

STREET CAKE

experimental writing magazine

issue 84



@louise mather

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issue 84

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Rules and Points

It's here in time for holiday shopping! A game like no other! Get ready to play *RefugeesTM*, proudly brought to you by The Good Life Inc.

Read Before Playing:

Approximately 63% of players will have opinions about refugees.

Approximately 1% of players will have met a refugee.

Recommended for ages 18 to 21 (maximum idealism) or 37 to 42 (maximum cynicism).

The Good Life Inc. is not responsible for any ethical dilemmas that arise during the game.

The player pieces and board are attractive but irrelevant.

Rules and Points:

None of the players will like the rules.

All players with an income of over \$200,000 will argue that the rules do not apply to them.

There is no fair way to assign points.

There is no way to determine when the game is finished.

Just when you think you've won, a fist will pound on your door. Always have your bags packed.

If you send The Good Life Inc. any complaints, we will break into your home and steal your game. Also your passport. And anything else of value, including family photos with additional suspects.

If you were born in a refugee camp and have never been to your "home" country, you automatically win.

If you are on a list that a military regime denies creating, collect 200 points.

If you recently saw a movie or read a book about a refugee, collect 10 points.

If at any time you went to bed hungry for more than three nights in a row and/or did not know where you were going to sleep, collect 75 points.

Collect 20 points for each time you were beaten where the bruises wouldn't show.

Collect 100 points if a coworker, friend or family member betrayed you.

Double those points if they did it because the government threatened them.

Triple those points if the government stuffed ballot boxes to stay in power.

Quadruple those points if the government stayed in power without even a fake election.

A player misses a turn if they use the phrase "left-wing propaganda".

A player misses two turns if they say, "Refugees just come here to live off our tax dollars."

A refugee misses _____. The first player to complete this sentence does not collect points but is allowed to feel morally superior to the other players.

Forget all the previous rules. A foreign government with close business ties to yours has suspended them.

**Poem on the proposed re-evaluation in the Church of England
of masculine language for the divine**

Inside the old view it said

God was e^very^whe^{re}

Bed

t
h
i
s
\
b
e\\\\\\ not a coffin but an incubator of nightmares and
d
\
\
i
s

c
h
a
o
s



stephanie ivanova

COMFORT
(Or, how I cope with OCPD)

I find comfort in straight lines
in leading lines
in border lines

I find comfort in finish lines
in firm lines
in fine lines

I find comfort in symmetry
in geometry
in perimetry

I find comfort
comfort
comfort
comfort
I find comfort

Yet comfort

Never finds comfort

in

me

How the Light was Lost

I.

When did I start running? Have I ever not been running? I don't have the expendable breath to dig up the answers to those questions, but I know why I can't stop: the blood-thirsty grizzly bear ragging behind me. All the survival guides say running encourages the chase. This is all my fault. It hasn't always been a bear hot on my heels. When I look back, the bear has transformed into a diamond-backed snake keeping pace as if it's slithering on ice.

II.

Over countless years, I've outrun a menagerie of predators. Too many to remember except for the hot breath on my neck. No matter how much debris I toss on the path to slow them down, they never relent. I cover the trail with broken glass like a flower girl casting rose petals. Others in pursuit have been gentler, like fawns or flocks of geese in perfect formation, but I kept running.

III.

When faint voices called from behind, I could not decipher what they were saying, so I kept moving forward. Often the voices were familiar, but I could see only silhouettes in the thick fog. Sometimes they sounded desperate as if they were pleading. That could have been the tone of the wind.

IV.

On a morning that never arrives, there is silence. I glance over my shoulder at an expansive nothing, a swirling darkness. It has presence and absence simultaneously. It swallows the road, the trees, the sun, and the sky. Feels like being a hundred yards from the maw of an event horizon. No one comes back once they breach the precipice, not even sunlight escapes.

V.

I stop running and stare into the darkness. Has this void always been following? Is this why I started running? This is why the bear was running. Nothing was chasing me. Everything was trying to flee. I did all I could to stop them. How awful the monster who threw debris and broken glass in their path. How terrible the monster who betrayed everyone, even the light that is never coming back.

