "I missed you yesterday!" he told me. "I cried for two hours!"

They wanted to know about the watch party. Was it crazy people? "Sort of," I said, wishing to be honest. "I mean, I was there, too. At one point I started insulting the wigs of the Founding Fathers."

"I'm sorry I missed your text," Babiker said. "I was watching the results. I was having drinks. I watched Trump's speech, and I don't think he knows how to think," he added, pointing to his temple.

What Trump was really promising was freedom to move in the world the way he does, under his protection, according to his laws.

"No, he just says things," I mused, remembering Omar telling me in that darkened bar that what separates us from the animals is the tongue, remembering Trump's voice before that telling us we cannot allow animals into our country.

"Come back again," Babiker said as he dropped me off, a look in his eye like lights on a hill. His face, caught up and expectant, declared him a full fevered participant in the strangest election season America has seen since anyone can remember, one in which everything might really be at stake, though of course we say that every time—as a mindless chant, a pinch of salt, a superstition to ward off the day it will be true. "We will be here. Come back for the election, come back and we will take you anywhere."

TRUMP THE DISRUPTER

Is America's democratic system equal to the challenge of an authoritarian president?

BY **BRIAN BEUTLER**

The breakdown of democracy in Honduras seven years ago materialized like a bankruptcy—slowly at first, then all at once. Honduras's democracy was only a quarter of a century old in 2005 when it elected Manuel Zelaya, the son of a wealthy businessman, as the country's seventh president. When Zelaya's agenda drifted in a populist direction, he lost favor among the ruling class and the legislature turned against him. Echoing an impasse now uncomfortably familiar to Americans, the Honduran Congress rejected Zelaya's Supreme Court nominees. Meanwhile, the country's working class rallied to his side.

In a parliamentary democracy, a figure like Zelaya would have been replaced by a prime minister who enjoyed the support of a majority of the legislature. But Honduras's system of government is organized much more like our own than those of countries like England and Israel, where legislative and executive arms of the government are interwoven. Nearing the end of his constitutionally limited four-year term, Zelaya organized a referendum to test the public's appetite for changing the constitution to allow him to run for reelection. Sensing a power grab and fearing a popular groundswell, the other branches of government balked, claiming Zelaya lacked the authority to conduct such a survey and demanding that he desist. Zelaya pressed ahead. "We will not obey the Supreme Court," he told throngs of Hondurans who'd gathered outside his offices to support him. "The court, which only imparts justice for the powerful, the rich, and the bankers, only causes problems for democracy."

Zelaya ordered the military to fulfill its obligation to assist in administering public elections. When the military refused, the president fired the head of the armed forces, General Romeo Vásquez Velásquez. "We are soldiers," Vásquez said. "We have to comply with our responsibilities." Though the Supreme Court ordered Vásquez reinstated, Zelaya continued resisting the legislature and the Court until eventually, by secret order of the judiciary, he was placed under military arrest, allowing the president of the National Congress to serve out the remainder of Zelaya's term.

Though Honduran police, military forces, and their supporters killed 20 people along the way, according to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, this disorderly process went about as smoothly as a coup can go. In late 2009, Honduras elected a new president and a semblance of order was restored—a better outcome than what has befallen other presidential democracies modeled after the world's longest surviving one.

In the United States, our hope is that a similar standoff will never arise—or that it would be resolved through existing legal and constitutional processes before governing ceased and violence erupted. But we've never had a serious aspirant to the presidency blithely promise to trespass constitutional limits

if confronted with resistance from his or her power-sharing counterparts. Not, that is, until Donald Trump came along.

It's small wonder that Trump's liberal and conservative critics alike envision a Trump presidency as an endless spectacle of recklessness and destruction. Trump has promised trade wars. He's made the mass expulsion of a nation's worth of immigrants a central plank of his campaign platform. He's pledged to re-embrace torture and murder as sanctioned anti-terrorism tools and said he would extend them extralegally to the families of suspected terrorists.

It is uncomfortably easy to imagine Trump issuing lawless orders that military leaders are unwilling to execute. It is just as easy to imagine Trump firing generals and civilian officials who resist him, and replacing them with apparatchiks. It is *almost* as easy to imagine a sclerotic Congress finding itself unable to respond with appropriate urgency.

Trump has certainly displayed authoritarian tendencies. Confronted late last year with the fact that Vladimir Putin kills journalists who challenge his power, Trump praised the Russian president as "a leader" who (by contrast to President Obama) is "running his country." To the objection that killing journalists is not the American way, Trump summoned his inner wiseguy—sprinkling a small dash of Michael Corleone ("Who's being naïve, Kay?") over his own ribald political persona ("Someone's doing the raping!"): "I think that our country does plenty of killing, too," he said.

Trump has made it clear he'd consider himself superior to Congress. Hours before polls closed on March 1—better known to political junkies as Super Tuesday—House Speaker Paul Ryan, the most widely respected elected official in the conservative movement, set aside his official responsibilities to admonish Trump for playing coy with his appeal among white supremacists. "If a person wants to be the nominee of the Republican Party, there can be no evasion," said a visibly uncomfortable Ryan, frustrated in his attempt to project seriousness by his boyish inflection and fidgeting. "They must reject any group or cause that is built on bigotry."

Ryan's reprimand became a harbinger of the kind of unprecedented crisis a determined demagogue might visit on our political system. That night, after winning seven state primaries and finding himself a couple of coin flips from the White House, Trump channeled his inner wiseguy again in responding to the Speaker. "Look," Trump said, barely concealing his exasperation, "I don't want to waste a lot of time. … Paul Ryan, I don't know him well, but I'm sure I'm going to get along great with him. And if I don't, he's going to have to pay a big price, OK? OK."

In one sense, this was vintage Trump, prefacing intimidation and bullying with perfunctory pleasantries. ("I like him, I get along with him very well," he once said of rival candidate Ben Carson, before comparing him to a child molester.) In another, bleaker sense, it was a man aspiring to run our government heedlessly threatening the person responsible for funding it. It was a candidate for president of the United States hectoring the person who controls impeachment proceedings—long before they'd ever have to govern together.

This is the stuff of constitutional nightmares. The U.S. system hasn't endured the level of stress that Trump's campaign has threatened to impose upon it since the civil rights era, or perhaps the Civil War. It's no surprise that huge swaths of both the left and right are deeply worried about the stability of American democracy with Trump at its helm.

But there are at least two ways that a Trump presidency could unfold, and they bear almost no resemblance to one another. An unrestrained, authoritarian Trump who attempted to bring Putinism to the United States could precipitate a chaotic and potentially violent constitutional crisis. By contrast, if he governs with more deference to constitutional checks and balances than he's shown so far, it's possible to envision Trump's presidency—thanks to his departures from Republican orthodoxy—easing some of the gridlock that has gripped our political system. To the extent Trump's candidacy holds out any promise for Democrats, it's that his success could spark a cleansing fire in the other party. The risk, of course, is that the conflagration might spread.

IF TRUMP WERE elected and governed as he's campaigned, would countervailing forces be able to contain him? Though there are good reasons to think they would, the nightmare visions do not appear to liberals and conservatives out of irrational panic. They stem from fundamentally sound doubts about the nature and health of our political system.

The coup in Honduras, though relatively bloodless, epitomized a form of disequilibrium—inherent to divided governments like our own—that has frequently given way to juntas and oppression in less-developed democracies. The theoretician who diagnosed this structural instability as a primary source of political unrest in Latin America was Juan Linz, a Yale political scientist whose famed 1990 essay, "The Perils of Presidentialism," has enjoyed a renaissance in recent years as a kind of Book of Revelation for a debased American democracy.

Linz passed away on October 1, 2013—in a poignant irony, amid a shutdown of the U.S. government. His ideas had been coming into vogue among American political elites, who were seeing the systemic dangers Linz had identified begin to play out in the legislative gridlock and recurring crises inflicted on the country by uncompromising congressional Republicans.

Parliamentary democracy is often tumultuous, but like a slippery fault system, the turmoil tends to release pent-up tension gradually, in regular small bursts, rather than catastrophically, all of a sudden. To become prime minister, a politician needs to climb the ranks through the system—a process that tends to weed out reactionaries and radicals. To remain in power, a prime minister needs to nurture the respect of the coalition that promoted her or him in the first place. Should the parliament lose confidence in the prime minister, it selects another, or parliament is dissolved and the country holds a general election.

Presidential systems impose no similarly moderating influences on ambitious demagogues. Linz recognized that by forcing two different, popularly elected branches of

government to share power—like twin princes fighting for the throne—presidential systems give rise to legitimation crises almost by design. A few years before Linz died, this observation was borne out dramatically by the consecutive U.S. elections of 2008 and 2010, when voters installed a Democratic president by a landslide, then a Republican House of Representatives by another landslide. The question of which branch of the government was the more legitimate voice of the people pitted Congress and the White House against each other in dangerous brinkmanship. Within months of the 2010 midterms, the government nearly ceased functioning twice, the second time amid a threat by the GOP majority to undermine the supposedly inviolable validity of U.S. debt.

That crisis, which courted global economic calamity, was resolved at the last minute when President Obama largely acceded to House Speaker John Boehner's demands. But the episode raised an alarming question: What happens when we have a president who refuses to be so accommodating?

In the years since, we've experienced several more symptoms of our perilous presidentialism, including the GOP's embrace of a kind of nullification via procedural extremism. By filibustering key nominees, the party temporarily crippled regulatory agencies and briefly commandeered the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, the nation's second-most powerful court, by blocking three Obama picks in an attempt to preserve its conservative tilt.

The Obama era has been, in many ways, a story of governing institutions devolving into a Hobbesian state of nature, with raw power deployed by both Congress and the president to alter and restore fragile balances between minority and majority parties, houses of Congress, and branches of government. Congress now gleefully neglects its prerogative to modify outdated or ill-devised laws, leaving it to the president to govern through the use of legally dubious administrative kludges. When the news of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's death broke in February, astute political observers knew the Republican Senate would never allow Obama to fill the vacancy and flip the balance of the Court from right to left. One hour later, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell confirmed this cynical intuition: "This vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president."

When Linz wrote his essay, he didn't foresee that these kinds of standoffs, which had spelled doom for other presidential systems, would arise here. In Linz's original telling, the fact that the United States had managed to exempt itself from constitutional crisis for over a century was an odd but enduring idiosyncrasy. Like Einstein concocting the theory of anti-gravity to rescue his more general theory from predicting the collapse of a universe that everyone assumed to be static, Linz needed to account for the fact the United States had escaped the dim fate his theory prescribed. He chalked it up, in part, to a quirk in our system: We'd been saved from such crises, he said, by "the uniquely diffuse character of American political parties."

That was 26 years ago, written as President George H.W. Bush was partnering with Democrats to increase taxes—a time when conservative Southern Democrats were still serving in Congress alongside members of both parties who had, not long before, driven a corrupt president from office without incident. Our system had spat out President Richard Nixon as soon as it recognized the toxin. Countries like Honduras, Chile, or Brazil might be vulnerable to the meddling of power-mad demagogues and dictators, but in the United States of 1990, that threat seemed remote.

In the two decades between the publication of "The Perils of Presidentialism" and Linz's passing, Republicans and Democrats completed their evolutions into ideologically disciplined parties, with Democrats drifting slowly but steadily leftward and Republicans making a mad dash to the right. As Linz's theory predicted, polarization has gridlocked our system, making it more prone to constitutional crises than it has been in generations.

In the midst of these Obama-era shocks, Linz reflected on his notion of American exceptionalism. "I initially thought the United States was escaping the problem, because of the lack of discipline in the parties, and the relatively good relationships among the legislators," he said in a 2013 interview with *The Washington Post*. "Obviously things have been changing. … I think there's still enough political wisdom in this country to avoid it, but obviously in many countries in Latin America and other parts of the world a crisis like the debt ceiling would easily lead to a military coup."

IT IS NO GREAT stretch to interpret Trump's rise as a phenomenon driven by disgruntled masses abandoning democracy in favor of autocracy—as part of the natural progression of Linzian decay. But it's also possible that American democracy really is unusually resistant to systemic breakdown and can endure even the unprecedented challenges that Trump could pose. Maybe, despite the potential for crisis that's baked into our way of governing, we can relieve these systemic tensions in other ways: through party realignments, through sheer institutional robustness, or through popular insistence that we uphold our constitutional traditions. In that more optimistic light, Trump looks less like doom for the republic than doom for the Republican Party.

If Trump were to govern with a more even keel than he's led us to expect, his presidency could conceivably serve as a weird remedy to the constitutional problems we're already experiencing—and end up being powerful evidence of the political anti-gravity that keeps our democracy from succumbing to ideological polarization.

The bleakest plausible capstones to a Trump presidency are so very bleak because he has proven to be a shameless and unpredictable candidate for the office. But it's those same qualities that have the potential to flatten American polarization by turning the political system on its side. If Trump were to build his legacy of "greatness" through compromise (or, rather, "deal-making") instead of a will to power, he could reverse America's drift toward partisan polarization, and might even herald a return to the kind of

undisciplined, ideologically mixed parties that Linz saw as critical to our system's durability.

If Trump proved willing to operate according to custom, his heterodoxy—combined with his zeal for negotiation and personal triumph—might function as a turndown service for several strange bedfellows. Trump's critique of "free trade" could unite liberal and conservative trade skeptics. While his anti-immigration extremism might upend the bipartisan consensus for comprehensive reform, Trump would also force opportunistic, pro-corporate immigration supporters on the right to choose sides between the GOP's nativist faction and liberal humanitarians—and would, thus, drive an even larger share of the American professional class into the Democratic Party, tilting it away from liberal orthodoxy.

Because Trump has consistently promised his base of older voters to leave Social Security and Medicare untouched, his presidency could also shatter the unified conservative opposition to the New Deal consensus. And if there is a third way between the Republican Party's reflexive hatred of the Affordable Care Act and the popular view that every American should have access to health care, Trump is the only candidate in either party likely to forge it. No other figure would have the clout or the flexibility to preserve a liberal health-coverage guarantee while reshaping our insurance system dramatically enough that Republicans could claim to have repealed and replaced Obamacare. This would create political détente on an issue that has divided the parties for decades.

Even if Trump behaved as erratically in office as he has on the campaign trail, he still might inspire new coalition-building in Congress—just of a different sort. Imagine if the next president were another Republican like George W. Bush and wanted to trample civil liberties, torture suspected terrorists, and create new theaters of war with sketchy funding and authorization. A Republican Congress would do nothing but enable him—just as it did Bush.

By contrast, if President Trump were to go rogue in all the ways he's suggested, he would find himself tangled in a vast net of constitutional resistance. Republicans would not be so deferential to an anti-establishment figure like Trump if, after taking over their party, he set about destroying its ideological underpinnings—propping up the welfare state, for instance, and alienating the business class with protectionist trade and restrictive immigration policies. Impeachment is our Constitution's ultimate remedy—one the Hondurans neglected to write into theirs before the coup—but the founding document also gives Congress control of the national treasury. If Trump bowled over constitutional barriers, a bipartisan coalition of Democrats and Republican Trump rejectionists could deauthorize or defund different facets of his agenda—such as, for instance, a campaign of mass expulsion of unauthorized immigrants. Courts would constrain him as well. Lacking the power to co-opt legislative leaders and judges, Trump would have to adapt or die.

This is one reason why, for all the understandable alarm about the twilight of the republic, the Trump saga has unfolded as the story of a party, rather than a nation, on the brink of collapse. If Trump becomes president, it will either be by building a new coalition for the GOP or by radically altering the balance of factional power in the existing one. Once the election was behind him, he would turn from a campaign world dominated by rhetoric and strategy—and popular entertainment—to governing, a realm in which norms and laws have much greater conforming power.

Trump's success could spark a cleansing fire in the GOP. The risk is that the conflagration might spread.

Trump's ability to break the Republican Party in half is playing out before our eyes, as is his power to stir up ugly forces in the body politic. His desire to lay the Constitution to waste will only be tested if he's sworn into office next January.

The Republicans most committed to stopping Trump from being elected are, generally speaking, the same folks who have convinced themselves that everything about their party was just fine until Trump came along. They are wrong about this, but their very wrongness is what gives me hope that Linz may have been right, after all, about America's peculiar resistance to constitutional crisis.

My suspicion is that Trump is mostly a symptom of rot at the nexus of movement conservatism and Republican politics—not, by and large, of some broader national decadence. While the American government might not be entirely immune to the perils of presidentialism, it may well be riddled through with enough complexity and redundancy to make realignment more likely than collapse. The lesson of Trump's candidacy—and, perhaps, his presidency—is not, then, that a corrupted party like the GOP will eventually take the country down with it, but that it will eventually eat itself alive and be replaced with something altogether more wieldy.

George W. Bush, who so successfully pushed past the limits of presidential powers, wasn't unbound by norms and checks in a vacuum. He benefited from a deeply complicit Congress and a conservative judiciary. Any of the non-Trump Republican candidates in this cycle would be given the same latitude if elected. The real danger to our system may not be that disrupters like Trump will emerge and demolish existing political coalitions, but that they won't. Without disruption, our parties will be free to stray further down their paths of polarization—until the kinds of crises that defined the past seven years confront leaders who are less responsible than Obama or more reckless than Boehner, and our Linzian fate overtakes us.

Republic of Fear

Donald Trump has already transformed American culture. Even if he loses the election, Trumpism is here to stay.

BY **JEET HEER**

LATE IN FEBRUARY, a curious incident happened at a basketball game between two high schools just outside Des Moines—one mostly white, the other mostly Hispanic—where white students hurled the phrase "Trump, Trump, Trump!" at their opponents. Not long after, something similar happened in Indiana at another basketball game: Students from the predominately white Andrean High School in Merrillville, while holding aloft a big cutout of Trump's head, shouted "Build a wall! Build a wall!" at Bishop Noll Institute's predominantly Hispanic players and fans. The taunted students responded by yelling back: "You're a racist!" Luckily, neither of these episodes escalated into physical violence. But they testified to the way Trumpism is rippling out across society, far beyond the political arena—and being felt even in such banal, ordinary settings as high school hoops contests.

From the moment he stepped off the Trump Tower escalator last June, and in his campaign announcement speech called Mexican immigrants criminals and rapists, Donald Trump's presidential run has been an exercise in white nationalism. The questions that have obsessed political pundits since that moment—Can he win? Will he cause a crack-up in the Republican Party? What happens if there's a brokered convention and the establishment tries to take the nomination away from him?—are important, of course. But they're far too narrow. What really needs to be asked is this: How is Donald Trump changing America? Not how he *will* change the country if he lands in the White House, but how he's *already* changing it. Because Trump, even before he secures the Republican nomination—and even if he never wins the presidency—has transformed America as much as any political figure of our era. It's a transformation that transcends politics and bleeds deeply into our culture.

Fear is the very essence of Trumpism. Political scientists have found that his most ardent supporters are white people with authoritarian tendencies who are afraid of the way the country is changing—economically, culturally, and demographically. He wins them over by posing as the strongman who is tough enough to fight back against the feared agents of change, whether they're Mexican or Muslim immigrants, Black Lives Matter protesters, or "politically correct" liberals who say "happy holidays." But Trump hasn't simply pandered to such fears, as Republican candidates have since Richard Nixon first cooked up the "Southern strategy." He is a demagogue who's turning white people's anxieties into

PHOTOGRAPH BY **JOSHUA LOTT**

AFP/GETTY

anger for political advantage. Trump isn't simply reflecting fear; he's conjuring it—both among his followers and among those he demonizes.

The most visible example of the Trump effect has been the well-documented abuse and violence directed at protesters (and sometimes reporters) at his campaign rallies. This behavior isn't the rowdy spillover of hard-fought politics, as Trump likes to paint it, but a direct result of the candidate's own encouragement. At a February 1 event in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Trump told the crowd, "If you see somebody getting ready to throw a tomato, knock the crap out of 'em, would you? Seriously. OK? Just knock the hell—I promise you, I will pay for the legal fees. I promise. I promise."

Trump's "promise" has become a sanction for racial taunting and beatings that have become a ritualistic part of his campaign. On March 9 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, TV cameras caught a white 78-year-old Trump supporter named John McGraw sucker-punching a 26-year-old protester, Rakeem Jones. The following day, when CNN's Jake Tapper asked him about the incident, Trump responded thusly: "You're mentioning one case—which I haven't seen, I heard about it—which I don't like. But when they see what's going on in this country, they have anger that's unbelievable. They have anger. They love this country. They don't like seeing bad trade deals, they don't like seeing higher taxes, they don't like seeing a loss of their jobs where our jobs have just been devastated. And I know—I mean, I see it. There is some anger. There's also great love for the country. It's a beautiful thing in many respects. But I certainly do not condone that at all, Jake."

