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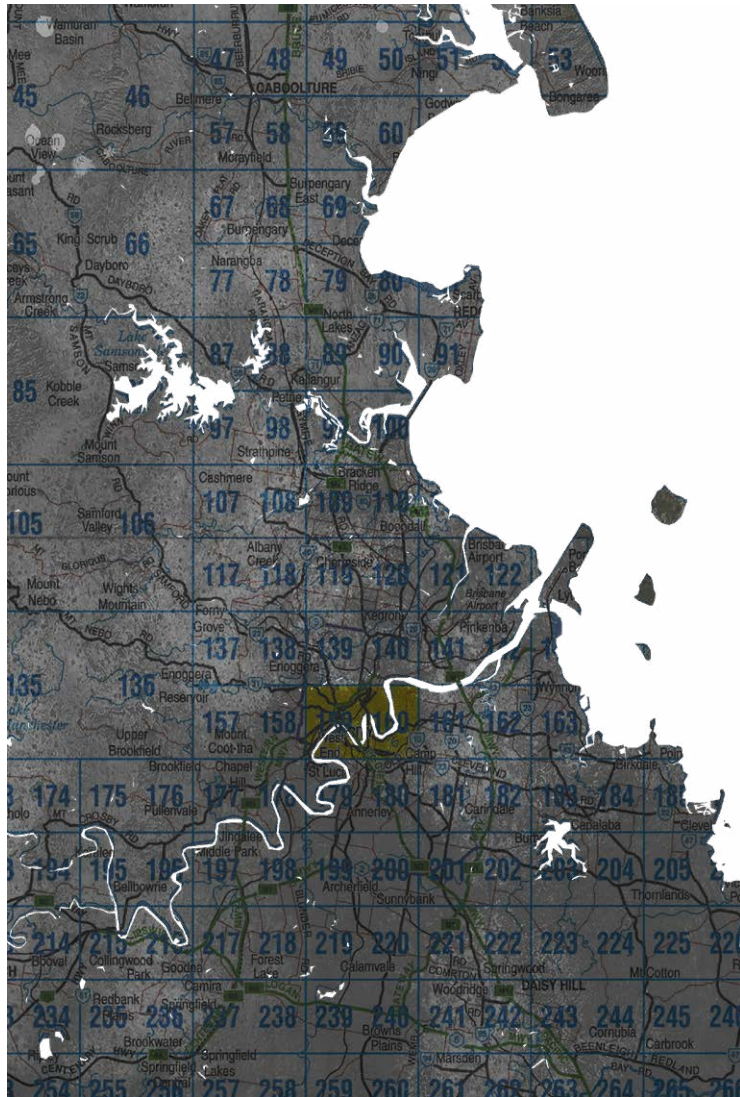


Zine

A

Street

Zine



A STREET ZINE

NEW WRITING

BY CARODY CULVER, SHASTRA DEO, LAURA ELVERY, ZENOBIA FROST,
JERATH HEAD, REBECCA JESSEN, SEAN MITCHELL, AND JONATHAN O'BRIEN.
DESIGN BY JONATHAN O'BRIEN. PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEAN SWINDELL.
PUBLISHED BY JERATH HEAD & JONATHAN O'BRIEN
ON BEHALF OF PSEUDONAJA GROUP.

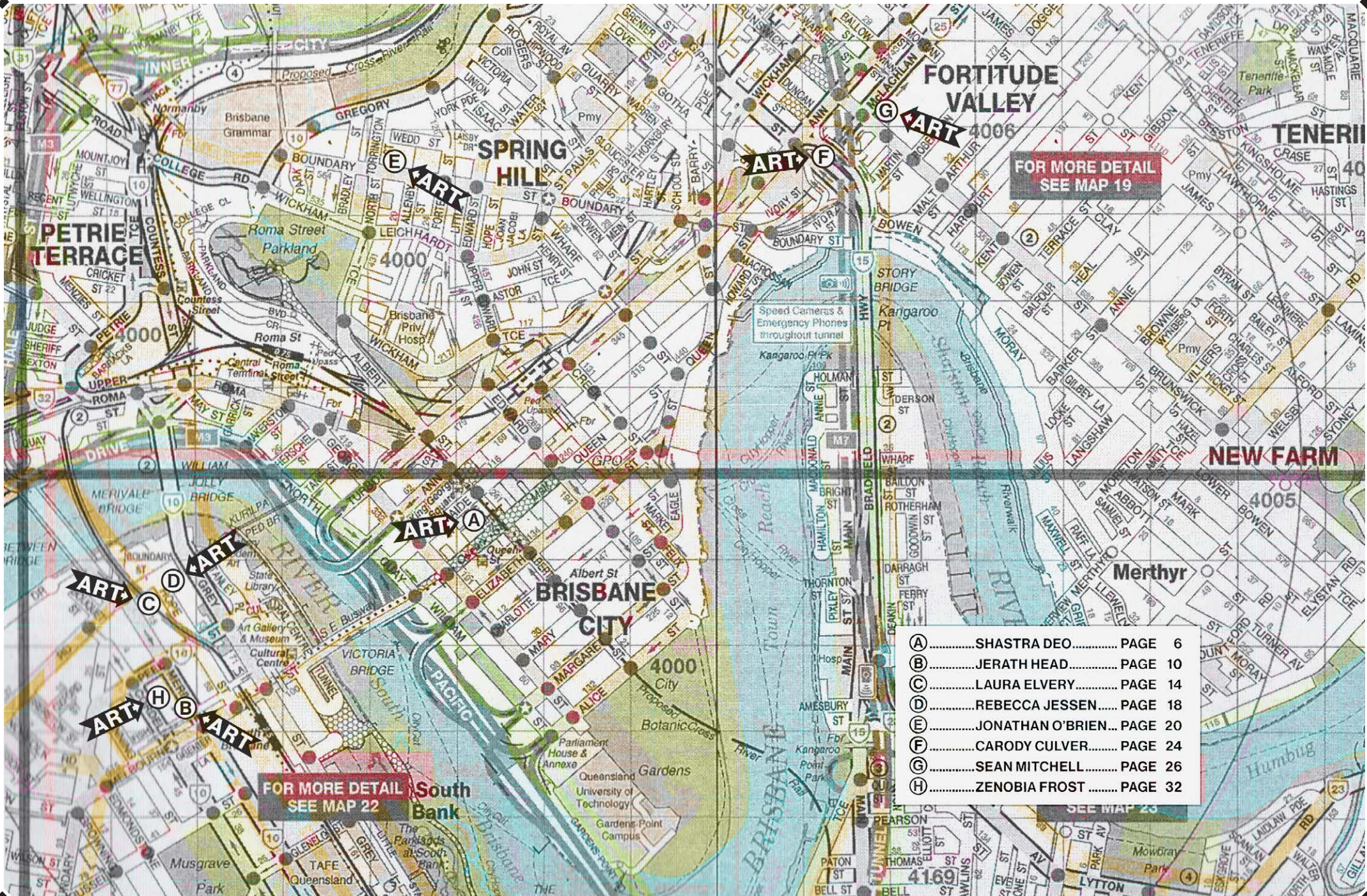
When we bought a Bostitch No-Jam Booklet Stapler from Amazon for \$63.75 to bind together Pseudonaja's first project, *A () Zine*, we vowed to make good on the investment: one day, maybe, just maybe, we would staple something else.

