

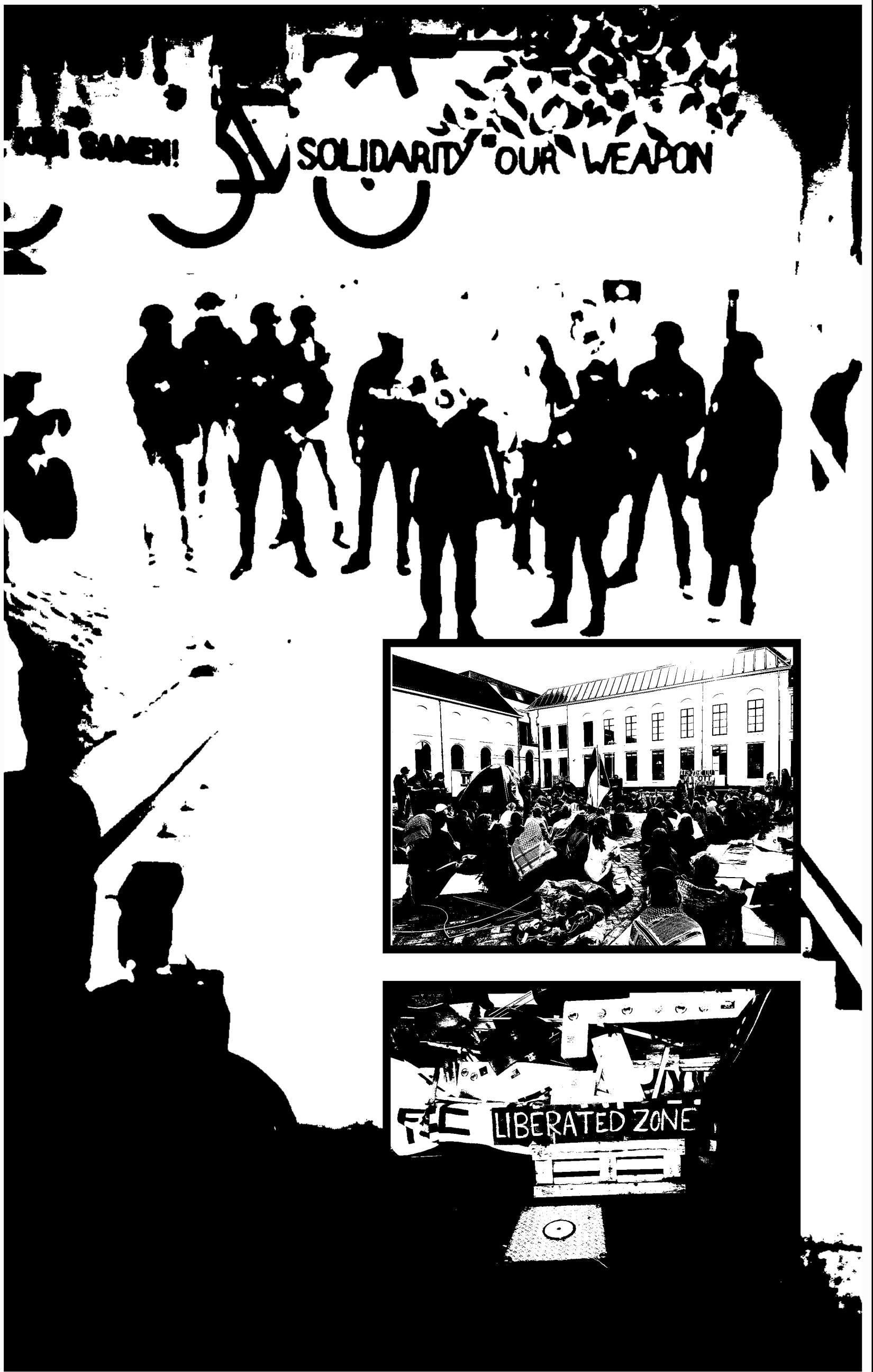
SCOPERANG

2024

**WE ARE PEACEFUL!
WHAT ARE YOU?**

**THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION!
INTIFADA, REVOLUTION!**

**COPS OFF CAMPUS!
HANDS OFF STUDENTS!**



The Stories we Tell Ourselves

by Juliet Tanzer

We are without power, we are not involved, we may benefit but we are not complicit. These are the stories we tell ourselves. That it is far away, that it is not our fault, that we cannot act.

30 000 dead but oh so far away.

We tell ourselves that we cannot see it, when we are not looking.

We tell ourselves that we are not involved. When we are.

We tell ourselves that there is nothing we can do. When there is.

30 000 dead and oh so close to us.

I grew up on two sets of folklore. I grew up on the stories of Post-Apartheid South Africa, and the stories of the Jewish diaspora. These stories were always in contrast, the one characterised by the hope of a democratic transition away from Apartheid, the other a tale of the supposed necessity of subjugation, oppression, and apartheid. This tale was told to the victims of European antisemitism in Shtetls and Ghetto's to those on-board refugee ships that were turned away. To those fleeing pogroms and those survivors of the Shoah, the greatest cruelty committed on European soil. It was a tale of a promised land. It was the lie of a Land without People for a People without Land. It was the ultimate acceptance of the same European values that had ruined the lives of Jews in Europe, that people can only exist in ethnonational states.

“ Do not tell yourself that this has nothing to do with you, that there is nothing you can do. Rather, recognise that together we can demand change.

It should not matter what tragedy was committed against you if you then colonise someone else. My ancestors' role in the Johannesburg gold rush and colonisation of South Africa are no less horrific because they had come there fleeing the pogroms of 19th century Lithuania. It did not matter that those who went to Palestine in the early 20th century fled the same enemies. They both colonised, they both oppressed, they both instituted apartheid. They both told the same stories. Stories of righteousness, of divine will, of democratising and spreading modern, western values. They tell the same stories to themselves. The South African Swaart Gevaar (Black Fear) is replicated in Israeli fears of the “demographic threat” of Palestinians. The fear of rooi (Red) terrorism in South Africa repeats itself in Israeli descriptions of Islamism; it is the same story of a terrorist other that has simply been updated from a Cold War to Post-9/11 world.

There are also other stories being told by my Israeli relatives, and they are the same as those ut-

tered in South Africa decades ago. What apartheid does so successfully is segregate worlds, so much so that eventually you can claim to be unaware of the other world's existence. A white South African baas may have willed themselves to ignorance to the pain they inflicted on the Black South Africans who they employed for pittances, pain inflicted through segregation, land theft and the creation of Bantustans. Israelis now claim that same ignorance, unawareness of apartheid walls, of settler violence, of the Nakba and the Naksa and now of the genocide they inflict.

The stories Israelis tell are not the stories of my religion or of my culture. Judaism is based on



two central tenets. When one of our greatest Rabbis, Hillel the Elder, summarised Judaism he said as follows: “what is hateful to you, do not do to another person, the rest is commentary.” This golden rule of morality has clearly been broken by a state that claims Judaism at its core, the apartheid instituted by the state is antithetical to the morality of this religion. The second tenet of Judaism is to question, in fact the name Israel, that has been bastardised by this Zionist entity, means to one who grapples with God. Judaism is a religion of arguing, of debate and rigorous questioning. It is a religion that demands we question, and so we must continue to question not only the actions of the Zionist entity, but also all institutions and all states that work with them. We must wrestle these institutions, like Jacob wrestles with God, such that they change for the better.

We often tell ourselves stories about our own ability to change the world around us. It is easy

to place ourselves in either of two extremes - either that we as individuals can change the world, or that we are useless in the face of the powers. The truth is far murkier. Of course, we cannot do anything alone, and enacting anything that changes the world is never easy. Fortunately, we do not need to act alone. All around the world, people like you and me are working to create change, college campuses across the world have become spaces for change. Ours can too.