Trump's words are worth parsing because this is how he has responded, over and over, to his followers' disturbing, sometimes criminal behavior: First, there's an initial silence that implies sympathy with the racist aggressors, followed by praise of his supporters for their passion and love of country, and then, grudgingly, there's a pro forma renunciation of violence. When he's not blaming the protesters for whatever happens to them, Trump casts the violence as a result of nothing but legitimate economic grievances and frustrated patriotism, feelings that are not only justified but even commendable: "a beautiful thing."

DONALD TRUMP IS a big bully who is enabling many little bullies. His campaign for president has made white Americans more comfortable with their bigotry, giving them permission to be more vocal and confident in expressing their prejudices, resentments, and hatreds. This is exemplified by the fact that the word "Trump" has become a taunt used to humiliate or intimidate—a sort of verbal cudgel. On March 12, Khondoker Usama, a Muslim student at Wichita State University, reported that he and a Hispanic friend had been accosted at a convenience store by a man yelling, "Trump, Trump, Trump," and "Brown trash, go home. Trump will win." Similar sentiments were expressed last August, when a Hispanic homeless man in Boston was beaten up by two white men who yelled, according to the police, "Donald Trump was right," and "All these illegals need to be deported."

Trump was initially, characteristically, hesitant to comment on the hate crime in Boston that was committed in his name. "I haven't heard about that. It would be a shame, but I haven't heard about that," Trump said. "I will say that people who are following me are very passionate. They love this country, they want this country to be great again." After repeated challenges by the press, Trump finally tweeted: "Boston incident is terrible. We need energy and passion, but we must treat each other with respect. I would never condone violence."

But Trump is doing more than condone violence; he's drawing it forth. And while much has been written about the grievances, legitimate or otherwise, of his white working-class followers, less has been said about what it's like to live in Trump's America if he's cast you as someone to fear.

Along with Latinos, Muslim Americans have borne the brunt of Trump's attacks. Some are starting to wonder whether they have a future in America. "A lot of times, I question whether the U.S. is still going to accept me as an American who happens to be a Muslim. I didn't have that question after September 11. I have this question now," Ali Zakaria, a litigator in Houston told the *Toronto Star* in February. "From a psychological point of view, that's a big change."

That understandable anxiety is music to the ears of organized white nationalists, who have cheered Trump's rise—and have clearly been emboldened by it. Rocky J. Suhayda, chair of the American Nazi Party, captured the enthusiasm last September when he wrote: "We have a wonderful *opportunity* here folks, that may never come again, at the *right* time. Donald Trump's campaign statements, if nothing else, have *shown* that 'our views' are *not* so 'unpopular' as the political correctness crowd have told everyone they are!"

Trump, when pressed, has frequently said he doesn't want to be endorsed by organized white nationalists. His strategy is to maintain plausible deniability while also bear-hugging the haters—often by retweeting them. Queried in November by Fox News host Bill O'Reilly about retweeting a wildly false and inflammatory claim that 81 percent of white murder victims are killed by blacks, for instance, Trump responded, "Bill, I didn't tweet. I retweeted somebody that was supposedly an expert, and it was also a radio show." But retweets are an excellent way to wink and nod at the extremists—to communicate a solidarity that even Trump, who's broken so many of the boundaries of polite political discourse in his campaign, doesn't feel he can openly express. In light of this recurring pattern, Trump's notorious refusal to disavow his support from David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan two days before Super Tuesday looks less like a novice politician's mistake—or the result of wearing a faulty earpiece, as Trump later claimed—and completely in keeping with the way he plays footsy with white nationalists.

IT IS COMFORTING to imagine, as many liberals and anxious conservatives do, that the Trump phenomenon will prove to be an isolated, ugly episode—a case of temporary mass insanity that will leave no lasting scars on American culture

and politics, especially if Trump is ultimately defeated. This is wishful thinking. The destructive forces he has unleashed won't be easily boxed back up and contained. And the Republican Party will, from all indications, continue to be a vehicle for Trumpism even after his political career is done.

While establishment Republicans like Mitt Romney have passionately denounced Trump and plotted ways to block his nomination, the party's official response to its front-runner has been a pattern of appeasement—even after he threatened violence against the party itself. On March 16, less than 24 hours after knocking Marco Rubio out of the race and taking another step toward the White House, Trump was asked on CNN about the possibility of a brokered convention where he could be denied the Republican nomination. "I think you'd have riots," he replied. "I think you'd have riots. I'm representing a tremendous—many, many millions of people."

True to form, the Republican National Committee decided to downplay these incendiary remarks. "I assume he's speaking figuratively," said Sean Spicer, the RNC's chief strategist.

By introducing the threat of violence into the very heart of a presidential nominating process, Trump was plunging the country into uncharted territory once again. It's easy to see him as being part of a long tradition of American demagogues—the Father Coughlins, Joseph McCarthys, George Wallaces, and Pat Buchanans. Yet Trump, who has held the polling lead in the Republican race pretty steadily since July and has repeatedly bested his rivals in the primaries, is a much more formidable and dangerous figure than any of his predecessors.

Consider Wallace, the politician who Trump most closely resembles. Like Trump, the Alabama firebrand capitalized on racism for political gain, mounting a third-party run for president in 1968 as the candidate of white backlash against the civil rights and antiwar movements. Wallace relished inciting his crowds to beat up the hippies and eggheads—and to shout their hatred from the mountaintops. Yet Wallace never came close to winning control of a national political party, though echoes of his repellent politics could long be heard in both the Republicans' Southern strategy to inspire white solidarity and in Democrats' "tough-on-crime" support for the mass incarceration policies of Bill Clinton's presidency.

But today's Republican Party has undeniably become Trumpized. You can see it in the campaign of his rival for the nomination, Senator Ted Cruz, who has insisted Trump is unfit to hold office even as he's hardened his own stance on immigration and mimicked the frontrunner's xenophobia. Trying to outbid Trump's promise to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants—and then provide a mechanism for allowing the ones who are law-abiding to return—Cruz has said he'll deport all these people but *not* let any back in. Trump's birtherism and Islamophobia once seemed shocking in a major political figure, but Cruz has mirrored it by surrounding himself with advisers like Frank Gaffney, founder of the far-right Center of Security Policy and a notorious conspiracy theorist who believes the Muslim Brotherhood has infiltrated the highest levels of American government. Together, Cruz and Trump had won 77 percent of Republican delegates through the March 15 primaries. That's hardly an indication that Trumpism is somehow an outlier, a momentary eruption, in the GOP.

And in politics, of course, success breeds copycats. Barry Goldwater might have been clobbered in the 1964 general election, to give one notable example, but he showed how an archconservative could win the Republican nomination—and ultimately paved the way for the election of his ideological disciple, Ronald Reagan. Goldwater-Reagan conservatism was the driving force in Republican politics from 1964 until 2012.

Donald Trump is a big bully who is enabling many little bullies. His campaign for president has made white Americans more comfortable with their bigotry.

Now the GOP—which dominates American politics at every level but the presidential—is the party of Trumpism.

We can expect future Republican presidential candidates, running in a party that has not only lastingly alienated Americans of color but threatened them with open hatred and violence—even expulsion—to borrow from Trump's strategy of racial polarization. Trump might fail, in other words, but Trumpism will live on. And given the fact America has a two-party system and voters will inevitably want change, we have to face the prospect that even if Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders wins the White House for Democrats in November, the historical odds say the United States will eventually elect a Trumpian president.

Yet Trump's enduring impact won't merely be political. "This is a movement," Trump exulted last August during a campaign speech in Nashville, Tennessee. "I don't want it to be about me." He was right about that: Trump may be the icon of the movement he's ignited, but it's gone far beyond his actions or control. And while organized white nationalists are the animating core of the movement, beyond them are the far more numerous Americans who harbor racist attitudes and economic resentments but have no links to the likes of David Duke.

For decades, this cohort has had to grapple with the fact that public expressions of racism were becoming taboo. When politicians tried to win over these voters, they had to use code words and dog whistles. Trump has changed all that: The dog whistle has given way to the air horn. And now when white people want to harass Hispanic basketball players or Muslim students, they have a rallying cry: "Trump, Trump, Trump!"

Paradise Found

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BRAD TEMKIN**

CITY LIFE IS hot. Baked by the sun, buildings and roads exhale heat at night, raising urban temperatures by up to 22 degrees. The infrastructure that makes cities so attractive to the billions of people who live in them—the subway cars, street kiosks, air conditioning—belch out more warmth. And it's only supposed to get worse: By 2050, 2.5 billion more people are projected to leave the countryside for the city; in the United States alone, urban land will more than double by 2100.

Faced with what scientists call "the urban heat island effect," cities around the world are encouraging the development of roof gardens. These blankets of wildflowers, grasses, and sometimes even vegetables reduce water runoff, absorb carbon dioxide, and lower temperatures. Chicago is home to the world's largest rooftop farm: The two acres of land atop a soap factory supply a million pounds of vegetables a year. These emerging green spaces show how the clash between urban and rural is not always one way: Sometimes, maybe not often enough, it is nature that finds a way to sprout amidst humanity's great constructions.

Highmark Building (looking west), Pittsburgh

Lurie Children's Hospital (looking southwest), Chicago

The Rouge (looking southwest), Dearborn, Michigan

Tyner Center (looking northeast), Glenview, Illinois

BVB Tram Depot (looking west), Basel, Switzerland

A MADDENING SOUND

Is the Hum, a mysterious noise heard around the world, science or mass delusion?

BY **COLIN DICKEY**

SUE TAYLOR FIRST started hearing it at night in 2009. A retired psychiatric nurse, Taylor lives in Roslin, Scotland, a small village seven miles outside of Edinburgh. "A thick, low hum," is how she described it, something "permeating the entire house," keeping her awake. At first she thought it was from a nearby factory, or perhaps a generator of some kind. She began spending her evenings looking for the source, listening outside her neighbors' homes in the early hours of the morning. She couldn't find anything definitive. She had her hearing checked and was told it was perfect, but the noise persisted. She became dizzy and nauseous, overcome, she says, by a crushing sense of despair and hopelessness at her inability to locate or escape the sound. When things got bad, it felt to Taylor like the bed—and the whole house—was vibrating. Like her head was going to explode. Her husband, who had tinnitus, didn't hear a thing. "People looked at me like I was mad," she said.

Lori Steinborn lives in Tavares, Florida, outside of Orlando, and in 2006 she had started hearing a noise similar to the one Taylor was hearing. Steinborn thought it was her neighbors at first: some nearby stereo blasting, the bass coming through the walls. It would start most nights between 7 and 8 p.m. and last until the early hours of the morning. Like Taylor, she began searching for the sound; leaving town helped her get away from it, but it was waiting when she returned.

The experience described by Steinborn and Taylor, and many others, is what's come to be known as "the Hum," a mysterious auditory phenomenon that, by some estimates, 2 percent of the population can hear. It's not clear when the Hum first began, or when people started noticing it, but it started drawing media attention in the 1970s, in Bristol, England. After receiving several isolated reports, the British tabloid the *Sunday Mirror* asked, in 1977, "Have You Heard the Hum?" Hundreds of letters came flooding in. For the most part, the reports were consistent: a low, distant rumbling, like an idling diesel engine, mostly audible at night, mostly noticeable indoors. No obvious source.

The story of the Hum begins in such places, far from the hustle and bustle of cities, where stillness blankets everything. That's where you hear it, and that's where it becomes intolerable. After it was first reported in Bristol, it emerged in Taos, New Mexico; Kokomo, Indiana; Largs, Scotland. A small city newspaper would publish a report of a local person suffering from an unidentified noise, followed by a torrent of letters to the editor with similar complaints.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **LOUVIERE + VANESSA**

Photographic rendering of a Hum recording from Windsor, Ontario. Archival inkjet print on handmade Japanese *kozo* paper covered in gold leaf.

Sometimes, this would lead to a begrudging official investigation, but these nearly always ended inconclusively. Far more likely was widespread dismissal of the complaints, which made the experience that much more frustrating for those who heard the Hum. Though University of Southampton researchers R.N. Vasudevan and Colin G. Gordon, who investigated claims of the Hum in 1977, established that it was "very probably" a real phenomenon and not an auditory hallucination, Hum sufferers have been consistently written off as either delusional or simply suffering from tinnitus. When asked by *The Independent* about the Hum in 1994, Jonathan Hazell, head of research at the U.K.'s Royal National Institute for Deaf People, responded, "Rubbish. Everybody who has tinnitus complains at first of environmental noise. 'Hummers' are a group of people who cannot accept that they have tinnitus."

Dismissed by governments and mainstream researchers, Hum sufferers become demoralized, despondent. In such isolation the discourse festers, breeding conspiracy theories and kooks. In 2009, the first episode of the reality show *Conspiracy Theory With Jesse Ventura* offered a theory of the Hum possibly stemming from a government mind-control device, and in a 1998 *X-Files* episode the Hum (or something very much like it) caused spontaneous head explosions. On a Facebook page for Hum sufferers, one rambling post describes how "advanced satellite technology" is being used as "a brutal torture instrument by transmitting sounds, voices, and images directly into the brain, creating numerous pains and sensations throughout the body and significantly altering energy level and emotional states." The post goes on to name several people who have been targeted by this technology, including Miriam Carey, the dental hygienist who drove through a White House checkpoint in 2013, setting off a high-speed chase that led to her death, and Aaron Alexis, the civilian contractor who, on September 16, 2013, entered the Washington, D.C., Navy Yard and killed twelve people before dying in a firefight with police. Alexis has become, for some, proof positive that the Hum is not merely an annoyance but a massive government conspiracy. In a message later recovered by authorities from his computer, Alexis wrote that "Ultra low frequency attack is what I've been subject to for the last three months. And to be perfectly honest, that is what has driven me to this."

There are many things we know the Hum is not, but few things we actually know it is. I'd first heard stories of the Hum a few years ago, in the genre of weird conspiracies and odd occurrences one reads about when traveling the internet: another tin foil hat theory to go with the UFOs, Flat Earthers, and Raelians. But then I learned about Glen MacPherson, a high school math teacher in British Columbia, who had attracted attention not for sharing strange tales of the Hum but for doing serious, scientific work on the phenomenon. Word was that he had undertaken a research project that, if successful, could hold the secret to understanding the Hum once and for all. So I traveled to western Canada to hear about the sound.

As far back as the early nineteenth century, one finds records of strange noises, mysterious humming, inexplicable sounds. A traveler summiting the Pyrenees in 1828 described how, when his party first beheld Mount Maladeta, "we were most forcibly struck with a dull, low, moaning, aeolian sound, which alone broke upon the deathly silence, evidently proceeding from the body of this mighty mass, though we in vain attempted to connect it with any particular spot, or assign an adequate cause for these solemn strains." These enigmatic sounds were attributed to various causes—insect swarms just out of sight, shifting sands—but, being rare and benign, they were mostly ignored.

The Industrial Revolution changed attitudes toward noise, as machines and urban life introduced a constant, deafening racket into the world. By the end of the nineteenth century we'd begun a war on the noise we had created, particularly in the United States, where it quickly became a question of personal liberty and privacy. "How soon shall we learn," the magazine *Current Literature* editorialized in 1900, "that one has no more right to throw noises than they have to throw stones into a house?" In 1930, the *Saturday Evening Post* commented that "People dare not enter a man's house or peep into it, yet he has no way of preventing them from filling his house and his office with nerve-racking noise."

Different cities tried different tactics. New York set up "Zones of Quiet" around hospitals and schools, and established the Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise, which pushed through a 1907 act prohibiting the needless use of steam whistles in maritime traffic—the first noise-abatement legislation passed by Congress. In Baltimore, a dedicated anti-noise cop named Maurice E. Pease was appointed to instruct any huckster shouting about their wares that business could be conducted more efficiently via printed signs. Chicago banned the hawking of wares outright in 1911, and peddlers responded with a riot that stretched over three days, in what the *Tribune* called "a day of rioting and wild disorder such as has not been seen in Chicago since the garment workers' strike."

After the introduction in the 1920s of the decibel as an objective unit for measuring noise, cities were able to implement noise-abatement policies that cut the overall volume to (mostly) manageable levels. But perversely, it's precisely these noise-reduction laws that allowed the Hum to emerge. In a loud environment like New York City, it's far too difficult to hear the Hum, since it tends to just blend in with the din and chaos of everything else. The Hum, you could say, is not so much a sound but what's left over, the noise you hear once all the other noises have been taken away.

Further confusing matters is the fact that some reports of the Hum have been definitively traced to specific sources and corrected. The Hum was heard in Sausalito, California, in the mid-1980s, but was eventually found to be the result of the mating sounds of a fish called the plainfin midshipman, whose call could penetrate the steel hulls of the houseboats in the marina. The Windsor Hum was investigated by the Canadian government and ultimately traced to factories on Zug Island,

across the Detroit River in Michigan. After an extensive study of the Hum in Kokomo, Indiana, researchers determined that it was caused by two nearby manufacturing plants whose production facilities were emitting specific low frequencies.

The Hum soon stopped for some people in Kokomo—but not for everyone. Even in cases where there's a likely culprit, it's difficult to prove for sure. Dr. Colin Novak, one of the lead researchers of the Windsor Hum, concluded his report in May 2014, but in a CBC article that year he was quoted saying that while there was a high probability the cause was the Zug Island factories, "Unfortunately, we weren't able to find that smoking gun." Without a longer study and more cooperation from U.S. authorities, researchers couldn't definitively identify the source. "It's like chasing a ghost," Novak said.

"I love science. I love mysteries. I love figuring things out," said Glen MacPherson, the high school teacher and founder of the World Hum Map and Database Project, a site that has, since 2012, gathered and mapped reports of the Hum worldwide, including its location, intensity, and relevant biographical facts on the individual reporting it. MacPherson lives in Gibsons, British Columbia, a tiny town on the far west side of an inlet called Howe Sound. To get there you hook up with the Trans-Canada Highway and take it west until it runs out of road at a place called Horseshoe Bay, and from there a ferry carries you across the sound.

The air in Gibsons is lucid and still; you can hear the call of birds echoing across that pure stillness. Even the ferry and its cargo seem deferential to the silence of the water and its sparsely inhabited islands. The humble city of Vancouver, 30 miles away, seems a noisy urban nightmare.

We were sitting in the conference room of the Gibsons & District Public Library on a Saturday afternoon. It was quiet inside; any kids who could get away with it were out soaking up one of the last good weekends of the season. As I listened to MacPherson's story of a mysterious noise, I couldn't help but notice a sign tacked to the wall behind him, written in the big, gentle hand of a kindergarten teacher: "Be kind, be safe, be listening."

So I listened. MacPherson's Hum story, at least initially, was fairly typical: In 2012, he was living in Sechelt, just a few miles from Gibsons, when he began hearing at night the droning of what he assumed were seaplanes taking off and landing. "I couldn't tell if it was a week or two or a month," he recalled, "but it became quite obvious at one point that this sound was not being caused by planes. So I waited until it started the following evening—it seemed to have a pretty regular onset at 10 to 10:30 p.m.—and I went outside, and the noise stopped."

"My logic was that if it was louder inside and it stopped outside, then the source was inside: a refrigerator, a piece of machinery, whatever it was. I started walking through the house, and the sound was relatively consistent." MacPherson began turning off various appliances, all to no avail. One oddity he did notice, however, was that the noise would stop if he turned his head sharply or exhaled, though it would instantly return. "And then I ran out of ideas, and so I did what many people ultimately do: I cut the power to the house—and it got louder."

