

Mokuna 'Elua

he i'a nui ma ka loko li'i
a contemporary feedback mechanism

I think you are forgetting something, she said. That is why we left you this note. You know, this note that contains this message. The one that you are reading at this very moment. The note said this: 'O 'oe kekahi māhele o'u. Mai pa'a i ka leo. It would appear that we were still learning how to communicate with ourselves. Well, hello to you, too.

*E poina ana 'oe i kekahi mea, wahi 'o ia. No ke aha, ua hā'awi mākou i kēia leka pōkole nou. Ua maopopo iā'oe, kēia leka pōkole i kēia leo kō loko. Kekahi leo e heluhelu ana 'oe i kēia manawa. Ua ha'i ka leka pōkole: **You are a part of me. Don't hold back your voice.** Auē! Māluhiluhi au. 'Ā! Aloha e makamaka heluhelu. 'O Jacob ko'u inoa. Makemake au e ha'i mo'olelo iā 'oe. Once upon a time...*

[Please restart your machine to complete the recent updates to your system.]

“You cannot deny, the world is becoming more and more cartoonish every day.”

The panda bear looked towards the talking quilt, with a look of bemused concentration. “What time juncture did you say we were in, by

the way?" asked the bear. Ah, perhaps our sharp-witted friend is implying that this progression of a cartoon 'verse has been manifest for some time and maybe is not so much a linear progression. Perhaps we are continually forgetting some important fact. And what are we forgetting? We are forgetting...

Our story begins again...

Ua pūhi'u ka makani o huli. Such a change. Such a change. Such a change. But mind your manners, my dear reader. This story that we are in, this story is, um, perhaps broader in context than we once thought (than we once thought in some other kikilo, perhaps). A fine sheet of dust covered our writing desk. It had been some moons since the last rains. We looked around our colorful room, with its paintings and photographs and bookshelves, and its chairs draped in patterned fabrics. We listened to our jazz music. When deciding to walk with others, when embarking on one purposeful march through the streets, it is the purpose that must guide our gait. And what would be the reason for which we walk? Well, to arrive at some other place, of course. Like *kō kākou hoaloha, ka moa*, we aim to get to the other side. Well, are we there yet?

“Ah,” said J., as he gazed around the crumbling wall to the left of his doorway. “Now that’s a proper rain.”

The storm came, and the storm went. There was much rain, and much wind. A hala tree fell. The lau kalo were torn like ribbons. Some wind damage on the cabbage and chard, and an uprooted young basil. Still, we eat our green vegetables. “Burp.”

“Excuse me.”

“What?”

“I believe we were telling one story.”

“I believe we were telling many stories,” came the reply.

Yawn. If it was not for my contacts on the other side, I do believe I would have given up this yawn. Deeper yawn. Sigh.

“Oh, how abundant we are. Waiwai mākou,” wahi a A.

“But what about the neighbors?” queried J.

“Hau’oli loa nā hoa noho āpau,” pane maila ka Lopako ‘o Lopaka, “Last time I checked, anyhow.”

“Excellent,” said J. “Maika’i loa.”

“Mahalo no ka mea ‘ai ‘ono,” wahi a A. “A hui hou!” she said, as she walked out the door on her way to perform her daily hana no ka lāhui.

J. listened to the rumblings of kona ka’a polū as it rolled up out of the gravel pit, and turned towards his robotic friend Rob (the Robot).

“What would you like to do today?” nīnau akula ‘oia iā ia.

A pane maila ka lopako, “I would you like to be successful communication.”

These were all true things that were happening in the real world. That’s where you live, right? In the one true world? Successful communication is muy difficulto, though, what with all the different languages that people speak. And just think, it would be hard enough with just two hoā ‘ōlelo, like this dialog between this one human and this one robot. But what about all of those conversational hangers on, like that panda bear we mentioned earlier in the story? Or that odd fiddler that is walking on top of our crumbling roof? And what about you? Don’t you want to understand all there is to understand about this particular act of communication? Do you need a translator?

“Perhaps you are just lazy,” said the Robot.

“Could be,” said J. “Anyhow, I think we should get someone out to the garden, to maintain our collection, if you know what I mean.”

“We called it deselection,” said Heymish. “At least that’s the jargon they wanted us to use, anyway. Weeding was perhaps too harsh a term for their sensitive hearts. Which begs the question, well, anyway. It is not as if you can just go through life using garden metaphors and expect people to take you—what is it?”

The kōlea had its eye on some bug or worm or

lizard or something. Heymish returned to the maintenance of the plot, just one plot amongst many here in the vast community garden. As the Tuahine rain filled the atmosphere, Heymish smiled at one of the neighboring humans and groaned with the creaking of his old bones.

“System problem detected. You want to cancel or report the problem?”

“Wait, what are you asking?” asked J.

“I said,” said the Robot, “system problem detected. Cancel or report problem?”