“ It should not matter what tragedy was committed against you if you then colonise someone else.

It is important to recognise that this is not simply about re-enacting a performative revolution, it is about demanding change that goes beyond statements against neutrality. It is about power and money, about refusing to work with, to stand with and to fund those committing genocide. The end of Apartheid in South Africa was a complex change, but what cannot be overstated is the role that boycotts played in constricting the economic and cultural capacity of the state and forcing it to accept democracy. The same can be done to Israel.

I urge you to engage in Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS). There are resources for what brands or stores not to buy from to focus pressure on Israel. Cultural boycotts are just as important; boycott Eurovision and help force this university, and all universities to cut ties with Israel. This applies pressure on Israeli civil society to change the policies and realities of Israeli apartheid and genocide.

“ All around the world, people like you and me are working to create change, college campuses across the world have become spaces for change. Ours can too.

I am sure most of you are at least aware of the letter demanding change and accountability from our university, demanding that UCU works to end UU's relationship with a genocidal apartheid state. I urge you all to sign it, to lend your voice to shifting the narrative. Do not let your voices grow quiet, we have an obligation to act. We have an obligation to ourselves, to Gaza and to Palestine. Do not tell yourself that this has nothing to do with you, that there is nothing you can do. Rather, recognise that together we can demand change. Change in this college, in this university, in this country, and in this world. A better world is possible, a world where Never Again is applied to everyone, where morality is not claimed but enacted.

A better world is possible.

Encampment of May 7th

Documents chosen by Jasmine Carder and Yoan Panev on behalf of the Boomerang and Scope Boards

Text by Utrecht in Solidarity with Palestine (USP)

The following is a text circulated on WhatsApp group chats announcing the strike on May 8th in condemnation of the police intervention on the night of May 7th

A Statement Condemning the Use of Police Violence Against Peaceful Students and Staff at Utrecht University

Around 11pm on Tuesday the 7th of May, riot police were called in by Utrecht University's Executive board to Drift Library's courtyard to violently break up the Utrecht University encampment in solidarity with Palestine. The police abused, dragged, and harassed students, staff and faculty. The students were demanding UU to take a stance against the ongoing genocide in Gaza, to disclose, boycott, and divest from Israeli academic institutions complicit in the massacre of 40,000 people in Gaza. This action comes after months of failed attempts at entering into meaningful negotiations with the university. In this encampment the students were exercising their democratic rights to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and academic freedom as protected by the Dutch constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

Hours before, in the afternoon on Tuesday 7th, students and staff had peacefully gathered at the at the Drift Library's courtyard in protest against the ongoing genocide in Palestine and their University's complicity in it. They had set up this Solidarity encampment calling for the University to disclose, divest, and boycott Israeli institutions involved in the occupation of Palestine.

For the entire duration of the demonstration, Anton Pijpers (the president of UU's Executive Board; CVB) was seen at the windows and walking inside the library building, but never once stepped outside to meet with the students. Surprisingly, in its statement this morning, the Executive Board

falsely claims that "protestors ignored their offer to meet" with Anton Pijpers. In fact, students demanded that Anton Pijpers speak publicly to all UU students and staff at the encampment. As the so-called representative of the UU's students and staff, Anton Pijpers clearly and decisively denied the invitation though he was a stone's throw away. The CvB claims that as a result it decided to "ask the police to end the occupation", once again reflecting the undemocratic policy of the UU.

UU's response was to call the police against its own students, staff, and faculty. Around 12.30AM, riot police came to the library to aggressively break up the encampment. Students and staff were violently evicted, on the basis of arrest, as per the police's communication, yet without providing a reason for the arrest. The evictees, it later became clear, were being administratively displaced (bestuurlijke verplaatsing). This form of administrative displacement constitutes deprivation of liberty and is a violation of article 5 of the European Convention on Human rights.

The police abused, dragged, and harassed students, staff and faculty, forcing them into buses as evidenced in images and videos circulating on social media. Over 60 people were administratively displaced, and taken to an undisclosed location before the police released them at 3AM near Houten, next to the "Police Utrecht Cells Complex," which is over 2 and a half hours walking from Utrecht.

In their statement, the CvB also claims that "partly because our house rules were not followed, serious safety concerns arose". None of those concerns called for the response that ensued: The fact that House Rules were not followed does not in itself justify the violent removal of protestors and interfering with their right to peaceful assembly. The irony that the CvB would rather call the riot police to violently arrest students and staff putting them in danger, in the name of safety and security, rather than respectfully speak with

the students, says it all. The CvB, in a breach of trust, called the police without issuing a warning to the student negotiators, as per their agreement, unilaterally terminated the negotiations, asking the police to arrest the protestors, and thereby threatening the safety of protestors themselves.

We strongly condemn the use of police violence against students, staff, and faculty gathered in a peaceful assembly. NO POLICE ON CAMPUS! We give our full support to our students and academic community demanding our University to be accountable for its institutional and structural complicity with genocide against Palestine. Again, we demand that UU takes a clear and strong stand against the ongoing assault on Palestinian life, cuts ties with Israeli universities, research institutions, organizations and companies, and endorses the academic boycott of these institutions. We also demand that all university protests be respected and that no violence will be used against students and other protestors.

In solidarity with those who were injured, threatened, and detained at the Solidarity encampment in Utrecht, we call for all faculty and staff at Utrecht University to cancel all classes and meetings today and to condemn police violence on campus. We urge faculty and staff to stand by their students and oppose the university administration's deliberate choice to betray their trust through lies and violence.

Share this call with as many colleagues as you can and join us at the Academieggebouw on DomPlein at 4PM.

Signed,
UU scholars and
staff for Palestine



USP Instagram

Email by the President of the Executive Board of UU

The following is an email sent to UU students and faculty on the morning of May 8th regarding May 7th

Dear students and colleagues,

On Tuesday afternoon, May 7, pro-Palestine demonstrators occupied the courtyard of Utrecht University Library. Anton Pijpers, the President of the Executive Board, was on site and offered several times to meet with a delegation of the group of demonstrators. This offer was refused multiple times. Later in the evening, barricades were erected and the atmosphere became more grim. The demonstration was terminated by the police around 00:30 hours because of growing security risks.

"This feels like a disappointment. We would have preferred that the demonstration - for which we provided space - had ended without police deployment" says Anton Pijpers. "There was a large and growing group of protestors in the courtyard.

Partly because our house rules were not followed, serious safety concerns arose. Our offer to meet with a delegation of protestors, and calls to leave the courtyard, were unfortunately ignored multiple times. After intensive consultation with police and the municipality, we had to ask the police to end the occupation on the library grounds."

Due to clean-up and repair work, the library courtyard will remain closed on Wednesday, May 8. The library will be open as usual and is accessible through the main entrance.

The Executive Board hears and reads the concerns of students and staff about the current situation in Israel and Gaza on a daily basis. As a university, we share these concerns and feelings of sadness, bewilderment and helplessness about the violence resulting from this conflict. We sympathize with everyone affected by this conflict, from whatever side. We hope that this conflict ends as soon as possible.

Demonstrating and protesting are part of our democracy, and therefore part of life at Utrecht University. We offer space for this, provided it is done respectfully and according to our house rules. That was not the case yesterday.

Partly for this reason, we make an urgent appeal to our entire community once again to maintain peace and unity, with consideration and respect for each other. There is always room for different (scientific) perspectives and feelings at Utrecht University. Calls for hatred, violence, intolerance, intimidation or calls that otherwise transgress those frameworks of open society have no place there.

