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Not Afraid Ruins



givin' credit where credit's due:

thanks to my awesome travel companions. thanks everyone who hosted me, fed me, gave me advice and entertained me. thanks everyone in wellington who looked after me when i came home exhausted. Thanks everyone in auckland who looked after me while i put this zine together.

dedication one: to JAG, for always saying utterly sensible things that validate all of my conflicting feelings and for making sure i eat.

dedication two: to Kit Celestine, and her mother, and her father.

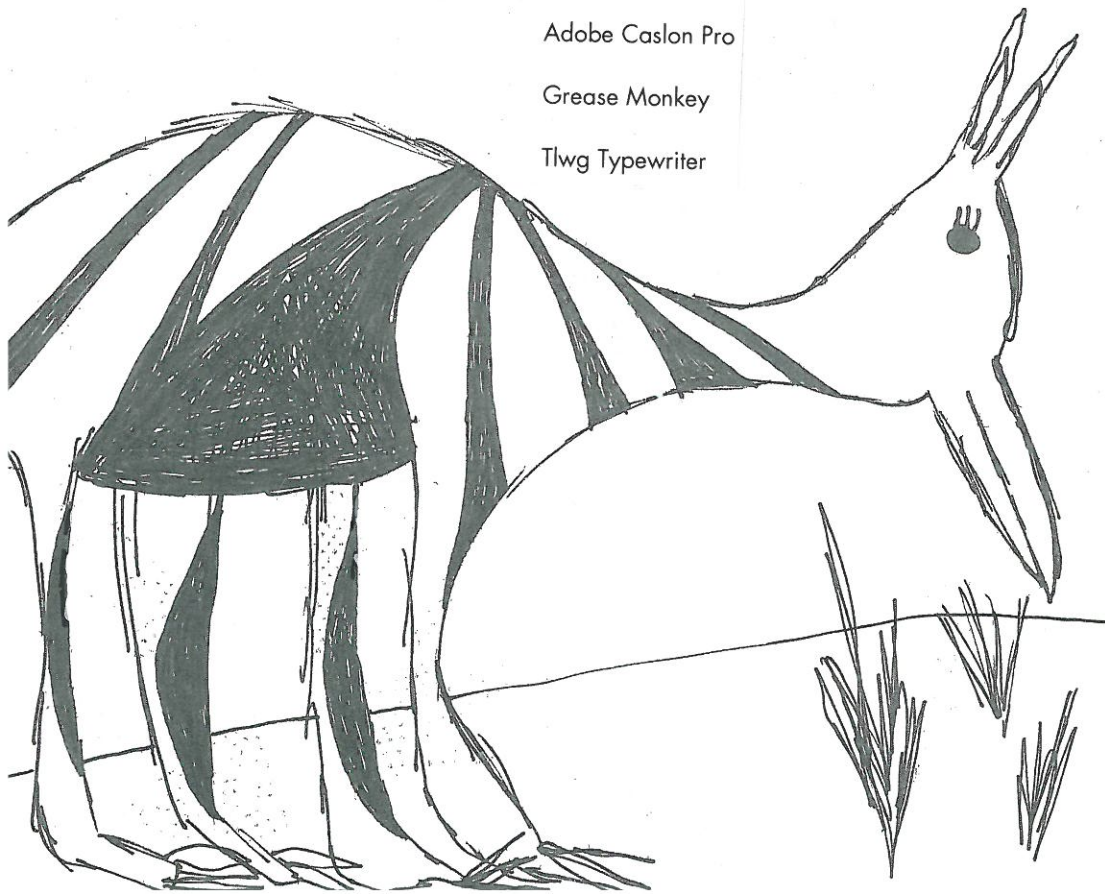
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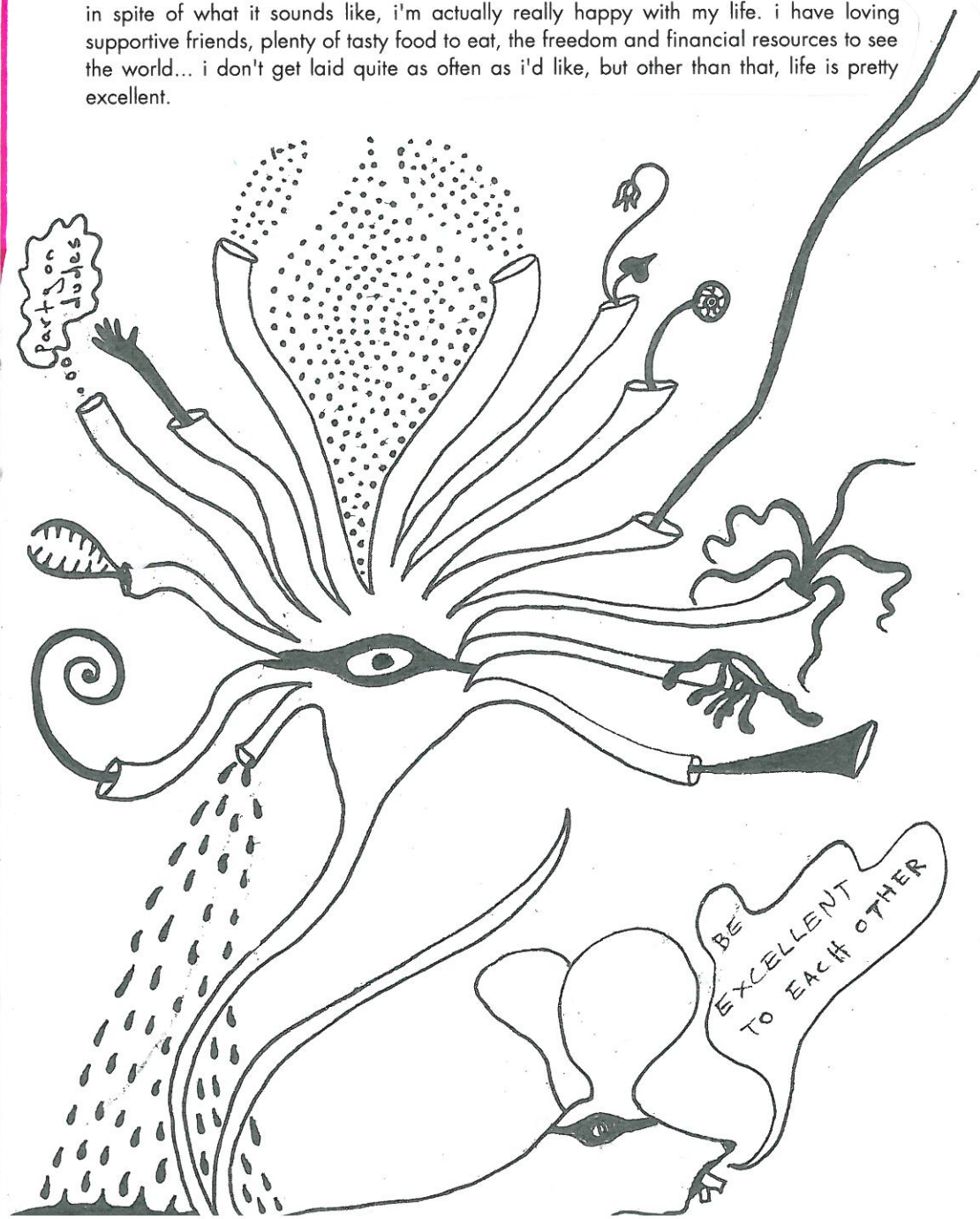
Adobe Caslon Pro

Grease Monkey

TLWG Typewriter



in spite of what it sounds like, i'm actually really happy with my life. i have loving supportive friends, plenty of tasty food to eat, the freedom and financial resources to see the world... i don't get laid quite as often as i'd like, but other than that, life is pretty excellent.