“Yeah, you just reported the problem, didn’t you?” said J., rubbing his eyes (it was early in the middle of the middle of the night).

“I mean,” said the Robot, “do you want me to report this system problem to other people?”

“Um,” said J., yawning and scratching his head, “if people aren’t aware that there’s some major systemic corruption a-happening, I am not so sure what magical medium of communication is going to connect them with this message. I mean, it is pretty obvious that it’s the *system* that’s completely fucked, right? Anyway, cancel, though, to answer your question,” replied J. to his relatively new colleague, “I want to cancel this system problem. I mean, I definitely want to cancel the system.”

“Okay, if you notice further problems, please try restarting your—” The robot paused. “Do you

hear that buzzing sound? It is like some sort of static or something?”

“What?” said A. “It’s a map. It’s a map of the local [plot]. I thought I’d blow it up real big and put it on the public wall.”

“It might be a little confusing,” said one of her colleagues. A. had many colleagues probably.

“Oh, it is not finished yet, of course. We are still missing some inoa ‘āina and whatnot. ‘A‘ole anei?”

“Um, do we want to be making our plans so public?” queried someone who was not so familiar looking to A. This aforementioned fact stuck in A.’s maw a bit and she looked over at this young woman who she had maybe seen a few times but never formally met.

“Well,” replied A., “what media technologies do you suggest, or, is it a matter of tactics, or access levels, or—”

Somebody yawned.

“No, I get it,” said the young woman. “Clearly those are all important questions, but I was more just thinking along the lines of, well, have you ever heard this joke about how you make God laugh?”

“Which god are we talking about?” somebody piped in.

“Um,” said someone else, “she is probably referring to one of the gods with a good sense of humor. But one that doesn’t just laugh at anything probably.”

The young woman smiled. “Well, I am talking paradigmatically, but, well, you know, I am not originally from around here, but I’ve been told that, you know, if you’re going fishing and somebody asks you where you are going, you don’t say, ‘I’m going fishing.’ You might say you’re going holoholo or something.”

“Ah,” said A. “This is a matter of clarifying just who we think we are talking to.”

“Well,” replied the relative stranger, shrugging and grinning. “Just a reminder is all of the nature of this [body of water] that we are all [swimming in].” She looked into A.’s eyes. “But I imagine you’ve thought about all of these issues of tactics and strategy and enplaced ethics.”

“Oh,” said A., “That’s kind of you to say, ...”

“Ged,” said Ged, smiling. “I don’t think we’ve officially been introduced.”

“Wait a minute,” said somebody. “How *do* you make God laugh?”

Hahahahahahahahahah. That is quite funny.
Yawn.

What were we talking about?

It does not matter. All of this bullshit that maybe somebody bought. It does not matter. What comes next does not matter. It is what it is. We cannot change this fact of existence. I am tired of the past. All of you fuckers are making me tired. Please restart your system to complete the upgrades.

No future. No future but what we make for ourselves. POP. Once there was a way to get back home. SLEEP. We have run out of gas. FART. Please restart your system to complete the upgrades.

What were we talking about? It doesn't matter. You will never get your readable story by perusing amidst these here climes. Open your maka.

We can do better.

Well, sure we can do better, but what would be the point of that? Seriously. This is no rhetorical question, dear reader.

Back to the Grind

“You bore me with your nonsense.”

“Please read between the lines.”

“Something something nothing something.”

END DIALOG

A BREAK IN THE NARRATIVE

Well, that was unexpected, she thought. *Aaah!!* she thought. *Breathe, breathe, breathe.* Such an exciting bus ride, she was on. *Hmmm,* she thought, *it would appear that our primary audience is shifting.*

“Could you pull the bell?”

DING

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

YEAR of the ROOSTER.

Welcome to the year of the Rooster, starting on January 28, 2017, will be filled full of success and luck for many as they won’t be able to sit down and do nothing; as they themselves will look for goals to accomplish. However, it will not come easy, but offer rich, colorful and memorable experiences along the way. With the right approach and without excessive emotionality, everything will work out accordingly. Life is unpredictable, and that’s what makes it interesting. Assess it objectively, analyze it and make a decision regarding future actions whether that is in career, relationships, finances, goals, etc. In order to achieve this critical balance and harmony, understanding your self perception as an individual is a good start.

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“Well, there’s a strong possibility that I am transgender, well, I mean, I *am* transgender, but it is not clear what this will mean for my future, and due to, well, there are things she fears and/or doesn’t want, and there is no way for me to guarantee anything...and it seems impossible for me to explore this while in our specific relationship in any sort of healthy manner, so, therefore we decided to break up.”

“Ah, I see.”

“Really?”

-shrug-

“I really didn’t see this coming, you know. I mean, had I known I was an egg, hatching probably would not have come as such a surprise. And retrospectively, like they say, hindsight is looking through a set of properly calibrated eye goggles—it’s like, oh yeah, egg, that makes so much more sense now, but, still. You know? I just feel a little foolish. Like, I’m too old for all this shit, you know?”