On behalf of the
Executive Board of
Utrecht University,

Anton Pijpers



House Rules

Image © Belen de Bruijn



FOLKLOR E

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Image © Belen de Bruijn

Memleket Gibisi Yok (There's No Place Like Home)

by Anonymous

i'm a byproduct
who i am
where i am
where i'm going
what i'm doing
my entire pathetic existence is a byproduct
it's all the offshoot of something much bigger
a crooked system that doesn't really care about me (or you, dear reader, for that matter)

i'd put my money on it
there was no careful consideration
no chewing it over
no weighing the pros and cons

after all, why should there have been?
she was the perfect candidate
picture this, there she was
an inter-national student (mind you, she only had one nationality, just not the right one)
with her spotless track record
in desperate need of
- how do i put this -
money
or financial aid, if you need a good old sugar coat

but none of it really mattered, did it?
as long as she was not from around here
from a faraway land
wishin' and hopin' and thinkin' and prayin'
for her hard earned salvation in its shiny silver armor
to whisk her up
to come rescue her (or so she thought)

now after two years and countless coaster rides later
she still doesn't belong here

no matter how many family trips she gets invited to
or how proud she feels whenever she says appie
no matter how many times she wakes up to a new day or pays
taxes in this hollow land every

shred of her existence will forever and ever belong to that murky
gulf that reeks of landfill
and quite frankly
she's not complaining
your destiny is set by where you're born, they say i guess i just
didn't know it'd be set in stone

You

by Iren Şerbetcioğlu

i
I will birth you
Just so you can hate me
The way only a mortal can hate its god

ii
And you will be born
Again and again
As the mother trying
child trying
And the indifferent father
Whose indifference they both have to
Hide with makeup in the dim light
One sitting on the toilet seat
The other bending over their face
And you will also be the one
That waits at the door
Growing more and more
Resentful with their whispers



When we were boys

by Jasmine Yi Carder

When Charlie and I were boys, we had a treehouse nestled deep into the woods. Looking back, it wasn't much. The walls were an uncomfortable four feet, the windows were covered with saran wrap, and the tin roof was basically stapled down. To top it off, the ladder only reached as far as the first climbable tree branch. But despite its modesty, that glorified box was everything to us. In our small neighborhood, crawling with siblings and nitpicking parents, the forest and the treehouse were our kingdom and castle.

It was a summer night in that treehouse that sparked it all. I don't remember what happened before we went to bed. Both of us were deep sleepers—me especially—so I only woke up when Charlie shook my head against the ground.

I opened my eyes to red and black static. There was a terrible quaking all around us as the roof rattled and the walls creaked. A layer of warm water coated the ground; more poured into my nose and ears, muffling the noise and choking my breath.

When my vision cleared I saw rain blowing sideways through the window onto Charlie's high nose. His dark curls stuck to the side of his face, blending into the darkness behind him as if he were emerging from it. There was a terrible helplessness in his features that I could see clearly even without light. We stared at each other as a thunderous clap was followed by the thud of wood hitting earth.

I don't think either of us realized at the time that we were in a storm. Afterwards it was obvious. What else was the frantic assault of wind and rain? But right then, in the dark, with the whole world bursting into our ears, nose, eyes, trying to drown us in mid-air? Well, there was no explanation for that.

We didn't dare try to climb down. Even if there had been a ladder, or if branches weren't falling nearly as often as the rain itself, escape was out of the question.

All at once, Charlie jerked himself up from the floor and took my trembling body—me who always went first, always teased him for his softness—into his arms. He buried me in a corner. His hand clamped around the back of my head and my arms wound tightly around his neck. Cheek to cheek we anchored ourselves together.

Our lumbering tree, which we had thought was immune to wind, started shaking. We didn't move. Even when our roof gave way and the sheet of tin was torn from above us, he stayed protecting me. It felt impossible that anything had ever existed before or after. Like we had been born attached to each other.

At some point we either blacked out or fell asleep. All I remember after that was unfurling from each other into still air.

It wasn't dawn yet. I groped around, trying to find something, I don't know what, until I noticed Charlie. He had sunk back into a pile of damp leaves, his neck craned back, his glowing eyes pointed up. I followed his gaze.

Not only was there a hole where our roof used to be, but it was as if there was a hole in the sky itself. The branches above us had fallen away and the black of the dense evergreen treetops framed a strip of color so rich as to be something entirely different from the black or blue we knew. Spilling out of it were blazing lights. There were probably hundreds of thousands in the small space we could see. Piled on top of each other, larger ones burning through the small, jostling for space in the too-crowded sky. We had both seen the stars many times before but they had never

and have yet to ever look like that again. Yes, there was the vastness of it, the feeling of their looking down on us, but there was also the certainty that they were peering into us. It was as if the storm had ripped the earth apart so they might touch us.

Of course, it would be years until I could describe what I felt sitting next to Charlie; and, like the vulnerability of the storm, my nakedness in the face of the stars is something I know only we will ever truly share.

In the following weeks, the effect that night had on us was subtle. Honestly, I'm surprised I wasn't more embarrassed or resentful of Charlie considering how badly I wanted to be the cooler one. But I wasn't. On some level I recognized that we had become a part of one another. A lot of the posturing of boyhood disappeared between us. At the same time, a new sort of pressure grew. Everyone we knew wanted to hear what had happened in the treehouse. Our parents constantly brought it up, the adults in town praised us for how brave we were, and we achieved legendary status at school. But no matter how many times we gladly retold the story in each other's presence, not once did we ever discuss it alone. There was something there that was raw. A nerve had been exposed and although we didn't know what it was, we didn't dare tread on it.

It was around then that Charlie came up with the spirits. It started as an accident. The dog lady had been telling us over and over again how lucky we were to have survived the storm unscathed. After nodding, smiling, and more nodding Charlie grabbed my arm saying, "Must have been the forest spirit," and ran off with me. When we slowed down I asked him what he meant by 'forest spirit'.

Silly as it was, that was the closest we had come to addressing that night. Charlie seemed nervous. Several times he looked like he was about to say something only to lapse into silence. I wanted to comfort him but I didn't know how.

"Boris." I blurted, "Boris the Forest Spirit."

After that, Boris was born into our lives. Little by little we started to attribute various things to the spirit. Boris stole Charlie's missing snack because he was eternally hungry. Boris broke my sister Er-en's new phone because he had huge feet and if you left something in the forest, even for a moment, he was prone to step on it. In the fall, when the leaves fell off the trees it was because Boris shook them off. He needed his bedding to hibernate and for a big spirit one needed a lot of bedding; only a couple leaves would never do.

Boris grew into a cranky, sour old creature who just happened to have a soft spot for us. We three were friends, but all other humans were excluded from that friendship.

The rigidity with which we stuck to Boris's character was out of the ordinary for us who could never commit to a game longer than a couple days. By the time winter rolled around Boris went into hibernation and neither Charlie nor I ever questioned the certainty of that fact.

In the absence of Boris, the tension grew again until I boldly introduced Charlie to June. Contrary to her name, the spirit June only looked after the forest while Boris was away in the winter. I explained it like this, "You know how my dad guards the university at night because all the people are gone but the teachers can't leave it empty? June does the same." June was shy, albeit friendlier than Boris. She wasn't special friends with us, but she wouldn't do us any harm either.

I didn't like it when Charlie decided that June and Boris didn't get along, but the unspoken rule of the spirits was that they weren't up for debate; so June was made to dislike, and then hate, and then loathe Boris.

Charlie and I were busy that year discovering more spirits. There were the twins Rick and Bob, Boris's elder brother Grizzly, and Sisi, the annoying imp, who fittingly shared a name with my little sister. Those are only the ones I remember. There were others, forgotten or relegated to single, small events.