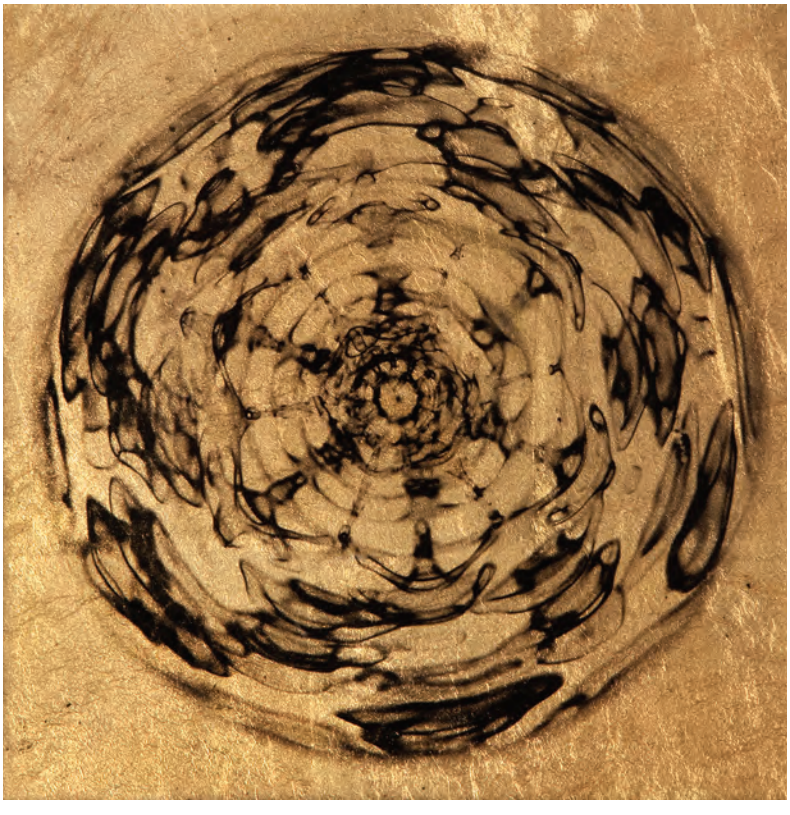
Though his experience with the Hum has not been as excruciating as some others (he describes himself as a Hum "hearer" rather than "sufferer"), MacPherson was drawn to the problem of this mysterious noise: "Less than one month after beginning my informal inquiries, I did what essentially every single person who visits the Hum web site has done: You go to Google." He found an article in *The Journal of Scientific Exploration,* by a geophysicist named David Deming, titled "The Hum: An Anomalous Sound Heard Around the World."

> Rather than dismiss Hum hearers as delusional tinnitus sufferers, the question that might be better asked is why don't *more* of us hear it?

Deming, who has taught at the University of Oklahoma since 1992, was one of the first scientists to take the problem of the Hum seriously. (He also heard the Hum.) Crucially, Deming was able to distinguish the Hum from tinnitus. Tinnitus, usually a ringing in the ear, can take a number of forms, but while its intensity may wax and wane, it is more or less omnipresent, and those who suffer from it tend to hear it in any environment. The Hum, which is constant but only under certain circumstances (indoors, rural areas, etc.), defies a simple correlation with tinnitus. Additionally, Deming notes that if the Hum were related to tinnitus, one would expect a fairly normal geographic distribution rather than clusters in small towns.

Deming believed that the Hum wasn't an acoustic sound, but possibly a low-frequency vibration that some people interpret as sound. The most likely culprit of the Hum was a Navy project known as Take Charge and Move Out, or TACAMO. Begun in the early 1960s, TACAMO is a network of aircraft that carry very low frequency (VLF) antennae to communicate with nuclear submarines. VLF waves, which require extremely long broadcast antennae and massive amounts of energy, can cover the globe and penetrate nearly

Hum recording from Bristol, England.



Hum recording from Taos, New Mexico.

any surface (they reach submarines a hundred feet below the surface). Deming proposed a simple experiment to test this hypothesis: Three boxes, each large enough to hold a human, one that blocked sound, one that blocked low-frequency waves and other types of electromagnetic radiation, and a control box that blocked neither.

Aside from Deming's article, MacPherson realized, there was very little out there: The few user forums were rife with nonsense, heavy on anecdote, and light on fact. There were enough reports from far-flung places to suggest that the problem went beyond Taos and Bristol, but no one seemed to be doing anything systematic to gather all this information. As it happens, MacPherson had a background in technology. "My degree major was in computer science programming, minors in mathematics and Russian language. I also worked briefly as a web professional in the early 2000s alongside my teaching." In 2012, he used a simple Google Docs tool to create a list of self-reported experiences with the Hum. "In combination of that and the Google form, and me knowing how to whip up web sites in a few hours, it began: the World Hum Map."

MacPherson's database allows users to input their experience with the Hum, including information on where and when it's the loudest, if the hearer has tinnitus, if anything makes it stop, and so on. The World Hum Map soon came to the attention of Reddit, and submissions began pouring in; there are now over 5,000 data points. The first thing the site revealed was that the Hum wasn't restricted to Taos and Bristol. It was everywhere.

It's in Overland Park, Kansas, where it sounds like "a metallic sound of something vibrating"; in Ankara, Turkey, where it's a "very deep and quiet rumble that sounds like a very distant diesel generator"; and in Hervey Bay, Australia, where it's "a pulsating continuous low background aircraft rumble that does not go away." It seems to show up mostly in rural areas and in small cities: More people have heard it in Boise, Idaho, than in Washington, D.C. Reports dot the globe, from Iceland to the Philippines, but they're concentrated in North America and Europe; MacPherson surmises this is only because the site is in English.

As I listened to MacPherson tell his story, the wind kept batting a branch against the windows, creating a noise just slight enough to hear but that gradually became maddening, as I found myself unable to tune it out. Hearing is complicated. It's not just the physical sound waves that matter; it's also what your brain does with that information. It's important to remember that there's so much we still don't know about how hearing works. We know low-frequency waves can cause pain, nausea, and other deleterious effects on humans—indeed, the United States and other governments have long experimented with using sound and vibration as non-lethal weapons. Over a decade ago, the WaveBand Corporation introduced a device known as Mob Excess Deterrent Using Sound Audio (MEDUSA), which uses directed microwaves to create a strong, discomforting audio sensation in the victim's head. More common are Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRADs), which use ear-splitting focused noise and have been used on everyone from protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, to Somali pirates attacking cruise ships. Add to this the fact that since the early twentieth century we've been bombarding the atmosphere with all manner of frequencies and waves. Rather than dismiss Hum hearers as delusional tinnitus sufferers, the question that might be better asked is why don't *more* of us hear it?

MacPherson liked his map and thought it was useful for creating a community for Hum sufferers. But he knew there was nothing scientific about it, nothing that would lead to a breakthrough in the Hum's source. "People tell me where they are and what they hear and I put a dot on a map," he said. Then, a few months after he started hearing the Hum, he realized "this crucial experiment that Deming had envisioned hadn't been done yet." The boxes. No one had thought to attempt Deming's simple proposal of three boxes that could easily and definitively prove whether the Hum was an acoustic noise or a frequency, and no one had thought to try it. "I couldn't believe it." So MacPherson crowdsourced a few hundred dollars to cover the material costs and built the first one, the one that would block VLF waves.

MacPherson's Deming box is six feet by three feet by two feet, and made of black low-carbon steel. It looks like a cross between a coffin and the monolith from *2001.* He keeps it in a woodshed not far from his house. "Deming," MacPherson said, "suggested that the first box out of three—which is what this is—should be able to completely block VLF radio waves." Deming's solution was a box with walls made from inch-thick aluminum, which would have been cost-prohibitive, to say nothing of technically difficult. "Then I went on with my research and discovered that mild steel, with a minimum thickness of 1.2 millimeters, would provide what they call, in the physics lingo, about ten skin depths. Each skin depth of mild steel attenuates the signal to, let's see,"—he mumbled a few figures, working out some math in his head—"about 30 percent of what the original signal strength would be. Ten skin depths essentially provides 100 percent coverage." If a Hum sufferer were to get in the box, and if the Hum was indeed caused by VLF waves, then the noise should stop once inside the box. This is the test that MacPherson was planning to do while I was there. His goal was to take it on the road, bringing it down the Pacific Coast to meet up with other Hum sufferers and test it.

The welds on the box were thick, running along the edges like long-healed scars; as I ran a finger along one of them, he said, "The welding is crucial, because VLF radio waves have a peculiar habit of being able to penetrate, and find cracks, just like water."

He pried open the hatch so I could peer inside. It looked claustrophobic, a pure black interior not long enough for an adult to lie in comfortably.

"So you'll need some kind of oxygen source," I asked, feeling a bit queasy at the thought of spending time locked in there.

"No need," MacPherson answered. "There's plenty of air inside a box that size, enough for, I don't know, four hours of breathing." This was probably technically correct but not at all reassuring.

MacPherson propped a foot up on the edge of the box. "If it were a different frequency than VLF," he said, "like something around microwave, or cell phone frequency, which some people suggest, then this would not have taken me off and on three years to build." I asked why, and he said that those waves can easily be blocked by thin layers of foil. "You know, the classic—"

> An inexorable attraction to anomalies is one of the ways science moves forward.

"The tin foil hat," I finished, both of us laughing. That he's able to joke about this suggests his even-keeled approach to this whole question, but the hint of fringe conspiracy theories always lurks just around the corner and makes actual progress on solving the Hum extraordinarily difficult.

Take, for instance, another prominent voice in the Hum community: Steve Kohlhase, a mechanical engineer living in Brookfield, Connecticut, who first started hearing the Hum in 2009. "At one time it was very quiet around here," Kohlhase told me over the phone. "We moved up here from New Jersey in 1994, and there were two Algonquin pipelines by us"—gas pipelines—"and an Iroquois pipeline behind us. We bought the house realizing all that. But it was quiet, no issues at all. And during the 2000s, under Bush and all that—and I'm a Republican by the way—they decided they were going to start expanding. They put a couple of compressor stations behind us, and after they installed those, probably seven months later, I started sensing a low-frequency disturbing noise when I was in bed—the typical thing: One person hears it and the rest of the family doesn't." He wasn't alone in hearing the noise, he said. "The dog started acting up, and the coyotes started acting up: They started to walk up and down the street, leaving their habitat. ... The dog went on Prozac because he couldn't handle it."

Kohlhase believes the pipelines running through his neighborhood and throughout the country are producing the Hum. He claims many of his neighbors hear it too but are afraid to say anything for fear of driving down property values. Other Hum sufferers have connected the Hum to electromagnetic radiation from nearby power plants, cell phone towers, or "smart" utility meters that broadcast their readings. Any facet of modern life that emits a signal or has moving parts has at one point or another been put forward as a potential cause of this unbearable noise, as though the Hum were something of a Rorschach blot of technological woe.

But from this set of information Kohlhase has extrapolated a conclusion more and more sweeping in scope. He believes that most—if not all—mass shootings of the past few decades can be traced to natural gas pipelines emitting low-frequency radiation. I asked Kohlhase about Aaron Alexis, the Washington Navy Yard shooter. "I don't think he was crazy," he said. "I think he was basically sane given the conditions he was experiencing." Nor does he think Alexis was alone. Using MacPherson's maps of Hum reports, and his own research, Kohlhase claimed to have found a correlation between high numbers of Hum sufferers and mass shootings: "[Alexis] was probably affected mentally by living in these Hum clusters, such as many of these other murderers—in Denver, Albuquerque, Tucson, out in California, even out here in Connecticut, at Newtown." In the wake of the Sandy Hook shooting, Kohlhase submitted material to the Connecticut State Police suggesting that a natural gas pipeline near Adam Lanza's home may have been what drove him to kill 27 people.

This reading of recent gun tragedies is pretty disturbing in its desire to explain with one stroke the root cause of these violent episodes, neatly sidestepping the problem of mental health, easy access to high-capacity assault weapons, and many other factors. It also sidesteps the deep conflicts, ambiguous problems, and difficult solutions in favor of what you could call a magic bullet that resolves the problem once and for all. But in the absence of serious scientific inquiry, this is precisely the kind of logic that's allowed to prevail.

Perhaps this is the reason so many people have seized on MacPherson's experiment: its elegant simplicity, its promise of silencing the crackpots. With one simple test, it seems, we'll know once and for all whether the Hum is related to VLF waves. If this theory is correct, we'll know right away: If someone can hear the Hum outside of the box but not inside it, there will be strong evidence that it's a low-frequency issue (the box isn't soundproof). But the fact that it's such a simple experiment is also why it's so frustrating that MacPherson hasn't tried it yet.

"As it turns out," MacPherson told me, standing next to his steel monolith, "this unit, despite its very mundane and sepulchral appearance, has not been tested. Nobody has entered this yet, and I'm going to be the first person."

When I asked him why he hasn't gone in yet, MacPherson gave me a range of answers. "For one," he said, "I don't think this location will work. For many people the Hum is inaudible out of doors." The woodshed MacPherson uses for the box is covered but not sealed, and has no door on it. He won't bring it inside his own house, claiming it won't fit inside the door. So he has to move it. "In the big picture

scientifically, this sounds ludicrous, but I need a trailer. The box looks too much like a coffin. I don't want it seen out in public too much."

But it's not just that he doesn't want to be seen driving it around; he doesn't want to be seen testing it, either. "It'll need to be put in someone's garage, because that will provide the blocking for the ambient sound, but it'll also provide the privacy necessary." When I threw out the possibility of just going ahead and renting him a U-Haul, he demurred, changing the topic back to the theoretical discussion. Having come this far, he seemed suddenly uncomfortable with what he had made.

Gibsons, after all, is a small town of only a few thousand people, and MacPherson has taught high school here for 26 years. Without exaggeration, it's safe to say that most everyone who lives here or their children has gone through his classroom. Since he's begun this project he's become known locally as the Hum guy: When he goes grocery shopping, one of the teenage clerks will stand behind him out of sight and hum quietly. It's the kind of joke MacPherson takes in stride. "If I don't show a sense of humor on this," he said, "it's going to be hell."

David Deming has more or less ended his involvement with the Hum; he's no longer doing research on it, and he declined an interview on the topic (though he did answer a few brief questions via email). One wonders if this is because of people like Kohlhase, who Deming sees as the main problem standing in the way of understanding the Hum and other scientific anomalies. "They are inexorably attracted to anomalies of all types, but their behavior is fundamentally irrational," he wrote in a 2007 paper. "On internet discussion forums, these people relentlessly drive out good posters and ruin everything they come into contact with. They need to be condemned swiftly and mercilessly."

MacPherson is a bit more tolerant. "Everybody gets a chance with me," he said. An inexorable attraction to anomalies is one of the ways science moves forward. William R. Corliss, the controversial physicist who spent years collecting records of scientific oddities from singing sands to the Nazca Lines, once wrote of such research that, "while not science per se," it nonetheless "has the potential to destabilize paradigms and accelerate scientific change. Anomalies reveal nature as it really is: complex, chaotic, possibly even unplumbable."

When Wolfgang Pauli first proposed the existence of neutrino particles in 1930, he almost immediately regretted it, referring to them as a "desperate remedy" to explain anomalous readings of radioactive decay. The work that ultimately proved their existence led to a Nobel Prize in 1995, but there were still problems, and neutrinos continued to confront scientists with unexplained readings, unpredictable data, and other anomalies that confound known models. Ultimately the so-called solar neutrino problem (referring to the fact that only a third of expected neutrinos emitted from the sun are recorded as expected) was solved in 1998, leading to another Nobel in 2015 for neutrino research.

There are many in the Hum community who see MacPherson's box as an equally important scientific feat. "Regardless of the ultimate findings," a poster commented on MacPherson's site, "you have moved the investigation on the Hum forward in an unparalleled manner." Having come this far, on the verge of finally testing the VLF theory, excitement among the Hum community is pretty high. "Thank you," another commenter wrote, "for the inspiring initiative which may eventually bring back a life to many wandering spirits."

But having finally completed the box, MacPherson suddenly stopped. After weeks of telling me that he would conduct his experiment in my presence, he made it clear that it would not happen. Partly, he said, this had to do with the school year starting up again and the increasing demands of his main job and his other hobbies. A few weeks later, when MacPherson still hadn't tested it, a poster on MacPherson's web site snarled at him. "Go in already," he wrote. "What is it with this cliff-hanger shit?"

There was only so long I could stare at a metal box, particularly once MacPherson made it clear that neither of us were going inside it. We'd talked about going out to one of the places where MacPherson has heard the Hum the loudest, but instead he took me to his high school. He was eager to show me the garden he'd set up in the back of his classroom, where his students were growing tomatoes and various herbs. He talked about his other hobbies—surfing, cooking, playing bass guitar. He seemed far more enthusiastic about what his students are doing, and at times seemed quite over the Hum and his role in it.

I'd come to Geibsons to see the thing that was finally going to solve the problem of the Hum, made by the one man best positioned to make that happen. But MacPherson has already begun downplaying the impact of the box he's built. It doesn't have much practical use, after all: You can't live in an airtight steel box all your life. Several people have written about the possibility of living in metal shipping containers as a means to escape the Hum, but since VLF waves can permeate most surfaces, one would have to flawlessly seal the container to get any kind of permanent relief. If it is VLF, in other words, it is inescapable, and MacPherson will at best only be able to verify that the Hum is everywhere.

Rather than hoping to end the problem once and for all, MacPherson hopes that his experiment—if he ever conducts it—will serve as a catalyst for more serious investigation. "I expect at some point I'll have this taken away from me by a big university lab," he said. He believes that the entire problem could be solved with a good lab and a small amount of funding.

"The problem is that no one's paying for this, no one has picked this up," he said. "It's me and a few people sending me PayPal accounts through the mail that's essentially made a big metal box sitting in a woodshed."

ESSAY

The Wreck

Adrienne Rich's feminist awakening, glimpsed through her never-before-published letters.

BY **MICHELLE DEAN**

IT BEGAN WITH her fear of stairs. One day in November 1969, Adrienne Rich, a poet known to other poets but not yet to the wider world, paused at the top of the steps in her sister's house in Boston, overwhelmed by a sense of peril, until her sister came to help. "Touching her, I felt no fear," Rich wrote in a letter, "but what I did immediately feel was that something very serious had happened to me, something I had better fight—that I couldn't let myself in for a life of being helped up and down staircases."

When she got back to New York, her fear spread to the three subway entrances near the apartment, on Central Park West, where she lived with her three sons and her husband. These she had descended many times—sometimes in great pain and limitation from the arthritis that plagued her from her twenties on. But now, her mind seized up worse than her body ever had. Even when she managed to overcome it, anxiety followed her down to the subway platform. Rich felt something "coming on very fast, capable of paralyzing my life."

The trouble seemed to pass quickly. Rich found a psychiatrist known for his clientele of writers and artists, Leslie Farber. Farber told her he could give her medication but would prefer not to, that the best thing she could do was enter analysis and probe the sources of that deep compulsion. In their first sessions together, Rich felt she could "risk entering certain zones more immediately than I could ever have done with someone I loved ... I have never before had such a sense of the intensity of an attention which was not really trying to elicit *anything* but which therefore was able to receive the whole message."

What came out in those therapy sessions would surprise nearly everyone Rich had ever known. It changed her life, her poetry, and her politics—a transformation that has hardly been traced before, because Rich herself often avoided direct discussion of the subject. Within months, she would leave her husband of 17 years, the Harvard-trained economist Alfred Conrad. Within a year, Conrad would drive up to the family's house in Vermont alone, in a state of unarticulated despair. It was October 1970. He bought a gun, went out into the woods, and shot himself.

In the years that followed, Rich began to cut ties with old friends, including some of her closest confidants. She left New York for the West Coast, where she would live for the rest of her life. She came out as a lesbian. She began to write more prose, revealing a talent for polemic. Her feminist politics bloomed suddenly into a very explicit sort of radicalism, the kind unafraid to march onto the pages of intellectual journals and complain that "the way we live in a patriarchal society is dangerous for humanity."

She also became famous. In 1973, she published *Diving Into the Wreck*. It was her ninth book of poetry, but its mixture of anguish and strength of conviction vaulted it past all her previous work. Many of these poems were explicitly feminist in concern, as with "Trying to Talk With a Man,"

> Out here I feel more helpless
> with you than without you
> You mention the danger
> and list the equipment
> we talk of people caring for each other
> in emergencies—laceration, thirst—
> but you look at me like an emergency

With this book she won the National Book Award for poetry, tied with Allen Ginsberg. It positioned Rich as one of the foremost poets of her generation and a leading feminist thinker. A young

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JANNA KLÄVERS**

Margaret Atwood wrote that hearing Rich read from it "felt as though the top of my head was being attacked, sometimes with an ice pick, sometimes with a blunter instrument: a hatchet or a hammer." A male reviewer called it angry, which it was, but women responded in droves because they were angry, too.

By the time of her death in 2012, Rich was a towering figure, an abstracted Great Poet and Important Feminist, whom *The New York Times* eulogized as "a poet of towering reputation and towering rage." Some of this praise has made her sound like a statue, not a person. Her radical feminist beliefs had a curiously distancing effect, often thought too blunt, too simplistic. It seems hard for people to imagine that these ideas could be the result of a complex mind, a complicated experience. And like many artists, Rich was wary of those who wanted to connect her work too closely to the shape of her life. When she died, she asked that her friends and family refrain from participating in any full-length biography; many of her archived letters to close friends are sealed until 2050.

But during the 1960s and into the mid-1970s, Rich wrote often about her innermost concerns to her friend, the poet and critic Hayden Carruth, who was at the time living in relative isolation with his wife and child in Johnson, Vermont. The letters he kept span almost a thousand pages among his papers at the University of Vermont, and Carruth, for whatever reason, left access to them open. Her literary trust granted permission to quote from the letters for the purposes of this article, though Pablo Conrad, her middle son and literary executor, declined to be formally interviewed for it. They paint an intimate portrait of her intellectual and political awakening, one which has scarcely been seen before.