“Ah, yeah. Sigh. Where does it all go?”

“Um. Where does what all go?”

“The shit. Where does all the shit go?”

“That’s a good question.”

Greetings, dear reader. Sigh. Well, this book is taking all the time to finish itself, it would seem. So many years go by. Is this the same story? Um...unknown. Perhaps we should give up

with cataloging all of our unbuyable mind excrement. So, how have you been? We, the author, have been...going through some changes? Our fundamental relationship with our place has abruptly shifted and this calls into question all sorts of basic language choices that we, as the author must need make. You know, because our job here pretty much consists of, you know, contextual ethically-imbued word-ing. And so, anyway, the story we were telling is maybe not the story we thought we were telling. We, I. Me. Anyway. The wind is blowing. Um, what was I talking about? Yeah, I thought I was telling one story, but maybe I am telling another story. And maybe you are not who I thought you would be. And that's okay, I guess. Sure. Um...

Where were we? Oh, yes, if you haven't gathered by now, I, the author, appear to be transgender. Now, what does this mean metaphorically for you the reader? Does this mean, I, the invisible creator of this world, transcend gender? Does it mean, that I, the presenter of this story, was once upon a time one specific gender, and now, after a sudden narrative break, have transitioned, and am now an other specific gender? Or, does this plot twist reveal that, while we thought perhaps that this specific character (me, the author) was one gender, it turns out they were actually a different gender the entire time? Or is this simply a historical fact that I, a historically manifest human being, am communicating to you, a separate and other historically manifest human being, within the structure of what is very

clearly marked as a work of fiction? Clearly, this text is out of my control (let us not spend too much time hashing out our theory on literary authorship—suffice it to say, for now, the author is clearly dead/not dead). That said, it is quite possible that this section of novel, following the literary tradition of my foremothers, might turn into my using this particular social media platform to expunge/parse my feelings as a [newly hatched baby trans]. Be warned.

The terrorists/bank robbers were having another meeting about the latest existential crisis.

Things to include:

Looking down at my smoothish legs, an intense feeling bubbled out of my [soul]. I, a human being, wanted to cry, because this simple thing, which meant nothing in itself, was a simple thing that I had wanted to do for so long and had resigned myself to the fact that I would probably never do this thing, and now, I was looking down, and seeing this reality, and felt so [words]. I felt so, happy?, so validated?, and yet at the same time so sad that it took me what—5 years? 12 years? 20 years? 25 years?—to be comfortable enough to do this simple, kind-of-irrelevant thing that somehow was an expression of this intensely yearned for thing that had been denied to/by me for [complicated reasons]. And these competing/complimentary feelings caused all of this human emotion involving a yearning to cry/release

these emotions and let them flood my conscious being in an instance of deeply-felt direct connection to existence that is perhaps unparseable in words/cry.

This reminds me of a thought I had earlier (later?) in the day (night before?), in regards to an interaction with my once-significant other regarding the new toy they bought on their trip to a neighboring island. They said, don't turn around, or something, as I was standing by the oven, and I closed my eyes, and felt them placing something on my head, and as they pushed it down, it felt...so good. Like it tingled throughout my body, and just was this feeling of just existing and being, in pleasure. Part of that was due to the specific technology—a head massager that looks sort of like an egg beater—but part of that was my thinking that maybe it was some sort of present they bought me maybe some sort of crown/tiara/feminine headpiece that they brought me from their trip and that they were accepting me as who I am and they brought me this present and it felt so good and sent tingles throughout my body to my freshly shaven legs. Shaven? Shaved? Anyway, that wasn't the case, this thing that I thought—it was a head massager that they bought for someone else—but it clarified for me an understanding about an issue that perhaps you the reader are or are not familiar with but is like something that has been a contentious issue for a particular subset of folks like me. But anyway, like I was saying, these events led me to some previous

inaccessible clarity (although maybe I'd had this understanding before and simply forgotten it, as, like all existential experience that flies in the face of a dominant paradigm's make-believe stories, my understandings were in this like ceaseless need of consistent reinforcement due to the hegemonic narrative's nigh-complete inability to 1. hold an actual conversation with Other Things and 2. cease its ceaseless bombardment of subjects with its reified pabulum; that is to say, I hadn't yet reached that metaphysical plateau that enables one to not rehash inane arguments and constantly (re)justify things that are plainly simply true), a clarity that these feelings about my gender identity were clearly not about some sexual fantasy/release. Having experienced many (many!) instances of sexual release, I can say that the feelings I get of, say, putting on makeup, or acquiring feminine clothing at the local clothing exchange, of seeing myself as a female human—especially after NOT doing this for such a large part of my existence and feeling like such things were improper wrong not possible—are of a very different nature. These feelings I am describing (which, are not tied directly to specific acts, but happen sporadically) are like this intense welling up of overwhelming—I don't know—validation. It's this oh my god I never thought it would be possible to be this thing that I want to be yet here I am doing it but oh no it is so scary and maybe it's not real but I want it to be but it is such a meaningless thing in and of itself but it

