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Miscellany/Méli-mélo: Editors' Notebook

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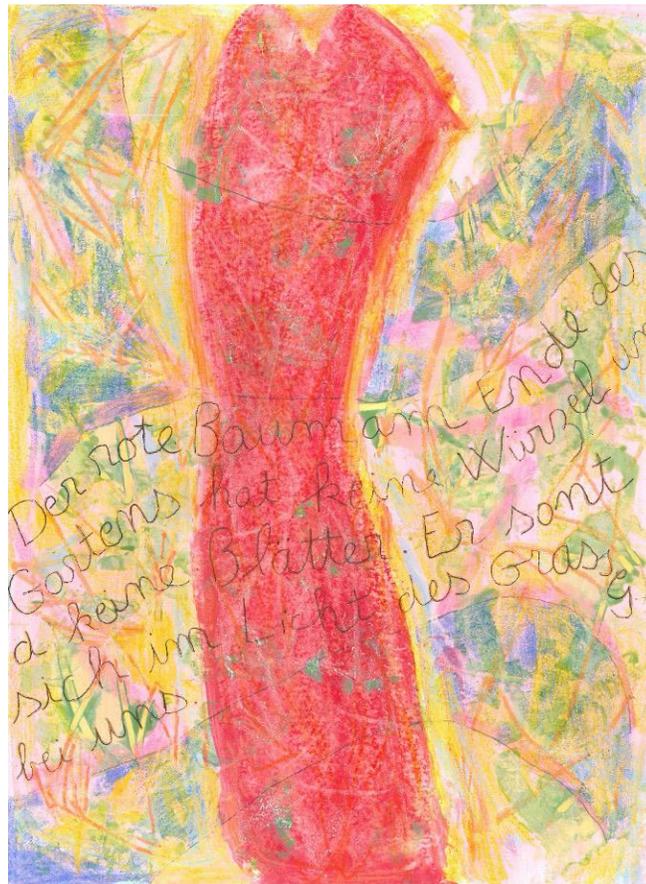
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*Miscellany/Méli-mélo:
Editors' Notebook*



Sans titre, Catherine Parayre

The Miscellany/Méli-mélo issue was conceived in April 2020, when the Guest Editors and the Co-Editors decided that our planned special issue on racism and antiracism in the environmental humanities needed more time and attention than those early days of the

pandemic afforded. Instead, we sent out a call for an extra-open issue, un numéro très ouvert. In the English, we hoped to evoke both the quotidian sense of *extra* (the *OED* has “[b]eyond or more than the usual”) and the slang sense of the excessive, the flamboyant, the “she’s so extra.” In an effort to bend our minds away from the COVID-19 tractor beam, to call people from their sourdough starters and their doom-scrolling, and to skirt the productivity imperative, we welcomed work that is expansive, genre-bending, informal, and improvisational. We asked contributors to submit intellectual sidecar projects, desktop clutter, knick-knacks, trifles, mixtapes, long-abandoned projects, slow thinking, and half-baked masterpieces. What we got was far more submissions than expected—an astonishing smorgasbord of rich thinking and tasty art. We are very pleased to share our selections from that bounty with you.

By design, this issue is a grab bag of art, poems, short reads, and a few deep dives on topics as diverse as plastic waste, pandemic gardening, and a long-standing debate over whether vultures can smell. By happenstance, it also weaves some intriguing and complex webs on themes including skin, race, animals, amateur art, artistic practice, mourning, water, and silence. The pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, and worries about populism, denialism, fascism, and white supremacy register across the issue as overt or unspoken contexts or content, as tangents, as metaphors, and as mood.

We are pleased to offer a bilingual issue that includes an impressive set of French-language articles, visual art, poetry, and fiction edited by Julien Defraeye. Please read Julien’s “Note du directeur du contenu francophone” for his introduction to the issue and the French content, including articles by Antoine Paris, H  l  ne Laulan, and Caroline Anth  rieu-Yagbasan; poetry by L  na  g Cariou and Camille Sova; fiction by Marie Pascal, Nicolas Balutet, and S  lvia Aymerich (with translator H  l  ne Beaulieu); and visual art by Alexandre Melay and Catherine Parayre.