Europe

AN EXCITING TRIP ROUND
THE CONTINENT



This zine is kind of a sequel to not afraid of ruins #2. I left Palestine/Israel and spent two months wandering around Europe. Nine planes, twenty two trains, twenty four beds. Wandering Jewess, that's me.

So this zine is about vegan food, public parks, fancy buildings, trains, books, squats, museums, anarchist social centres, Jewish history, trees, rabbits, seagulls...

And it's a lot about anxiety. It wasn't til I started collating this zine and re-reading what I'd written on the road that I realised how anxious I was the whole time I was travelling. I'm so used to anxiety being part of my life that I just don't notice it anymore.

Part of me wanted to re-write everything, to make it sound like I had an awesome time traveling and wasn't phased by anything that happened. To be honest, i'm a little embarrassed to admit that small things like catching a train alone, or losing my handbag, have such a debilitating effect on me. I'd much rather convince everyone I'm some kinda superwoman who's never intimidated by anything.

But I think it's real stink that I am always lying to myself and everyone else about being vulnerable. I just want to be able to admit when I feel fucked up and not be scared that I will lose people's respect. I want other people to be able to admit when they feel fucked up and know that I will understand coz I am exactly the same.

So this zine is mostly me feeling fucked up, anxious and vulnerable in different parts of Europe. Maybe you can relate.

While I write this I am singing Dar Williams to myself:

'I know that I am lucky, cause I am like East Berlin.

I had this wall and what I knew of the free world
was that I could see their fireworks,
and I could hear their radio.

And I thought that if we met, I would only start confessing,
and they'd know that I was scared,
they would know that I was guessing.

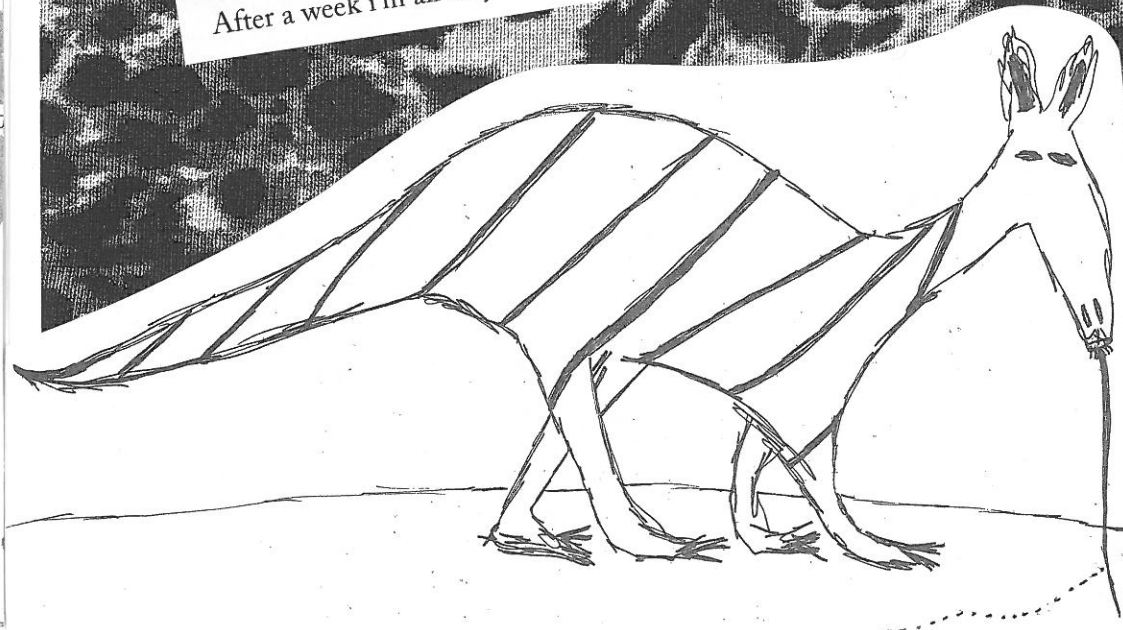
But the wall came down and there they stood before me
with their stumbling and their mumbling,
and their calling out just like me.'

Wellington

Back in Wellington is not the happy homecoming I expected. I've had it with this city. Books are overpriced. There's nowhere I want to eat. The stationery shop is out of my favourite pens.

Seven years is long enough I think. Long enough to use up a city. Long enough that all my friends know all my other friends and this city is like a noose that keeps tightening around my ankles.

After a week i'm already dreaming of my next escape.





The Politics of Anti-Semitism edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair:

I've been wanting to read this book for a long time. It's a collection of essays challenging the idea that criticism of Israel equates to anti-Semitism. There were a couple of interesting essays in here, mostly the ones by Israeli authors.

The problem is, so many of the essays in this book were actually anti-Semitic.

One of the most annoying themes that recurs in a couple of the essays is the idea that support for Israel is derailing the US government off its true course. I tend to think that propping up colonialism, racism, imperialism and the military industrial complex is very much keeping the US government on its true course. There's also a whole essay of 9-11 conspiracy theories: apparently Israelis were warned not to go near the World Trade Centre that day. This kind of bullshit makes the Zionists look right when they say Palestine solidarity activists are anti-Semitic. I recommend you read Marqusee's book instead.



Berlin

is a bit of a headfuck.

Being here is like the opposite of being in Israel. The latter is the place I was born in, but have no ancestral connection to, a place where I'm part of the dominant ethnic group, the colonizers. The former is a place I've never been to, which plays a huge role in my history but that I know nothing about. The only thing I have connecting me to this place is my German family name. This is a place where I am part of a minority that's been historically persecuted, that's more visible as a set of memorials and museums and cemeteries than as a living community.

It would be so nice to live somewhere not as an occupier or as a persecuted minority. To live in peace.

