

**Access by Patti Smith**

Lauren managed to find me at my regular café, her perpetually unfinished manuscript *A Play among Worlds: "Aching, Moving Irresolutions"* in hand, with a strange request: could I help her access it again?

"I would like to climb back inside, just for a few moments, so that I could dismantle these 18,124 words, then reconstruct them so they would make sense during the omicron ohmygod. But the words are in no mood to let me back in."

"What's left that's worth putting back together?" I threw out.

"Uhhh....." Ironically, she seemed to be searching for words. "Well...you saw that the first time the words wouldn't let me back in, I tried to write to you:

*Patti, you wrote about the Year of the Monkey (2016) and published it in the Year of the Pig (Smith, 2019)*

*Is there any room for slower or quieter voices in the Year of the Rat?*

*We're in boxes within boxes: Word programs, screens, homes, borders, mindsets.*

*Our worlds are smaller and bigger.*

*Re-assemblages.  
Re-configurations.  
Re-curations.*

*Today I could scroll down. Into the past world. But it hurts to touch.*

*On February 6, 2020, I could only add to this page:  
Emptiness of any conversation.*

*Dates can try to mark worlds. Here are mine, marginally:*

1/13/20 Left Beijing  
Soon after Something is wrong in China  
1/19-1/20 Chased down street in Langkawi, Malaysia by a Japanese family also  
trying the 3<sup>rd</sup> pharmacy to buy masks  
1/23-3/22 The wave in Thailand  
4/1 Now illusions in Japan..."

“Yeah,” Lauren said, “if I am running from the burning building of my own work, I might grab a few of those lines, ‘something is wrong in China,’ ‘illusions in Japan.’ They’d be easy to carry and might come in handy.”

“Reasonable,” I agreed.

Lauren began to flip through photos on her phone, murmuring something to herself about whether the linguistic gods would like a visual offering.

“Like in your stuff!” she exclaimed desperately. “Since the proverbial password to my own work couldn’t be retrieved, I just spent all last week reading *M Train!*”<sup>1</sup>



*Lauren’s reconstructed elbow, post first and second surgeries, Kyoto, Japan, June 2020 & April 2021.*

Come to think of it, Lauren had accidentally slipped into *my* books. Perhaps she was straddling *Year of the Monkey* and *M Train* – flailing wildly, but with an enviable passion. The idea for her piece about moving through worlds was interesting in theory - prose poems, a play, even her application to go to outer space, but I could see how the words got tired of her. Everyone, *everything* is just tired right now, I thought.

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<sup>1</sup> Smith (2015)



*Spacesuit filter, "See what it would be like to become a member of the dearMoon crew by trying out this filter." <https://dearMoon.earth>*

"Maybe the words just want to rest," I offered, locking eyes with her.

"Yeah..." she said, turning to gaze outside. "Maybe I do, too."

"You could grab that part where you pasted a conference review of this piece. You could probably recycle that line, 'Let me leave this here so I can be uncomfortable each time I open this document.' That'll probably come in handy somewhere else."

"Good point. I'll make a note to head straight there like the high value items on Supermarket Sweep."



*Supermarket Sweep, Lifetime (US cable channel), 1990s.*

"Ha, right: 'next time you're at the checkout and you hear the beep!' And grab the section titles while you're at it. We could make a little digital magnetic poetry set out of the Deleuze parts, at least. Move them around on the screen of a zoom house party."

*Prologue: (Non-)Artist Statement 3*

*Part I: The Journals: intertextual curations in search of a smaller self*

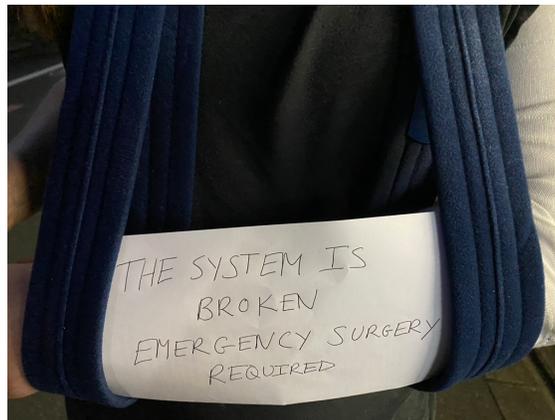
- *Prologue: After the beginning of the virus: signifying breaks 5*
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*Part 2: Relational aesthetics: micro-histories of emotion - more non-poems to humans and non-humans 40*

*Epilogue: after the beginning of the end of the virus: re-assembling ourselves for flight 54*

“Okay, this is good. I think this is enough. If I can ever get back in, I won’t ask for much. I won’t ask them to be reconstructed. That’s too much for anyone, *anything* right now. Come to think of it, I’ll just ask these few words if I can *borrow* them. Return them. The other 17,899 or so will never even have to know.”