But *A Street Zine* is about much more than a return on investment. It's about celebrating the proliferation of street art across Brisbane's walls in recent years, and extending on the joyous process of creating our last set of publications. It's about showcasing talented Queensland artists, and making something beautiful.

If *A () Zine* was a response to Australia's lockdown in the early days of COVID-19, this publication was intended to mark our return to the streets. In Brisbane we have returned, at least for the time being—but each of us has loved ones elsewhere who are struggling through the uncertainty of a world still very much on hold, and so this zine is for them as well.

A Street Zine contains a selection of Brisbane's finest writers and people—some new contributors, and some familiar faces. Each has nominated a piece of local street art and penned a response, which we have published alongside glowing photographs of the pieces themselves. Together, these words and images create private moments from public art, and draw attention to the city's history and complexity, providing humour and reflection and moments to pause and observe.

So please, pause and observe, and we hope you enjoy this zine, this byways zine, this please don't get lost zine, this streets of your town zine. We enjoyed making it.



FOR MORE DETAIL
SEE MAP 19

FOR MORE DETAIL
SEE MAP 22

(A)	SHASTRA DEO	PAGE 6
(B)	JERATH HEAD	PAGE 10
(C)	LAURA ELVERY	PAGE 14
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FOURTEEN MOTIVES FOR
OPENING A RED DOOR

BY SHASTRA DEO
AFTER MACE ROBERTSON

1.
At the verge of a crossroads
the only thing moving
is light behind a red door.
2.
Things I know to be true:
a) A red door is red.
b) A red door is not always red
at night.
3.
Were one to enter precisely
the right number of doors the right
number of times, one
would find themselves
earlier in history than when they began.
4.
Let's say I grew up in a rough neighbourhood.
Keys wedged in the skin of my fist. We would hide
the fact we loved the world in a room
with no window. Let's say that, shall we?



TINY RED DOOR NUMBERED 45A BY MACE ROBERTSON
BURNETT LANE, BRISBANE CITY
PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN O'BRIEN



5.

One day one evening in the last
nights of spring a red door is all that stands
behind a woman who wears my old face
names herself Grief, and keeps asking
asking, Do you know where my husband has gone?
do you know where he is? can you call him
please? do you know when it was
the last time you saw him?
do you have anyone you can call? do you have anyone
else you can call? and looking at myself in miniature
in the gloss of a policeman's sunglasses I say
Well,

6.

I was always a little hungry.

7.

Well, the history of a body can change when one
looks at you with their teeth.

8.

But have you read the obituaries?

9.

Things I don't know yet:
a) The obverse of history.
b) The colour of a red door.

10.

Before a closed door everyone sees
me touch my pearl necklace as
though it were a rosary. Their eyes
I loved how they looked on me.
In their mouths I am neither
blamed nor forgiven for
the sum of all tragedies in their becoming.
And through an open window,
the sun.

11.

Let's say there is a door that is unlocked
only by speaking softly and tenderly towards
what sits behind it for however long it takes
to fall in love. Keys that leave an imprint
in the fist that curls the doorknob.

12.

I remember:
a) Opening a red door.
b) Not opening a red door.

13.

Night closes in at evening. Their eyes
were pointed at me. Standing in the red
doorway looking out
at the last of the day.

14.

When a door falls open there is nothing inside but
inside.

LAYERING TECHNIQUES

BY JERATH HEAD
AFTER BAO HO

1.

The street here sits atop land that once bore a pocket of rainforest and swamp. Merivale Street runs south and east, passing over ground that used to be part of Musgrave Park, many years ago, before development hemmed it in, a park that is the last remnant of an Aboriginal camp which in all likelihood predated European settlement of these lands and is the unofficial political capital of Aboriginal Brisbane.¹

In 1982 people gathered in Musgrave to protest a state of emergency under a state government that denied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people civil liberties under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protection Act 1971*, despite the nation having recently voted in a referendum and the federal government having amended the Act to make it less restrictive. As people protested, Bob Weatherall and Neville Bonner declared the park Aboriginal land—once more, still.