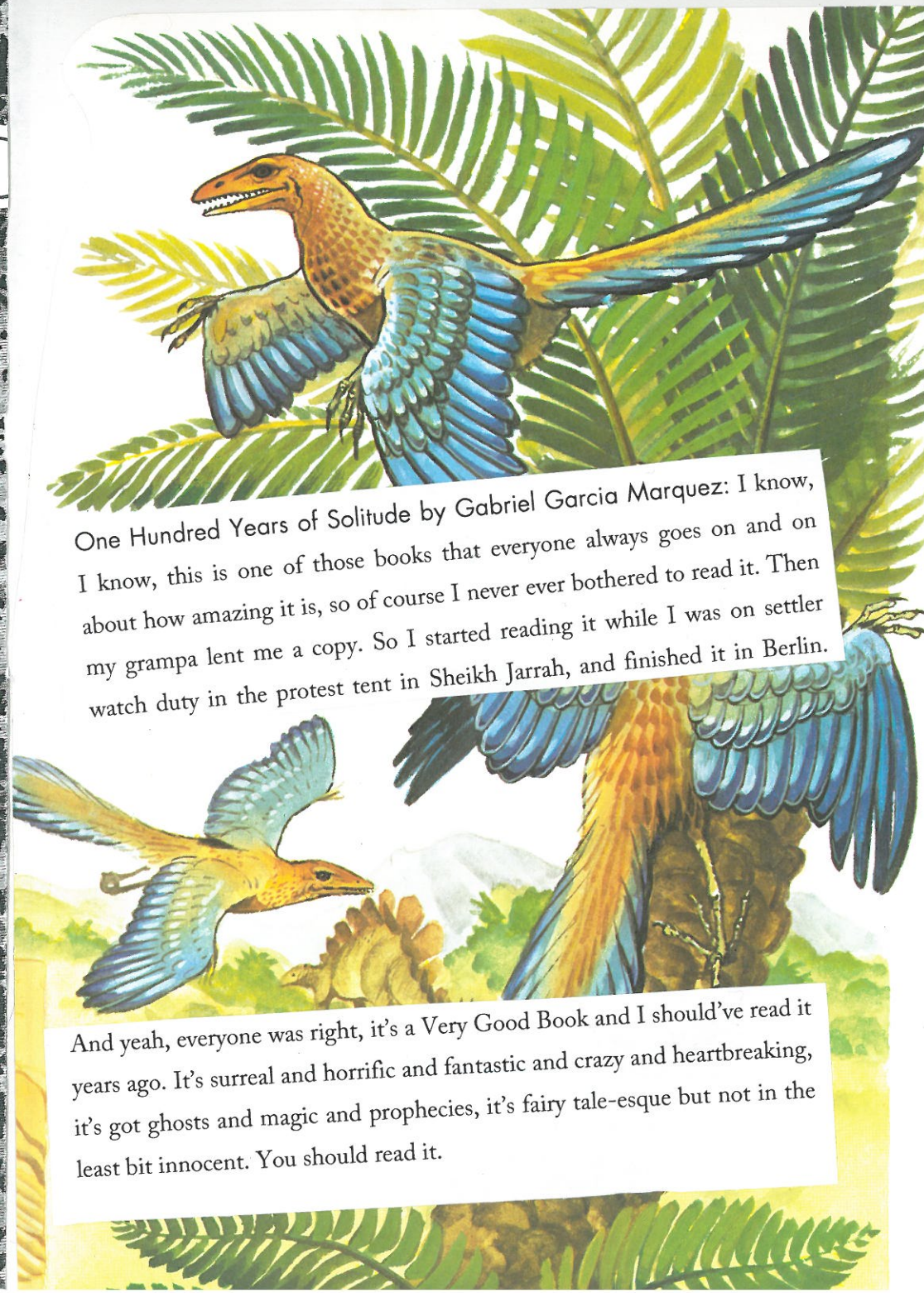


The old Jewish cemetery in Berlin is surrounded by apartment blocks. From across the fence I hear music. First Israeli folk songs, then Deep Purple. Maybe somebody's getting married.

This is a strage place — tall trees, ground covered in ivy. It's like a mat that I want to sink into, it looks so comfortable, and kinda ghostly. Like nature's laid a blanket down over the graves so they remain undisturbed.

In 1943 the cemetery was trashed by Nazis. So really this is one mass grave. An estimated 10000 corpses but no way to know their names. There's a few headstones that have been rescued and put on display in the corner. It's crazy to think that someone's gone to the trouble of destroying this place. That's a lot of hate — to destroy the evidence of someone's existence long after they're dead. It's more than an attempt to erase someone's present existence, it's the desire to wipe them from history completely, to deny that Jews ever existed here in Berlin.

I guess that's why Jewish cemeteries are such a target for neo-nazi attacks. Because they symbolise a continuity of Jewish presence: that Jews have lived in this place long enough to bury our dead here.



One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: I know, I know, this is one of those books that everyone always goes on and on about how amazing it is, so of course I never ever bothered to read it. Then my grampa lent me a copy. So I started reading it while I was on settler watch duty in the protest tent in Sheikh Jarrah, and finished it in Berlin.

And yeah, everyone was right, it's a Very Good Book and I should've read it years ago. It's surreal and horrific and fantastic and crazy and heartbreaking, it's got ghosts and magic and prophecies, it's fairy tale-esque but not in the least bit innocent. You should read it.

Dissonant memories, fragmented present: Exchanging Young Discourses between Israel and Germany edited by Charlotte Misselwitz and Cornelia Siebeck:

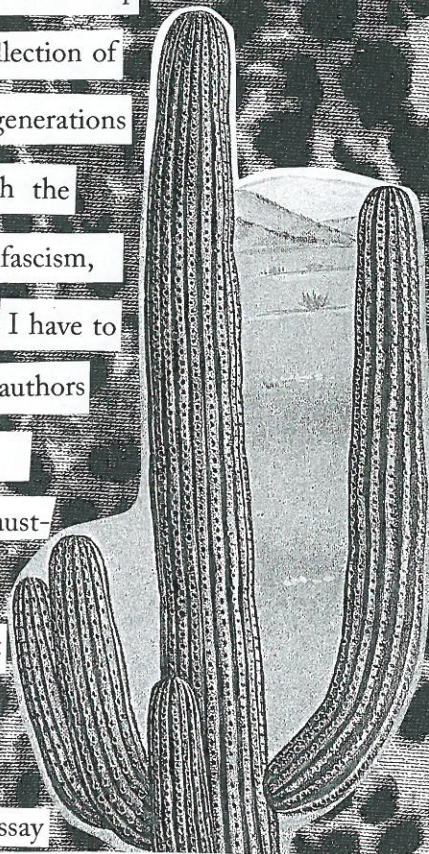
I found this book at an English language bookshop in Berlin and I'm so glad I did. This is a collection of essays by Israeli and German writers, three generations after the holocaust. They deal with the

holocaust and all things related: racism, fascism, immigration, Zionism, Israel and Palestine. I have to admit, I found most of the essays by German authors slightly annoying. Most of them came from an anti-Deutsch we-feel-guilty-about-the-holocaust-so-we're-gonna-defend-Israel perspective.

But there was a cool essay about anti immigrant racism in Germany today, and another about anti Fascist struggle in East Berlin.

The highlight for me was Daniel Kahn's essay about Yiddish language and culture as a country with borders in time, not space.

The essays by Israeli writers focused more on challenging nationalist identity and building bridges with Palestinians. My favourite was about Mizrakhi Jewish identity as an alternative discourse of Jewish history: one that's based on living peacefully among non-Jews rather than as a persecuted minority.



One of my favourite things about being in a different country is all the new animals and plants I haven't met before. It kind blows your mind with the awesomeness of evolution. A few metres from me is a tiny rabbit munching a maple leaf. It must be nice to be a rabbit someplace where humans aren't constantly trying to kill you. The ones here are brown and only slightly larger than my hand. They have little ears that point to the sky — like two thumbs. I wonder if they are hares or rabbits. They're different from the ones on Abed's farm in Walaja. They remind me of the Redwall books I used to read when I was a kid, or dubbed European cartoons they used to broadcast on Israeli TV during the summer holidays.


I also saw a swan. A white one, like in E.B. White's trumpet of the swan. And a troupe of birds, black and white ones with long necks. I don't know if they're swans or geese but they walked right towards me, the whole gang, stopping along the way to pick worms out of the dirt. They looked me straight in the eye. It was a little intimidating to be honest. Then they just waddled away towards the river.



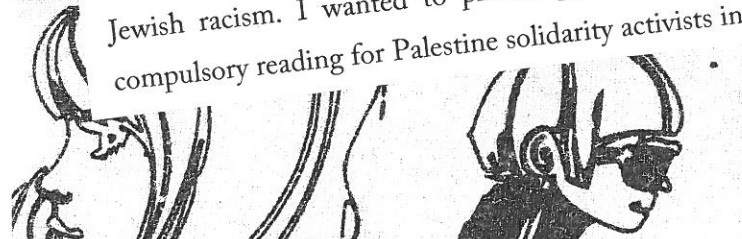
I meet Bamboo and Sparklefairry at Belin Hauptbahnhof. They've had a twenty hour flight from Auckland and then a seven hour train journey from Frankfurt. We take the S bahn back to Neukölln and catch up on two months worth of gossip. Some of it is exciting. Most of it is enraging. Why do so many men in our community abuse their partners? Why is there such a high threshold of tolerance for perpetrators of intimate partner abuse? It breaks my heart.

Over the next few days we explore the vegan food of Berlin. Chicken cheeseburgers, burritos, currywurst, salami pizza, ice cream... I love eating in this city. We go museum hopping, we go to Tiergarten, we go to the Berlin wall.