We were faithful to these spirits. Although I had never believed in the tooth fairy and we already had our doubts about God, the spirits transcended the bounds of a game or story. I, at least, came to believe that they truly existed.

Introducing the spirits to outsiders was a no go for me. I knew they'd ruin it. I made up excuses as to why; people would judge them, they wouldn't understand like we did, and so on. Really, it was more of a gut feeling. The spirits had started as ours and it was important that they remain that way. Charlie didn't get it.

When the spirits were unveiled he let it out in the worst way possible. We were walking home from school with a group of kids and someone was talking about a cat going missing. Charlie jumped in, "Grizzly probably ate it."

My breath caught. I hoped that they would assume Grizzly was a bear or coyote, but as soon as someone asked Charlie confidently said, "He's one of me and Jack's forest spirits." Dez asked what the fuck a 'forest spirit' was and Charlie made a grand speech laying out the laws and lives of the spirits. They went crazy for it.

When we came to the road where we should've split off from the others, everyone stopped to keep interrogating Charlie.

At that point I was blind with fury. How could he? It was like he had taken a piece of my insides and paraded it in front of a bunch of strangers. I had never imagined this kind of betrayal. I didn't know what to do with it. I thought of hitting him but that wasn't enough. Instead, I did the thing that I knew would hurt him most.

The next time he brought up Boris, I looked him square in the eye and said that I couldn't believe he was still talking about that. The spirits were and always had been a joke; that it was embarrassing how worked up he got over it; that he could be weird but I was done. He peered at me. His wide, laughing eyes stilled like a doe who hears the snap of a branch in the distance. I experienced a single moment of complete satisfaction.

But the moment passed quickly. The look on his face deepened from shock, to hurt, to something else. He didn't cry or even move much but there was a part of him that shrunk away from me like a dying animal scratching away from its hunter. My chest hurt watching him.

We kept hanging out that day, but the next, when he came over,

I stayed shut in my room refusing to come out. I had never felt shame like that. There was something special between us and I knew I had crushed it; happily and intentionally, I had destroyed it.

My self-imposed isolation didn't last long. There was no me without Charlie. I inevitably went back to him. Besides, I soothed myself, he had also betrayed me; we had both suffered.

We hung out as best we could but neither of us mentioned the spirits. Without them there was a loneliness that lingered around us. We had incorporated them into our lives so thoroughly that their absence was visible everywhere. We were forced to walk around our world blind to almost everything so as not to trigger the sense of loss.

Sad to say, it took a long time for our friendship to heal from that and even longer for us to talk about what had happened. Charlie was too much a peacekeeper to risk my having another melt down. I was too proud to bring it up with him. I justified my behavior thinking that he had started it, even though I knew that wasn't really true.

In the end, it was me who unintentionally resurrected them.

We must have been seventeen or so. We were walking behind two old women wearing great big sun hats with multicolored ribbons tied around their brims. The wind was blowing directly into their faces, tossing the hats off. They flopped them forward and the wind flopped them back. They pushed them forward again and back they went. They started clucking to each other like chickens; shaking their fingers at the wind as if scolding it.

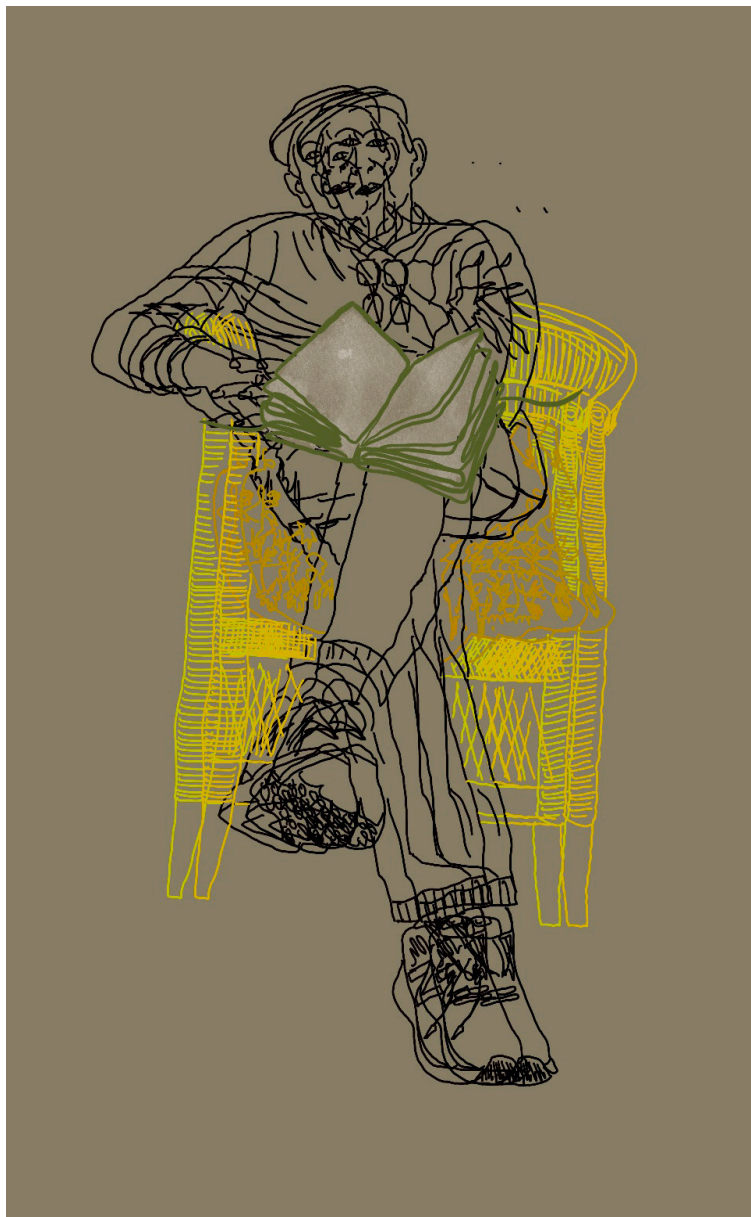
Charlie started cracking up. One of the ladies turned her scowl on him and the scandalized look on Charlie's face was too much for me. I burst out laughing. Then they started clucking at the both of us, scolding us for being 'degraded young men'. Their faces twisted up and the hats almost blew away entirely. We couldn't help but laugh harder.

"What can I say, ma'am," I wheezed, "it's Sisi at work, not us." The women didn't deign to respond, swiftly crossing the street.

It was only after we collected ourselves that I realized what I had said. I turned to Charlie not knowing what to expect. He gave me this great big smile as if to say, *so you've finally given it up*.

"You're right. Sisi always has her fun."

To this day, I still believe in the spirits. Whenever the leaves shake off, I can't help but think of Boris; and when the snow falls in clumps, I know June's on shift; and when my kids' cat was lost I reassured them that Grizzly lost his taste for housepets a long time ago. Admittedly, the feeling I had of them as a boy, the way that they waited around every corner for us to discover, has faded over the years. But there is one thing that grew stronger. Every once and a while, when other people may be prone to feel small or adrift, I recognize the presence of Charlie, anchoring me firmly to the earth. I doubt that will ever leave me.