WHEN W.H. AUDEN gave Rich the Yale Younger Poet's prize in 1950, he famously said that her poems were "neatly and modestly dressed, speak quietly but do not mumble, respect their elders but are not cowed by them." That line is so often quoted because her life inverted it, as she became more famous and more overtly identified as a poet of anger.

Rich was brought up to be a very conventional and—more important—very successful sort of poet. Born in 1929 in Baltimore, nothing in her background suggested artistic precocity. Her father was Jewish, having grown up in Birmingham, Alabama; her mother was a Protestant from Atlanta, Georgia. Arnold Rich had encouraged her to write verse from the age of four. He himself was not an artist, but a doctor, with a particular expertise in tuberculosis. He had, consequently, concentrated and divided his literary ambitions among his two daughters, wanting Adrienne to be a poet and her sister, Cynthia, to be a novelist. "I think he saw himself as a kind of Papa Brontë," she told Carruth in 1965, "with geniuses for children."

The Rich daughters were at first schooled at home by their mother, only sent out in fourth grade. Their father drove them to write every day, expounded on principles of prosody, the theory of how a poem sounds. He loved, in particular, Rossetti and Swinburne, thought "poetry had fallen on hard days more or less after the death of Oscar Wilde." In a characteristic fit of pride, he'd printed one of Rich's early poems, an "allegory on suicide," as a chapbook. Obedience was a singular virtue in the household, hard work the method of greatness.

But Arnold Rich could not prevent other influences from pressing on his daughters. Worldly subjects began to look like avenues of rebellion. "I went along with all of this," Rich wrote to Carruth about her father's plans, "but in secret spent hours writing imitations of cosmetic advertising and illustrating them copiously, thinking up adjectives for face cream which Madison Avenue had in those innocent days not even stumbled on." In some letters she speaks of hating her father. Her marriage at 24, she said in her 1976 book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, had been a kind of break between them. "She had ceased to be the demure and precocious child or the poetic, seducible adolescent," she wrote of her younger self. "Something, in my father's view, had gone terribly wrong."

Among the things that had gone "wrong," and would keep going "wrong" for the rest of her life, was her poetry itself. Rich started writing looser, blank verse, gradually breaking from the rules of prosody her father had instilled, in what she seemed to consider her first successful book of poetry, *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law*, in 1963. There are hints throughout her work that she was amused to discover that all the flattery she'd received from her father had been a kind of control and she saw how her changing verse was a literal break with patriarchy. In the title poem, often identified as her feminist breakthrough, Rich would write of time as male, judging women's behavior by the lowered standards of chivalry:

> Bemused by gallantry, we hear
> our mediocrities over-praised,
> indolence read as abnegation,
> slattern thought styled intuition,
> every lapse forgiven, our crime
> only to cast too bold a shadow
> or smash the mold straight off.

That poem, composed between 1958 and 1960, was first published in 1962 in the *Partisan Review*. It was then still a year before Betty Friedan would publish *The Feminine Mystique*. Sylvia Plath was still alive in London, the poems that would make up *Ariel* as yet unpublished. There was no New York Radical Women collective, no *SCUM Manifesto*, no consciousness-raising groups. And yet Rich had, all by herself, put her finger on the upsurge of feeling—that feeling being anger—that would come to define the second wave of feminism. "A thinking woman sleeps with monsters," is another of the most resonant lines in *Snapshots*.

But until *Diving Into the Wreck*, Rich was still reserved about her politics. Her letters to Carruth track little feminist reading—Simone de Beauvoir comes up in passing but mostly as an object of gossip. Gloria Steinem makes no appearances, nor Juliet Mitchell, nor Shulamith Firestone, nor any of the writers of the great feminist tracts. Rich was perhaps tailoring her remarks for her audience, Carruth not having much

engagement with feminist politics himself. But judging by these letters alone, it would seem that her political and social views were formed mostly through her reading of black writers. She loved, in particular, the early work of James Baldwin. But as late as June 1968 she was having doubts about his work, too:

> James Baldwin is as dead as Medgar Evers. Was he always, or did he die a slow death? I haven't reread any of the early essays or that first novel that seemed so good to me five years ago. Maybe our perceptions are getting sharper. Maybe he sharpened them, blunting himself in the process.

Rich really began to think like an activist when she ventured out into the world of work. In 1966, still recovering from an operation for her arthritis, Rich began to teach, first at Swarthmore (where she did not like the students) and then at Columbia (where she liked them very much). These were her first excursions back into the real world after her sons were grown, and her early remarks on teaching are flavored with a feeling of new freedom:

> [The students] are extraordinarily unhypocritical, candid, impatient of anything that seems abstract or mere ritual. I feel they live in a different time-scale from us. I like them better than most of their elders, I suppose, but I have never felt so concretely that I'm thirty-eight, middle-aged, and drenched in assumptions which they haven't even heard of.

This was an unusual reaction. Most writers end up disliking teaching, claiming it takes them away from their own work. From the beginning, Rich had a much more open mind.

That urge to examine her own assumptions was compounded when, in 1968, she began teaching at City College in its Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program. SEEK was originally conceived as an admissions scheme; the idea was to get more black and Puerto Rican students from struggling high schools into the university. Under SEEK, the top graduates of local high schools were automatically admitted to the university, provided they first went through a series of classes designed to beef up their writing and mathematics skills. Rich taught language to small classes in this program for two years, beginning in the fall of 1968.

In an essay she later wrote on the experience, "Teaching Language in Open Admissions," Rich was wary of the "banal cliché" that, as a privileged teacher, she would learn as much from her students as they would from her. They did nonetheless force her to see a certain section of literature in a different light. Rich found herself, in an effort to lead her students to the discover of "the validity and variety of their own experience," teaching from black literature for the first time. Her coworkers also included a number of black feminists—the poets Toni Cade Bambara, June Jordan, and Audre Lorde among them—who would become lifelong friends and allies.

Rich somewhat downplayed her exposure to black writing before she taught at SEEK. She had, after all, always read Baldwin. She also kept up with Eldridge Cleaver and the other polemicists. And among the writers she most admired, her letters to Carruth tell us, was LeRoi Jones, later known as Amiri Baraka. She liked the urgency of his message, though she had a complicated reaction to his fiery persona:

> We whites with our malfunctions and hang-ups and blocks and sense of alienation—I mean we people with raw nerves who take life so hard—well, a bad novel is a bad novel, but what about somebody like LeRoi, some of whose literary criticism is the best I've seen in a long time, and some of whose social incantations are as bad as the next demagogue's? LeRoi always did think that Baldwin was essentially white-spirited, denying things in himself, with nothing really to write about except his own exquisitely exacerbated sensibility. But what is happening to LeRoi is a different process, at least what I see of it, a totally understandable and relevant madness, but a madness no less.

SEEK plunged her into the midst of it. "It is the only thing I've ever done from a political motive," she told Carruth, "(I applied for the job after King was shot, as a political act of involvement, from which I've gained such a sense of doing something practical and effective." This proved intoxicating, in fact sending her into a flurry of composition—most of the poems that comprised her *Leaflets* are dated 1968. The book was dedicated to Carruth and his wife, but one of the poems she drafted, in late September, after she'd begun teaching at SEEK, was dedicated to Jones:

> Terribly far away I see your mouth in the wild light:
> it seems to me you are shouting instructions to us all.

Rich was becoming more involved in radical politics, and yet in all these letters of the later 1960s, there is little to no mention of the women's movement, or of marital unhappiness. She and Conrad spent New Year's Eve 1968 at the apartment of some of Rich's students, who "agreed we would not say 'Happy New Year' because no one expected or dreamed that 1969 would be happy," but who also sat up all night reciting poetry to each other. "These are the students of whom people say that they have no interest or love for anything written before today, that they don't properly revere the classics, that they don't read, etc.," Rich wrote to Carruth. Already, she knew better.

This sharpening and blunting is an interesting metaphor for the life of an artist in politics. Rich recognized and even agreed with the politics in the work but was afraid to wield them herself, just yet. She believed, as she would later write in a 1983 essay called "Blood, Bread and Poetry," that politics had little place in art. She writes of being told, after the publication of *Snapshots*, that her work was "bitter" and "personal." "It took me a long time not to hear those voices internally whenever I picked up my pen."

IN THE MIDDLE of all this is the enigma of Alfred Conrad. From these letters we learn only certain things about him, such as

that he shared his wife's politics and attended protests and leftist talks with and without her. Sometimes he even seemed to be ahead of her radicalism. He proposed, for instance, that the couple stop paying taxes on account of the unconstitutionality of the war in Vietnam. He was a native of Brooklyn, who was born Alfred Cohen but later changed his name to Conrad, and became a man of what you could call a kind of solid conventional success: He earned all three of his degrees at Harvard. His academic work bore the proof of his leftist beliefs; he co-authored a celebrated paper on the economics of slavery in the antebellum South. And once he became a full professor at City College, he often got involved in conflicts with the administration.

Evidently he had quite a bit of personal charm, if of a reserved kind. When Sylvia Plath met him in April 1958, she recorded in her journal that he was "doe-eyed." And perhaps shy at first. But when they sat down to dinner, he loosened up: "I talked to Al about ... tuberculosis, deep, deeper, enjoying him." But Plath is one of the only people who left behind any record of Conrad. Beyond these bare facts there is not a great deal known of him.

In October 1967 Rich and Conrad joined a number of other writers and poets—Robert Lowell, Denise Levertov, Galway Kinnell, and Norman Mailer among them—in Washington for a march against the war in Vietnam. Rich was still recovering from a surgery and did not actually walk in the larger of the two protests, held on the twenty-first, but made it to a smaller march and a planning meeting among the poets. Rich reported to Carruth:

> The order of events for the public meeting was being discussed, and Denise was announcing that she and Galway were thinking of chaining themselves to the gates of the White House. Galway, by the way, like all of us, was dressed with a care and propriety rarely attempted by him, looking rather as if he were going to a funeral. Denise had a leg encased in surgical bandage, having somehow knocked her knee two days earlier, and probably shouldn't even have marched, let alone try to chain herself to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

The notes of the comic in this description were shoring up a certain depression. Rich had been feeling intermittently depressed throughout the 1960s, a state she often chalked up to her captivity in hospitals and occasional blocks in her writing. But she also did not seem to feel much connection, in the end, to the social movements of the time—not to the anti-Vietnam students, not to the counterculture, nor even a clear connection to the civil rights movement. A month after the protests, she wrote to Carruth of her worry about those to whom "political protest comes too easily," holding that activism ought to be more difficult for the average "honest man."

"At times the state of poetry fills me with despair. My own, the whole shooting match," Rich continued. "The kind and quantity of polemical poetry around these days is awesomely depressing. I'd like to keep poetry safe for the future by forbidding that it be written for two or three generations." It still worried her, in other words, that her life was becoming more and more bound to ideals of social change which seemed still, to her, to threaten her art.

THERE WERE CLEARLY infidelities in Rich's marriage—some of them her own—but throughout the 1960s Rich gave no hint of wanting to leave. Alfred Conrad was in fact quite intricately associated with the SEEK program that had instilled new energy in Rich. In April 1969, funding for SEEK was under threat and students occupied a campus of the college. Conrad was one of the few professors students spoke to and respected. "He is deeply impressed with [the students'] maturity and realism," Rich proudly reported to Carruth. His colleagues vilified him for joining with the students, but he stood with them, anyway.

The first hint of any trouble, in fact, appears only when Carruth began to complain to Rich of restlessness within his own marriage. (He would separate from his wife Rose Marie in 1980.) He did not preserve his own letter to Rich, but her reply makes clear that he had made some kind of overture:

> I will not flirt with you. I love you too much for that, and I know this is a danger zone. For years now I have believed that honest, loving and deep relations were possible—known they were possible—between men and women who have permanent relationships elsewhere. But proceeding on that assumption, one takes on much difficulty and much responsibility. Even if I didn't know and love [Rose Marie]

> I should be anxious that I, at a distance, not become a focus of fantasy, something more glamorous and idealized than any near-at-hand woman—myself included, if I were near at hand—could be. I feel a responsibility to be very lucid, to demand that you too be very lucid.

The letters hint at no physical relationship or developed affair. But Rich once again lapsed into the role of Carruth's soother and caretaker: "I think you feel you're a failure, while for me you have been one of the exemplary figures, against whom I set the chasers after success and the people held together with vanity and prestige." She urged him to begin reading Rollo May, the chief of a school of psychoanalysis sometimes called "existential" because of May's tendency to draw from the arts and philosophy in his analysis of the mind. She also asked him not to chase after her so clearly:

> We are both engaged in extraordinary marriages. The strange paradox of love is that it longs, each time it occurs, to be eternal & exclusive. We don't know what to do about these feelings, we falsify or mis-identify them. What we have to do, I think, is commit ourselves as best we can to each love, and acknowledge that there are as many loves as one needs, but that loyalty to one need not involve disloyalty to another.

It was a few months after this sort of letter that the troubles with the stairs began. And as Rich's relationship with her new therapist, Leslie Farber, deepened, so did a sense of distance from Carruth. Her letters begin to remind him "how little you know me." Farber shared, with Rich and with Carruth, a love of French existentialist writers. And increasingly Farber was a confidant more important to her than any other in her life. Carruth, who had been in therapy himself, tried to warn Rich she was getting too close to the psychiatrist, but she did not listen. "I feel very destructive toward others to whom I would ordinarily turn," she replied.

At the same time, she was informed by a doctor that the surgeries she'd undergone had not been successful. The arthritis continued to cause daily pain. Among the medical advice she was given were instructions to avoid the stairs whenever possible. "I just have to face becoming more and more of a cripple," she wrote dejectedly.

> Please don't write me that all of life is compromise, that I can be 'active mentally' as the doctor put it ... I depend on you for your pessimism as much as your humor and your reassurance of affections.

Another operation was scheduled and performed in March 1970, and another course of physical therapy began. Conrad was arrested for protesting a draft board, occupations at the college continued, and Rich began complaining of exhaustion. She would drive up to the family's house in Vermont and sleep for days. Her letters to Carruth got more and more abstract, especially when they touched on her conversations with Farber. But finally, when he once again seems to have brought up her attractions for him, she responded with a full-court feminist response:

> Of course Rose Marie is jealous—I would be too, if you have made mysteries about yourself and me, forced her to "intuit," etc. Think of all that she has invested of herself in you, in your life together. Think of all that *any* bright, attractive, vital women invests in bourgeois marriage, in her husband and family. Her independence and autonomy are postponed or resigned altogether; her own spirit is almost continually being asked to take second place to the needs, the will, even the passing moods, of her man.

The letter continues along these lines for some time until finally Rich signs off,

> If this sounds like a Women's Lib rap, baby, it is.

During this time, she was distant from both her friend and her husband. Within two weeks Conrad had visited Carruth in Vermont, alone. In a *Guardian* interview in 2002, Carruth recounted that Conrad had visited him in June 1970 to complain about their split. Rich wrote to Carruth that she could offer no "tidy explanations" but that she was separating from Conrad. "Some of it is uniquely peculiar to Alf's and my very complicated relationship, and to who we each were long before we knew each other."

Conrad spiraled out from this rapidly. Rich wrote to Carruth that he needed the separation just as much as she but "finds it almost impossible to admit to this, as if it implied some kind of failure." Carruth, flabbergasted by the sudden change, wrote hectoring letters back, telling Rich he worried she was moving from her "proper center." "This is not something I am doing *to* or *against* Alf or out of vindictive anger," she replied. Nor, she said at the end of July 1970, was she contemplating divorce. She had no plans to live with someone else. She would get herself a studio apartment.

Even after moving out, Rich continued to spend some time with Conrad and her children. "Alf & I talking a lot, in the car on leaf-strewn roads, or by the stove evenings," she wrote to Carruth as late as the fourth of October. But by the thirteenth she'd changed her mind again: "I feel Alf is in bad trouble—I can't help him anymore & I am trying at best not to provide damaging occasions for him—but he needs friendship." The same day she wrote the letter, Conrad wrote a check for the gun.

Carruth, living nearby, would be the one to identify the body. "I will never finish being grateful that you could be there," Rich wrote to him a few days later. "I think (absurd!) that Alf would have wanted you there." In 1998, when Carruth published autobiographical fragments he labeled *Reluctantly*, he wrote of Conrad without naming him:

> Some years ago I had a friend whose domestic life was in a shambles. Part of the trouble was not his doing, but he was

> so bound up, so repressed and inhibited, that he could talk to no one, either psychiatrist or friend, about it. He was forty-five years old, had three minor children, was a success in his work, a liked and respected person. He went into the woods and shot himself. ... Anyone could have told him that what he should do was forget the whole mess and go to California; this is the common, effective American expedient. He was simply incapable of this. Incapable. In such a case can anyone say with certainty that his suicide was wrong?

I FOUND THE letters between Carruth and Rich in a roundabout way. I was trying to make sense of how Rich's feminist beliefs fit with other women writers and critics of her generation. After the success of *Diving Into the Wreck*, Rich would promptly begin a study of motherhood that became *Of Woman Born*. This book, published in 1976 and now a classic, was among the first to articulate the ways in which the biological facts of procreation had been used as a justification for patriarchal control. "The experience of maternity and the experience of sexuality have both been channeled to serve male interests; behavior which threatens the institutions, such as illegitimacy, abortion, lesbianism, is considered deviant or criminal," she wrote. Later, she would also write an influential essay on "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in which she argued that lesbian experience was "a profoundly *female* experience, with particular oppressions, meanings, and potentialities we cannot comprehend as long as we simply bracket it with other sexually stigmatized existences."

These writings and others aligned Rich with very radical feminists, the type that often advocated for outright war between the sexes—placing her closer in her beliefs to Shulamith Firestone than to, say, Gloria Steinem. Rich was adamant that there was a great abyss of experience between men and women, and frequently pessimistic that the divide could be overcome unless women were allowed to speak on their own terms. Still, her poet's faith in language led her to believe that women could make themselves heard, if only they dug down deep enough into their own experiences.

Rich was the only fellow traveler of the so-called New York intellectuals to dive so headlong into the women's movement. And the attitude most of these people took toward women's liberation was that it was incalculably vulgar and intellectually poisonous. Even Elizabeth Hardwick, whose writing is often now classified as feminist, once told an interviewer, "I don't know what happened. She got swept too far. She deliberately made herself ugly and wrote those extreme and ridiculous poems." This remark had the opposite effect on me than the one intended: I wanted to know more about how this one person had managed to stand up to the rest.

Besides, I had suspected that the distance between these extremes had been greatly exaggerated. My mind got caught on the snag of an argument Susan Sontag had had with Rich in the pages of *The New York Review of Books*. At the time, the building and revival of the reputations of women artists was one of the few projects everyone in the movement could believe in; Rich herself had written on Anne Bradstreet. "Feminists would feel a pang at having to sacrifice the one woman who made films that everybody acknowledges to be first-rate," Sontag had written in her essay on the Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, blaming the movement in part for the rehabilitation of a propagandist.

It was then 1975. Rich was getting deeper and deeper into the movement. She wrote in to the *Review* in the role of a whip, trying to impose a kind of party line. On a reading of Sontag's prior work, she added, "one imagined Sontag not to dissociate herself from feminism." Then she went in for a bit of flattery twined with condescension: "One is simply eager to see this woman's mind working out of a deeper complexity, informed by emotional grounding; and this has not yet proven to be the case." Sontag delivered a 2,000-word riposte, a searing document that excoriates those who would see everything through the lens of gender. "Like all capital moral truths," she wrote, "feminism is a bit simpleminded. That is its power and, as the language of Rich's letter shows, that is its limitation."

The argument sounded familiar to me. It was a diorama of the internecine warfare you still see at work in feminist discussions today. There is a fair argument that "feminism" is now a word rendered almost without meaning because it covers such a wide spread of politics. In that context, it often seems that the only common denominator of feminism is to be dissatisfied with "feminism." Feminists too, hate simplemindedness. But we don't abandon it because it has, as Sontag put it, capital moral truth.

I learned as I suspected that the gap between Rich and Sontag was not so very wide as it looked. In Sontag's archive at the University of California, Los Angeles, there is a letter from Rich. "I'm sure we can do better than this," Rich begins, saying she'd like to meet up in New York to talk about the exchange. "Your mind has interested mine for a number of years—though we often come from very different places." She cited mutual acquaintances and a love of Marie Curie. To this, Sontag eagerly replied that she, too, would like to meet when Rich was next in New York. Suddenly, in those two letters, the image of Rich as a polemical firebrand falls right through the floor.