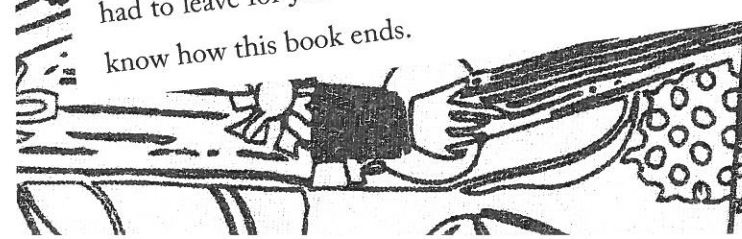
I am underwhelmed by the latter. Compared to the West Bank wall this is just a brick fence. I try to imagine it twenty years ago, surrounded by snipers and soldiers, covered in razor wire. I try to imagine the West Bank wall fifty years from now. A historical relic, a tourist attraction, just a wall in the middle of a thriving city, leaving foreign tourists underwhelmed.



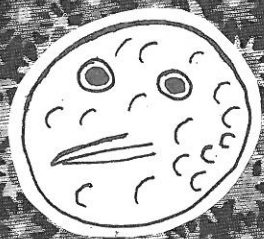
If I am Not for Myself by Mike Marqusee: I found this book in the gift shop at the Jewish Museum in Berlin. It's subtitled 'Journey of an Anti Zionist Jew' but really it's a mash up that includes Marqusee's childhood in a Zionist leftwing family, his grandfather's life story as a leftist in the early twentieth century, radical Jewish history in pre-WWII Europe, the biblical prophets, Palestine solidarity activism in the UK and USA and travelling in Asia and North Africa. I really appreciated the way he deconstructs 'anti-Semitism on the left' — he doesn't deny that it exists, but he's awesome at outlining the difference between criticisms of Israel and Zionism, and anti-Jewish racism. I wanted to photocopy that whole chapter and make it compulsory reading for Palestine solidarity activists in Aotearoa.



Neuromancer by William Gibson: I fucking love this book. And not even for any political subtext (I'm still undecided on its gender politics) but for including all the elements I want in a good story: Crazy tech, arse kicking heroines, post apocalyptic universe and fantastic adventures. I read this over a few days in Tel Aviv. Secret admission: I had to leave for Jerusalem before I finished the last chapter. I still don't know how this book ends.

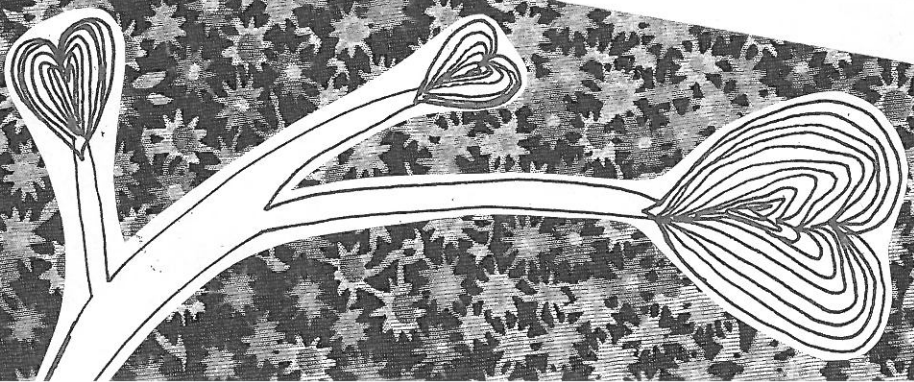


Books

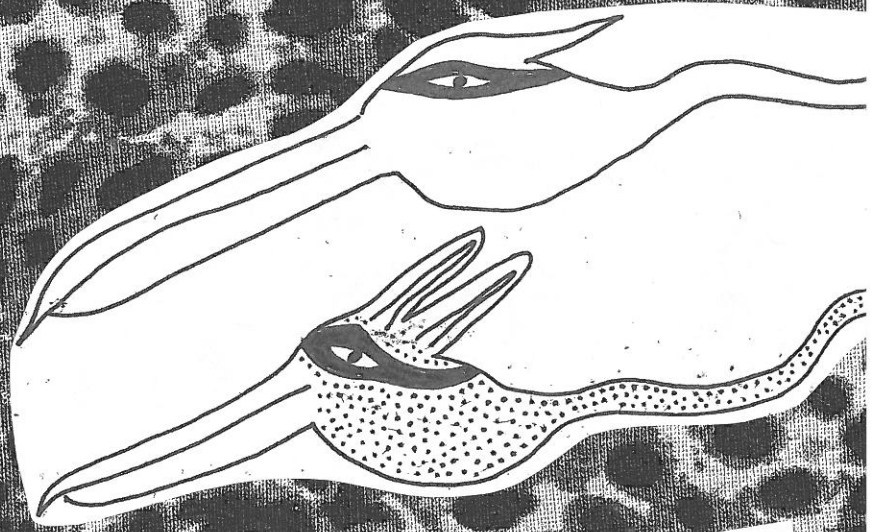


I spend a lot of my travelling time sitting in parks reading books. This might seem like a waste of time — I can sit and read books in Glover Park. But you know what? I think a book is a completely different book depending on whether you read it in Tiergarten in Berlin, or in a protest tent in Sheikh Jarrah, or in Glover Park in Wellington. Here are some of the books I read on this trip:

The City and the City by China Miéville: I read this book in Tel Aviv. It's the perfect book to read in Palestine. It totally captures the way that two separate and distinct places can coexist in the same geographical location. In my sleep deprived jet lagged state I could feel the book's universe bleeding into my own and I wasn't quite sure which was my reality for a bit.



Bamboo and me go to a Dead Prez show. The venue is very pretty, on the river, with an outdoor market. Two guys come up to us and start a conversation. Bamboo tells them how excited she is to see Dead Prez play. They ask if we smoke pot, we tell them we don't. They wander off. I think they were trying to hit on us by offering us pot, Bamboo thinks they were hitting on us to try and sell us pot.



The gig itself is a bit of a letdown. The opening acts are sexist and banal. We've already seen DP once this year and their set's got old — especially the bit where they say, 'this one's for the ladies' and play *Mind Sex*. In Auckland, surrounded by my queer feminist posse, the casual sleaze was kinda amusing. But here, just the two of us in a sea of strange men, it makes me feel alone and alienated.

but it's ok. it's exciting waiting at the train station.

exciting because I'm about to have an adventure in a strange country, where I know no one.

but exciting too, for this moment right now. sitting alone, listening to Sarah Haddad, writing to myself, thinking about people I miss... I love moments like this when I'm travelling. The feeling of being on my own, being responsible for myself only. Finally, I get some me time.

only. Finally, I get some me time.

only. Finally, I get some me time.

only. Finally, I get some me time.

only. Finally, I get some me time.

only. Finally, I get some me time.

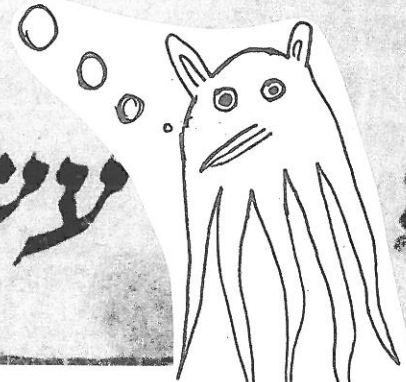
TRAIN STATION
HAUPTBAHNHOF

2 hours.
this is what I get,
for being so organised!
come here early, just in
that case all these things
can do wrong.

It is strange talking to a German person about the holocaust. Perhaps much stranger for her. I feel this tension, like... whose history are we talking about, hers or mine? Who does the holocaust belong to, Germans or Jews? Both our identities are so invested in it. I think of Daniel Kahn's statement that there is nothing less Jewish than the 'Jewish holocaust': the holocaust belongs to Germans. Jews were its object, not its subject.