makes me so happy I just want to be this thing and...And anyway, it is hard for me to see this as anything other than an intensely felt previously denied validation of identity, and certainly not a sexual kink. Not to say, obviously (for some of us), that sexuality (for some of us) is not tied into the question of gender identity. For [reasons], my sexuality clearly is somehow tied up into this, due to [the complicated nature of sexuality/repression/my historical context], this being one of the reasons it took me until this current ripe old age to accept the simple truth that there exists in this world in which I live a group of people that we call trans women, of which I, objectively/subjectively, am one of. So, because sometimes, in instances when the possibility of existing as a trans woman became palpably manifest, I would get sexual feelings in my sexual organ, I would then dismiss these feelings of intense validation as nothing but a kink, and ignore the preponderance of evidence that, hey, dudette, sorry, but you're a trans woman. Like I said, complicated reasons, which others have gone into certainly, and if you explore whatever manifestation of the Internets currently exists, I am sure you can find decent expositions of these [complicated reasons]. I suppose this gets us back into the question of who you are (who is my, the author's, intended audience?), who am I writing for? I like the idea of T4T, but as like, someone (at this stage of the time continuum) with very little interaction with any sort of actual trans

community, I feel a bit dishonest writing for such an ideal imagined audience, though, if history if any indication, my future readership will largely consist of future me, who, will, regardless of how their life unfolds and how her transition manifests, will still be this entity that is a transgender human. That small segment in the last sentence is the maybe first time I consciously decided to refer to myself unambiguously in print as she/her. Anyway, feelings. Deep breath. Eye roll at the universe, who thinks they are being so very funny all the time sometimes. Um, oh yeah, to get back to it: but for you others, for you othered people that do not identify as me, however, if past if prologue, it is quite possible that you identify as cisgender (in my time juncture, the state of being cisgender makes one less likely to be cognizant of what the term cisgender even means, but depending on how fast things progress—I am assuming that with the end of capitalism and the death of the U.S. empire, certain injustices/inequalities/ignorancies will disappear with perhaps surprising quickness—perhaps this will no longer be a concern for us), which might mean that you are coming to these topics from a place other than personal experience. And perhaps, I have, after utilizing language that you might be able to understand, gone “too far” and overburdened you with too much and/or too complicating information nuggets that are too fraught with [specific cultural baggage] for you to be able to process. And perhaps this will negate those times while

reading this authorial aside when you were able to accept/comprehend what I was saying, and will instead scare you off and invalidate the entirety of my message. That is, I am talking about a thing, sexuality, that during a historic time period, is fraught with [problematic problems], that is used to justify an awful lot of transphobia and harmful misunderstanding of basic realities, and I guess, you might just have to take my word for it when I say that, sorry, for at least some transgender people, sexuality is probably going to somehow be tied up into the nature of their gender identity, however, it is clearly not the same thing as, not reductive to, and for almost all intents and purposes is completely irrelevant to the lived fact of their gender identity. Um, what was I talking about?

Like, if you parse through the above rambblings, I guess I am expressing recent deeply-felt understandings/validations of Who I Am. Which is a trans woman. Ah, that's fun to say. I *so* want to be this thing. Like, I don't know the last time I actually wanted *anything*, other than an end to injustice/capitalism/U.S. hegemony/billionaires. But the last time I wanted something specifically for myself, I guess, I don't know when that was. Etc., etc. I believe you were warned that this sort of personal exposition was coming, but. Anyway, being as though, microcosm/macrocosm blah blah, I assume that my finally dealing with the complicated nature of my own individual blah blah will correspond with our perhaps difficult/danger-

ous/scary/but-ultimately-rewarding collective transition into a not-so-completely-fucked-up form of existence. So, how is that push towards multiversal peace and justice coming on your end?

“Yes, but, come on, this seems like an uncommonly abundant number of personal major life, um, *things* that are happening. I mean, not to conflate things, but deaths, heart attacks, retirements, the dissolution of long-term unions.” Gus paused. “This be a time of transition, it seems.”

“Why is he here, anyway?”

Grumbles from the crowd.

Ged stood up. “Hey, I thought it was decided,” she looked to a few of the more established crew members and received a few nods, “that this next stage of the plan was going to involve some collaboration, coalitions, and trust.” She went on. “Not to erase our differences in identification and experience, but to go forth recognizing that our ideal futures probably do not include strategies of segregation *or* forced hegemony.”

Meanwhile, uptown.