The Articles section of this issue kicks off with Priscilla Jolly’s nonfiction essay “Skins, Surfaces, and Other Worlds,” which makes poetic and political links between skins and surfaces that are allergic, racialized, bug-bitten, and subject to contagion—setting a tone and a broad theme for the issue. In another nonfiction piece, “Stray Thoughts and Desire Paths—A Dialogue,” poets Jenna Butler and Yvonne E. Blomer share stray thoughts about writing, teaching, farming, parenting, racism, and the pandemic that trace desire paths of ecology, collegiality, friendship, and solidarity. Also combining academic research with creative practice, Kelly Norah Drukker’s essay examines the complicated interplay among place, memory, and loss. As a recent transplant to Ireland, Drukker reflects on how to grieve in Inis M  r for her grandmother who passed in Montreal. Drukker’s attempts to “speak [her] losses in this place” draw attention to the many physical and emotional landscapes that comprise our sense of place (2).

The scholarly articles in this issue engage intersecting conversations about animals, artistic practice, and the relationships between science and art, passion and expertise. In “From Beowulf through Virginia Woolf to the Coastal Wolves of British Columbia: Animals, Interdisciplinarity and the Environmental Humanities,” Pamela Banting reflects on the theoretical challenges and possibilities that emerge through a focus on animals and animality. Animals challenge disciplinary boundaries, raise complex questions surrounding

anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism, and reveal the limits of our knowing. Banting makes a compelling case that theorizing animals in the humanities—or thinking *with* animals—makes a significant contribution to the larger study of animals while introducing possibilities for activism. Melissa Yang’s “By Shattering The Vulture’s Nose” unearths an unusual historical debate on avian olfaction. With rigour and poise, Yang pulls us into the world of nineteenth-century naturalism to frame a debate between John James Audubon and Charles Waterton. Both “prone to artifice,” Audubon and Waterton were “more artists than scientists” (2). After unpacking the sensational language and cultural implications of the debate, Yang concludes with a turn to modern ornithology to settle the question in favour of Waterton’s “Nosarians.” These English-language articles demand to be read alongside Hélène Laulan and Caroline Anthérieu-Yagbasan’s article “De la gravure scientifique à la gravure artistique : Le burin de Pierre Lyonet et de Cécile Reims,” which pairs twentieth-century artist Cécile Reims’s engravings of caterpillars with the engravings that inspired them, by the eighteenth-century amateur scientist and artist Pierre Lyonet. Antoine Paris’s “Le texte, le terrarium et le gaffophone” also resonates with the other scholarly pieces: it’s an experimental and philosophical essay on scientific articles as unstable texts—representations and taxidermies that create worlds and environments of their own.

In the Photo Essay section, Galicia S. Blackman’s “Storying Silence: A Visual Essay” explores the productive potential of silence. Emerging out of Blackman’s academic research on the experience of silence in the classroom, the visual essay challenges the notion of silence as a gap, a lack, or an emptiness. Combining photography with short poems, Blackman’s poetic meditation invites us to listen to silence.

Poetry Editor Rina Garcia Chua embraced the extra-open call and welcomed a deluge of poetry submissions. The poetry section is a treasure trove of formal experiments and capacious imaginings; here you’ll find haiku, sonnets, visual poems, knick-knacks, erosion, oil-beasts, pangolins, polar bears, government letters, immunity-boosting concoctions, and a bird-watching quiz. Thanks, Rina, for your excellent and generous work!

In English fiction, Kimberly C. Christensen dramatizes a near-future world with no polar bears, narrated by a shocked, rambling fund manager. Two French stories, Nicolas Balutet’s “Bélaïr” and Marie Pascal’s “Fin du monde,” offer lyric, liquid-prosed reflections on water. Sílvia Aymerich’s children’s story “Peau de lune,” translated from Catalan by Hélène Beaulieu, tells a charming tale about difference and kindness that centres around a small lizard with skin like the moon.

The two features in the Visual Art section are linked by a concern with plants, memory, and temporality. Alexandre Melay’s mixed-media works explore the productive tension between the immaterial and material to consider perception, space, and the role of art in the Anthropocene. In *Tropical Trauma*, which is the cover image for this issue, plant species are fossilized in plaster and suspended in time, a poignant meditation on loss and memory. While Melay works with the concrete potentialities of natural materials in art, Catherine Parayre’s vivid, colourful works form an imaginative garden. Facing the reality of spending a summer

trapped inside four walls, Parayre turned to painting to combat the isolation of the pandemic. The image that accompanies our editorial is a cheerful depiction of the plant world that forms an antidote to the dreariness of November and acts as a reminder to find joy in the everyday, despite the heaviness of our current moment.