2.

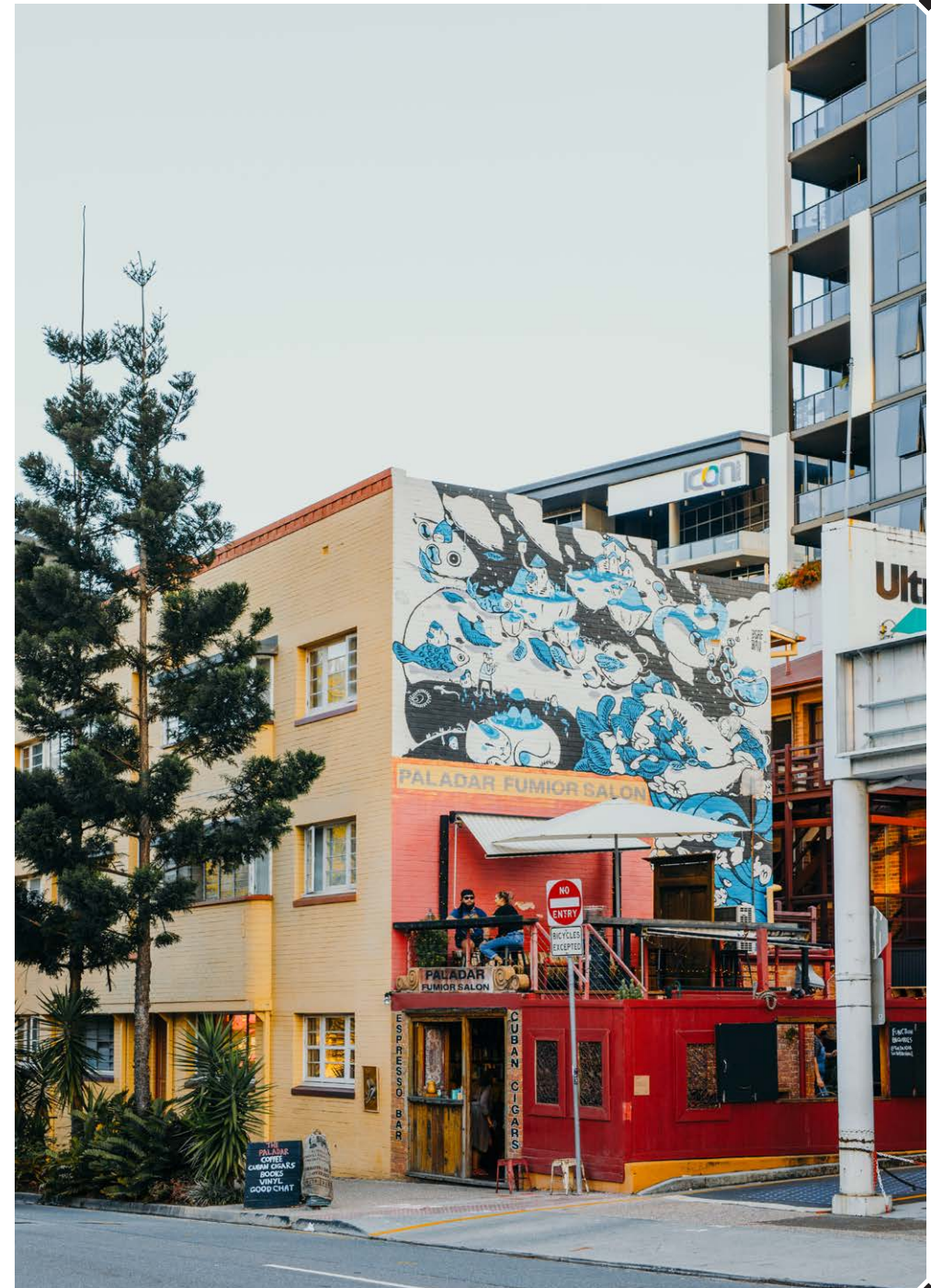
The squat red building sits on the corner of the street and the lane, an addendum to a larger structure. It was once brown wood and brick, a shelter built in the years of World War II, when the Brisbane line was allegedly drawn and the city’s residents expected bombs to fall on them the way they had fallen on Darwin in 1942. That same year, Brisbane became the centre of command for a theatre of war in the Southwest Pacific and saw a Supreme Commander from the United States take up office.

Soldiers from the United States began to walk brazen through the streets, walked roughshod over Australian perceptions of dignity and fairness. A smouldering sentiment was contained until one night in November 1942 when it ignited into a brawl that became many, spreading out over the inner city. In one such brawl, as Australian soldiers attempted to relieve a Private from the US Military Police of his shotgun the shot left the gun and

¹ Kerkhove, Ray (2018). 'Aboriginal camps as urban foundations? Evidence from southern Queensland', *Aboriginal History* 42, p. 142.



NICE TO MEET YOU AGAIN BY BAO HO
CORNER OF MERIVALE STREET AND FISH LANE, SOUTH BRISBANE
PHOTOGRAPH BY DEAN SWINDELL



tore through the chest of Gunner Edward Webster and spilled his blood and his life onto the street. The Battle of Brisbane, as it came to be known, had just this one death and its occurrence was greatly under-reported.

3.

The wall that hosts the blue and white mural is part of the larger structure and was once yellow—pale and inoffensive, a classic overlay for brick buildings of a certain time in Brisbane. Painted over because it is in the painting over that history moves forward, that the present is made new, and Brisbane is a new world city.

Bombs never fell here but they fell on Belfast and Berlin and Belgrade. The Japanese never arrived but many of the people who left never returned. Post-war logic said populate or perish. The Australian government wanted whiteness but whiteness was in short supply and so a certain otherness was reluctantly permitted. Migrants came and many ended up in South Brisbane; the building with the yellow wall was bought by a Greek family in 1955.