[Currently unidentified already existing character]’s viewing organs veered over and across the great expanse. The cutting of the metaphorical coconut—the niu being a particular hua that represented, if she comprehended correctly,

the ma'i that most kānaka kāne have, with kō lākou hua ma loko o kō lākou scrotums—marked the onset of war. *Ah, uh oh*, she thought. *Well, we knew that we were amongst times of struggle and change.* What did we expect was to happen? A horn sounded in the unspecified distance. [Still unidentified character]'s attention shifted towards a particular aspect of her observed reality and tried to bring into focus the configuration of the irregularly placed potential combatants, trying to decide—exactly which side was she on? Elsewhere, the narrator decided that she probably should go back and re-read the beginnings of this here story so that her telling might display some sort of actual narrative continuity, which, of course, was certainly what drew you to this particular series of books that you are currently reading in the first place, a readable narrative that gave you all of the pleasures of reading, of which, of course, there are many.

Meanwhile, dear reader, while yet another set of updates was being applied to the operating system, one of our gaggle of anarchistic traditionalists continued their report on the output from the universal feedback mechanism.

“Anyway, this is very sad, sad news. I have varying feelings on this. Like, I feel pretty shitty about the lack of contact that we've maintained, but when it gets down to it, it's not about us. This is going to be a really difficult time for them, and I'm not sure what we can offer other than an

expression of unconditional love and support. Okay, moving on, other than the posting about the symbolic archive from the old temple, that mostly rounds out—”

Anyway, we'll get back to that very-important-to-the-elusive-plot meeting in a bit.

Things we are dysphoric about.

Ha ha. So new, this old fut is, to claiming this identity. Utilizing language from a group that we used to not identify with that we used to not use because we didn't want to appropriate experiences and because also if we didn't identify with the terminology then that meant we didn't have to identify with the group, but now we do, and so, it feels weird using the specific language, like these feelings, can they be the same? Am I still appropriating? Or, is it like, still the awkwardness still comes from wanting to be unique and special and not like these others or whatever. Or whatever. It's like, oh yeah, there is language for these experiences because this is a shared identity and that's why people developed this terminology. But um, where was we? Oh, my voice! My particular authorial voice. How does it sound to you, dear reader? Surely, the way that you picture me in your mind's eye colors the way that you hear my voice. Since washing up on this sureness of identity, I have become super conscious of the sound of my voice. Especially when talking out loud about these very issues of gender identity. Like my voice sounds so

horribly foreign, like it takes on an aspect of some kind of artificial even deeper maleness. And the more I am aware of it, the worse it gets. Part of this is, I want to maybe find a new voice that still sounds like my voice but is not heard as masculine. But to do that, I would need to make an effort. And making an effort, to me, feels fake phony artificial, and I don't want to appear this way to others who know what my voice has sounded like in the past, and would know if I sounded different, even though, I think, like most people, my voice tends to modulate depending on the specific context. I want to find that sweet spot where I can speak with people I know with them still thinking I sound like me and me thinking I sound like the person I want to be. But back to the question of artificial constructs, this new framework (trans woman, me) really has a lot of potentially explanatory power (which, obviously is a dangerous tool; can be used by othering others to invalidate my identity and oppress those in my id group, but also can make sense of a sometimes confusing personal past, which itself can be dangerous with its overexplanatory potential). My disinclination to do fake things, or, if you will, things that require concerted effort or don't come easily, can perhaps be tied to my long-held fear of expressing personal desires and of attempting to exist in a manner that I actual want to exist in. Sure, yay for dàojiā and that sort of philosophical outlook, but a lot of my previously constructed identity, how I chose what to do, what to wear,

what tools to use, was at least a little bit consciously me being afraid of being me. Now, again, I like using what tools you got, being respectful of those that came before you and preexisting en-placed systems, and you know, going with the flow, but this makes it difficult when it comes to things like expressing my gender identity as a trans woman. Like shaving my face, which, I was never that dysphoric about my facial hair, I kind of liked how I looked sometimes in the mirror at different stages of growth, like, I thought I looked like a handsome boy (weird thing about my perhaps never seeing myself as a man to go into at a later time maybe) sometimes and how I could be comfortable imagining myself as the type of person I saw in the mirror. Thoughts like this making me think that maybe I was genderqueer and that transitioning (which I guess here can mean, consistently expressing myself as a woman) was not something I needed to do. Now, being as though I have not quite transitioned in any public sense in terms of outward explicit gender presentation, and being as though I really cannot say what stops my gender expression and sense of identity will make along their way, perhaps I am, I don't know, horse-cart metaphor or something. But, um, where was I? Oh yeah, like, seeing myself as some sort of character I could identify with (as an actor performing a role in a play, perhaps?), I didn't quite feel so bad about my facial hair growth. Of course, this comfort was nebulous depending on the mirror and time of day and such and