Most of my time in Bremen is more relaxed than this: walks along the river, reading Ursula Le Guin, eating sorbet, stocking up on radical books from Ruin Nation Records. But this thing keeps tugging at my head. This weird awareness of myself as a Jewish person in Germany. Wondering what random passers by would think of me if they knew.

When I come back to Hauptbahnhof to board the train to Berlin, the station is full of German soldiers in uniform. It freaks me out a little bit. When I step onto the train I'm shaking.



אדם
אדני
ניזתא

Bremen

When I get to Bremen Hauptbahnhof I'm just relieved to finally be there. It's been a hectic train-ferry-train journey from Copenhagen and I'm exhausted.

Later on Elianna tells me about Nazi trains carrying prisoners to concentration camps through that same train station. Then it becomes sinister. Out of Berlin, my sense of discomfort about Germany is heightened.

I remember my dad's reaction when I wanted to study German at age fourteen: 'Screw German. Why would you ever go to Germany? To see the state of the concentration camps?' He won that argument. I enrolled in Spanish instead. To this day my German is limited to 'mein Deutch is nicht ser gut.'

At a show I chat to a woman who's finishing her masters thesis in holocaust studies. We talk about Abba Kovner and Nakam, the 'Jewish avengers' who attempted to poison former SS officers after the holocaust. She says it's a shame their plan was foiled. There's an awkward discomfort eating at my belly. She talks about Nazis with a vehement bitterness which is a hundred times more intense than anything I could ever feel. I guess it's easier to feel compassion for someone who perpetrated genocide against you than it is to feel compassion for someone who implicated you in their crime of genocide.

Milan

I think I like Milan. It's proof that the universe really does look after me. I made an arbitrary decision to come here — it was a dot on the map, a place on the way to Spain. I booked a train — a fifteen hour journey — and almost immediately regretted it.



I didn't know anything about Milan. I didn't know a single person there. None of my contacts had replied. I thought I would have a miserable two days locked up in some shitty hostel, feeling anxious, isolated, exhausted and homesick.

Somehow things worked out. I found a place to stay, housesitting an incredibly comfortable apartment. I had a three and a half hour wait between getting off the train and meeting the guy who was gonna let me into the apartment. Again, I thought I'd spend that time walking around alone, schleping my pack, feeling anxious and tired.

Instead, MJ and Christopher came to meet me at the station with a ton of food, and we had a picnic in the courtyard outside. We hung out til it was time for me to get on the metro, and caught up on the last who-knows-how-many months. It's a crazy coincidence that they were here at the same time as me. It was so nice to see people I like.

It makes me realise what a huge hold anxiety has on my life. Even something as simple as traveling to a strange city is oh-so-terrifying. One way or another, things usually work out. If there's one thing the last five years have taught me it's that actually, I'm strong and resilient and independent and I can look after myself. But still, I'm always waiting for things to go as wrong as they possibly can. I'm always stressed. I never feel safe anywhere anymore.

There are a lot of rocks. Rocks as far as the eye can see. Little rocks the size of your fist. Big rocks the size of the Sky Tower. Medium sized rocks too. It all looks pretty benign. But looks can be deceiving.

You see, my crust is actually formed by a set of tessellating tectonic plates. Underneath the surface of these plates run rivers of hot liquid lava. On occasion, when the plates shift, the lava might explode through the cracks between them. Whenever this happens, hot lava shoots upwards, like a burning red geyser. It lights up the shade-less sun-less horizon. It makes the ground shake. The plates split apart and things that were there fall in and things that weren't there get spat out. Suddenly you have to blink because the landscape's changed, it's all different and you're not sure if you're still in the same place. Was that thing there before? Did it just appear from the ground? Were you here before? Did you just fall in through the ground? What the hell is this? How'd you get here? How will you ever get out?



My Mind

by Nausea

It is a dangerous place. Not the sort of place you enter uninformed. You wouldn't wanna rush in there with your eyes shut, that's for sure.

It is a desert land. It's all sand and stones. At first you might think there is nothing there at all. If you wait patiently you will start to notice signs of life. A snake slithering just beneath the sand. A scorpion crawling from under a rock. A tiny shrub.

No, that's all wrong. It's not like that at all. Actually, it's an ocean. It is wet and salty. It moves to a rhythm dictated by the phases of the moon. It is full of tiny living things. The deeper you dive the more there is to see. It holds entire ecosystems. It is full of trash dumped there by other people. You should be careful not to drown in it, or get eaten by a shark.

No, actually, that's not it either. It's more like... a crust of black volcanic rock. It is a crusty old mind. Rock as far as the eye can see. There is no shade. But there is also no sunshine, so things balance out. There is no place to sit. You have to stay on your feet. There are some steep drops, so you should watch where you put those feet.

My Heart

by Nausea

It is full of holes. It is a swiss cheese heart. It is a shell of a heart. Once it was filled with people, taking shelter. But some of them became cruel. They started to hurt the other people living in my heart. They started to hurt the people outside, who had no place to shelter. They started to hurt other people whose hearts they also lived in. They started hurting me. Some of those people began punching holes in the walls. They were jumping up and down and smashing in the floor. I had to cut them out.

Some of them I cut out slowly. I planned it with precision. I took a scalpel and carefully carved around them. I scraped out what was left with a teaspoon.

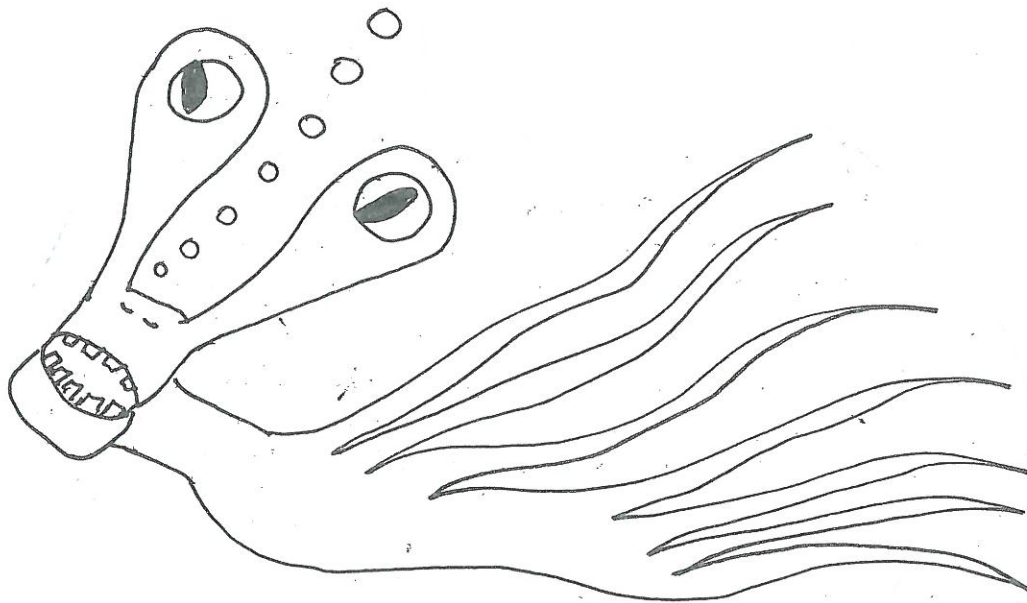
Some of them were a rushed job. It was a matter of some urgency and all I had was a blunt machete and I just hacked and hacked in the dark until they were more or less out of there but I think I may have done some damage, some other folks might have been in the way at the time, and maybe I might have cut some of them without noticing.

Then my heart wasn't such a safe place anymore.