4.

In 1988 the World Exhibition was held in Brisbane. The government wanted people to come and this time the world was invited, and so rugged and remarkable and rough-and-tumble residents of South Brisbane were pushed out, smeared out to the edges to make way for Leisure in the Age of Technology. The Greek family that had bought the yellow wall pulled coffee at Expo, ran the café—exchanged leisure for labour.

5.

The brown took on red and the Greek took on Cuban. Bomb shelter became paladar fumior salon, un lugar en el que el propietario podría parecer otra persona y en el que a los clientes les podría parecer que estaban en otro lugar. A slice of Cuba plastered over Brisbane and Greece and displacement—a feeling that things could be tweaked, this new place made different.

The proprietor wore a black leather jacket and wore his grey beard thick and wore his grey hair long and tied back. He pulled coffee and



sold cigars and maintained an air of few words as communist propaganda appraised customers from the wall.

6.

Paladar closed and opened and closed and opened again in new hands. Developers shaped and reshaped the bulk surrounding Fish Lane and the Brisbane Street Art Festival coloured in by numbers this mainline of bars and restaurants and culture. Yellow became blue and white and settled atop red. Hong Kong atop Cuba atop Greece.

7.

The blue and white merges with the sky on a day when the sky has cloud daubed across its surface. Things come apart across space and time and all the strangeness bursts through. A paladar holds back a tidal wave and a tattooed cat takes stock. A small girl hugs a giant rabbit and the world floats on by. ☺



OVERFLOW

BY LAURA ELVERY
AFTER FINTAN MAGEE

Citrus peel coiled on our sanded-back
kitchen table. My son prods it with his
finger, says *Dad, I need you to get
the orange out of my teeth.*
Always the pith, always
caught in the same tooth.
Did I get it? I ask
Swallowed it he says.

The pond I fell into
as a child, all my cousins
shrieking with laughter, my mother
undressing me afterwards to rub me with a towel.
I was the youngest, naked
and pale with bits of muck on my balls.

The waterfall my son tumbles into—
the shallow pool beneath.
A tourist watches, cradling
his camera. Want to scream
Do something! but I see
my boy's arms churn, a shoeless foot
turning circles. I plunge
my hands into the violent cold—
his eyes, his mouth, his wails, the tendons
under his arms, his Paddington coat.
I drag him up like I'm doing the dishes.

All those children found
in shallow graves, all those forsaken
churches. *An apology must be specific.
Include the word 'sorry'. Make reparations
if you can.* At church, a man once struck
my mother, just a girl, on the tender
slats behind her knees
for not putting all her coins
in the basket.

It'll do us good, I say.
We arrive, me and my son,
to clean mud from a stranger's house
after the flood. The river's iron smell.
Now, my boy has golden hair
on his top lip. We're both shy
about it. We go down
in garbage-bagged boots to the filthy garage,
find a plastic tub clotted
with earth. I expect to haul up
a serial killer's trophies, bones tight-packed.
Instead: white folded towels.
Box in his arms, my son snags
his hip on a stray nail
and I take him to get a shot.

*I thought you would die
so many times before now.*
My desire always to hold him
like a new bowl.
The pith gets caught
in the throat. The rocks
are slippery. The water is cold
and your family laughs and laughs.