This issue includes reviews of Valerie Mason-John's *I am Still Your Negro: An Homage to James Baldwin*, Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island*, and Craig Russell's *Fragment*, curated by Book Reviews Editor Anita Girvan, plus a review of Anita's book *Carbon Footprints as Cultural-Ecological Metaphors*, which was in progress before Anita joined the Goose team and was edited by the Co-Editors. Anita's approach to the book reviews section involves the careful selection of books for review, centring work by Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) and other voices that have been marginalized in North American environmentalism. Anita works closely with reviewers to attend to matters of content, style, bias, and equity. We welcome Anita's approach that fosters ethical editing practices and transformative community building within the environmental humanities. Thanks, Anita!

With issue 18.2, the Goose welcomes three new editors who joined us in the spring: Poetry Editor Rina Garcia Chua and Co-Editors Siobhan Angus and David Huebert. Rina is a PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of British Columbia Okanagan, the editor of *Sustaining the Archipelago: An Anthology of Philippine Ecopoetry* (2018), and the Diversity Co-Officer for the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE). David is a scholar of animal studies and an award-winning writer of fiction and poetry. Siobhan is an environmental art historian and curator whose work focuses on photography, resource extraction, and workers' art. We are so excited about the talents, skills, and perspectives that these editors bring to the Goose team.

This is Co-Editor Melanie Dennis Unrau's final issue with the journal. Since 2017, Melanie has co-edited five issues of *The Goose* with precision and care. Behind the scenes, Melanie has worked tirelessly to update publishing and training processes that provide Goose team members with technical and relation-building skills that support our collective efforts to enact anti-oppressive editing practices. We want to thank Melanie for her commitment to capacity building and for being a wonderful colleague. We wish her happiness and success.

Thanks, as always, to our amazing team of volunteer editors who work together to recreate this labour of love twice per year. Thanks especially to Copy Editors Stephanie Eccles, Jenna Gersie, Jordan B. Kinder, and Emma Morgan-Thorp for their vital backstage work to deliver this issue full of extras in great shape and on time.

Having watched the COVID-19 crisis leapfrog into a new cycle of police violence, new regimes of racialization, and civil unrest over the past several months, we want to signal our enduring commitment to work that engages the intersection of race and environment; to doing our own work to address the insidious and harmful ways that racism, toxic whiteness, and unexamined bias have played out in the environmental humanities and in our journal; and to create an antiracist and anti-oppressive culture at *The Goose*. We support the [“Preliminary Statement on Anti-Racism”](#) made by the Association for Literature, Environment, and Culture in Canada /

Association pour la littérature, l'environnement et la culture au Canada, and we will help ALECC follow through on its commitments to create antiracist cultures and practices for the environmental humanities in Canada.

Our next issue, titled “e-Race-sures” and guest-edited by Rina Garcia Chua and Anita Girvan, considers race and environment, copiously imagined, in the hopes of addressing the “pressing need for academic and creative communities to proactively address systemic issues of racism within and outside of our institutions.” Please share the [call for submissions](#) widely, and submit by November 15.

Take care, everyone, and thanks for reading *The Goose*!

Works Cited

“extra, adj., adv., and n.” *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Sept. 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/67075.

MELANIE DENNIS UNRAU is Co-Editor of *The Goose* and a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at Columbia University, studying Canadian petropoetics, especially poetry written by oil workers. Melanie is the author of *Happiness Threads: The Unborn Poems* (The Muses’ Company, 2013), a co-editor of *Seriality and Texts for Young People: The Compulsion to Repeat* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and a former Editor of *Geez* magazine.

ALEC FOLLETT is Co-Editor of *The Goose*. He holds a PhD in Literary Studies from the University of Guelph and researches and teaches in the areas of Canadian literature, science communication, and the environmental humanities.

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SIOBHAN ANGUS is Co-Editor of *The Goose* and a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Art at Yale University. Her current research explores the visual culture of resource extraction with a focus on materiality, photography, and environmental justice. She is a recipient of the Governor General’s Gold Medal.