Wrong: I do not write to be able to speak. Wrong: I do not want you an inch within me. Instead: it is intermittence I am possessed with, delighting in its stable fist around my throat, a life-giving chokehold, the very pressure point a cluster of everything alive in me. I am swatting at air with my inky hands, splattering stains onto the collective atmosphere, filling every room I occupy, to be able to get a hold of silence. The quiet is a wishing well for my morning-market body; a sighing garden where I bury myself next to the seeds of your absence, watering them with the breath of my imagination. Were you near me, threatening the bounds of my skin with your ever-present scent, I would be too fogged up to quell all this movement. What I say now is to reach a moment where not much needs to be said. To dote on the unsayable. My luckiest strike is that the writer's damnation twins that

The Cove



of a lover's: with both these frames I am seeking paradox, sniffing out an incorrigible sky, marked neither by thunder or drizzle so I stay unfronted by a thousand mirrors revealing me tender-lipped and knee-borne to myself. Indeed, you are wrong to think that this labyrinth is not meant for play: my desire is not erroneous for it is only meant for me. I am the hand, I am the puppet. Everything I want of you speaks to me of a lesser known, unrealized, soon-to-be me. This race against time will be compassionately won if you let the tape of you reverse the markings on my celluloid screens. I am insisting on a return to childhood because everyday it throbs within me; disturbed repeatedly by how the sky and its supervised beings underneath do not care whether they are understood by me. Before age came to eclipse my fits and my rage, my inquiries and my thirst for a stage, I was *nearly* a daughter. A warbling promise in my mother's lap. I am asking to be delivered to a time when the sublime did not wear the foliage of the abject, when death was a mere mention in prayer. I dare not refer to your body as a temple because I fear you will vanish like god when I press my palm against you; become every city that does not want to

All memory is the
—Christina Tudek

house me. And believe me, there are many. I am writing still to show you that I am only a devotee to your fingerprint for I am the sacred decree: I drift like litany. Everything enters me like holy light treading through stained glass: refracting, multiplying motions, gestures only posterior to feeling. I can only shift in shape with my chalice half full, with the walls of my cathedrals blown to smithereens; every last catacomb reduced to a dwelling ground for a colony of webbing spiders. They say spiders breed creativity so with the very last of my many shadow-boxing legs, I am tracing the varied impressions and beds you leave behind wherever you seat. Or lay. Cravenly bearing visions of you with latent skin; but I am not cruel in my coveting— the sky may touch you after I ask it to make my countenance out of its tufty clouds for you to gaze up to. The moon may watch you after I teach her to blink her eyelids slow and composed like

enant
Grena))



Image © Emma Behrens

the memory of loss.
or
a vanishing night so sleep dares not to knock apart your dainty head. The sea may hear you cry if it will hide under its currents a boat with which to collect your teardrops, so I may knead the rivulets into silver pearls to give them to you shelled in an emerald box. I am godly demanding in instigating this covenant with you, asking you to be my earthly doll, waving apples underpinned with lust in your mortal face, but still... let me write my scripture, for living is a clandestine misgiving and your beauty is reparatory. It resurrects me. Saves me from seeing circling vultures in halos above my bed. Plops me down in a teacup field brewing kettle-sized dreams, with nine-colored deers streaking the horizons and peculiar luna moths reaching for the darkness. The toil of breathing preludes our spinning sky, but the labor of loving you makes a dance out of the dizzying transit from life to death, from chance to choice. While I ride this train, I feel a noxious sunset awaits me, nauseous with color, purpling with promise. Is it foolish to sing with a throat clogged with the faintest faith? No: I am harnessing silence; nebulous with wait, imprinting relief onto reality— and for the moments in between (*I plead*): you must, you must, you must accompany me.

Marzanna

by Alicja Anna Chojnacka

The 21st of March is an important day in Polish folklore. It's the day when all folk gather and proceed to drown and/or burn Marzanna – a straw doll created to resemble the goddess of death and winter. The burning of the doll, followed by drowning it in a natural body of water returns the spirit of the goddess to the underworld, and therefore signals the first day of Spring. The end of bleak winter. A new beginning.

* * *

There was a time when the gods walked among us. A time when people lived in harmony with nature, aware of its power over them. When the land wasn't governed by the greedy hands of men. A time before Marzanna wandered among the mortals for months on end, destroying everything in sight.

Marzanna and Dziewanna – one goddess of two faces. Her two forms were always tethering on a thin line between beautiful creation and merciless destruction. She was the ruler of all fates.

Dziewanna had a warm disposition, she was the personification of mother nature and the source of all life on earth. She used to wander the world while the sun was shining, high in the sky, and a beautiful cacophony of birds followed everywhere, and all the green leaves would turn their bodies towards her - seeking the warmth of her presence. Those working in the fields would sometimes spot her guarded by the tree line, and humbly bent their necks in an act of respect for their goddess. After all, she was the one that brought life into their soil; the one who kept their children alive, and their world warm, from sunrise to sundown.

Marzanna was the one that could put an end to it all, the goddess of winter and death. At dusk, she would walk towards the river, largely unseen by the eyes of people who resided with their families and friends in the comforts of their houses. Why would they come outside? Their bellies were full and their singing loud – it was the happiness of people abiding by the rules of mother nature. Besides, all the wiser ones knew to avoid Marzanna, as a mere look across her left shoulder could stun the strongest of men to death, and the softest touch of her fingertips could cause limbs to decay.

Dziewanna would give way to Marzanna as dusk's burning fingers tore through the sky. Her golden hair writhed and blackened as her skin turned cold and pale. Her eyes were like the deepest point of the darkest river, which she would eventually step into, descending into the land of the dead. And every step she took along the way was marked by bites of frost, which would only thaw at Dziewanna's return at the crack of dawn.

During the day, she took care of the living, at night of the dying. Her nights were spent delegating any lost souls, keeping the harmony of the world in check and the living far away from the restless wrath of decay. Everyday at dawn she would return, and the blanket of darkness she brought into the world, she took away with every step she placed along the dawn's tender light.

It was the time before they spoke of their "saviour," of a God who filled them with ceaseless shame. In his religion, there was endless atonement to be done. It was before they tried to challenge her power and surpass the force of nature. Some truly believed – built foreign churches, ones which were no longer in her name, and put up solemn crosses. Still, for most, it was a façade, a political move. Even then, they were willing to give up their tradition, their faith



Image © Alicja Anna Chojnacka

and their souls, for their foolish politics. One day, even their leader, "Prince Mieszko I", was baptised. The goddess was no longer given sacrifices.

But it is not in the nature of gods to worry. Humans come and go in a single blink of their eye, and those who believe themselves to be eternal leave the fastest. Her forests were littered with remains of forgotten conquerors, who believed they built indestructible empires. She saw men trying to put up a battle against the divine power of their gods, and the same men drive themselves to insanity, death, and all other sorts of madness.

Though Dziewanna was no longer sought out, Marzanna was still equally feared. The crops began to die, and the leaves fell away – the wrath of disrespected gods was upon them. There was hunger, and there was death. The destructive force of nature does not know class, or wealth, so its suffocating touch eventually reached the royal family.

On the 21st of March of the year of sorrow (or year of baptism according to some), Dziewanna was standing on the hill overlooking the misery of human design. The grass was yellowing, and the frost was no longer thawing. She was ready to let Marzanna take the lead as the burning sun rays were slowly creeping away from her.

It was in the middle of this beautiful metamorphosis that she felt the binds around her. Tugging and burning her divine body, the beautiful materials softly touching her skin were torn by the hot hands of angry men around her - and while anger warms the human body, the gods' fury burns cold. Her now cold eyes landed on the men in front of her, the force of revenge broke their skull in half as they slipped to the ground. The pathetic proof of their



mortality oozed out of its cage and let a carmine river flow.

She stopped as her murderous gaze landed on the beady eyes of their leader. Marzanna recognised the feeling of loss and grief swimming in his reddened eyes. Their enormity could only signal one thing – the loss of a loved one, a kindred spirit. *It's all you, you foolish man.* She wanted to say. *It's all your fault.*

Whoever said that gods don't know emotions was deeply mistaken. They know love, they know anger, and they know determination. And more often than not, they know them all at once.