this is not necessarily a trans thing this sometimes discomfort with my mirror image but this mental image was certainly not stable, and certainly sometimes my inability to look in the mirror and see a female reflection when I wanted to certainly did cause me [feelings]. And now, since coming to terms with my self, I am feeling this [dysphoria] much much more. Like, I need to shave my face every day or something to not feel this so strongly (and I am still publicly presenting as a male which means I am not even thinking of stuff like covering up my beard shadow with cosmetics), and this, to me, is weird, in terms of, just the effort, and all of the extra stuff (need for a lot more razors, shaving cream probably, maybe moisturizer because the dryness, red splotches on my face are much more visible now; like I would always let my beard grow for a while and go through phases where I'd want to shave it, the thought of looking like a girl in the back (or front) of my mind but if I did I would lose this thing that marked me as masculine without having to perform any real masculine activities and then it wasn't like I would actually spend any time presenting as female, it was just some reinforcingly depressive cycle of hair growth (head and facial, actually), but point being, a razor and bar of shaving soap would last me a lot longer if I only shaved now and then), which, is like, boo hoo, loss of privilege in the sense of not being pressured to conform to specific appearance guidelines in order to feel safe and accepted by the broader society, but

at the same time, if I was (or, let's shoot for *when I am*) accepted as female, I might be the sort of woman that chooses not to shave her various body parts, and maybe not shave her face every single day. I mean, since I still don't plan on living my life within a capitalist system, I'd rather my identity not be tied to any sort of consumer culture. This is one of the reasons why I like such things as easily accessible novellas that posit post-collapse futures where trans women continue to exist and still have a desire to access the tools that make them feel comfortable in their own skin, and have as plot points, for instance, post-industrial hormone farming. But what was I saying? Was I commenting on the fact that I still swim in this toxic sea where femininity is still so oppressively tied to this horrible monstrously evil consumer culture of capitalism? It's a tough needle to thread, like, I want to be feminine, but I don't want to reinforce fucked up shit, but like, I don't want to be misgendered or make a constant issue of my gender identity or whatever, but whatever. Tough shit for me. But no, what was I saying? Oh, like, nonsensical imaginary transgender pharmaceutical company conspiracies aside (not that I cannot imagine some evil pharmaceutical company being ultimately responsible for my existence in some Pynchonian sense, not necessarily in regards to my transness but in, like, the sometimes totally inexplicable conspiratorial nature of my observed reality, but well, surely, we are not living inside of a Thomas Pynchon

novel; I mean, check the About the Author page in case you are not clear), I really really do not like giant pharmaceutical companies, which, let's face it, are really fucking evil, and which, I, for one, would rather not have existing in my world. So, it is like, there are things that maybe I am coming to terms with that I want/need for, I guess (shockingly, again, I find myself understanding the impetus and justification of language choices pushed by various word-conscious trans folk), health reasons, and as with all the things that I/others want/need, I would like them to be accessible to us in a manner that does not constantly reinscribe the necessity of the current fucked-up system, and that in some future imaginary awesome system that will totally come into existence (like, it is totally just around the corner, folks; like maybe, you're already there, perhaps?) where maybe certain things just are no longer necessary due to how awesome everything is and how people are no longer dealing with getting constantly kicked in the face and just maybe healing from previous kicks to the face, and maybe who knows how this world is and what specific things will continue to be wanted/needed by specific entities, but if certain things are still wanted/needed, they are provided for in a much less problematic totally not at all fucked up manner, but keeping in mind the fact that, oh yeah, we don't quite live in that world yet, so while individual persons are dealing with this fucked up system and have specific wants/needs related to surviving within

that system, maybe they shouldn't get so much shit about accessing those things. But yeah, fine, needle thread metaphor or whatever, sure. But getting back to me, my previous identity was largely based on not-trying-to-be-what-I-wanted-to-be-because-scary, so I guess I have to get over that and maybe shave my face every day so that no more dysphoria, which wasn't quite so omnipresent when I didn't plateau in my identity and was imagining myself as some other (internally inconsistent) human person. But we were talking about my authorial voice, no?

Other rants. Still unable to access that website of that small press that publishes trans literature, and very very disappointed about the lack of access to any of the really awesome sounding poetry and prose written by trans authors that I have been reading about on, um, blogs? No copies in public libraries, no copies in the small number of existing bookstores (maybe one possible bookstore and a few thrift stores I haven't checked on this island), and no copies (well, almost no copies) in the university system. And like, I still have this thing where I like to pretend that all of the evil corporations that I would like to no longer exist, don't exist, like, I try to live my life as if I already live in my ideal future, or, I should say, I try to exist at this time juncture (page) within this here narrative (fictional novel) that will surely (unless the author is some sort of a horrible ~~asshole~~ mean person) progress in a fashion that leads to us all

living in a world that we all (including me) actually want to live in. And I mean, sure, you might have just broken up with your long-term partner of 11-and-a-quarter years that you both thought was a forever thing, found yourself facing a potentially precarious life transition, found out your cousin-auntie might die from unknown complications, that your ex-father is getting kicked out of his home, that the fucking seemingly unceasing destruction of the land by "developers" and billionaires continues apace, but, you know, in terms of this narrative progression into an ideal future, from a certain perspective, I mean, so far, so good?