My heart was full of holes and people kept

falling out. I guess I should've done some renovations, at least cellotaped up some of the leaks. But to be honest, I know it's just gonna happen again. The whole damn cycle will repeat itself and I will cut many more people out of my heart between today and the day it stops beating.

So why bother? A woman can function quite well with a holey heart. In the right light you may not even notice the damage. It leaks in the rain, and it's harder to fit people in now. But overall, things seems to be running as usual.



I also manage to visit the café at Folkets Hus social centre and talk shit with some anarchists there. I'm so envious of these big European cities with their millions of social centres.

Nicole and me go to vegan folkekøkken at Ungdomshuset. When the council tried to evict the 'youth house' social centre from its original premises a few years ago the city erupted into riots. Many, many arrests later, the city caved in and gave them a new building in a low income

mostly migrant neighbourhood. R says it's caused some tensions in the neighbourhood but they're trying to build bridges with the local youth, holding street parties with local MCs and grafitti crews. The folkekøkken at Ungdomshuset is delicious and cheap, the bookshop is full of exciting radical literature, including an Esperanto section. GeekXcore. I strike a conversation with a couple of vegans and they give me a list of restaurants to try out.

'I love copenhagen,' I say to Nicole, 'I could totes live here.'

'You'd need to learn to ride a bike to live in Copenhagen,' she says.

My deep shameful secret: I can't ride a bike — minus a hundred anarcho-punk points for me. But I get around well enough on public transport. Everything about this city feels so comfortable.

Copenhagen

By the time I get to Copenhagen I am physically exhausted from weeks of trains, planes and ferries. I haven't seen Nicole since we were seventeen but somehow it feels like nothing's changed between us. We go for walks around the city. Copenhagen is pretty! Lots of cobbled streets, renaissance era buildings embossed with the king's initials, lush green parks.



One day we borrow her parents' car and go visit Kronborg, Hamlet's castle. It's a hilariously kitschy tourist attraction. The queen's boudoir includes a looped recording of a giggling woman. Underneath the palace is the stone basement where the soldiers lived. It's dark and cold and it's awful to think of all the young men living there: no light, no ventilation, can't light a fire. How would you keep the rats away?

Lyon

BILLET à composer avant l'accès au train

LYON PART DIEU → MONTPELLIER ST-RO 01 ADULTE

Départ 18/07 à 17H07 de LYON PART DIEU
à 18H57 à MONTPELLIER ST-RO TGV 5117

Classe 1 VOITURE 01

01 PLACE SELON DISPONIBILITÉ

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SURCLASSEMENT PASS EURAIL

Arriv.

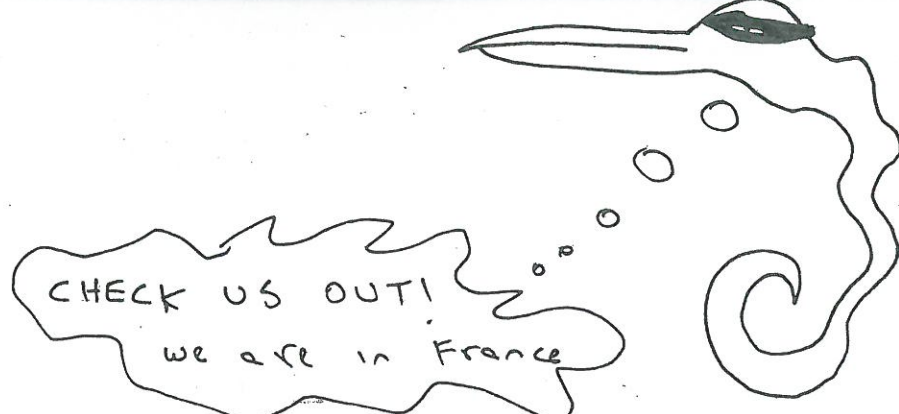
Départ

Arriv.

Pri


AB

We arrive in Lyon with our backs sticking to our bellies, metaphorically speaking. Sparklefairy manages to order us Subway in French. I'm pretty sure the sauce isn't vegan but I wolf it down anyway. We have three hours til our next train. We sit outside on the steps reading and watching people. It's a pretty mundane way to pass time but the excitement of being in a new place for the first time makes me smile.



CHECK US OUT!
we are in France

sure, we don't know where we're sleeping
tonight, we don't know if we'll eat dinner.



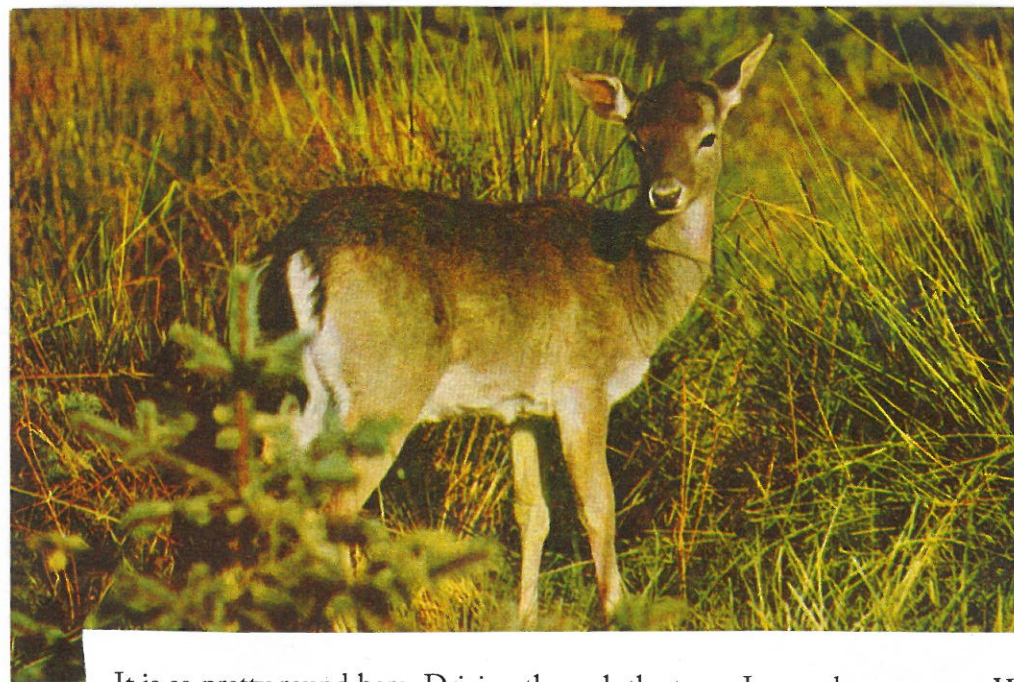
we've been awake since 5am. it's
too hot and we're covered in bites.

we are tired and despondent

BUT

we are tired and despondent in **France**

There are volunteer interns from around the world living here. I spend a lot of time curled up in the volunteer common room in front of the telly, watching the Al Jazeera kids channel. Another month and I would've been fluent in Arabic.



It is so pretty round here. Driving through the trees, I see a deer run past. We are listening to the Smiths. I'm with one of my favourite people. The landscape is beautiful. If a double decker bus crashes into us, well, you know....

Glencree

has a creepy history.

It was built as an army barracks to house the British occupying forces at the start of the 19th century. Later it became a boys' reform school.