I do not know if the two ever met in the end. I do know that eventually Rich came to see herself as engaged in a project analogous to Sontag's, at least in terms of its intellectual seriousness. In the preface to *Arts of the Possible*, Rich quoted Sontag's complaint that the serious had become "quaint" and " 'unrealistic,' to most people." In fact, Rich, too, had become dissatisfied with feminism as it existed by the end of her life. She disliked the sudden rise of personal essays, "true confessions" as she called them. She felt that this displaced a feminism actively opposed to capitalism or racism or colonialism.

Perhaps this explains why Rich left such strict instructions against a biographer digging into her life. She simply, and admirably, did not want her personal life to overshadow the things she believed in. But her political change did not happen without this personal catastrophe; at least, it seems, it could never have happened in the same way.

Today there is a tendency to portray the radical feminists as flat figures. Even on the left, the movement has been stereotyped as a trove of dogmatics, unshaven man-haters who want female supremacy. They are, to borrow Sontag's frame, thought simpleminded. There is little recognition that their political beliefs bloomed from actual human conditions, that they were and are people with full lives, changing their minds and learning, motivated by flashes of sadness and anger. They have become as abstracted as the movement itself. There are certainly criticisms of radical feminism worth mounting—one that seems particularly trenchant against Rich herself is her alliances with a number of feminist writers who demonized transgender women. But simpleminded? They did a lot better than that.

FOR THE FIRST couple of years after Conrad's death, Rich kept things much as they were before it. She taught at the SEEK program; she wrote long, searching letters to Carruth. "Sometimes I feel relief that he was able to make, for once in his life, a clean statement about the way he was feeling," she wrote just a few days after Conrad's death. Later she would become more philosophical: "It's clear to me that I had never finished with Alf, that something goes on in me now which has to do with him, like a cut off limb that still tingles." She pronounced herself unwilling and unable to get involved with anyone else. For a while she didn't want to write about the suicide either, horrified as she was by the "romanticizations" of others.

Romanticization became a theme with Rich in this period. In the middle of 1970, Robert Lowell left Elizabeth Hardwick for another woman. Almost as soon as she heard, Rich fired off a letter. "I feel we are losing touch with each other, which I don't want," she wrote him. "Perhaps part of the trouble is that the events of my own life in the past four or five years have made me very anti-romantic, and I feel a kind of romanticism in your recent decisions, a kind of sexual romanticism with which it is very hard for me to feel sympathy."

It seems that in the aftermath of Conrad's suicide, this is what happened: Rich began to lose faith in most forms of love. Occasionally she'd openly say so to Carruth. She was clearly unwilling to use a new romance to patch over the wound, too. This led to a lot more psychoanalysis. And a lot more time spent with women.

In a long letter to Carruth dated August 1971 that presaged many of the arguments she'd later make in *Of Woman Born*, Rich gave a very simple account of the source of her ideas about gender:

> And above all, talking—with my women friends, not one of whom, whatever her situation, does not feel relief and hope and new courage in the crystallizations and confirmations that are taking place. And with men, including my therapist, with whom I have had extremely moving and amazing talks.

Her letters become almost wholly preoccupied with gender politics. Where formerly any discussion of sexual life has been, at best, oblique, Rich becomes suddenly frank:

> For me, there has sometimes been that element, but more often a strange joyful sense of *power*—of taking some kind of *mana* into me with the sperm of a man, but also (and this I hope I've ceased to need or want) simple power over the man in terms of my body being absolutely necessary to him at the moment of intercourse.

Perhaps an initial period of concern was warranted, on Carruth's part. After a few of these letters, most of which simply asked him to consider the possibility that women's liberation really had something to say for itself, Carruth became angry with Rich. He began to become suspicious that she was moving away not just from him, but from all men. Her tone in the letters became increasingly defensive. She wrote him a letter about a long car trip she'd taken with Elizabeth Bishop—in which Bishop told her she had secretly sympathized with the women's liberation movement—but such was the breakdown of the relationship that she felt compelled to add, "No, I haven't been into a lesbian experience."

When finally she told him, in 1974, that she had begun seeing a woman, he accused her of a "sexual switch." "Too shallow, and rather cruel," she replied, angrily, to the accusation. They stopped writing to each other for a while, and though the friendship resumed, it was rockier. The few post-1974 letters in these files are more careful, and the correspondence stopped entirely in 1977.

Another of *Diving Into the Wreck*'s poems, "Song," could be read as a report of recovery from the events of 1970:

> You want to ask, am I lonely?
> Well, of course, lonely
> as a woman driving across country
> day after day, leaving behind
> mile after mile
> little towns she might have stopped
> and lived and died in, lonely

Rich deflected the success of *Diving Into the Wreck* when she accepted its National Book Award. All those years of moving with her students had left her convinced that the project of language was not something any one person ought to be able to claim. "We, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, and Alice Walker, together accept this award in the name of all the women whose voices have gone and still go unheard in a patriarchal world, and in the name of those who, like us, have been tolerated as token women in this culture," she said in her speech.

That was it, the moment she smashed the mold entirely. Things like this did not happen in America, particularly in literary and intellectual America, in the 1970s. They are starting to happen more now, of course. It is no longer such a strange, unusual thing to point out that there are more voices to be heard. Maybe our perceptions have sharpened. Maybe she sharpened them.

State of the Art

The Metropolitan Museum makes a bid for the modern.

BY **IAN VOLNER**

FOR NEARLY A century and a half, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the beaux arts behemoth on Manhattan's Upper East Side, has been rather a dowdy operation, a standard-bearer for everything ancient and ageless in human culture. Now, quite abruptly, it's on the move: First stop, Madison Avenue and 75th Street, where the former home of the Whitney Museum of American Art has recently reopened under the banner of the Met Breuer, with new exhibitions and a new curatorial outlook that could reshape the public profile of the largest art museum in the Western Hemisphere.

The change has been in the making since at least 2008, when the museum board selected Thomas P. Campbell as the Met's new director and CEO. His predecessor, the courtly Frenchman Philippe de Montebello, presided over the museum for three decades. Hardly a caretaker director—the Met doubled its exhibition space under his watch—Campbell favored a mostly hands-off approach to the museum's assorted departments, letting the ivy grow, curatorially speaking. Susan Sellers, who was hired by Campbell in 2013 as the head of a newly reinvigorated department of design, described Montebello's Met as being "like a university," a gaggle of somewhat disjointed faculties. Sellers's job is part of Campbell's new direction, an attempt to bring a consistent visual identity to the museum's disparate parts—including the Met Breuer, five blocks down and one block over from the Fifth Avenue mothership.

It may seem an odd paradox that the Met is simultaneously unifying its structure and broadening its reach, but that's precisely what's happening. The move into the Met Breuer—renamed for its architect, Marcel Breuer, after the Whitney decamped for its new Renzo Piano–designed digs in the Meatpacking District—was arranged in part to accommodate a massive trove of modern art donated to the Met by cosmetics magnate Leonard Lauder. The modernist ambition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art has lagged behind the Whitney, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Guggenheim for much of the last century. The $1.1 billion Lauder gift instantly made the Met into a prime destination for twentieth-century paintings and sculpture—it includes 33 Picassos and a smattering of works from Fernand Léger, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris. Managing the newly acquired horde is Sheena Wagstaff, installed in 2012 as the first curator of Campbell's department of modern and contemporary art. No longer just a storehouse for Greco-Roman artifacts and impressionist blue-chip paintings, the Met is now a serious contender in the fast-paced modernist marketplace.

It even has the modernist monument to prove it. Marcel Breuer's building opened in 1966 to mixed reviews. Breuer himself saw the museum as an antidote to Madison Avenue's skyscrapers and its art as a bulwark against the ad men within. In his notes, Breuer wrote of his building: "It should transform the vitality of the street into the sincerity and profundity of art." A lumbering, top-heavy exercise in quasi-Brutalism, it was not a building that played nicely with its Upper East Side neighbors, who were slow to accept a parvenu in their midst. Once they did, however, their embrace was total, and by the late 1970s the Whitney's plans to expand the building were repeatedly thwarted by ear-piercing hues and cries about the potential damage to the beloved local landmark. A 1985 scheme hatched by Whitney director Thomas N. Armstrong III would have expanded the footprint by demolishing neighboring brownstones and using the current museum as a building block for an enormous addition by Michael Graves. The plan went through years of review and almost sparked a civil war among the museum's board members before it was shelved. The decision to move the Whitney to the foot of the High Line was a direct outgrowth of the near-fanatical devotion to Breuer's original vision.

Restoring that vision to its bygone glory has been the objective the Met and its architects, Beyer Blinder Belle, have pursued at double speed during the 17 months between the Whitney's departure and the debut of the rechristened Breuer. The building's lobby, with its bush-hammered concrete walls and smooth concrete trim, has been beautifully refurbished, the stains and patches of 50 years artfully blended and blasted away; the lower-level courtyard has been replanted with slender aspens, making it feel more like a sylvan hideaway instead of the dreary narrow well it had become.

The bookstore that once occupied a fair chunk of the northern side of the ground floor has been removed, leaving an open space topped by row upon row of now-iconic round pendant lamps, cleaned and fitted with working lightbulbs of consistent color and luminosity. Ever since their acclaimed work on Grand Central Terminal in the early 1990's, Beyer Blinder Belle has held an almost undisputed claim to the mantle of New York's finest and most sensitive architectural fix-it men. They haven't flagged here, an especially impressive accomplishment given what must have been a considerable temptation to improve on Breuer's sometimes ungainly design. The 29,000 square feet of exhibition space, modest by contemporary standards, is spread across four stories of bluestone and parquet floors. It's all still there: the irregular trapezoidal windows, the darkened staircases, the openwork cement drop ceiling, the visible ducts, the gangplank entryway spanning the sunken court like the

The Met Breuer, formerly the Whitney Museum of American Art.

COURTESY OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART. PHOTO BY ED LEDERMAN

drawbridge to some surreal castle. If anyone was worried the repurposed building was going to lose its edge, they can rest assured the Met Breuer is still very much the weird old Whitney. When Ada Louise Huxtable reviewed the building in *The New York Times* in 1966, she grudgingly admitted its pleasures: "The taste for its disconcertingly top-heavy, inverted pyramidal mass grows on one slowly, like a taste for olives or warm beer."

In tandem with the new space, the Met revealed a redesigned logo in February—a white background punched with the words THE MET stacked one on top of the other in red—only to have the Wolff Olins–designed emblem greeted with a torrent of online abuse. *New York* magazine's Justin Davidson compared it to a bus crash, another online wag summed it up with two other piggybacked words: THIS SUCKS. In truth, the new logo doesn't look half bad waving from the flagpoles of Madison Avenue, but the best that can be said of it is that it looks like it belongs on the shopping bag of a very fine department store in Indianapolis, during the heady early days of the Carter Administration.

More serious errors are evident within the Breuer. It may be merely a case of shaking the bugs out, but the restoration has thus far excluded such details as the bronze fixtures on the doors to the bathrooms and service areas, which are still oddly skewed and unpolished, sometimes smeared with white from a recent, or possibly decades-old, paint job. A number of observers have noted the removal of the custom granite shelving at the rear of the lobby, replaced by a large digital display advertising the current exhibitions, though the Met has reassured the preservation-minded public that the wall is extant behind the

Sheena Wagstaff, chairman of the department of modern and contemporary art.

screens. The museum has yet to account, however, for the large, visible rips in the insulation over its famously visible ductwork, which is certainly a pressing functional as well as aesthetic concern. And then there's the strangely spotty and unprofessional treatment of the foot of the temporary exhibition walls, below which still more white paint splotches are visible on the wooden floors, a carelessness that would be unacceptable at the Met's Fifth Avenue location.

THESE ROUGH-AND-READY fine points make an intriguing, if almost certainly coincidental, counterpart to the large inaugural show on the museum's upper floors. *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible* is a survey of incompletion through the ages, with portraits and landscapes from Titian through Elizabeth Peyton in various states of imperfection. As high-concept exhibitions go, this one doesn't exactly belong in the uppermost intellectual stratum, but it works, and visitors can spend hours examining the minutest pentimenti of the greats and wondering what might have filled the blanker segments of the canvases. More importantly, the show affords a convenient device for cutting into a deep core sample of the Met's collection—featuring, of course, some of the recent Lauder contributions—and demonstrating how the Breuer might work as an instrument for revealing correspondences and narratives that run from the Renaissance straight through modernity. Incompletion itself, one might say, is the essence of the Met in its current moment of transition.

Latter-day developments are on full display on the second floor, where Indian modernist Nasreen Mohamedi gets a full retrospective of her exquisitely hand-hewn line drawings. Lined up to succeed her are photographer Diane Arbus and painter Kerry James Marshall—the latter of whom was on hand during the press opening in early March, and who reflected on the peculiar privilege of finding himself, at 60, suddenly under the same institutional penumbra as some of history's most lauded artists. "In a lot of ways, we"—the living, the insurgent, the un-lionized—"want to be a part of that club," he said.

It's a fitting future for a building that, under the Whitney's stewardship, always managed to feel a little inchoate and eerie, a looming architectural question mark that hosted some of the most influential shows of the last half-century: In 1991 alone, the Whitney biennial—an art-world mainstay since 1932—helped introduce the world to artists as varied as Eric Fischl, Cady Noland, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. But it poses a different kind of question for the Met, which risks not so much a dilution of its brand as a worrisome case of mission creep: If the museum's mandate is to expand into the commercial realm of modern and contemporary art, will the institution lose some of its high-minded luster?

The entire Breuer initiative has been a family affair, arranged by Lauder, who also made a $131 million donation to the Whitney in 2008 to ensure that the building wasn't sold. The Met then stepped in to sign an eight-year lease, relieving the Whitney of the associated costs. The last time the Met opened a satellite location, it was also the work of a single family, the Rockefellers, who in 1924 gifted their substantial holdings of Gothic and Romanesque art and then gave away a chunk of land on which to build the Cloisters. Unlike Lauder, the Rockefellers were not major players in a white-hot art scene that has seen the world's wealthy turn to auctioneers, gallerists, and private dealers as de facto bagmen for converting cash into portable artistic investment vehicles. The Met is now positioned very close indeed to this churning economic whirlpool.

However, the Met has been here before—a moment when it not only survived but prevailed. In the 1960s, the enterprising curator Henry Geldzahler launched the first contemporary exhibitions at the Met and proved the museum could be both canonizing and progressive by bringing in new voices—Andy Warhol, David Hockney, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Adolph Gottlieb—who would become, just as Kerry James Marshall hoped, part of the club. But while membership has its privileges, there are also dues to be paid, and a new building does not make an institution. The Whitney, smaller and more nimble, charged with an experimental sensibility that it sees as intrinsically American, was perhaps better able to produce shows of greater originality and freshness during its Madison Avenue residency than the slower, larger Met can hope to do in the same setting. And if the Met, with all its historical baggage tries too hard to *be* the Whitney, the results could be awkward.

The architect Rem Koolhaas—who, incidentally, was tapped for a scuttled revamp of the Breuer in the 2000s—recently made the provocative suggestion that some contemporary buildings could be preemptively landmarked; a process of instant canonization, history catching up with the present. If the Met Breuer is poised to do the same thing to contemporary art, emblazoning it with THE MET and all that that portends, it might produce a compelling and salutary challenge to the whole idea of the canon itself; but it might also entail a peculiar, and uncomfortable denaturing of the Met's cultural role.

DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

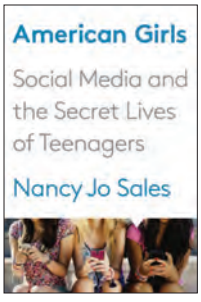
Hot Topic

For teenage girls on social media, attention is a way to be heard.

BY **ELSPETH REEVE**

"YOU BEING ASHAMED to send your tit pic is misogynistic." Anna, a high school senior, took a screenshot of the text, which appeared to be sent by someone named Tony. "If you were really a feminist, you would be comfortable showing us your body," Tony wrote. "Breasts are not sexual body parts. They're something everyone has. Don't let your internal misogyny stop you from sending nudes." Anna tweeted the screenshot under the words "they're advancing." As it went viral across social media, the exchange was seen as a shocking but perfect example of how far boys are willing to go to manipulate girls into sending them naked photos.

The text, however, wasn't real. Anna's friend had written and sent it to a group chat. I asked Anna if her friends joked about boys demanding nudes because it happened so often. "No guy has realistically asked for nudes to that extent," she said. "It's usually a casual 'do you have Snapchat?' message on Tinder." Did the ease with which boys could pursue girls on social media and the internet feel oppressive? Had the pressure to get likes on Instagram hurt her self-esteem? "I can see how that could easily happen, but for me personally social media has never hurt my self-esteem," Anna told me. "If anything it's satisfying to watch people like and retweet what you have to say."



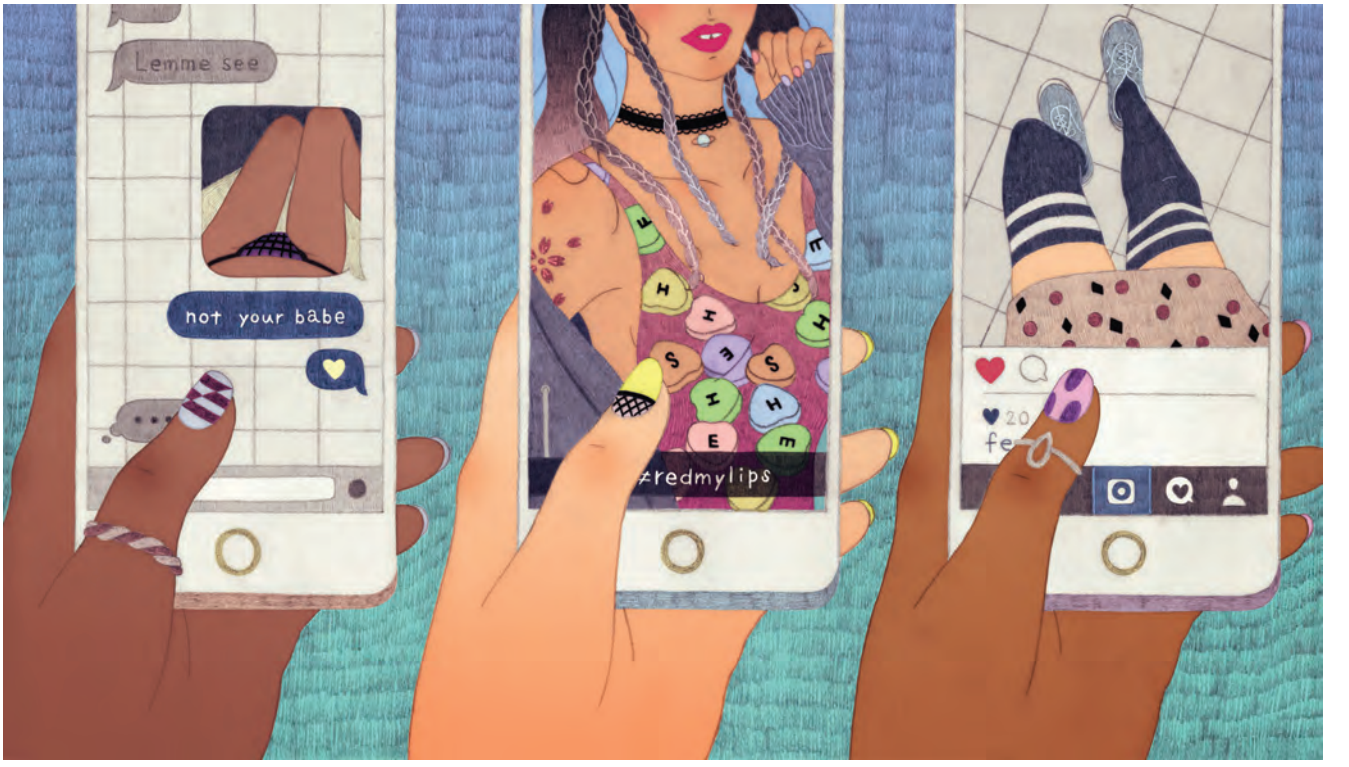
AMERICAN GIRLS: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE SECRET LIVES OF TEENAGERS
BY NANCY JO SALES
Knopf, 416 pp., $26.95

If you take Anna's text at face value, it encapsulates the bleak picture of contemporary teen-girl life Nancy Jo Sales paints in her new book *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers*. Sales argues that social media spews two all-consuming messages to teenage girls nearly every moment of every day: Always look pretty, never be prudish or slutty. It's less the wisdom of the crowd than the sexism of it. Teenage girls feel like contestants in a "never-ending beauty pageant in which they're forever performing to please the judges" by posting "flawless" selfies. They've become "hypersexualized" by the pressures of social media, their self-worth measured in Instagram likes, subjected every day to outrageous demands from porn-obsessed boys who insist they photograph their naked bodies for the fleeting approval of their male classmates. Dating apps increase the sexual availability of girls, which cause "some boys to undervalue the importance of any particular girl, and to treat girls overall with less respect," Sales writes. The boys demand sex quickly and move on if rebuffed: "So how is a girl who is interested in boys to compete for their attention in this crowded space? It wouldn't be surprising if some girls thought pictures that are provocative, nudes and semi-nudes, would be one way of getting their attention."