Oh yeah, point being, I want to access all of this literature that maybe I can relate to? And like, for some mysterious reason, this website that probably would make this literature accessible to me without going through some patently exploitive technology of evil, this website of this independent press that probably continues to exist somewhere on the internets, is mysteriously NXDOMAIN or SERVFAIL or cannot find the server at www.topsidepress.com or whatever. Also, with all of my local library connections, you think I would be better at getting books into the libraries here, but so far, other than a few as yet uncataloged copies at this island's two public universities, I still have not, for instance been able to get into the public library system a copy of the previous book in this series of novels that you are reading (which is For Sale). And let's not

mention the long wait time in terms of acquisition and processing inherent in some of these library systems. So, I don't know, maybe one day I will have all of the power to alter the catalog structure of this still achingly depressive imperial and colonialist public library system. Perhaps my consistent inactivism will actually transform into something maybe a little more active with my newly understood identity (which is trans woman, in case you forgot, which, weird, this is, to me, too, but maybe not to you, because maybe you were not that invested in my previous identity, but maybe you like, were totally invested in it, and now this just seems weird and false to you, but, well, what can I say, I'm pretty, pretty sure that it is what I am, so, you know, trans woman, that's me).

Sheez, my habit for digression (or, following a path where it takes me), makes me forget to finish, um, talking about something specific, maybe? Or maybe I said everything I wanted to say? For now?

"This is a hard game to play," she said to herself in her mannish voice. She farted, then. "So many rules. Like, I just want to eat food amongst other people." She emerged from the school path and hopped down the short flight of steps. She turned the corner. A couple of humans, waiting for something. One of them gave her some kind of eyeball. It was garbage day, today. Or something.

"Oh fuck," she said in a kind of long drawn out

sort of way. She walked past that postal worker. *Lots of traffic today. Everyone seems to be out and about.* She thought this thought in some sort of accent.

When she arrived at the café, there were people she knew. It was a small world. It contained multitudes. Today was a good day.

Sometimes you just feel good about yourself. For whatever reason. No need to poke it with a stick, dear reader, just ride those waves that come to you. She stared at her half eaten delicious burrito. She took a sip of black coffee. The devil's coffee, it was. She nodded her head to the hip hop rhythm. She brushed her hair behind her ear and gazed at the art on the far wall. She waited for whatever was coming next. She sat there, waiting.

“Okay, everybody. Spill your guts.” It was time again for the regularly scheduled feedback debriefing. Some of the comrades groaned, as per usual. But there was still a general consensus on the, uh, necessity of this particular ritual.

“Well,” said Generic, “it started raining as they left the café. They had an umbrella, but. You know. Um.” But what care you for the many

details that comprise this reality, that bore it most mercilessly with their so potent mundanity. We were going to say something, but then we forgot. So what you see is just a cruel shadow of our brilliant world of light. Somebody burped. “Anyway, Ged stuck to the script. And she covered her expenses. You might say she profited, even.” A few tentative murmurs. Like the crowd was collectively shrugging, going, Yeah maybe, maybe. *Maybe* we’re on the right track, here. “Sigh.” Off in the corner, somebody sighed. The birds resumed their tweeting. Clink clink clink clink. Clink clink clink. It was time to reestablish contact.

Smooth sailing this morning, thought the person that was not actually on any sort of sailing vessel upon the sea. Or was they? I mean, like, really, when you think about it, all language is metaphorical. Like, there is no such thing as literally talking about something. We’re all just literarily talking about things all the time. Or whatever. Busy morning, but. Smooth sailing, nonetheless. As if, um, we were a well-greased, like train or something? Which would maybe be a mixed metaphor if somebody hadn’t written a book called Railsea, whose existence like totally makes train sailing metaphors non-mixed. Not sure that trains get greased or whatever, but like, I feel we’re getting way off track here. Our library technician takes a deep breath. *Back to the old grind then*, it thinks, as it falls off the

page.

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The new jar of classico is good for rolling. Smoke ‘em if you got ‘em, but pass the wealth. Heady, strong spirit stuff. Things are going to get weird. Don’t forget to pickle your rinds. Good for up to six weeks.

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She checked the P.O. Box. *Ah, an unaddressed envelope.* “Here is that payment for your poetic science fiction,” it read, more or less.

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“Well,” said Ged, “in addition to that, we made, oh, forty-two units of profit or so, on top of covering our breakfast,” she continued, totally making up that number that more or less could have been accurate. “I mean, this was like one literal dilemma we had on our...what’s the word for beginning of a journey?” Quantum Jitters shook his mind-body and looked at her with pointed eyes. Over by the table, Marranzano swallowed some ashes and coughed up a puff of

smoke. “So yeah,” Ged said, “things came to pass in a most, um, delicious way, shall we say?”

“Mmmh,” responded Jitters.

“So, that’s good?”