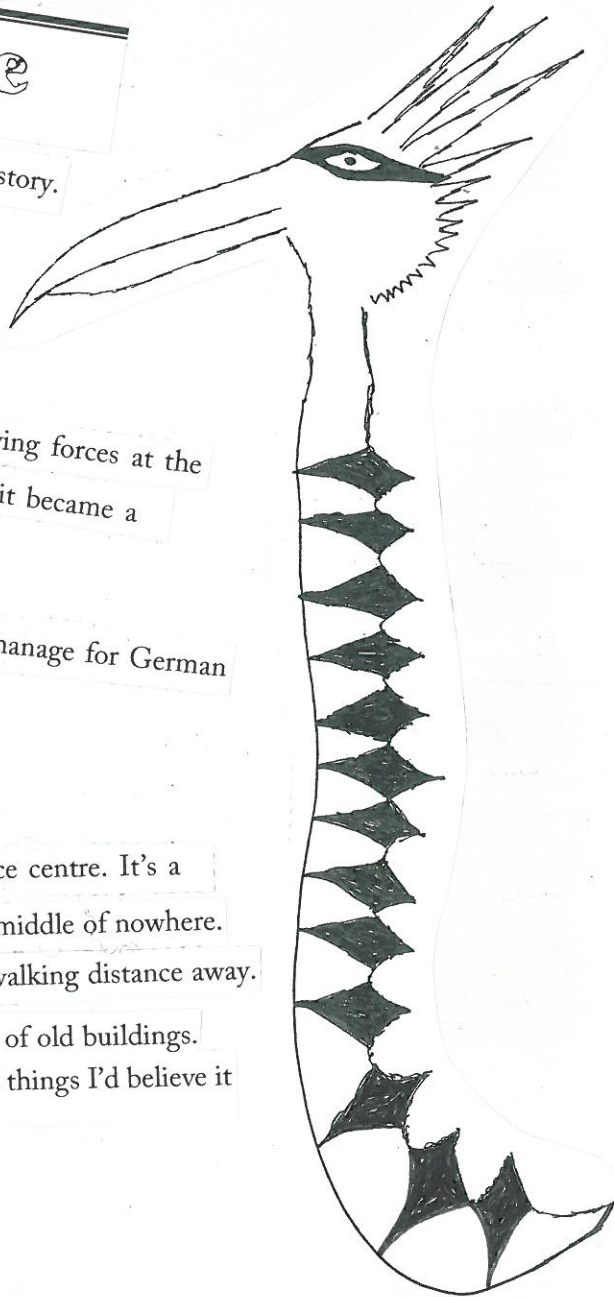
Then after World War Two an orphanage for German and Polish war refugees.

Now it houses an international peace centre. It's a peaceful kinda place. In the middle of nowhere.

The nearest village isn't really walking distance away.

It's green and pretty, full of ruins of old buildings.

If I was inclined to believe in such things I'd believe it was haunted.



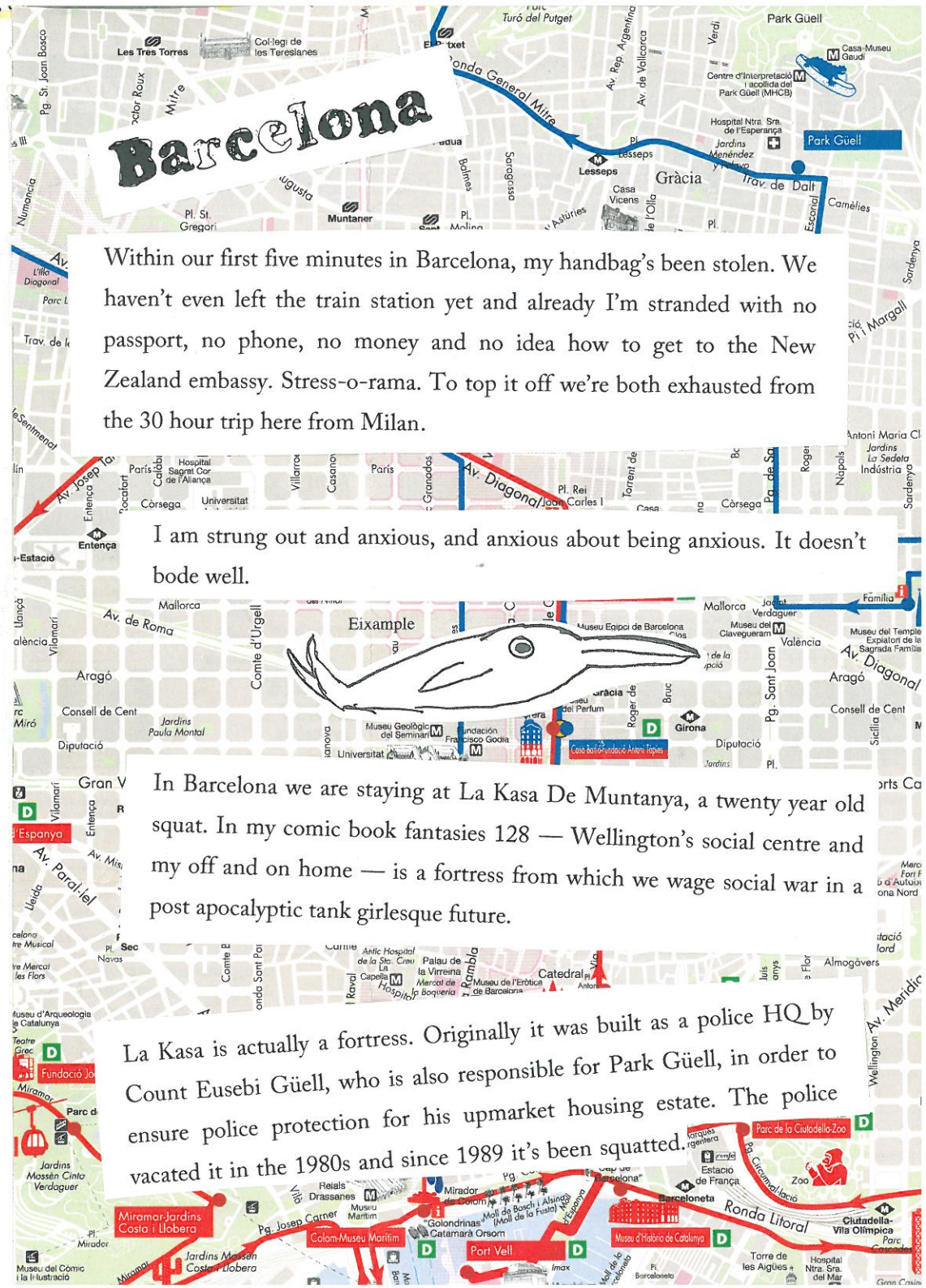
Barcelona

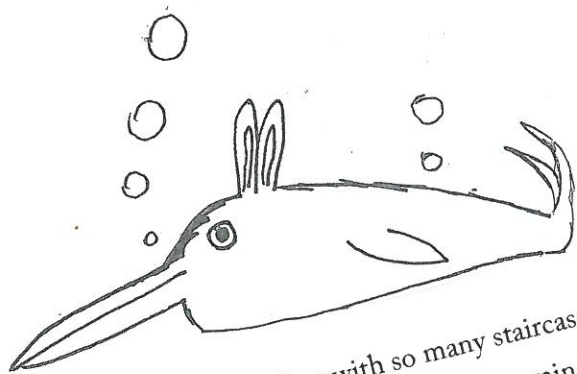
Within our first five minutes in Barcelona, my handbag's been stolen. We haven't even left the train station yet and already I'm stranded with no passport, no phone, no money and no idea how to get to the New Zealand embassy. Stress-o-rama. To top it off we're both exhausted from the 30 hour trip here from Milan.

I am strung out and anxious, and anxious about being anxious. It doesn't bode well.