She gave in, far from giving up, she let them drag her to the river – *her* river. They hoisted her up like a doll, wanting to burn her like a common witch, surrounded by the stink of straw and ignorance. There was talk of restoring the control of men over nature, freeing themselves from the bounds of the pagan gods, ridding themselves of the sin of believing in them. They all believed that burning Marzanna could stop the famine. All of them except for Mieszko, whose grief made him reckless and drove him out of his mind, and out of his castle on this cold night.

As the burning torch touched her beautiful hair, the ropes around her started dancing to the rhythm of the wind's howling. The sky was burning, but her heart was cold and set on revenge. Her fury burned with the coldest of blues, and she laughed as they cheered. Her skin blackened and her hair whitened. The frost around them burned away as the booming voice of Marzanna shook the ground they were standing on:

"I will come back, and once I return I will walk among you for three months. Cold and death will follow me, and the warmth I offered from dawn till dusk will be buried deep under the frozen

earth - one which will bear you no fruit. Your children will go quietly, and in all your pride, you will die. And even your almighty God will not repent the cold embrace of my burning fury."

She shook off the ropes around her as though it was dust lightly resting on her shoulder. She descended down the river with a calculated viciousness, sacrificing a short lived victory for a long lived revenge.

Quietly she descended down the river, returning to the land of death and decay. She stayed there as the men celebrated the rebirth of crops and the end of famine. Her look of disgust was mistaken for humiliation, and the thawing caused by her coldly burning fury was mistaken for the sign of a beautiful rebirth – the beginning of spring.

Beautiful weather returned and for months nothing changed. The men forgot about the fear she planted into their hearts with her words, but Marzanna waited patiently for the punishment she would bring.

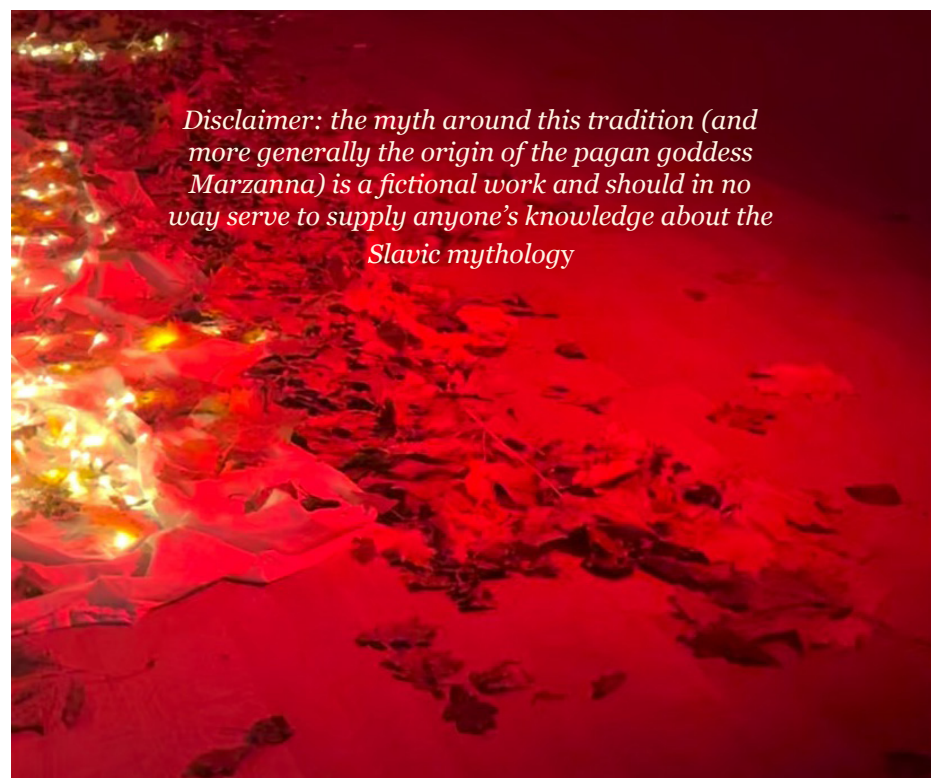
22nd of December was the day.

Marzanna emerged from the river, and walked among the living for months. The earth was covered by her wispy, white hair under which nothing could survive. The beautiful trees were now bent down with the weight of the snow. The lost souls of the dead wandered the earth as Marzanna stayed among the living. And all these months, she would walk on her soil and freeze everything, and everyone, in sight. All crops died and children starved. The men's burning limbs would chip away, frozen and hardened by the cold.

Humans begged for forgiveness but Marzanna turned a blind eye to their suffering. Dziawanna was never seen again, and the balance of life and death was forever skewed. For three months the land of the living was dominated by death. That was the beginning of winter, one which was prior unknown to her spoiled subjects.

She finally left on the 21st of March, dragging the body of Mieszko's son through the snow and into the cold river. It was time to take care of the dead, and leave the living alone, in fearful anticipation of her return.

And return she would. Every single year. The story of Polish winter – disaster of human design, moulded by the hands of gods.



Disclaimer: the myth around this tradition (and more generally the origin of the pagan goddess Marzanna) is a fictional work and should in no way serve to supply anyone's knowledge about the Slavic mythology

A FILM BY NATALIE SIN

Motherhood and one’s relationship with culture intertwine in Phantom Troupe. The horror genre hinges on fear. For Claire, she grapples with fear of abandonment, fear of loss, and fear of her own culture. The phantom peking opera troupe welcome those who enter their realm. Yet, they are heavily misunderstood. The Occident views the Orient in fear of what they do not know or understand. The young child does not understand the customs of her own culture. She does not understand her mother’s indifference to her.



During hungry ghost festival, a neglected child wanders off in a temple and steals offering food to satiate her hunger. Her surroundings manipulate as she crosses the spiritual realm.



Drifting back

by Lucie Bouchon

I don't really miss you
We were no good for each other
We both know all that we were
Was meant to be remembered

Like a vague memory revived once in a while
One that makes us both ponder
What aspects of our relationship we will make sure not to bring back
In a potential new one

But it wasn't all bad
And as I said I don't really miss you
But...

I miss your care
And your attention too
I miss being heard
Cause now I got so used
To not being listened to

I miss how I was your everything
You seemed to be the only person
That would always first
Think about my wellbeing

But I knew it was too strong
When my happiness became the only foundation that yours would grow upon
The first step that turned a simple teenage love
Into an obsession

But it started so good
And you were so sweet
And I really thought that it could last
Right until it crumbled under my feet

Now it's been two years
Since the station platform where I last saw you
All that's left are traces of a past trauma
That only haunts me when I allow it to

My life has changed so much since then
I moved to a different country,
Found the most supportive friends
And joke in a language you never heard me speak

But sometimes I can't help but fear
What if I never find someone who will hold me so dear
What if you were the only one who would ever dare
Sign such a deal

And I know it's probably not true
'Cause I believe that person was never
Meant to be you
So I wait, and I keep looking for them

But sometimes they feel so far away
That their mere existence seems doubtful
So in the meantime,
I let my thoughts drift back to you



In the Spirit of Folkloric Practices We'd Like to Keep Buried

by Anonymous

Dear not-so-random person across the room,

To acknowledge that this is the means of communication I resort to in order to express my feelings is perhaps a little pathetic - at the very least. But putting it on paper and having it published, even if entirely anonymously, will reassure me that I did indeed try - to the best of my abilities, even if those abilities are somewhat limited.

I could've let this go, like every other momentary "infatuation" - I know the accurate term in psychology, don't come at me (actually, you can't, never mind) - but I figured that now, more than ever, it was worth a try. Time and opportunities are running out, as the chant "You only live once," layered and infused with disappointment seems to be a permanent guest in my ears. Needless to say, you have been overstaying your initially very friendly welcome in my mind for quite some time now. As the rent is long overdue, here is my official warning (or whatever you'd like to call it) before I kick you out definitively.