WE ARE THE EUCALYPTUS GOTH

BY REBECCA JESSEN
AFTER UNKNOWN

we are the 77% humidity goth
the *it's gettin' hot in here* goth

we are the Driza-Bone goth
the Brisbane winter mood goth

we are the heat death goth
the sun salutations goth

we are the early jacaranda bloom goth
the purple people eater goth

we are the McSteamy goth
the all-day hot yoga goth

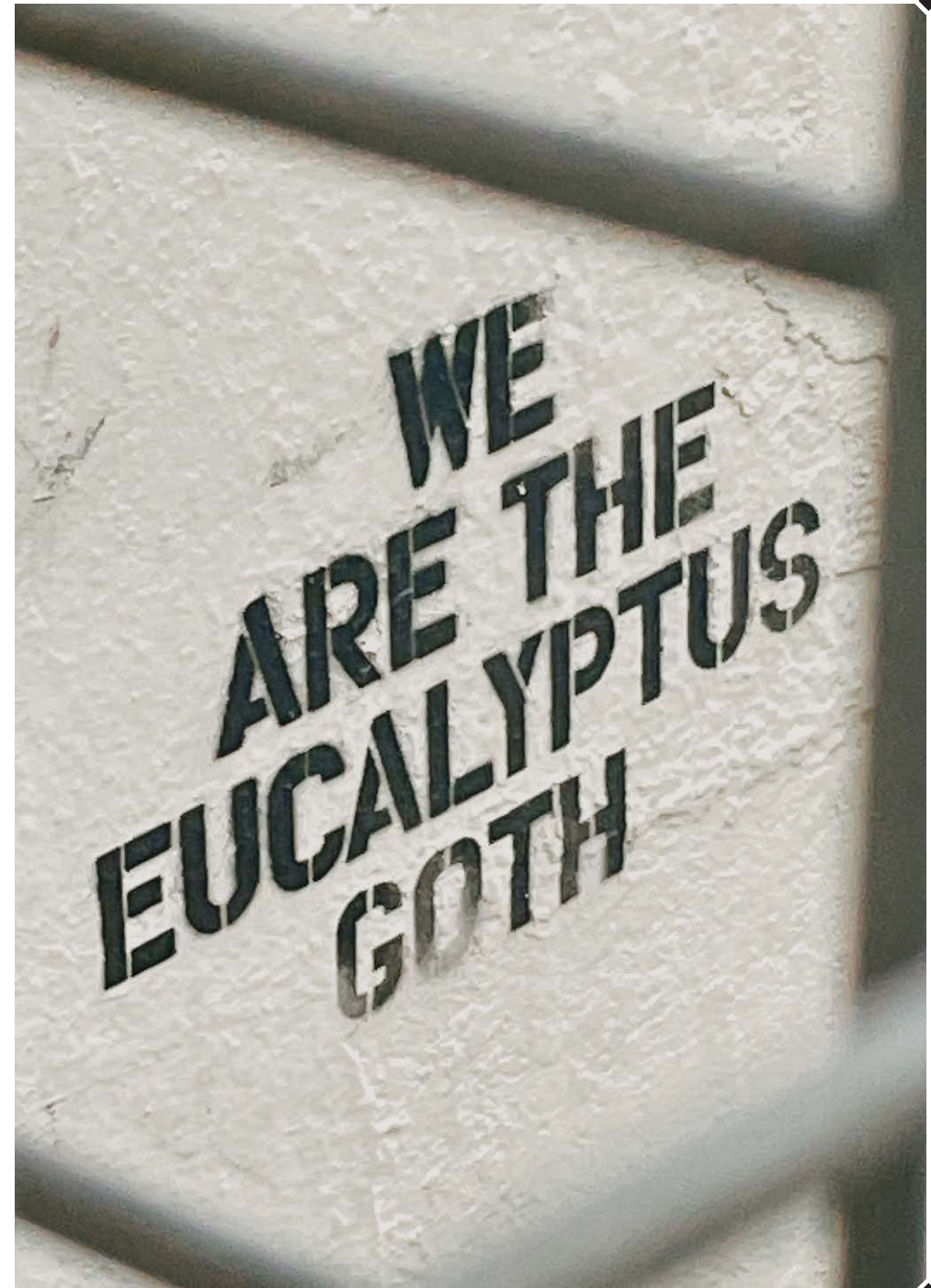
we are the sub-tropical goth
the rainforest-without-a-canopy goth

we are the 100-year-flood goth
the swamp rat goth

we are the August Winds goth
the Ekka flu goth

we are the evergreen goth
the seasonless goth

we are the Vicks VapoRub goth
the eucalyptus goth





ON SEEING THE MURAL

BY JONATHAN O'BRIEN
AFTER SHEEP CHEN
& MATT ADNATE

I was at this party, one of those ones on the southside where you all stand around and talk as though you've all seen each and every artwork ever made. Each and every artwork, that is, except the ones anyone wants to talk about. That seems to be the rule at these parties: only one person per conversation is allowed to have seen the artwork being discussed—otherwise, it must not be worth discussing. And so when it was my turn to bring up an artwork, I decided to tell the story of the mural. It's a story I usually tell when asked: How do you find living in Spring Hill? You know, in a suburb generally characterised by its littering of halfway houses, methadone clinics, and shuttered storefronts, by its bicycle thefts, its restaurants' strange hours, and its anthem-like screaming matches at two in the morning.

To distract from this reputation a little, whenever anyone asked me about Spring Hill I'd show them a photo of the IES building and ask if they'd ever seen it before. When people said no, which most of them did, then I got to tell the story the way I always told it: how it's entirely bizarre and hilarious that the International English School for whatever reason has a mural of a Chinese woman smiling while an Indigenous child tells the viewer to keep quiet. The child is saying: Hey, you, actually—stop speaking English. No, cut it out!

The entire painting is incongruous, an at once intense and indecipherable message to send in such a huge form, attached as it is to a brutalist façade that already stands imposing. But still, the irony of it all is delectable, and the story usually went over well, until that one evening at that one party when someone started frowning midway, and once I was done telling the story started saying: That doesn't sound quite right. And I said: What do you mean? And they said: It's a good story, but it isn't true. And I said: Well, yeah, I mean, of course it's not the mural's actual intention. The child isn't really telling the students to shush. But it's ironic.



IES MURAL BY SHEEP CHEN AND MATT ADNATE
BOUNDARY STREET, SPRING HILL
PHOTOGRAPH BY DEAN SWINDELL



And they said: No, you're being dishonest. And I said: No, I'm not; it's true. And they said: How do you know? And I said: Because I see the mural every day. And they said: But how close have you looked, and do you know about Noni Eather? To which I said: I've looked close enough thank you very much; it's just across the road from where I live—and no I don't know Noni Eather.

At this, my interlocutor shook their head and let out a sigh. The rest of the group had excused themselves to get drinks, perhaps because they knew the one rule of the party had been broken: there wasn't meant to be a dialogue, because dialogue meant the chance of conflict. And even though my drink was also empty, I was not free to leave. My interlocutor said to me then: Look, okay, for starters, the school is called IES College, and the IES stands for International Education Services. And even if it did stand for International English School, the mural wouldn't really be ironic, because that young girl is a specific young girl who's now a woman and whose name is Noni Eather, and she's portrayed silencing the viewer

as a tribute to the history of this place—the mural, after all, overlooks Spring Hill's Boundary Street. You're not stupid; you know what that history means.

And I said: Sure, okay, sure, but don't you think that it's kind of silly to use this sort of imagery in front of a school? Don't you think that this is a little too much context needed to understand such a public work of art?

And they said: I don't know, maybe. Maybe it's ill advised, and maybe it makes absolutely no sense. But even if that's the case, it doesn't mean you get to come in and spread misinformation based on assumptions you've made just so you get to seem clever or funny for a bit. Now, I'm gonna go get a drink. Do you want to come?