Sales has written extensively about teenage culture for *Vanity Fair*, including a 2010 article on the "Bling Ring," a group of Hollywood teenagers who robbed celebrity mansions. For *American Girls* she interviewed over 200 teenage girls, their parents, and experts in the field. Sales lets her subjects speak at length. As she's getting ready for her first date, Lily, a teen from Long Island, riffs on science camp, sibling rivalry, competitive high school sports, the pressure to get into college, the awkwardness of meeting an online friend in real life, the danger of meeting old men online, modeling, *America's Next Top Model*, Miley Cyrus, the "media," fashion, makeup, showing off online, flirting online, and how "everyone wants to be famous." For Lily, every single one of these things is significant and intense and weird. It should be, because this is all new to her—she's 14. It's Sales's project to prove that something fundamental has changed in teenage culture—in the universal human experience of seeing and communicating with the world for the first time as an independent person. But that's often the problem with Sales's argument—she seems to think the human behavior revealed on social media was actually created by it.

The challenge is that for nearly every one of Sales's anecdotes about the sexual double standard or the prison of beauty, I can think of a similar incident from my high school years, a pre–social media age: *There was this one girl who did this risqué thing and then* everyone *found out about it*. What is new is that the internet gives today's girls easier access to feminist ideas, while social media gives them the power to dissect and make fun of the boys who harass them. Sales highlights the term "fuckboys"—misogynist young men who use social media to demand nudes and treat women poorly—as evidence of the harassment girls receive online, which it is. But the existence of the word itself is also evidence that girls have been analyzing and dismissing this behavior as unacceptable. Having a name for it gives girls power over it: *Just another fuckboy*.

There's another word in *American Girls* I noticed repeated again and again by the author, her experts, her teen girl subjects, and their internet harassers: "attention." Girls who take provocative selfies, texting or posting them publicly, are "just trying to get attention." *Attention* is delivered as both a diagnosis and an indictment. In Sales's book, it is also something only girls want.



"Some girls wanted attention so bad, it was like they would do anything for it. Anything for the likes," Sales writes, paraphrasing a girl named Edie. Nina, a teenager, explains how some girls feel when they send nudes to boys privately, and the boys post them publicly: "They act like they like the attention. Some are just like, Oh yeah, I know my body looks good, so I don't care if everybody sees it." From a girl named Zoe: "People have become caught up in how much attention they're getting, and it doesn't have to be good attention—it can be bad attention, but it feels like girls have become more absorbed with getting attention through these networks for some reason." Zoe continues: "We're trying to clone ourselves in a certain way, and some girls figure, Oh, by showing my ass on Facebook I'm getting attention; I'm getting talked about, people are noticing me, and in some way that's good." A 17-year-old from Florida explains that in her state, "there's a lot of skin exposed all the time, and there's always an excuse for girls to show off their bodies. That's when they get the most attention from boys, when they get the most likes." "There's no feminism anymore," bemoans a Manhattan mom. "Men treat all women like whores, and the girls are all willing sluts that will do anything to get something from these monsters." Sales quotes a troll on a kidnapping victim's Ask.fm account: "Your not hot shit ... and your annoying when you just try to get attention all the time."

WHY IS IT bad that teenage girls want attention? *American Girls* does not say. I think it's shorthand for a whole set of sexist assumptions: Women should be unassuming and humble, they should not be ambitious, and they definitely should not seek out acknowledgment and praise from others. ("You don't know you're beautiful," declared the boy band One Direction in one of many condescending song lyrics in which young men bestow their attention on women like a precious gift.) You don't hear people say of teenage boys who do dumb or dangerous things to make YouTube videos, "Look at that boy, he's just trying to get attention." Teenage boy hair is just as fraught as teenage girl hair. Why do boys skateboard, wear sunglasses, drive too fast, or jump from dangerous heights? To get girls' attention. When boys do this, it's charming; when girls do it, it's corrosive. Men are supposed to strive, women are supposed to be discovered; men are expected to seek the admiration of their peers, be entrepreneurial and adventurous; women are expected to do all the required reading and homework and hope someday someone notices their diligent competence.

There is a tendency to police women for inauthentic behavior deemed detrimental to the sisterhood. There's the "cool girl" rant from *Gone Girl*, which rails against women who pretend to like football, dirty jokes, and chili dogs while staying thin and beautiful: "Men actually think this girl exists. Maybe they're fooled because so many women are willing to pretend to be this girl." There are "fake geek girls," attractive women thought to be faking a love of comics and video games in order to, you guessed it, get attention. There's an Instagram account that posts collected photos of attractive women eating fattening foods called You Did Not Eat That—it has 132,000 followers. Let's imagine the worst-case scenario inner monologue for these ladies:

ILLUSTRATION BY **JO YEH**

Dear god I hate football and cheese but this is so worth it for the attention. So what? Everyone wants attention—from the fleeting acknowledgment of mere existence to the aching desire to be known, loved, and remembered after you're gone.

I asked Anna what she thought about this. "I don't think it's bad to want attention, everyone wants attention. I'm not sure why it's so frowned upon, but it definitely is," she said. I pointed to the jokes kids shared on social media—couldn't you also get attention for other stuff? "Yes, getting attention can totally mean getting recognition for your ideas," she said. "A lot of the time people are shamed for selfies because they're used for attention, but no one really ever shames someone for sharing a joke. Both get attention, and both are possibly only shared in hopes of getting attention, but only one of them is really shamed."

When I was ten, my friend and I dug through bins at her parents' yard sale and tried on old high heels with short-shorts and bright coral lipstick. Her brother scoffed: "You look like hookers." I remember outwardly acting annoyed but inside thinking *yes!* Children don't understand the subtle signals of adult sexuality. Sales is puzzled by fights over dress codes across the country—some girls say bans on short-shorts are sexist, because it shouldn't be their responsibility to make sure boys aren't distracted. She writes, "Girls agree that they are sexualized and objectified by a sexist culture; but when they self-sexualize and self-objectify, some call it feminist; or they reject the notion that there is any self-sexualization or self-objectification going on in their choices, and to suggest as much is called slut-shaming and an example of rape culture." She cites an American Psychological Association report's dire warning, "Perhaps the most insidious consequence of self-objectification is that it fragments consciousness."

Is it possible the stakes are just a little bit lower? When teenage girls post sexy selfies, perhaps they are not necessarily dedicating their lives to "self-objectification"? Adolescence morphs your body into something unfamiliar, something that changes how the world relates to you, even though you're the same person inside. We all have fun until the novelty wears off—a welcome vacation in which this new body, a body that still doesn't quite feel like your own, becomes a canvas for a new self.

Sales cites many studies about eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and unhealthy dieting, often linked to girls seeing photos of objectified women, but none of these problems were invented by social media. The worst revelation about social media culture, teen or otherwise, may be the depths of human neediness, the desire for constant affirmation. But the best revelation is the savviness with which these young women analyze it. Sales discusses the case of Essena O'Neill, a popular Instagrammer who one day recaptioned her photos of bikini-clad happiness to say they were staged, an act which ultimately brought O'Neill even more attention. "Even calling out the enterprise of 'likes' as a sham gets you likes," Sales writes. "This speaks not only to the culture of social media but its existence in a broader culture of fame, in which so much focus and value is placed on the self and the promotion of self, on self as a brand." This is an incredibly pessimistic view. That teens would "like" rants about social media being an illusion is not a symptom of addiction to attention but a sign they are far more sophisticated than we give them credit for.

What Sales fails to understand is the kids are self-aware about their needs, their desires, their pleas for attention, and the absurd give-and-take of nudes and selfies. Take a Tumblr joke written by a teenage boy in June. Headline: "OMG EVERYBODY DO THIS IT'S REALLY FUN." Underneath, in smaller text: "validate me." It got 95,301 notes. Another post: "Send me nudes when you get home so i know you're safe." 153,021 notes.

Here's a rant by a teenage girl about how girls are held responsible for boys' behavior:

> straight boys are weak and pathetic, queer girls walk into the ladies changing room and see ten women naked, do they stare? do they say something inappropriate? do they make them uncomfortable? no because they have the common fucking sense to recognize when a situation is sexual and that people deserve the most basic level of respect to not be harassed, yet here we are banning shorts and low cut tops in school because straight boys are weak and pathetic

The girl who wrote this later updated the post:

> okay i made this post this morning and it has since had eighty two thousand notes, it's been featured on reddit, facebook, twitter i've been sent multiple death threats and messages that i don't even want to describe
> and i have to apologize
> i've seen the error of my ways
> straight boys are not 'weak and pathetic'
> straight boys are weak, pathetic and *fucking annoying*

That post has more than 1.2 million notes. When someone posted it on Reddit, it got more than 100 comments, many of them mean. But the author has her own community—she doesn't have to be a passive victim of bullying.

American Girls proves sexism is still rampant in American culture, and girls suffer serious consequences from it. While social media offers plenty of evidence for this, Sales does not prove it's the cause. Sales argues teens are "hypersexualized," but a recent study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows teens are having less sex, and the teen pregnancy rate has plummeted. "Now more than ever, I believe, girls need feminism," Sales writes in her conclusion. "They're deeply in need of a set of critical tools with which to evaluate their experiences as girls and young women in the digital age." But now more than ever, they have it right at their fingertips. They can google "feminism," send links to their friends, make posts about it, use it to criticize boys' texts, and let feminism inform their viral meta jokes about nudes. Take the post about "weak and pathetic" straight males. An anonymous person asked the young woman who wrote it, "What's the sluttiest thing you've done?" She responded, "Existing in a culture that punishes women for being sexual."

Home Security

The tenants and landlords caught in America's vicious cycle of eviction.

BY **BRANDON HARRIS**

"LOVE DON'T PAY the bills," opines landlord Sherrena Tarver as she prepares to remove another black woman from one of her north Milwaukee properties. When has it ever in America? It's expensive being poor, and perhaps triply expensive to be black, female, and poor. Although black women make up 9 percent of Milwaukee's population, they account for 30 percent of evictions in the city, which had a housing crisis even before the Great Recession. One in eight renters experienced a "forced move" during the height of the recession, and one in five black women in Milwaukee will face an eviction sometime in their lives.

A shattering account of life on the American fringe, Matthew Desmond's *Evicted* shows the reality of a housing crisis that few among the political or media elite ever think much about, let alone address. It takes us to the center of what would be seen as an emergency of significant proportions if the poor had any legitimate political agency in American life. More than 20 percent of Americans spend over half their income each week on rent, a number that continues to rise, recession or not. For many of the individuals Desmond profiles—including a heroin-addicted ex-nurse who can't get into an underfunded county rehabilitation program, and a trailer-park property manager whose job hangs in the balance after local politicians target his park as a site of prostitution and drug running—there is little hope of breaking out of the cycle of unstable housing.

EVICTED: POVERTY AND PROFIT IN THE AMERICAN CITY
BY MATTHEW DESMOND
Crown, 432 pp., $28

Desmond introduces us to Patrice Hinkston and her three children as they face eviction from a ramshackle building that Tarver, a black working-class striver with "bobbed hair and fresh nails," owns in the north Milwaukee ghetto. Patrice is given an eviction notice as she pushes the wheelchair of her neighbor, a Vietnam veteran named Lamar, along the street. Soon, he too receives an eviction notice for nonpayment of rent. Lamar tries to work his debt off by painting and improving the apartment Tarver has evicted Patrice from. He is cheap but costs more than hiring "hypes," the droves of out-of-work men in the community, some homeless, who will labor for well below minimum wage.

After her eviction, Patrice moves her family into another of Tarver's buildings on the same lot, an apartment where her mother and siblings already live. The result is eight people crowded into a derelict two-bedroom apartment with a broken sink, bathtub, and "barely working" toilet. Withholding rent does not compel Tarver to make repairs—she claims the Hinkstons broke the facilities—and calling a building inspector can be perilous. Tenant protections largely disappear for families who are behind on their rent, as Patrice's mother was before her daughter and her family moved in. She, too, is eventually taken to eviction court, riding the bus through snowy Milwaukee at Christmastime to appear. The city used to place a moratorium on evictions over Christmas, but no longer.

Tarver's neglect of her properties comes off as cruel, but Desmond avoids painting her as a villain. She has been hardened by doing her desperate tenants favors, he informs us, giving them food and clothing when they have none, providing when the state can't or won't. This goodwill, in Tarver's eyes, has been returned with late rent payments or broken appliances. After being lenient with a tenant who is ultimately involved in a shooting in one of her apartments, Tarver and her partner clean the blood out of the rug. Calls to law enforcement to settle a domestic-violence dispute end with the police threatening Tarver with fines and recommending she evict the victim of the reported abuse.

THE SON OF a working-class preacher, Desmond is an associate professor of social sciences at Harvard, and he did much of his research as he completed a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. *Evicted* recalls Studs Terkel's searching representations of ordinary people in their jobs in his 1974 book, *Working*, and more recently, George Packer's account of the disintegration of the social contract in *The Unwinding* in 2013. Desmond, who lived in a trailer park and a roach-infested ghetto duplex while working on the book, suggests that evictions, and the rise of property management as a profession, are causes rather than mere symptoms of entrenched poverty.

Residents such as Arleen, a mother of two boys with few job prospects, no husband, and declining state support, evicted by Tarver multiple times, might be hard to root for. The Paul Ryans of the world would surely mark this woman, a sufferer of sexual abuse doing the best she can with the terrible hand she's been dealt, as a "taker," "welfare queen," or whatever the proper code for black layabout is at the moment. But Arleen is also a person who, like many of those profiled, cannot get government housing assistance because of her eviction record. Other landlords will not rent to her because of that very record, and she often finds herself choosing between feeding her children and selling

their food stamps. She needs the money to pay for any number of things, from shoes for her children to a storage unit for their soon to be evicted belongings. These are almost impossible choices for anyone, but ones that many cultural commentators feel happy to pathologize from afar.

Vulnerable children who live in poverty are often victimized for the paltriest of reasons. Desmond's account begins with Arleen's sons passing a winter afternoon by having a snowball fight that includes passing cars as collateral damage. After his car is struck by a snowball, a driver chases them, kicking down the door of the house where they live. The landlord uses this as cause to remove the family, which leads them first to shelters, and finally to Tarver's apartments.

Eviction weighs on the spirit of the evictee, driving already vulnerable people to overwhelming anxiety, and exacerbating the likelihood of further bad choices, depression, and even suicide. Desmond provides an account of one county sheriff who entered an eviction proceeding, intent on removing a tenant alive, but who instead witnessed a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The number of suicides attributed to evictions doubled between 2005 and 2010 as the housing crisis consumed much of the American economy. "Eviction does not simply drop poor families into a dark valley, a trying yet relatively brief detour on life's journey," Desmond writes toward the end of the book. "It fundamentally redirects their way, casting them onto a different, and much more difficult, path."

Help from the state is difficult to access. Desmond powerfully shows that in times of crisis the poor can often rely only on one another. Time and again in *Evicted* we see the bonds of support, both financial and in kind, that poor people form with each other: Daughters, freshly evicted with their children, move into the equally precarious homes of their mothers; sisters move in with their brothers; new tenants who are complete strangers share their space with previously evicted tenants. These deals are struck out of something more lasting than necessity: the recognition that "there but for the grace of God go I." One evictee contemplates "the lawns and jobs and children and normal problems" that other members of his family still enjoy, before declining to ask them for help. As Desmond quickly observes, "middle-class relatives could be useless that way."

IT HASN'T ALWAYS been this way. As Desmond explains early in the book, eviction used to be a remarkably rare proceeding in American life. This was not because the government was more benevolent, but because communities were able to unite and take action against landlords more easily. Eviction riots were not uncommon during the Great Depression, and Desmond finds, for instance, an account of the eviction of three Bronx families in a *New York Times* article from February 1932 that suggests nearly a thousand people turned up in their defense.

But such solidarity is hard-won in postindustrial ghettos and transient trailer parks, where everyone wants a way out instead of finding a way to lift everything, and everyone, up. Whereas sheriff squads now have full-time eviction units, there was a time when marshals were "ambivalent about carrying out evictions." They had other reasons for picking up a badge and a gun.

"If poverty persists in America, it is not for lack of resources," Desmond concludes, before recommending, among other things, a universal voucher system to provide housing for every American. The housing market and its effect on low-income families remains an underreported area, even after Ta-Nehisi Coates's landmark 2014 *Atlantic* essay, "The Case for Reparations," which focused on how housing discrimination extracted billions of dollars from African American families over the decades of the Great Migration. *Evicted* takes a bold first step in describing various aspects of this problem as it exists today. Not the least of these is that "most federal housing subsidies benefit families with six-figure incomes." Until we spread wealth more effectively, needless suffering will persist.

Men Are Pointless

BY **DOROTHEA LASKY**

Maleness as a construct is pretty pointless
Men are painful

Being pregnant taught me
What assholes men really are

Making fun of my pumping
In the bathroom or the office

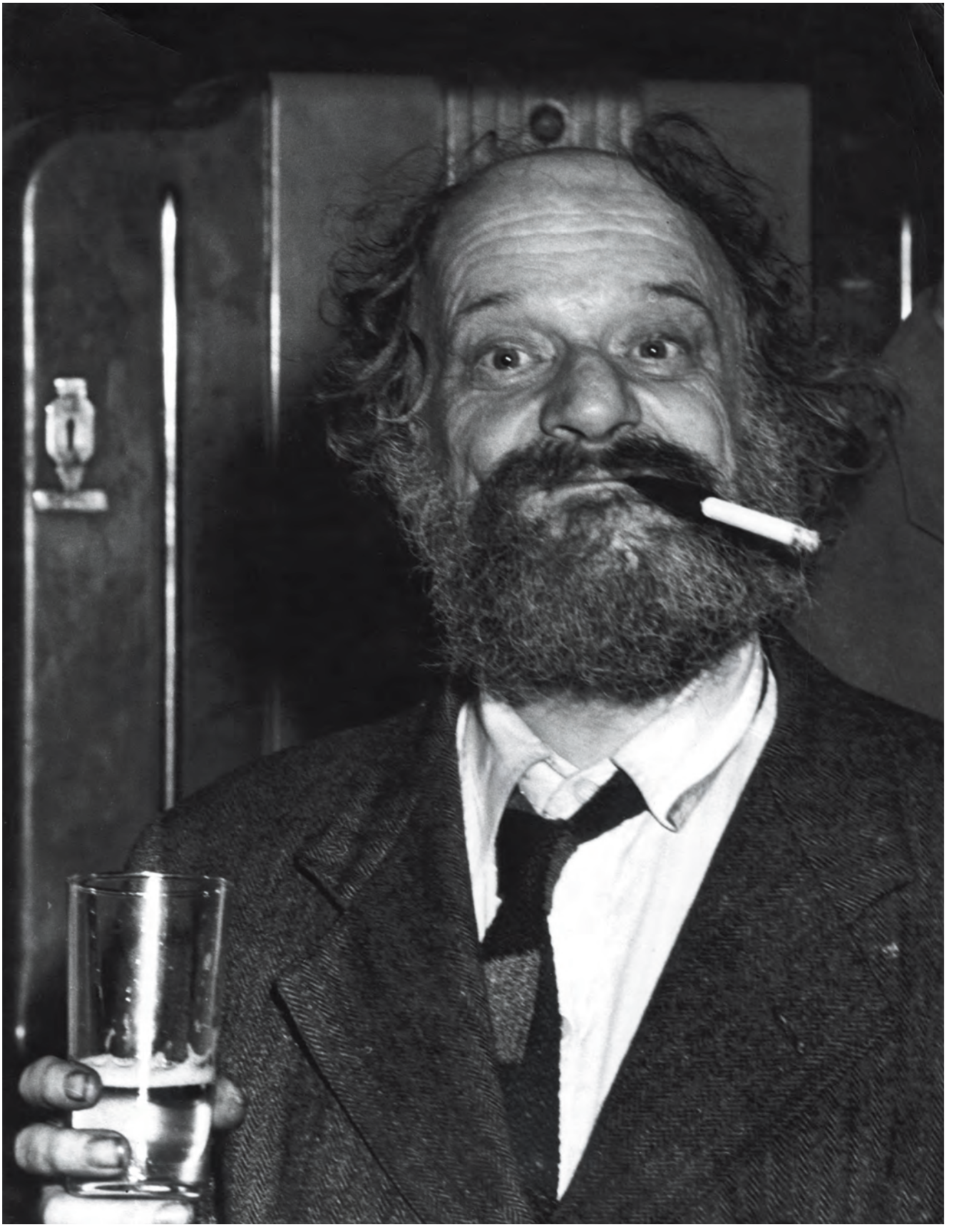
I want to live in a world
Where she exists

Man smoking in turquoise gym shorts
I need to write more things down

The song I can't fight this feeling is playing in the deli
Everytime I think of you

Movie star by the lake
With the flamingos so calm, neon roses

Dorothea Lasky is the author of ROME *(Liveright, 2014).*



Joe Gould was a fixture of the bars of lower Manhattan. Photograph by Weegee.