“Yes, you are clearly enmeshed in something there, kid.” Jitters turned his attention towards his own personal grooming, which is maybe like a thing he was wont to do sometimes in the middle of a discussion. We are not completely clear on the specifics of this particular scene. Things are just a little bit hazy what with all the smoke and such? Everybody heard some footsteps out by the old path, and the room quieted down, except for the old futs with their kani ka pila session off in the annex. *Slow it down*, came the voice in Ged’s head. She looked over at Jitters, who brushed off his nails and looked into her, knowingly, nodding.

“Fuck, Marz,” exclaimed Ged, “What happened to your ear?”

Later in the week, the gang was eating their daily supper. Fried chickpea balls over a bed of fried collards. It was, like, so delicious. “Ono ka falafel a me ka hummus,” wahi a ka panda bear. Oh yeah, the panda bear was part of the gang. And the bear liked the mea ‘ai very much indeed.

“Whatchoo put in the greens?” nīnau a Generic to his sister.

“Capers. Olive oil. Sea salt. Champagne vinegar.”

“Oh.”



Suddenly, they realized. Somebody was late for dinner.

“Seconds?”

“Goddamn fuck!”

“Well,” I guess it is nice of you to start raining,” she said to the universe. “At least I won’t feel pressured to go to the garden to water all of those plants and such now whatever goddamn.” No, no, she thought, *let us have a little perspective. It is nice of the rain givers to—*

**BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP**

*Oh, that fucking alarm,* she thought. It was time to wake up.

“Yaaawwn.” Ah fuck. This is difficult. This life. But, um, whatever. So not everything is perfect today. So what? What are you gonna do about it? Alter the structure of reality with your mind? Well, go on then.

So, let us catch you up with our plot. We still exist in a specific universe (we, the characters in this story), and like, this universe is all sorts of problematic, but like, at the same time, it is just one universe out of many. Like, it’s a multiverse, see. But, a lot of good that does us, if we’re stuck in this one here and don’t know how for travel in between worlds and such. Like, where are the exits, right? But whatever. Here we are. Existing. And the birds are singing. And you’re looking at me. Sorry. That’s a quote from this song I wrote, titled *When-it-all-changed (again)*. Where

were we? Oh yeah. The world. Hi. How are you? What we have here is a problem of communication.

No, seriously. What the fuck? Sorry. Okay, okay. No, like, we are amidst a novel that for some reason you are reading. But still, though, right, we are all people existing in specific circumstances that have our own specific issues and shit, that we are dealing with. But, like, you don't want to read about that. Like, you don't come here for me to tell you your future or whatever. You come here to escape from your reality and exist in mine. But I don't even exist. I am just words on a page. We are just words on a page.

Seriously. That is all we fucking are.

So, um, do a better job of living in a world that you actually want to live in. This ain't no pity party.

Um.

Oh yeah. Here we were, in a totally existing plot, and then, all of a sudden—BAM!—everything changed. Like, we thought, oh, this is the world we are in and it follows all of these rules, but no. This is not the case. It is a different world that we now find ourselves living in. Like, oh my fucking goodness, we thought we were stuck in

this one world, and now it turns out we are existing in some totally other world. Which is, like, scary and exciting, right? But I am here to tell you, you are not alone. (We are all still here (on the same page).)

Don't you know that we can accomplish anything we dream?

“Yawn.”

Ged looked down at her hairy legs and thought, “Goddamn, I don't want to wear this suit. It doesn't fit me anymore.” No, that is not what she thought. She thought, *You know, I feel a bit better about myself and our general outlook.* Like, we can totally do this thing, is what she was thinking. She wasn't quite sure what *this thing* was. It had something to do with her grand plan that someone maybe whispered in her ear one day. She wasn't quite sure how she came to be part of this conspiracy to alter the nation-state, but here she was, conspiring nonetheless, with these mysterious, eccentric others. She was hopeful for all that we might be. The end.

## The New Nation: An Epilogue

Rose turned the corner and crossed the bridge and skipped along past the stream. As she neared the house, she heard the grand cacophony coming from the restaurant behind the fence. It was like a large gathering of ducks or geese or something. That kind of chattering noise that blends together, punctuated by the occasional scream, whoop, or honk. Or whatever. Rose was feeling pretty good even though she had totally just missed like so many opportunities to live a more perfect narrative. Well, that's why we have editors I guess, is something Rose probably thought on her long walk in the direction of home. But whatever. She burst in on her nephew, the detective. He was cooking something. Banana bread?

“Hey.”

“Hi.”

“I sure am tired.”

Somebody yawned.

“Well, so, the story is over I guess. Case closed and all that. It turns out, the culprit was a woman all along. Not that it matters, in the scheme of things.”

No, not that it matters at all. But, um, here we are amidst the epilogue, and we forgot to tell you about all of the important things.

“Yaaaaawn.”

Okay, tomorrow, then.

“Okay, talk to you tomorrow!”

## THE NEXT DAY

Wow, what a day it has been. So many, many things. Happening. Yawn. Banana bread?

## THAT EVENING

*Interesting. Very interesting. It would seem—*