Much later that night, on the way home from my interlocutor's house, I stopped by the mural. I saw then for the first time the plaque that explains the piece, featuring an excerpt from an interview with Noni Eather herself, whose father was a member of The Campfire Group, an artist collective once based out of a Torrington Street house, right nearby the IES College campus. In her words featured on the plaque, Eather explains that the reference photo for the mural, taken by Mick Richards in 1994, 'became a symbol of [The Campfire Group's] collective idea'. 'Several artists,' she says, 'kicked off their solo careers there and together they generated projects for Indigenous education and cultural awareness.'

On reading this, the mural's nature becomes clear to me: it serves as an invitation to a deep history, and it is this new clarity that renders my pithy story untellable. And while it feels bad to be corrected, and to part ways with one's own easy answers, I have to remind myself that these feelings are selfish, and illusory, and that if art does indeed have a social purpose, then it is probably to teach us how to see, a task no work can complete if we refuse to meet it halfway, to at least try looking closely, in case there's just a little more truth to be found. ☪



THE MORE I THINK

CARODY CULVER
AFTER SEBASTIAN MOODY

The more I think about it the bigger it gets
The bigger I think about it the harder it gets
The harder I think about it the sharper it gets
The sharper I think about it the pointier it gets
The pointier I think about it the sorer it gets
The sorer I think about it the sicker it gets

The mirth I think about it the laughter it gets
The bisque I think about it the lobster it gets
The morgue I think about it the deader it gets
The years I think about it the older it gets
The sage I think about it the wiser it gets
The sound I think about it the louder it gets
The money I think about it the richer it gets

The think I get about it the better it gets
The gets I better about it the thinker it bets
The better I get about it the thinker it mores
The more it thinks about it the lesser I'm for
The less I know the more it gets
The less I am the more I know.



MURAL MARKET

BY SEAN MITCHELL
AFTER APPARITION MEDIA

I gaze upon a beautiful contradiction. On the corner of Brunswick and McLachlan, on the northeast-facing wall of a building that once housed a bar called The Flying Cock, is a most impressive painting.

Freshly fluffed nimbi adorn the uppermost quadrant of THE WALL. Angular, Tolkienesque mountains poking through the cloudy canopy. *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* ohne den Wanderer. Moving down the façade, and spliced between the apertures, grows an impossible botanical scene. An abundance of tropical trees, large-leafed houseplants, and flowers in full bloom. This cornucopia of chlorophyll creates the impression of quietude and peace.

The reverie of this scene, however, is somewhat offset by its centrepiece: the brand. The name of a telco emerges from the forest, the softened sans-serif a glowing green. THE WALL is not a mural; THE WALL is marketing.

But THE WALL is different to most ads. Brand name aside, there is no text to be found: no website, no credit, no information at all. And it is beautifully, skilfully hand-painted. In a neighbourhood of fluorescent convenient stores, and crackling neon adorned bars, THE WALL is a breath of fresh air. And yet, beautiful as it is, this Edenic depiction is actually something of an invasion.

INVASION

In the world of graffiti, walls are canvases of which there is a limited supply. Eligible spaces are highly sought after. I don't pretend to understand the nuanced rules that dictate painting and painting over. But I do understand scarcity—and competition. Money wins out, and the idea of ads infesting Brisbane's unique art spaces one by one haunts me. But some murals are commissioned, and some artwork features brands, and the line between mural and marketing is constantly repainted.

IDENTITY

The brandname is a dead giveaway: THE WALL is 100% ad. But why is it so obvious? If we substitute the brand name with another verb masquerading as a proper noun, would it still register?

Without any context, it might pique enough for a passer-by to google the brand name, and if it is *search engine optimised* (I checked, it is) then the viewer has done a great deal of the legwork of being sold to themselves. But what if THE WALL was in a language the viewer didn't speak or couldn't easily search? If an ad isn't recognised as an ad, is it still an ad?