To say that I know anything fundamental about you would be a gross overstatement. Even the bare minimum is vague to me. I only know as much as I can deduce from your demeanour and the things you say, most of which I hear from a distance during class. At this point I should probably mention that we have spoken a few times, although not enough to make accurate judgements about one another (at least not on my part, I should hope). From what I can tell, you seem to be a smart, funny and considerate person (how basic of me, I know). You also seem to care about what others have to say - or at the very least you're good at faking it, in which case do consider joining the local drama group (or find a job in sales). It also seems that you're interested in a wide range of conversations. Besides that, I also rather like how you look, and for some inexplicable reason your smile makes me want to hand all my trust over to you, even without the knowledge of the full extent of your (dis)honourable intentions (please take that as a compliment).

As for me, I like (among other things) reading, writing (this isn't my best, by the way, I promise I have more to offer), music, cinema, architecture, cats, numbers (most of the time), pens, mazes, maps, mountains, home, and lastly, people - even if I lack the required skills to make much use of such a scary hobby. I realise the length of this enumeration can't make up for its outwardly seeming randomness or the long list of individuals it could apply to, which is the obvious reason for this need to maintain a certain level of anonymity. Yes, despite my usual propensity for inopportune clumsiness, I really am trying hard not to give away too much here.

Call it what you will [I'll let you appropriate the term "crush" if you wish, since at this point you are mostly crushing me past the point of recovering the ability to work on any essays properly (except this one, apparently)], the now rather superficial nature of my perception of you does make me want to explore more, and see what kind of potential there is for us to connect and make some magic (rest assured, I mean that literally).

To know that you will have (hopefully) read this at some point, is to know that my words will have crossed your mind, even if you weren't aware they were addressed to you (and came from me, oops). Which would clear up a bit of desperately-needed space in

my thoughts for other kinds of worries and what-ifs. If you ever do suspect that I'm addressing you, please continue going about your day regularly and let the memory of this letter be washed away by however many imaginary tsunamis you'd feel compelled to conjure up. This is the beauty of a dually anonymous public letter: everything is but tiny sprinkles of suspicion none of you can confirm – thus everyone's dignity shall be left intact. No, this is not a joke piece, and no, most of you need not be concerned with any of this, but please do feel free to speculate in case you find a need for an urgent ergo-boost; I certainly can't and won't stop you.

Some may well want to call this an over-idealisation of something only obtainable in Hollywood-conceived fantasy, or just a truly ridiculous attempt at drawing attention to myself, one that's a little too late after Valentine's Day. As a result, I must now face the tragic fact that this person will likely never be fully aware of the sincerity of sentiments expressed here. Also, if you happen to suspect you've seen this exact style of writing before at UCU somewhere - don't. You're just being a tad bit delusional.

As a final note, I'll be happy if this letter turns out to be what the rest of you needed as a gentle reminder that life is short – that this particular person you've had a crush on for the past 8 months/years will not wait indefinitely. So for heaven's sake, if you know what's good for you, please go talk to them (because I myself was too much of chicken to do it). Even if it means rehearsing a 20-min speech beforehand to make sure that your reputation doesn't crash and burn within a painfully squished timeframe (sadly, Wall Street never did recover, contrary to popular belief). It's better than having to accept the long-term disappointment caused by knowing you'd never have the guts to tell them how you feel (oh to not be intimately acquainted with the bitter taste of regret). It's also better than having to explain to the caregivers at your future retirement home that after years of waiting, Prince Charming never did show up on your doorstep.

Thank you for taking the time to hear me out in my attempt to get one step closer to finding the love of my life (I'm joking), and while it most likely won't amount to too much on that front, I'll gladly hang on to the remaining fraction of a fraction of a chance for the opposite (at least until my own version of fate dictates I must move on).

Sincerely,
The frightened little chicken across the room

PS: in an ideal world I'd walk straight up to you, present you with this



4-minute simulation for context, before proceeding to ask you out for coffee. As that ideal world is nowhere in sight, this was (unfortunately) the next-best solution.



A Children's Bible Love in a Fallen City

by Jasmine Yi Carder



I found *A Children's Bible* by Lydia Millet sitting on my bed during winter break; a gift from my stepdad. When I asked him what it was about, he refused to divulge even the tiniest of details. I was annoyed at the time, but, as happens a lot in my life, but rarely in *A Children's Bible*, my adult was right. My ignorance complimented the effect of the story, magnifying it tenfold. With this in mind, I will try my best to honour this wonderful work by preserving your reader's innocence.

Here are some details I will provide: The story is set in a large summer house rented by a group of friends, back from college, who take their families on a joint vacation. The story is entirely focused on their children, all twelve of them, and narrated by one of the young daughters. Left to their own devices as their parents frolic in nostalgia-and-drug-induced euphoria, the children play,

explore their rural surroundings, and take on the events of the novel together. Nothing more can be said about the plot besides that it isn't whatever you're expecting.

Out of the books I have read in the last couple of years *A Children's Bible* probably made the most unique impression on me. Just like Kafka's *The Trial*, it lulled me into a sense of safety, with its simple prose and a tame beginning. But, as the story progressed, a very particular type of panic set in; a mix of confusion and helplessness left me deeply distraught yet unable to turn away. A short book, it took me two days to read and another week to shake off. While I wouldn't say that it's horror in any classic sense, to me it is the archetypal horror story of our generation.

This book is not a nice book. It's well written, gripping, and thought-provoking

but it is not pleasant. If you aren't in a good mental space, this book isn't going to do you any favors. I say this as a warning, although I don't mean to deter anyone from reading it. The themes it touches on and the feeling it produces converge into a story I would assign as a mandatory reading for everyone alive if I could. There are simply some things we can't turn our backs on, no matter how much we might be tempted to.

I urge you to read *A Children's Bible* and to please refrain from googling anything about the book or author beforehand. In case you're tempted, I'll give you a few more bones to chew: *A Children's Bible* was published in 2020, it has 3.73 stars on Goodreads, it was a finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction, Lydia Millet is 55, she has written fifteen books, and she was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2010.

Settling it over a cup of tea

by Pieter Dolmans



The story of Baucis and Philemon, known from Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is about an old married couple that lives atop a hill in a village. They're visited by two strangers, who actually are the gods Zeus and Hermes in disguise. They ask for food and shelter, which they've been denied by all other households in town. Though the couple is poor and they barely have enough food for themselves, they decide to take the strangers in and feed them. Zeus and Hermes then reveal their identities and reward Baucis and Philemon by... flooding the rest of the village and leaving the old couple as the only survivors.

The moral is clear, right? It's a story in favour of the virtue of hospitality. The characters act hospitably, and this is framed as a good act (obviously there's plenty of other yikes-y moral implications: extreme punitive justice, the idea that poor people should always be generous, etc. But for now we'll set those aside). I wonder why, though. Does the story provide an argument for why we should be hospitable?

The obvious candidate is: you should be hospitable, because you'll be rewarded for it. After all, Baucis' and Philemon's hospitality is the reason they're left alive – though in the full story, they're then promptly turned into trees, but that's besides the point.

There are many stories like Baucis and Philemon. Stories which say “do good, and fate will bestow good things upon you.” And regardless of whether that aphorism is true or not, I feel a little uncomfortable about it. It rests not on the fundamental goodness of some virtues, nor on the goodness of helping other people, but on the *expectation of a reward*.

Whoever came up with Baucis and Philemon must've realised this to some extent. The gods don't just show up, eat the couple's food, reward them and leave. They first disguise themselves to erase the expectation of a reward. They make sure the couple acts out of virtue, not selfishness.