BOOKS

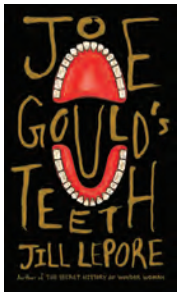
Scandal in Bohemia

Jill Lepore rewrites the history of a Greenwich Village hero.

BY **EVAN KINDLEY**

IT'S BEEN MANY decades now since historians began to dismantle "Great Man" theories of history, emphasizing their narrowness and artificiality. Histories from below, social history, microhistory: All of these well-established trends have been aimed at making the historical narrative more inclusive, more fine-grained, less elitist. Yet there is still a group of people who tend to be overrepresented in historical writing: namely, writers. "The past is what's written down," Jill Lepore writes in her new book *Joe Gould's Teeth*. "It is very quiet; only people who can write make any sound at all."

Lepore has long been interested in gaps in the historical record and in the way some figures inevitably crowd out others. Her first book, *The Name of War*, which won the Bancroft Prize in 1999, reconstructed a war between New England colonists and Native Americans from the natives' point of view; she has since written a biography of Benjamin Franklin's sister and a "secret history" of Wonder Woman. In a 2001 article in *The Journal of American History* titled "Historians Who Love Too Much," she declared that one of her aspirations is to "betray people who have left abundant records in order to resurrect those who did not." Even when we try to turn away from the powerful and famous in favor of the marginal and obscure, we are limited by the evidence available to us. Some people speak volumes; others are silent. It's easy to say that history should be about more than great men, but in practice we are often stuck with those who felt themselves, rightly or wrongly, to be great. It takes work to see past them, to read between the lines.



JOE GOULD'S TEETH
BY JILL LEPORE

Alfred A. Knopf,
256 pp., $25

Joe Gould's Teeth, Lepore's eleventh book in 18 years, takes for its subject a man who could not stop writing, and who certainly thought of himself (despite much evidence to the contrary) as a great man. In Joseph Mitchell's 1942 *New Yorker* profile "Professor Sea Gull," Joe Gould is introduced as "a blithe and emaciated little man who has been a notable in the cafeterias, diners, barrooms, and dumps of Greenwich Village for a quarter of a century." Gould was the scion of a wealthy New England family and had attended Harvard, but by the time Mitchell encountered him he was homeless, roaming the streets of New York, subsisting on plates of diner ketchup ("'the only grub I know of that's free of charge'"), and cadging drinks. "He sleeps on benches in subway stations, on the floor in the studios of friends, and in quarter-a-night flophouses on the Bowery," Mitchell writes.

What separated Gould from the rest of the city's down-and-out was that he claimed to be working on a book called *The Oral History of Our Time*. The book was to be, in Mitchell's words, "a great hodgepodge and kitchen midden of hearsay, a repository of jabber, an omnium-gatherum of bushwa, gab, palaver, hogwash, flapdoodle, and malarkey, the fruit, according to Gould's estimate, of more than 20,000 conversations." Gould told Mitchell he had been working on the *Oral History* for 26 years, filling up composition books he then stashed with various friends around the city. He boasted that he was setting down "the informal history of the shirt-sleeved multitude" and believed he was destined for posthumous fame:

> A couple of generations after I'm dead and gone ... the Ph.D.s will start lousing through my work. Just imagine their surprise. "Why, I be damned," they'll say, "this fellow was the most brilliant historian of the century."

Mitchell's first profile of Gould, "Professor Sea Gull," was an intriguing and memorable piece of journalism. His second, written more than two decades later, was a masterpiece. "Joe Gould's Secret," published in *The New Yorker* in 1964 and then brought out the following year, along with "Professor Sea Gull," as a book, is one of the greatest pieces of nonfiction of the twentieth century, and in its psychological acuity and narrative mastery it stands alongside the works of Joseph Conrad and Henry James.

"Joe Gould's Secret" is framed as a confession. Gould had died in 1957 and only now, Mitchell tells us, can he reveal the truth he'd learned about the man he'd made famous more than two decades earlier. Mitchell relates how, after the publication of "Professor Sea Gull," Gould begins to show up regularly at *The New Yorker* offices to ask for money—what he called "contributions to the Joe Gould Fund"—and to hold court for hours at a time. Mitchell, initially tolerant of Gould's erratic behavior, becomes increasingly frustrated as various attempts to get the *Oral History* published come to naught. Eventually, after Gould sabotages a series of meetings with book editors, Mitchell snaps:

> "I'm beginning to believe," I went on, "that the oral history doesn't exist." This remark came from my unconscious, and I was barely aware of the meaning of what I was saying ... but the next moment, glancing at Gould's face, I knew as

> well as I knew anything that I had blundered upon the truth about the oral history.

Mitchell came to believe that Gould had been lying for decades about the state of his magnum opus in order to convince friends to keep supporting him. The composition books he had been able to inspect contained not oral history but variations on a handful of autobiographical topics. "[Gould] must have found out long ago," Mitchell speculates, "that he didn't have the genius or the talent, or maybe the self-confidence or the industry or the determination, to bring off a work as huge and grand as he had envisioned"; his constant scribbling in fact amounted to a desperate avoidance of the project he had set for himself.

Gould failed to write the history of the shirt-sleeved multitude, but he did, via Mitchell, manage to leave a literary legacy of a sort. Although initially disgusted by Gould's deceptions, Mitchell comes to identify with him all the more strongly, in part because he himself has long been procrastinating writing an autobiographical novel, modeled on James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which never comes to fruition. He even comes to have a sort of respect for Gould's charade: "The Eccentric Author of a Great, Mysterious, Unpublished Book—that was his mask," Mitchell marvels. "And hiding behind it, he had created a character a good deal more complicated, it seemed to me, than most of the characters created by the novelists and playwrights of his time." Somehow, even in exposing Gould, Mitchell manages to glorify him. We're back to the great man, ambitious and influential even in his failure.

Lepore's new book is both homage and corrective to *Joe Gould's Secret*. She is clear about her admiration for Mitchell's writing, and his patient, unpretentious prose appears to have had an influence on her, as it has on so many *New Yorker* writers. Yet something doesn't sit right with her about his portrayal of Gould, which for more than 50 years has stood as the definitive account. In one sense, she defends Gould against Mitchell's charges by suggesting that the *Oral History* may, in fact, exist after all. But she also judges Gould in ways Mitchell never thought to, looking beyond the spectacle of his own abjection to the pain and misery he caused others.

Lepore is a prodigious researcher, and her book adds much to the annals of Gouldiana. Despite Gould's inability to finish—or perhaps even properly begin—the *Oral History*, he did leave copious evidence of his existence in the form of letters, diaries, and other written scraps, and Lepore was able to draw on these. "It turns out that a graphomaniac is an exceptionally satisfying research subject," she comments wryly. Much of what he left behind is disturbing and undermines Mitchell's relatively fond portrait of him. She digs into his history of mental illness, suggesting that he may have been autistic, and finds evidence that he underwent electroshock therapy and even a partial lobotomy later in life. His attitudes and actions toward women and people of color surface uncomfortably. "The more I learned about Joe Gould, the more melancholy, and the uglier, it got," Lepore writes.

She also gives serious attention to Gould's youthful interest in eugenics, a subject mentioned but glossed over by Mitchell in both of his profiles. During a period of leave from Harvard in 1915, Gould worked for the Eugenics Office in Cold Spring Harbor, New York, which dispatched him on a research expedition to measure the skulls of Native Americans in North Dakota. Lepore connects this trip—treated as nothing more than a colorful anecdote by Mitchell—to the young Gould's overwhelming preoccupation with theories of race and degeneration. He was particularly fixated, according to Lepore, on the idea of interracial sex, which he professed to abhor: "Even imagining sex across the color line, Gould believed, causes 'an antipathy which is involuntary and is felt with such violence that it is comparable to the extreme repugnance some people have to snakes.' " Yet his private conduct in subsequent years, Lepore reveals, suggests he was in fact repressing forbidden desires.

This last speculation is supported by another of Lepore's major additions to Gould's story: her account of his long infatuation with the African American sculptor Augusta Savage, a prominent artist of the Harlem Renaissance. "Gould hardly ever left her alone," Lepore writes. "He wrote her endless letters. He telephoned her constantly. If she gave an exhibit, he showed up." This was not so much a love affair as a prolonged stalking: In the correspondence between Gould and his friends regarding Savage, "[t]here are hints ... of violence, and even of rape." Savage did her best to evade Gould's unwanted advances, even leaving New York for Paris in 1929 in what Lepore surmises was an attempt to escape harassment.

Recovering the story of Augusta Savage is clearly one of Lepore's priorities in *Joe Gould's Teeth*. Just as Mitchell saw himself in Gould, Lepore identifies strongly with Savage, who she admits to thinking of "as if she were me." The difficulty of finding information about Augusta is telling: "In ... archives, all over the country, Gould is everywhere," she writes, while "Savage is hardly anywhere." Lepore reflects frequently on "the asymmetry of the historical record," its tendency to tell us so much more about the lives of white men than those of women or people of color. Like any historian, Lepore is limited by the evidence available to her, and Gould is inevitably at the center of this story, but it is a Gould as Augusta Savage, and the other women he hounded, might have seen him.

"Gould's friends saw a man suffering for art," Lepore writes. "I saw a man tormented by rage. To me, his suffering didn't look romantic and his rage didn't look harmless." With the passing of the years, Gould has been transformed from the comic figure of "Professor Sea Gull" to the tragic impostor of "Joe Gould's Secret" to the sinister and unstable obsessive of *Joe Gould's Teeth*. This is a Joe Gould for the age of Dylann Roof and Elliot Rodger.

WHY, LEPORE WONDERS, was such a chaotic person not only tolerated but celebrated by the intelligentsia of his time? She notes that even before the publication of Mitchell's profile, Gould was exceptionally well connected in literary and artistic circles. His friends and benefactors included the poet E.E. Cummings, the playwright William Saroyan, and the painter Alice Neel. Early on he published in prestigious little magazines like *Broom* and *The Dial*, and later Malcolm Cowley gave him book review assignments for the NEW REPUBLIC. When a woman Gould was harassing had him arrested, Edmund Wilson came forward as a character witness. Ezra Pound was a frequent correspondent and ardent supporter. William Carlos Williams was his doctor (presumably pro bono).

In Lepore's view, Mitchell's 1942 profile was the culmination of an effort on behalf of these powerful friends to boost Gould's reputation and keep him from ending up in an asylum. (He had already spent some time in the Manhattan State Hospital for the Insane, circa 1929.) "One way to think about the legend of Joe Gould," she proposes, "is that it was a fiction contrived by men who wanted to help him stay out of an institution." In other words, Joe Gould's carefully nurtured fame was the result of a kind of literary conspiracy: a more or less deliberate campaign to present an addled, troubled sexual predator as "an artist, a bohemian, suffering for his art, suffering for *their* art, suffering for all art."

Less effective is Lepore's attempt to reverse the magic trick that Mitchell performed in "Joe Gould's Secret" vis-à-vis the *Oral History*. The moment that Mitchell "blunder[s] upon the truth"—or what he believes to be the truth—about the nonexistence of Gould's book is one of the most dramatic moments in literary journalism. Lepore views Mitchell's grand revelation with skepticism. "It made a better story in 1942 if the *Oral History* existed. It made a better story in 1964 if it did not," she comments, correctly. She herself seems intent on overturning "Joe Gould's Secret" the way Mitchell overturned "Professor Sea Gull," and if she had been able to locate a substantial portion of the manuscript of *The Oral History of Our Time*, it would indeed have been a coup.

Unfortunately, however, Lepore doesn't find all that much more of the *Oral History* than Mitchell did. She quotes from several letters Mitchell received after the publication of "Joe Gould's Secret" from people who claimed to have read significant portions of the *Oral History*, and she manages to dig up a few notebooks containing material that more closely resembles oral history than anything Mitchell was able to find. But she herself admits that such stray fragments would only be valuable if they were indeed part of some much larger whole.

At this point, the question of whether Gould's *Oral History* "actually exists" is more a qualitative than a quantitative one. There is no doubt Gould filled up plenty of notebook pages with *something*, nor even that some portion of the material he put there could be accurately described as "oral history." But is it a book, or even the makings of one? It's clear Gould destroyed large portions of what he wrote, and that much of what survives is redundant. To decide what it all amounts to, we'd need a scholarly edition to collect and compare the various drafts and fragments scattered in research libraries and private collections throughout the country. Given the scale of the task and the slightness of the rewards, it's somewhat unlikely that anyone will actually undertake this labor.

There is still a group of people who tend to be overrepresented in historical writing: namely, writers.

But, then, it's not unthinkable: Gould has wormed his way into literary history, and he appears to be lodged there for good. The number of pages devoted to his "oeuvre," such as it is, already dwarfs that of many well-published authors of his era. Lepore acknowledges that Gould, the famous obsessive, is also a frequent cause of obsession in others. "There ought to be a DANGER sign" on this story, she muses:

> Writers tumble into this story and then they plummet. I have always supposed this to be because Gould suffered from graphomania—he could not stop writing—which is an illness, but seems more like something a writer might have to envy, which feels even rottener than envy usually does because Joe Gould was a toothless madman who slept in the street. You are envying a bum: Has it come to this, at last? But then you're relieved of the misery of that envy when you learn that what he wrote was dreadful. Except, wait, that's worse, because then you have to ask: Maybe everything you write is dreadful, too?

Joe Gould's Teeth is far from a dreadful book—it's a rather wonderful one, in fact—but it is, like *Joe Gould's Secret* before it, full of dread. Joe Gould haunts journalists and historians alike as he raises unwelcome questions about the limitations of what they do. At times Lepore's book feels like an exorcism, an attempt to banish Gould's unquiet spirit from the archives, to undermine the power he wields. At other times, it falls under that uncanny power itself.

Taking Wing

Did Vladimir Nabokov's literary fame overshadow his scientific achievements?

BY **LAURA MARSH**

IN THE SPRING OF 1970, a 71-year-old Vladimir Nabokov gave chase to a rare, orange butterfly on the slopes of Mount Etna, sweating and panting, his lips "white rimmed with thirst and excitement." Tucking the specimen into the inside pocket of his jacket, he told a *New York Times* reporter, "It is a feeling I usually get at my writing desk." Nabokov began collecting butterflies as a child in Russia, and when he came to the United States he spent his first years working in museums and publishing a dozen papers on lepidoptery, the study of butterflies and moths. He liked to be photographed with his huge gauzy net—high on a mountainside near Gstaad, Switzerland, or bounding down a country lane in Ithaca, New York, where Carl Mydans famously photographed him for *Life* in 1958. Hinting occasionally at a "merging between the two things," the fiction and the collecting, he courted the image of novelist-as-scientist, or, as the late Karl Miller called him drily, "Monsieur Butterfly."

FINE LINES: VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S SCIENTIFIC ART
EDITED BY STEPHEN H. BLACKWELL AND KURT JOHNSON
Yale University Press, 336 pp., $50

Since the success of *Lolita* in the mid-1950s, Nabokovites—both lepidopterists and literary critics—have tried to re-create his exhilarating field trips, as though the way he captured butterflies might reveal something about the way he captured ideas and details in his recondite, meticulous prose. In 2000, Robert Michael Pyle, co-editor of the anthology *Nabokov's Butterflies*, reminisced about his own trip through the Swiss Alps to Montreux in 1977, where he hoped to gain entry to Nabokov's inner sanctum—the Montreux Palace Hotel where he spent his last years—and discuss the region's wildlife; he even slips into Nabokovian diction to describe his hike. ("I brachiated downhill like some anxious ape, swinging from beech to smooth wet gray beech.") In *Fine Lines*, a new book about Nabokov's scientific work, entomologist Robert Dirig makes a pilgrimage to one of the novelist's collecting spots in the Smoky Mountains, where he sees for himself the "glorious blooms of flowering dogwood" and hears rustling in the branches. In another essay in the volume, four biologists compare current scientific methods with Nabokov's, expressing excitement to "have walked in Vladimir Nabokov's footsteps, both literal and conceptual."

But while the romantic and adventurous appeal of these field trips is clear, it's more difficult to reckon with the work those trips actually produced. Nabokov made more than 1,000 technical drawings during the course of his research, and *Fine Lines* presents 148 of them with editors' notes (only a handful have been published before), followed by ten essays from scientists and scholars. Despite the image of a finely observed wing shaded in brown and burnt sienna on the cover, most of these are not drawings of whole butterflies, or anything immediately recognizable as coming from a butterfly. Many are intensely magnified views of butterfly genitalia, which to the untrained eye look more like the down-covered stamens of flowers. (One index card compares 54 mystifying anatomical variants.) Nabokov did keep some whole butterflies in his collection, fixing their intricately patterned wings with a silver pin; but he also kept cabinets full of reproductive organs only, which held the information most useful to him as a scientist.

This body of work, *Fine Lines* argues, should "shed light on his artistic perception and creativity." But it can only do this, if at all, in the most roundabout way. The drawings show a very different type of interest in butterflies than we see in *Pnin*, when they flutter "like blue snowflakes," or in *Pale Fire*, when Charles Kinbote watches a red admiral "dizzily whirling around us like a colored flame." In fact, the more we find out about Nabokov's work as a lepidopterist, the more difficult it is to grasp what he saw in butterflies, and how much his study really found its way into the worlds of his books.

NABOKOV WAS BORN in Saint Petersburg in 1899 and grew up with an attic full of rare and expensive illustrated books on flora and fauna. He began to master the volumes on butterflies—Ernst Hofmann's *Die Gross-Schmetterlinge Europas* and Samuel Hubbard Scudder's *Butterflies of New England* among them—and caught his first specimen when he was seven years old, as he recalls in his memoir *Speak, Memory*. His fervent desire then was to name a new species. At age nine, he wrote to a prominent lepidopterist with what he thought was a discovery, only to be dismissed as one of many "schoolboys who keep naming minute varieties of the Poplar Nymph." Still, he cherished this aspiration into adulthood, writing in his 1943 poem "On Discovering a Butterfly" that "poems that take a thousand years to die" merely "ape the immortality of this / red label on a little butterfly."

By the time he left Europe for America in 1940, however, he was somewhat accomplished in the field. He had been subscribing to English and German journals since childhood, and he

Vladimir Nabokov with his butterflies, Paris, 1959, photographed by Marc Riboud.

had published two papers—on butterfly species of the Crimea and the Pyrenees—in *The Entomologist*. This was enough to win him his first appointment at the American Museum of Natural History, where he learned dissection, and a few years later he gained a position as curator of Lepidoptera at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. He joked in a letter to Edmund Wilson that he had "managed to get into Harvard with a butterfly as my sole backer," though he was not necessarily less a professional than other staff; fewer than one in ten curators there at that time held a Ph.D.

It was during this period of seven or eight years that Nabokov did the bulk of his work, classifying a group of butterflies called blues, which meant that he had to work out how different species were related to one another and how they should be named to show this relation. His taxonomies were intended to show the evolutionary lineage of species, not just superficial resemblances between them. This project was made more difficult because many species of blues could interbreed, could look alike, and could live in the same habitats—it wasn't clear how to define a species at all. Whereas earlier lepidopterists had focused on wing patterns, one of Nabokov's innovations was to compare the genital apparatus of butterflies, allowing him to differentiate between blues that were, as *Fine Lines*'s editors put it, "otherwise confusingly alike externally."

Under his new system of sorting and naming, Nabokov found blues were a more diverse group than had previously been known. This led him to what several writers in *Fine Lines* and elsewhere now agree was his greatest achievement as a lepidopterist: He was able to put forward an explanation of how blues colonized the Americas and subsequently evolved. He proposed that blues came from Asia, and crossed the Bering Strait, moving down through the Americas, but that not all blues were descended from these first Asian ancestors. There had been, he believed, not one but five waves of colonization, each producing different groups of species.