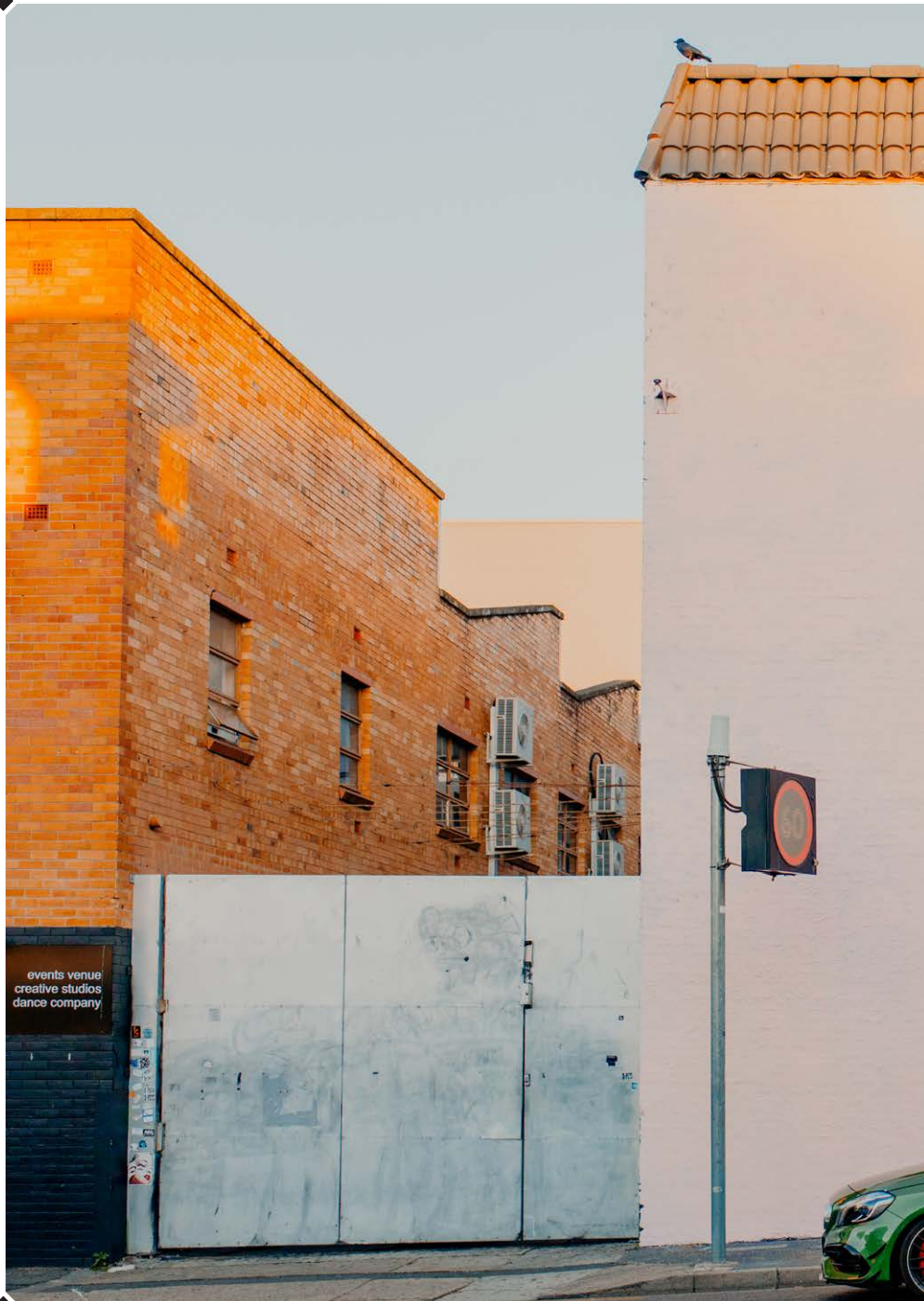
EMPLOYMENT

The legality and precariousness of street art have generally separated it from capital, but there have always been exceptions. Street artists have become millionaires, and tags monumental brands. Do places like THE WALL provide regular and sufficient income? A comfortable space for artists to hone their craft, and source funds for more personal artistic pursuits? After they clock off, do these same artists find themselves self-funding the painting of other walls, sans logos, when the sun goes down? I can't discredit the fact that THE WALL pays talented artists to do their thing.

ERASURE

But who painted THE WALL? Graffiti and murals have tags and Instagram handles, but this neo-capitalist artefact has nothing.

I find the marketing company behind THE WALL. As it turns out, advertising murals are not new, and this company has been painting ads for some time. They once painted over Newtown's iconic *it's like a jungle sometimes* with a marketing mural for Darren Aronofsky's film *Mother!*. The ad was deemed illegal by the Council and the company worked with Colin Bebe, one of the original artists, to restore the piece. But what if Council had approved?



EVOLUTION

It has been slow, but street art has steadily legitimised in the public eye. Street art festivals are now a staple cultural event, even in Brisbane. Despite being a largely corporate affair, these celebrations of walls and paint pay a whole lot of artists. But the counter side to legitimisation is commodification and commercialisation of an art style that was once the epitome of counterculture. Celebrating street art may have indicated to marketers that it is now a valid sales tactic.

Some weeks later, I return to THE WALL, and I find an entirely new arrangement, and a very different sales tactic, painted upon the wall. The calm and quietude has erupted into vociferous noise. Loud clashing colours, a clear call to action, even a large QR code—and, dead centre, a Brobdingnagian bucket of fried chicken. There is no mystery here; this is an ad. 🍗