“Besides,” she continued, pushing her phone back towards me, “the photos say more. I should put more photos in my stuff. I like how you do that.”



*Post-op protest, June 16, 2020. Kyoto.*



*Thank-you notes to medical team, Kyoto, June 2020.*

“Yup, that’s how you do it,” I laughed, “just drop them in. People usually like them more than words, anyway.”

“You know,” I went on, finally catching her gaze across the café table, “if I tried to tell someone about our meeting, no one’s going to have any idea what we were talking about.”

“That’s fine,” she said, nodding affirmatively. “It was all just about uncertainty anyway.”

--- Patti Smith is a “singer, songwriter, playwright, and poet...Smith writes in a stream-of-consciousness style, often meditating on questions of mortality and faith. Of *Auguries of Innocence*, critic Donna Seaman wrote that Smith ‘presents lithe works unsettling in their spiritual inquiry, archetypal imagery, and dissonant juxtapositions.’ Smith has also published the widely celebrated memoirs *Year of the Monkey* (2019) and *Just Kids* (2010), which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction. Hailed as the “godmother of punk” by the *New York Times*, Smith has a cultlike following.”<sup>2</sup> (<https://www.pattismith.net/intro.html>)



--- Lauren Ila Misiasek is an educator and cultural worker whose prologue to her perpetually unfinished manuscript (Misiasek, forthcoming, 2022) explains:

After years of experiencing a disconnect with Global Citizenship Education (GCE) discourses, but a deep connection with the interplay of the global, the citizen, and education, I began trying to write myself into a place where I could feel something about these ideas again. I found myself somewhere between the social sciences and the humanities, between the deeply personal and the collective.

In the following piece, as a (non-)poet, (non-)playwright, and (non-)artist, I curate original prose poems, letters, and a conversational dialogue “play” of interdisciplinary texts - including those who inspired the play’s style, like Sarah Manguso’s aphoristic *300 Arguments* (2017) and César Aira’s *fugia hacia adelante* technique (Malone, 2012, pp. 2-3).

Interspersed with my interjections, the “play” of texts and the enveloping fragments of personal writing before and during the pandemic aim to disrupt, question, and leave space for the reader to generate new meanings of GCE, and, beyond these themes, of the often painful and evolving experiences - “aching, moving resolutions” - that result from taking the risk of playing among, and ultimately being in, fuller relationship among worlds.

<sup>2</sup> Poetry Foundation (2021)

In academic-speak, at the creative nexus of the social science and the humanities, this piece uses various “experimental” writing forms to explore “alternative thinking of alternatives” (Santos, 2014, p. 42) about the themes above. In *Riotous Epistemology*, R. Gilman-Opalsky and Shukaitis (2020) draw on Holloway (2010)’s concept of “other-doing” – ‘different ways of thinking and imagining other worlds’ (p. 3). They consider their individual and collective work, explaining their interest in ‘know[ing] how to say different things in different way’ and in the role of the non-expert:

In *The Composition of Movements to Come*, Stephen asks: “How do avant-garde practices shift what is said, and how it can be said?” (2016) In *Specters of Revolt*, I ask: “What is the critical content, at least paradigmatically, that the qualitatively different logic of revolt poses to the logic of the established order?” (2016). So, each of us on our own wants to know how to say different things in different ways, and we are interested in logics oppositional to the logic of the existing order of life. Avant-garde practices and social upheaval challenge epistemological assumptions about what knowledgeable speech looks like because they are full of knowing, and thinking, and criticizing, and imagining, and yet they do not look anything like “knowledgeable speech.” (p. 4)

....There’s something quite important about opening up spaces for non-expert creativity....[to] interact differently, with a different logic (p. 34)

It is my hope that my non-expert “other-doing,” which perhaps does not “look anything like “knowledgeable speech,”” may expand the possibilities of what and whose voices count as “GCE” in the continual search for evermore creative, nuanced, and intersectional responses to complex global issues. My work aligns with other current calls emerging during the pandemic “for a renewed relationship between the arts and intercultural citizenship education that explores sustained imagined worlds; stimulates empathy; promotes the critical development of languages towards dialogue; inspires social, cultural, and political action; and demands transformation” (Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020).

I invite you to explore these characteristics and make your own meanings within my “imagined worlds.” ([www.trabajocultural.com](http://www.trabajocultural.com))

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