He wrote this paper in 1945; by the mid-1950s, he found himself with little time for lepidopterological studies, although he continued to collect butterflies as a hobby. He was now too busy with the "writing of new novels and the translating of old ones," which took precedence (despite his musings on the immortality of the "red label") over all else. As he told a German magazine, "the miniature hooks of a male butterfly are

nothing in comparison to the eagle claws of literature which tear at me day and night." After this retirement, his findings were mostly ignored.

All this began to change in the 1990s, when a group of researchers—including Kurt Johnson, one of the editors of *Fine Lines*—verified Nabokov's classification of blues, an event described in greater detail in the 2001 book *Nabokov's Blues*. Then in 2011, DNA studies also confirmed Nabokov's explanation of the evolution of the New World blues. There has since then been much debate about the importance of this work. The editors of *Fine Lines* claim that Nabokov was the victim of "malign neglect" in the entomological community, arguing that scientists didn't take him seriously because of his literary fame, and they set out to correct this by making big—sometimes implausible—claims for him. They write of Nabokov as a "visionary" who was able to grasp evolutionary patterns through his "apparent ability to create a virtual zoetrope in his head to see ten million years" of change. Another essay calls Nabokov "a genius not only of the artistic but of the scientific kind." The editors even claim that Nabokov would have achieved still greater importance had he continued: "He would have mastered, and welcomed, all the new advances of the modern synthesis," they write. "Any other assessment seems unrealistic."

This profession of faith doesn't sit well with the book's scientific claims. Moreover, some of the arguments of Nabokov's detractors are convincing. In her review of *Nabokov's Blues* for *Science* in 2000, entomologist May Berenbaum pointed out that just because Nabokov's findings had been proven correct didn't mean those findings were particularly important. "The fact remains," she wrote, "that his research was of modest extent and of interest to only a small segment of the scientific community." Rather than an "unappreciated scientific genius," Berenbaum suggested, Nabokov was in his literary work simply "the best writer about insects ... possibly ever."

IF YOU PLACE his novels and memoirs side by side with his lepidopterological studies, one thing is clear: Nabokov was interested in telling very different stories about butterflies in each. As a lepidopterist, he was interested in stories that spanned vast, geological time periods, informed by fine-grained empirical observations. But in his novels and stories, butterflies flit in and out of the narrative, either to adorn a moment of impossible desire or as flickering omens of doom—as in the case of the red admiral that lands on John Shade's arm before he is assassinated in *Pale Fire*. They are creatures of the ever-disappearing present, hardly existing for any concrete purpose at all; their wings bear the heavy load of subjectivity. In their elusiveness, their intricacy, they embodied the Nabokovian aesthetic; they were, as he wrote in *Speak, Memory,* an emblem of the "non-utilitarian delights" he sought in art.

Fine Lines does not accept quite so stark a distinction between Nabokov's two butterfly-related endeavors. One of the most revealing essays in the volume is Victoria N. Alexander's examination of the way Nabokov's views on butterfly evolution enlivened his imagination. Among Nabokov's more heretical scientific opinions, for instance, was that Darwinian evolution couldn't explain why some butterflies are able to mimic their surroundings so effectively. When a butterfly looks like a leaf, he wrote, "not only are all the details of a leaf beautifully rendered, but markings mimicking grub-bored holes are generously thrown in." The disguise is more realistic, he notes, than necessary to fool a predator, and so it must have come about by chance rather than by natural selection. While, previously, scholars of his work, such as his biographer Brian Boyd, have seen these remarks as unscientific, "dearly held metaphysical speculations," Alexander shows that it was in fact Nabokov's study of wing patterns that led him to this critique, and that his views were "very like those of other reputable scientists of his day who argued against gradualism." The reasoning is scientific and the conclusion is aesthetically gratifying. These superfluous imitations, Alexander explains, were to Nabokov "art for art's sake"—nature's own trompe l'oeil. They appealed to his appetite for practical jokes and coincidences that seemed to yield unexpected meaning.

Other essays in the collection scour Nabokov's works for signs of particular butterfly species, where there is scarcely a trail. Robert Dirig's essay tracks appearances of the Toothwort White, or *Pieris virginiensis*, and related "lepidopteral, ornithological, and botanical motifs" in *Pale Fire* with mixed results. Most impressive is the detective work Dirig carries out, using information about the butterfly's habitat, to figure out the "real" location of New Wye, the fictional college town where the novel is set. Less persuasive is his thesis that Nabokov based the character Hazel Shade, an adolescent girl, on the Toothwort White in its larval stages. The girl and the pupa share, he submits, "a long 'nose', awkwardly humped profile, and wallflower obscurity." Another essay in the collection makes much of butterfly-related puns in *Lolita* without making it clear what these word games reveal.

There's a special sense in which all of this activity, however unenlightening, is essentially Nabokovian. His works, ripe with multiple meanings and laced with esoteric clues, invite the kind of obsessive close reading that Charles Kinbote himself performs in *Pale Fire*, adding copious footnotes to John Shade's 999-line poem. To build extravagant theories on the most minute details and to strike out into one's own Alpine meadows with net in hand, seeking purely personal epiphanies, is only to follow the lead of Nabokov's characters.

Nabokov himself, meanwhile, seemed to take pride in discouraging indulgent readings of his butterfly work. When he died in 1977, he was working on a new book with a scientific focus, an illustrated history of *Butterflies in Art*, ranging from ancient Egypt to the Renaissance. It was to include works by Hieronymus Bosch, Jan Brueghel, Albrecht Dürer, and many others, though he complained their depictions were imprecise and ignorant. He traveled across small towns in Italy, France, and the Netherlands, asking curators to call up more accurate but little-known still lifes from their stacks. "That in some cases the butterfly symbolizes something," he insisted, "lies utterly outside my area of interest."

Blood Brothers

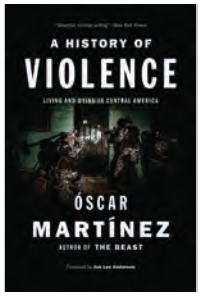
Life and death among the gangs of Central America.

BY **SARAH ESTHER MASLIN**

EL NIÑO HOLLYWOOD was a scrappy preteen, dirt-poor and wide-eyed, when he met Chepe Furia. The 26-year-old, hardened by the Mara Salvatrucha gang on the streets of Los Angeles, had recently returned to El Salvador to build his child army. It was 1994. Furia flashed his shiny truck and brand-name clothes to reel in El Niño and two dozen of his adolescent friends. In abandoned houses in the province of Ahuachapán, he told stories of great battles against the Barrio 18 gang, and forced the boys to beat the hell out of each other. He showed them his weapons: one 9mm and two .22-caliber pistols. That was it—they were in.

Furia named his new posse the "Hollywood Locos" and declared war on the rival gang. El Niño was 15 years old when he grabbed one of the pistols and, to impress Furia, shot a Barrio 18 member, slitting his throat for good measure. He and his fellow apprentice assassins would drink and smoke pot at Furia's two-story house, which served as a lookout for police. Some of the boys would arrive still wearing their school uniforms.

Nearly two decades later, in 2012, when Óscar Martínez started reporting about El Niño for El Faro, a San Salvador–based online publication dedicated to investigative journalism, the gangster was living in a shack with his teenage wife, smoking crack to pass the time, cocking the triggers of two pistols at the sound of any stir. Whole swaths of El Salvador belonged to the gangs, making the country one of the most murderous in the world. El Niño himself had 56 kills: "About six women and the rest men. I'm including faggots as men, 'cause I've killed two faggots," he bragged to Martínez.



A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: LIVING AND DYING IN CENTRAL AMERICA
BY ÓSCAR MARTÍNEZ
Verso, 257 pp., $24.95

But fortune had caught up to El Niño. He was 29—over the hill in gangster years. His murders and several stints as a protected witness had flooded the valley with his enemies, and he knew his time was running out. Martínez, aware his reportorial project had an expiration date, started visiting El Niño once a month. El Niño welcomed the visits—he had nothing to lose—and awaited his own death.

The story of El Niño Hollywood snakes through Martínez's new book, *A History of Violence: Living and Dying in Central America*, a compilation of 14 articles Martínez wrote between 2011 and 2015 for the crime investigations desk of El Faro. It's the story of how a war-torn region became a gang-torn one and how the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have categorically failed to protect their young men and women from becoming victims of the gangs, and in many cases, from becoming the victimizers.

Martínez dives into the underworld of his subjects, navigating barrios that police won't enter, spending days and nights with gang members. His methods resemble war reporting and his prose is cinematic. He describes a scene in which he and his brother—an anthropologist, equally lionhearted—are waiting in a truck on the side of a rural road.

> Then, suddenly, El Niño bursts onto the street. He had a short machete in his hand and his hand cannon and five 12-gauge cartridges on his belt. He was wearing the same balaclava that he wore on top of his head like a hat during the first trial. He jumped in the backseat of the pickup (my brother Juan was in the passenger seat) and started frantically looking around, obviously frightened. "Hit it! Hit it!" he said. "Step on it!"

This adrenaline rush will be familiar to those who read Martínez's first book, *The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail*, in which he followed migrants, coyotes, and drug lords on the journey north undertaken by tens of thousands of Central Americans each year.

That book won Martínez critical acclaim in the United States and Europe, and in Latin America it reinforced his reputation as one of a few journalists willing to dig at the grime under the fingernails of the Mexican government. His new book—which pries its histories of violence from the lips of corrupt officials and the paranoid minds of gang members—is no less fearless.

In January, I moved to San Salvador to work as a freelance journalist and to write a book about trauma among survivors of a 1981 massacre. Soon after I arrived, I ran into Martínez at a party. We talked about a 23-year-old Salvadoran radio journalist who was shot to death on March 10 for refusing to give information to local gang members—they sliced his tongue off with a machete.

When I asked about the risks he faces, Martínez told me that reporters like this young man—who lived in a barrio saturated with gangs—have it much harder than he and his colleagues do. Martínez knows how to tourniquet a bullet wound, but he probably won't ever need to do so because he avoids situations where he could be a target. At the end of the day, he sleeps in a house with private security. "If I get shot and bleed to death, it's my own fault," he said.

A member of the MS-13 gang paints graffiti on a wall inside the Chalatenango jail in El Salvador. Photograph by Moises Saman.

I understood. I first started reporting in El Salvador as an undergraduate. Over the years, as my ignorance about the gangs pushed me to read and ask questions, as the monster under the bed has become a network of sources, and as my skittishness has slowly dissipated, I've come to realize that whatever fear I experience can't compare to the relentless terror of living in a gang-controlled neighborhood, unable to leave.

Martínez has reported in much more dangerous places than I have. So far his instincts have served him well, and El Faro has sent him out of the country when he has received threats. Still, the unspoken rules of reporting in El Salvador—drive with the windows up, call the gang leader before arriving so he's not taken by surprise—are a constant negotiation of fear and trust with one's sources and with oneself. Martínez has been called reckless for getting too close to gangsters. I worry less about his body and more about his spirit.

Martínez sees a widening gulf between the gangs and the rest of the population, and he's trying to build a bridge before it's too late. By publishing in English, he confronts an additional challenge: How do you make insulated Americans care about far-off El Salvador? How do you nudge the needle from apathy to action? At his least effective, Martínez's explanation of why we *should* care, comes across as saccharine moralizing: "My proposal is that you know what is going on. ... This book is about the lives of the people who serve you coffee every morning." He's right—but guilt doesn't change policy, or sell books.

More effective are the parts in which Martínez marvels at the "logic of an ape" that led U.S. politicians to deport 4,000 gang members from Los Angeles back to El Salvador in the '90s. The gangs spread like poison: Authorities now estimate there are 60,000 active members in El Salvador, with half a million more—relatives, business partners—dependent on the gangs. The problem has come full circle, Martínez insists, mentioning the exodus of Central American migrants to the U.S.-Mexico border. Whoever dreamed up the mass deportation of gangsters, he writes, "spat straight up into the sky."

IN THE FIRST two sections of the book, "Emptiness" and "Madness," Martínez aims to debunk the notion that the Salvadoran government is united against the gangs. It's not. By the early 2000s, Chepe Furia and his murderous youth group had finagled their way into the political echelons of Atiquizaya, a town of 30,000 near the border with Guatemala. The gangster was renting his white Isuzu dump truck to the mayor for trash collection, snagging $2,500 a month, and using his connections—a spokesman for the mayor moonlighted as Furia's treasurer—to operate a slew of businesses, legal and illegal, from car dealerships to a drug distribution network. To make matters worse,

MAGNUM

every time a dogged police inspector captured Furia and sent him to jail, a circuit court judge went out of his way to get the gangster released. Finally, in 2012, with the help of El Niño's testimony, police and prosecutors succeeded in locking up Furia for murder. The crooked judge remained on the bench.

Mind-boggling corruption is the norm in Central America, and it offers one explanation as to why governments here have failed so miserably at defeating the gangs. Policemen and politicians are rendered powerless by the gangster hydra: Slay or imprison one top leader and another emerges to take his place, fattened and shielded by the corrupt officials who should be wielding the sword.

This impotence would be laughable if it weren't so devastating. Salvadoran President Sánchez Cerén declared war on the gangs in January 2015, backing shoot-to-kill policing and a Supreme Court ruling that classifies gang members as terrorists. Violence in El Salvador soared: 6,657 people were murdered last year, among them 63 police officers and 90 children. El Salvador's homicide rate, 103 murders per 100,000 residents, is more than 25 times that of the United States and a hundred times that of England.

A History of Violence also documents Martínez's search for a narrative form to suit his message. The collection's strength lies in his ability to write the hell out of his material, a skill he picked up by reading old stacks of *The New Yorker* and observing how writers like Alma Guillermoprieto and Jon Lee Anderson, who wrote the introduction to the book, used the tools of novelists to make true stories come alive. This kind of journalism is sorely needed in Central America, where the mainstream press refers to gang members as "delinquents" and "terrorists." *A History of Violence* lets them speak for themselves. Like Katherine Boo's *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* and Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's *Random Family*, it skimps on statistics and analysis, instead relying on description alone to create a world that captures the reader and doesn't let her go.

One of the stories, "El Niño Hollywood's Death Foretold," evokes Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.* Like the beloved Colombian writer, Martínez pens scenes that are suspenseful, moving, and vivid. Sometimes they lack context, jumping around in time and place, weaving in and out of the minds of different characters—an unfamiliar reader may feel parachuted into gangland. Without Martínez's skilled storytelling we might never read about these gangs in the first place. But by showing us violence up close, Martínez skirts the danger that his brutal narratives will be read as fiction.

I read the last section, "Fleeing," while on a plane from San Salvador to New York. I'd spent the night with coroners, driving from murder scene to murder scene, lifting bodies into big black trash bags, and shoving the bags into the back of a pickup. One young woman had been shot in the chest so many times I thought the bullet holes were a pattern on her shirt.

As the plane lifted off the ground, I put down the book. It occurred to me that most Americans will never understand what it means to flee. Unlike the men and women for whom violence is everyday life in Central America, we can simply leave.

Black Glove

BY **D.A. POWELL**

There she was we said
flat on her back on the sidewalk
outside Burdick's like a lost crow
in the snow, splayed
open as a question
mark, the time,
mark the time
you said, like it was dead
and picked it up

Who would have missed this bird
on their fist or their dainty wrist
it seemed she could have been anyone's
but no one claimed her on the street
where fingers extended begged for change
to invest them with humanity again
a simple hand inside a hand

but you took the entire night on
with a warm stranger. And it fit you.

—In Memoriam, C. D. Wright

D. A. Powell's collections include USELESS LANDSCAPE, OR A GUIDE FOR BOYS *(2012) and* REPAST *(2014), both from Graywolf Press. He lives in San Francisco.*

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PHOTOGRAPH BY EDOUARD ELIAS

LOCATION Nîmes, France
DATE August 6, 2015

Military service is often the chosen path of those with a patriotic calling. But for the men of the French Foreign Legion, the country they're trained to fight and die for isn't their own. Volunteers come from all over the world—Panama, Slovakia, the United States—to be sent to some of the most far-flung and dangerous posts occupied by French forces: Afghanistan. Somalia. Chad.

For many young men, however, like the 18-year-old Ukrainian pictured, the Foreign Legion is an escape from harsh conditions at home. As a recruit, he's able to earn more than he would in the Ukrainian military and send money back to his family.

"The Foreign Legion became an opportunity for many to start a new life," said photographer Edouard Elias, who was embedded with a unit in the Central African Republic in 2014 and returned to France the next year to document their training. Under the Legion's culture of anonymity, Legionnaires are required to give up their civilian identities and assume new names. They can revert to their old names after a year, though many decide to let them go for good.

Basic training is physically and mentally grueling—it includes days-long marches and outdoor overnights in the rain. Members of the diverse units often aren't able to communicate except in simple French. Women are not allowed to apply.

But to the men who make it, their unit becomes their family. The Foreign Legion's motto is, tellingly, not a pledge of allegiance to France, but to one another. It reads: "Legio Patria Nostra." The Legion is our homeland.

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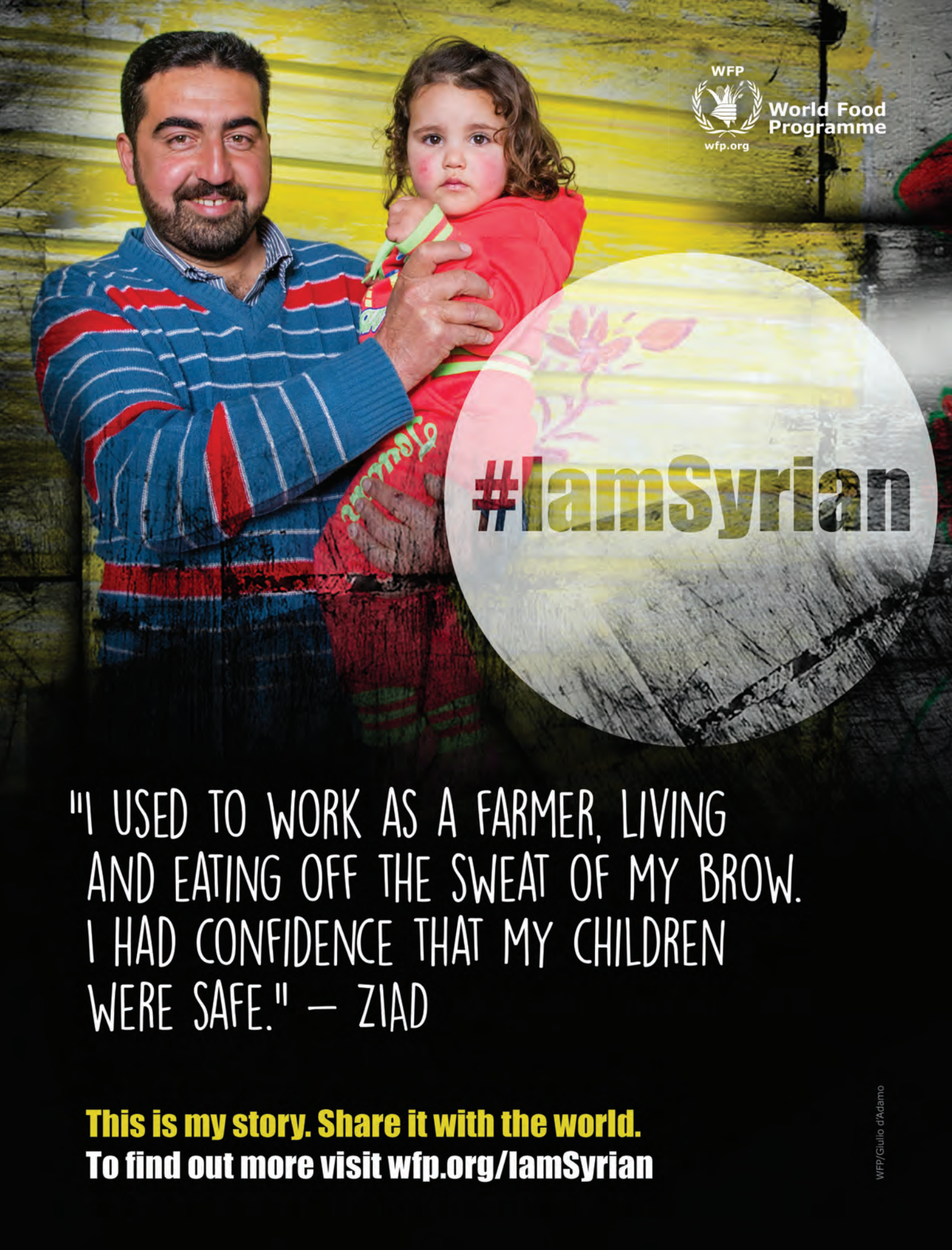
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