events venue
creative studios
dance company

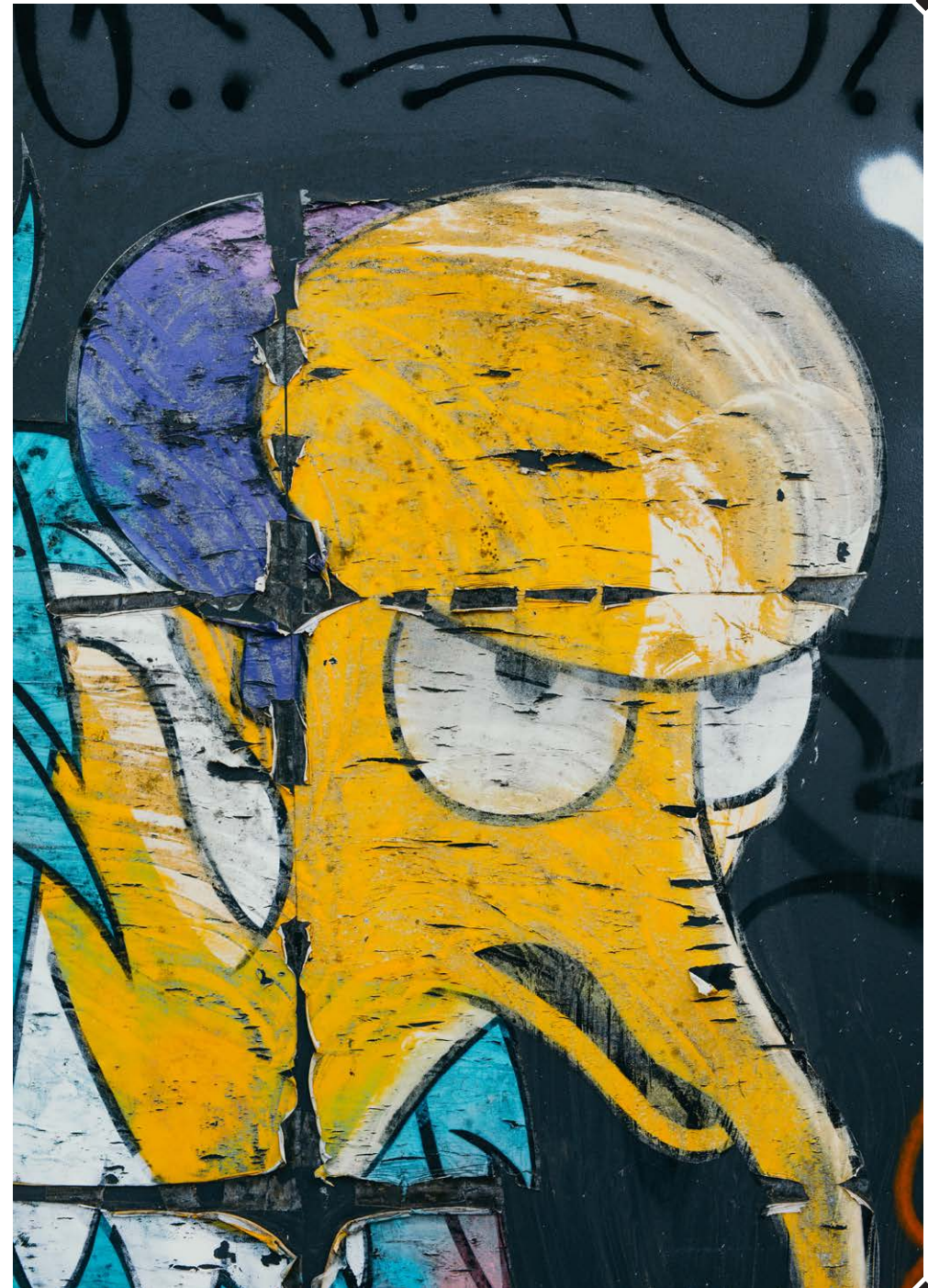
DAMN THIS COMMON GUTTER

BY ZENOBIA FROST
AFTER FAME MOUSE

Me, ol' Mr Retired? I'm no crypt-
keeper—why, I'm a capitalism
suffragette! I'm thrilled to announce
I've been negatively geared.
Revulcanise my Prussian dollars,
Smithers—Chernobyl's calling
for an election and I'm just
the May-Day billionaire
to represent the nuclear token.
Quick—look priceless! Toss on a few more
tobacco bucks; I guess I'm donning
dollars to these cabdabblers, these
distillate ogres pestering the rich.
I'm sick of buzzwords! Youth is cancelled
and I own their ironic orphanage,
their 'block' of 'flats' in 'town'.
I'm pouring harmless candy
into the all-you-can-buy buffet
on Hoodlum Island, putting in my duty dollars
so these slack-jawed troglodytes
can enjoy their contempt picnics
on my lawn. Fetch me my spare teeth,
Smithers: I outwitted toffee.



UNTITLED BY FAME MOUSE
CORDELIA STREET, SOUTH BRISBANE
PHOTOGRAPH BY DEAN SWINDELL



CREDITS & INFO

Carody Culver is a freelance writer and senior editor at *Griffith Review*. She has written for *Peppermint*, *Books+Publishing*, *Kill Your Darlings*, *Frankie*, *The Toast*, and others. She's also a co-editor for the comedy writing collective the Fanciful Fiction Auxiliary.

Shastra Deo was born in Fiji, raised in Melbourne, and lives in Brisbane. Her first book, *The Agonist* (UQP, 2017), won the 2016 Arts Queensland Thomas Shapcott Poetry Prize and the 2018 Australian Literature Society Gold Medal.

Laura Elvery is the author of two short story collections, *Trick of the Light* (UQP, 2018) and *Ordinary Matter* (UQP, 2020). Her fiction has been published in *The Saturday Paper*, *Overland*, *Griffith Review*, *Meanjin*, *Kill Your Darlings*, and *The Big Issue*. Laura lives in Brisbane.

Zenobia Frost (@zenfrost) is an arts writer and poet based in Brisbane, Australia. Her most recent poetry collection, *After the Demolition* (Cordite Books, 2019), won the 2020 Wesley Michel Wright Award and was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

Jerath Head is an editor and writer whose work has featured in a number of Australian publications. He remembers buying a cigar from Paladar Fumior Salon when he finished his undergraduate degree and attempting to smoke it while wearing an ill-fitting suit.

Rebecca Jessen's debut poetry collection, *Ask Me About the Future* (UQP, 2020), was shortlisted for the 2020 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry, the Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry and the Anne Elder Award.

Sean Mitchell is a sometimes writer and longtime graffiti enthusiast. He has fond memories of finding tags in impossible places along the Kedron Brook, collecting Man-Mans while riding the Ferny grove line, and watching new additions to secret walls around Brisbane's northside.

Jonathan O'Brien is a Brisbane-based writer, educator, and creative freelancer, described as 'a fresh and exciting voice' by The Guardian Australia. His fiction and research has won several awards and been published across Australia.

Dean Swindell is a Meanjin/Brisbane based photographer. He is a capturer of mood, personality, and place. He finds beauty in the mundane and uncelebrated, leveraging notions of nostalgia to convey feelings which can't easily be articulated with words.

Pseudonaja Group is a small independent literary outfit based in Brisbane, producing ekphrastic publications and projects both big and small. You can reach out to us at pseudonaja.group@gmail.com and view our past and future projects at www.pseudonaja.group. 📧

The traditional owners of the lands on which Brisbane sits—and where this zine was made—are the Yuggera and Turrbal people, and their sovereignty was never ceded.

PSEUDONAJA GROUP PRESENTS

CARODY CULVER
AFTER SEBASTIAN MOODY

SHASTRA DEO
AFTER MACE ROBERTSON

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