The appeal to selfishness in such stories is

a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the argument doesn't have much ethical substance to it, and so it doesn't teach us much about ethics. On the other hand, such stories are perfectly primed to their target audience. They exist to teach us to be good to others, and so they must appeal to people who *aren't* good to others; egoists. And what's the best thing you can give to an egoist to make them behave better? The expectation of a reward! But for the story of Baucis and Philemon to then turn around and say that Baucis and Philemon were good because they *didn't* expect a reward?! Nope, it's too much for my brain to handle.

The only argument for hospitality that remains in the story is, somewhat underwhelmingly: be hospitable because... the gods like it? Dear Boomerang, I feel like my folklore is broken, and this column is too short for me to fix it.

Loco LogiCo: The Origin of Words

by Kate Grossenbacher on behalf LogiCo



Is history really his-story? I remember being in one of my high school classes when my teacher pointed out her annoyance at the fact that men were at the center of history – it even says so in the word! I thought this was an odd statement to make. Of course, it is indisputable that our understanding of historical events is almost exclusively based around men. But is the word ‘history’ really centered around men? I mean, take the French word for history, ‘histoire’, the precursor of our modern English word. The pronoun ‘his’ is English, not French; in French, you would use ‘son/sa/ses’ (don’t get me started on gendered languages – they’re always confusing). A quick Google search brought me to the fact that ‘history’ is derived from the Ancient Greek word meaning ‘inquiry’ or, alternatively ‘knowledge by investigation’. This is where things got interesting for me: the root word for history was not exclusively linked to men,

but then again, the root word encompassed a lot more than modern conception does. So then, does the origin of words really matter?

It’s also interesting to think about this in terms of colloquial phrases. For example, ‘hang up the phone’. If we really think about it, it makes no sense: in what world am I ‘hanging up’ the phone by pressing the end call button? This is because the phrase originated with the first ever telephones, which would have literally had to be hung up to end the call. Now, however, the point of reference which would make that phrase make sense is almost non-existent.

One of my favorite fun facts related to this concept is the word ‘pool’, as in ‘pool your money’ or ‘carpool’. The term originates from a medieval french drinking game in which participants would put all their money in a pot and try to throw rocks at a chicken

– or, in French, a ‘poule’. Whoever hit the chicken first got all the money in the pot. Overtime, this term developed to encompass any sort of money that was collected in a similar way to that of the game ‘Poule’.

Hope this provides some insight on how our modern language is both linked to and disconnected from their root words. It begs the question, does the origin of phrases really matter? If so, under what circumstances? Especially with phrases or words that are rooted in systemic oppression of people throughout history, like the phrase ‘a piece of cake’, which is rooted in dehumanizing practices against enslaved people in the American South. Should we stop using the phrase due to its racist origins? Or is it so disconnected from those origins that the effect is no longer present?

Mila's Playlist

by Mila Frattini



I couldn’t think of a specific genre, song, or even an artist, to write about for this edition. When I started wondering why, especially given that I am an immersive listener who hops from one music fixation to another, I realised that it’s because the past month has been a difficult one. And amidst my groggy days and empty nights, I didn’t want to channel this not-so-happy version of myself in the music I listened to. Hence, no new temporary or long-lasting obsession.

Of course, music was still there. It was comfort I sought: a gentle nudge to go make coffee, a shimmering yellow-blue memory on my way to training, a warmth rising toes to head that could carry nostalgia and evoke gratefulness. All of this, I found in a playlist *Hasta La Raíz*, that I share with a friend. There’s no discernable musical thread that beads the songs together, but there are strong roots that grow in every direction. I’d like to share some of the branches with you.

The song that gives the playlist its name is by Natalia Lafourcade, a Mexican singer who explores genre and folklore with words that seem to be a part of her skin. “*Cada momento de no saber son la clave exacta de este tejido que ando cargando bajo la piel. Así te protejo.*” The track has a repetitive

guitar strum that reads like a strut, confident step after step. Walking imbued with tenderness that slows it down at times, but it doesn’t falter and doesn’t cease. Then the tenderness grows bolder, it has the same texture but more defined borders – it helped me walk too.

Save Me by Aimee Mann plays next. My mom adores her, and I understand why. She’s a storyteller who’s never impatient, never too wrapped up in her own work; she gives you time to seek, find, and take what you’re looking for. “*If you could save me from the ranks of the freaks who suspect they could never love anyone*”, sings Mann. She adds: they could never love anyone “*except the freaks who suspect they could never love anyone.*” And she could keep queuing more suspecting freaks, if only the song was longer. The tale would still make sense (though I didn’t get it for a very long time, which caused persistent annoyance on my mom’s part).

My friend and I went to a live tango night a while ago in a café here in Utrecht. It was by two Argentinian musicians she’d met on the street, and a guest singer with the deepest voice. It was lovely. Surrounded by Spanish speakers and slightly confused, I sat with my beer and felt at peace in a titillating kind of way. Their cover of *Esperando Heredar* (which we

added to the playlist soon after) was so entertaining the whole room’s eyes turned wide like kids’ watching kites fly. It teases a man whose life is a ‘sad comedy’, the accordion whistling through it all as more anecdotes are uncovered.

In Amsterdam, sometime in cold January, we stopped at a record store on our way to dinner. I picked out a Sergio Mendes best of collection, while she picked out *Peaceful World* by The Rascals, attracted by the album’s cover art. Her choice sparked the excitement of the salesman (who appeared extremely underwhelmed by mine, by the way). He claimed it was some of the best music in the store, though unknown to many. I’d like to think he was right. The song *Little Dove* is wonderful. It starts like trickling water, brings in a flute and soulful voices, then introduces more grungy garage rock drums while maintaining its eager whimsical elements.

There are many more songs I could mention, scattered and happy. All I wanted to share with the brief selection above is that, sometimes, music becomes relevant to us because there’s someone else there within the notes and the words, with us. I see my friends’ freckles in every track: that’s what makes it my music right now. Maybe it can become a part of your music too.

Dear reader,

It took three hours of “friendly” deliberation just to come up with the theme. And then another three days of texting to change it into what you’re reading here now.

At first, we took the word ‘folklore’ as synonymous with backwardness, as it reminded us of the worst parts of our home country – bullfighting, to be precise. But then, after our deliberation, we came to a different understanding. ‘Folklore’ then inspired in us a sense of belonging, of community, of a shared past. We wanted to eradicate the exclusivity and in-group/out-group dichotomy that often come bundled with all that, have everyone share their own traditions, and see a new shared folklore flourish.

So, take this as a collection of our histories. A collection that comes to your hands after many weeks of hard work from the Scope and Boomerang boards. We especially want to thank Bence and Quetzalli, who recently joined The Boomerang board, and have actively worked with us on the last stretches of this edition. And of course, everyone who contributed art or writing – none of this would be possible without you.

*Lots of love,
Violeta and Pablo*

P.S.: This editorial was written on Monday 6th of May, one day before the UU administration called on riot police to brutally crack down on a peaceful pro-Palestine protest held by our fellow students and staff at the city centre library. Worse still, the administration had the audacity to send all students an email the morning after, twisting the truth on these incidents and downplaying their own acts. On behalf of the Scope and Boomerang boards, we are deeply disturbed by this display of violence and cowardice on the part of UU, and we think it necessary to condemn it here.

And yet today, on Wednesday 8th, it’s clear that their efforts have backfired. Even more people have gathered at the library again to reassert themselves, to make it known that they will not be silenced – that we will not be silenced. We have changed the first two pages of this edition to honour their bravery and to inspire hope in you, dear reader. Hope that change is possible, that UU will yield to our demands, and that one day, Palestine will be free.

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