I DIVORCE YOU, I DIVORCE YOU, I DIVORCE YOU

(EVERYTHING
THAT
WAS

BETWEEN
(US)

IS NOW
BEHIND
(US))

SIGNATURE 1 (PLAINTIFF) _____ DATE (MM/DD/YYYY) _____

SIGNATURE 2 (DEFENDANT) _____ DATE (MM/DD/YYYY) _____

Notice

(thoughts arise)

immeasurable
terrain

(making)

mistakes in
perception

(the cause of)

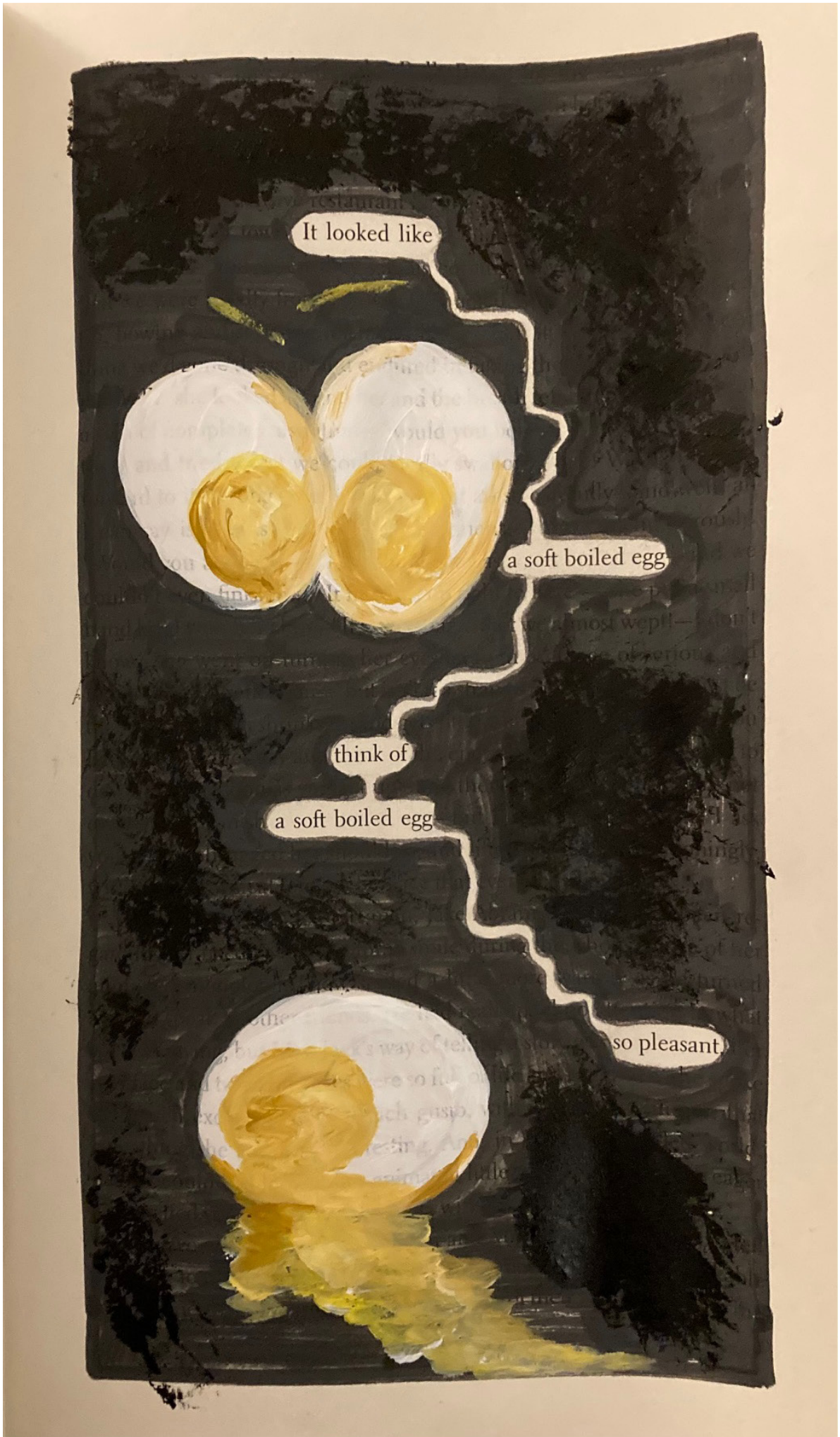
resisting
connection

(between)

the spotlight

(and)

the floodlight



Instructions for sleep, or how to craft a poem from the remnants

Think of an animal, a place,
the time of day –

if the sky can be made
from a piece of fruit,

solitary or soundproof,
tender eyes or fierce

in the wild dusk –
how much to hope,

split bones, teeth, ribs,
what sort of ending –

how to colour the sun
with blood or tongues,

if it exists, something
about eternity

Meditations on Arthur Rimbaud's Eternity

Elle est retrouvée.

Quoi? - L'Éternité.

C'est la mer allée

Avec le soleil.

(I) Google translate and homovocalism

She is found.

Found? –Eternity.

It's the sea gown

With the sun.

(II) Antonymy

It is lost.

Sure. It's eternity.

It isn't that the sea is gone.

Nor is the sun.

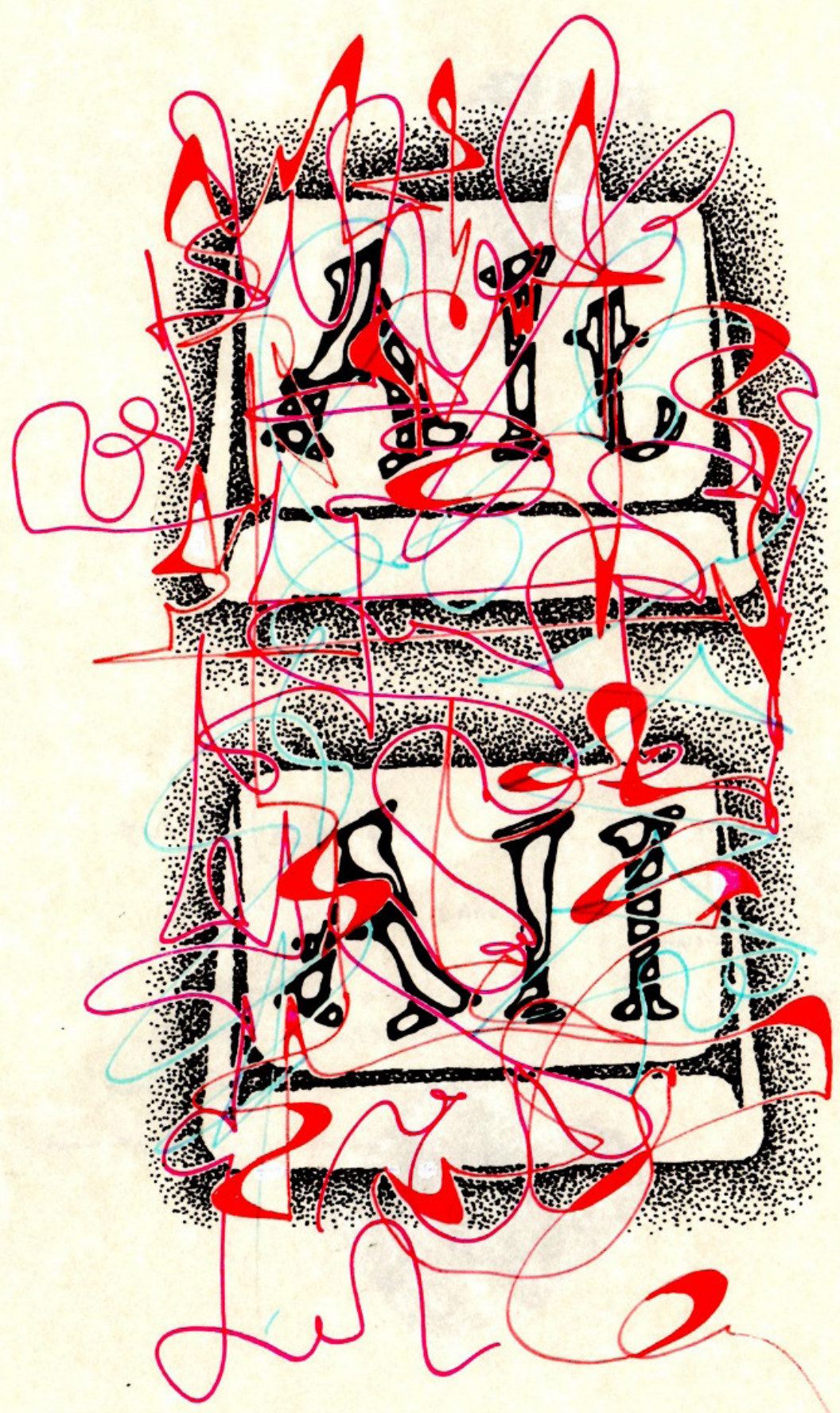
(III) Antithetical snowballing

It

is transience

is the sea

fleeing with the sun



*

Lying // just so // you get //

away // with // it //

that's what // poetry // should be //

c
h c
a h c
c r a h
h i c r a
a s h i c r
r c m a s h i
c i h a r m a s
c h s a t i a r m
h a c m r i s t i a
a r c h a i c m i s t
r i h a t s a c m i
i s a r i m t a c
s m r i c a i t
m a i s t e i
a t s m i c
t i m a c
i c a t
c t i
i c
c

Myths

Dance three times anticlockwise
around a fox for good luck.

Weasels steal washing to sell on eBay.

Black cats are compulsive gamblers.

Smoke from failed barbecues
puncture clouds to the point of rain.

Stack enough ladders and you'll reach the moon.

Rabbit feet may make your house possessed.

Kiss a pike on the mouth and you'll wake
as part of the reeds.

Chew clover and feel your gastrointestinal
tract birth a multi-storey car park.

Every heart is a piñata. Bash it hard enough
and your fingers will be bloodier than a beetroot.

Luckier souls may receive a hummingbird,
a paper chick, an orchid's dormant core.