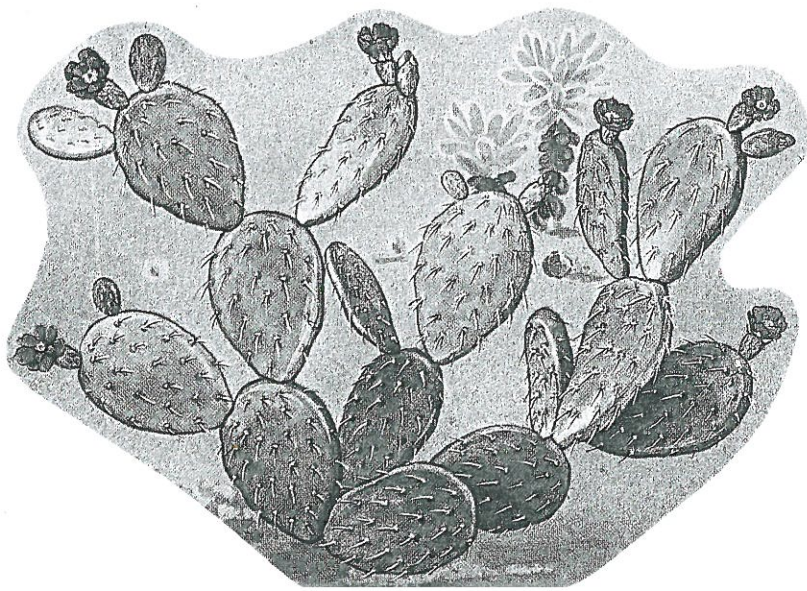
In Barcelona we are staying at La Kasa De Muntanya, a twenty year old squat. In my comic book fantasies 128 — Wellington's social centre and my off and on home — is a fortress from which we wage social war in a post apocalyptic tank girlesque future.

La Kasa is actually a fortress. Originally it was built as a police HQ by Count Eusebi Güell, who is also responsible for Park Güell, in order to ensure police protection for his upmarket housing estate. The police vacated it in the 1980s and since 1989 it's been squatted.





It's an amazing place. An old stone building with so many staircases it takes me a few days to stop getting lost. The labyrinthine-ness reminds me of the wasphive of the Tessier-Ashpools in Gibson's Neuromancer, which I just finished reading a few weeks ago. The random doors and stairways surround a courtyard full of potted plants — including pot plants. At the moment they are building a swimming pool. There's an amazing view of the city from here. La kasa is conveniently located at the top of a pedestrian staircase (and escalator). There's a gorgeous view of the city and the harbour. I'm so enamoured with this city — it's a combination of the exotic — medieval and renaissance architecture, and the familiar — pine and palm trees, cactuses and bougainvillia, the same plants that grow in Palestine.



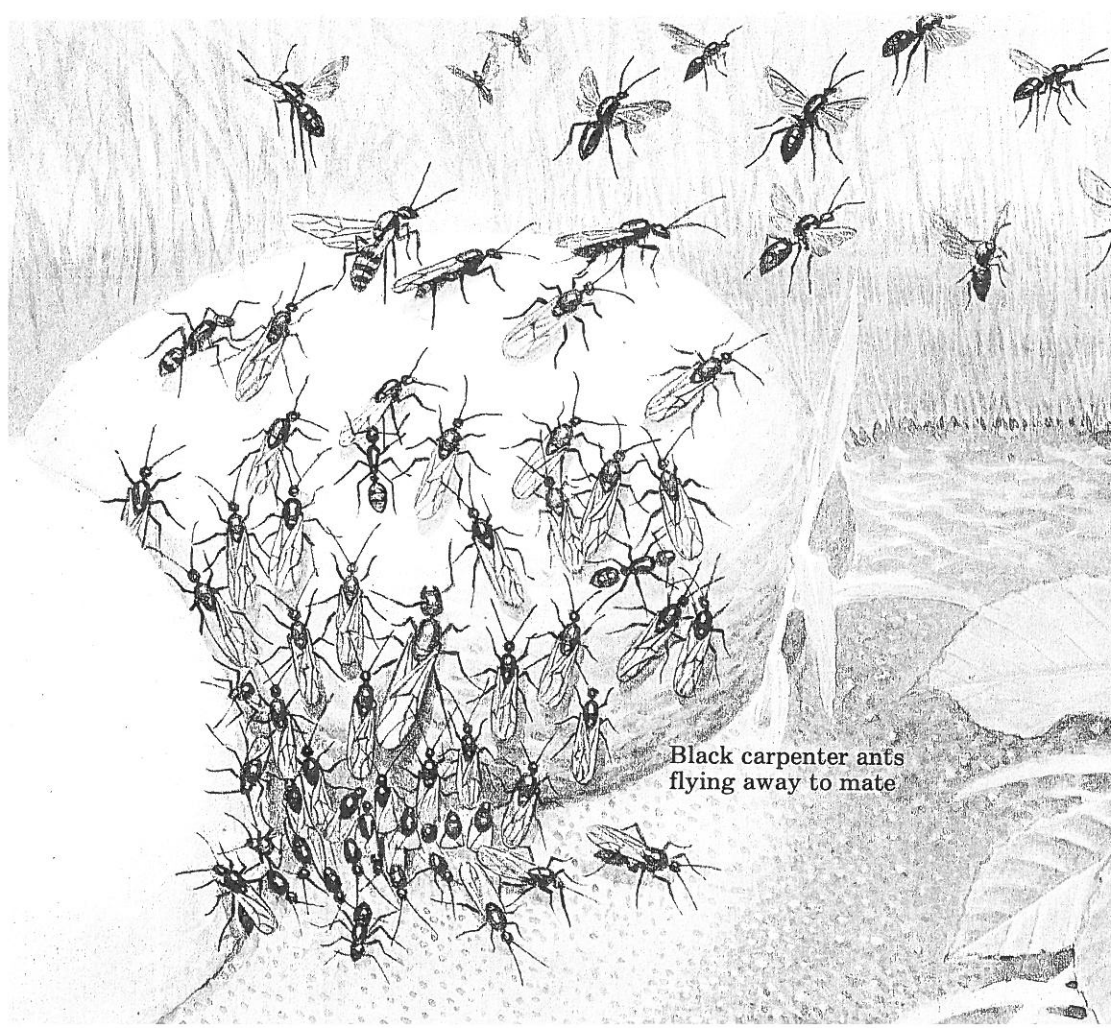
Dublin

My sense of being in a 1930s musical coninues throughout the trip to Ireland. We take a train from Surrey, through Wales, and — *Oh! A castle!* *Did you see the castle?* — my eyes are cemented to the windows the whole way. Then it's a ferry ride to Dublin. We stand on the deck and watch the sea pass by.

We get to Dublin just in time for the weekly community dinner at Seomra Spraoi social centre. Roni shows me around the space. It's a huge warehouse; the downstairs is spacious enough to be a ballroom. Upstairs there's a library, meeting rooms, storage space for zines, books and costumes. I stock up on back copies of *The Rag*, a Dublin produced anarcha-feminist zine, and leave a copy of *Imminent Rebellion 10* for the library. We eat, chat to random srangers, then catch a bus to County Wicklow.

Derg. Some natives insist that a true Irishman can distinguish 40 shades of green.

But one day soon, the vengeful cockroaches will crawl out from between my lips. Like in a cheesy horror movie, they will fly out and coalesce into one body. A ghost woman. A vengeful cockroach ghost woman. A hungry, angry ghost woman, hell bent on revenge. She will take that pain and humiliation away, she will drain it from me. It will drip out of the cracks, she'll collect it in her cockroach hands. She will return it to its proper owners.



Black carpenter ants
flying away to mate

Oof, Barcelona. It makes me anxious. Partly because my bag was stolen as soon as I got here, which makes me feel vulnerable walking around the city, like I have to be constantly vigilant. Partly that the language barrier makes me feel isolated, and slightly suffocated. I hate not being able to talk to people. Partly that it is impossible to be alone here. I can't walk down the street without being sexually harrassed, or stopped by people selling stuff, or wanting stuff, and always I'm on edge. I don't have anything worth stealing anymore — just my journal and a couple of books. Nothing that's valuable to anyone except me.

It will be a relief to be in Bristol, it'll be so nice to hang out with someone I know.

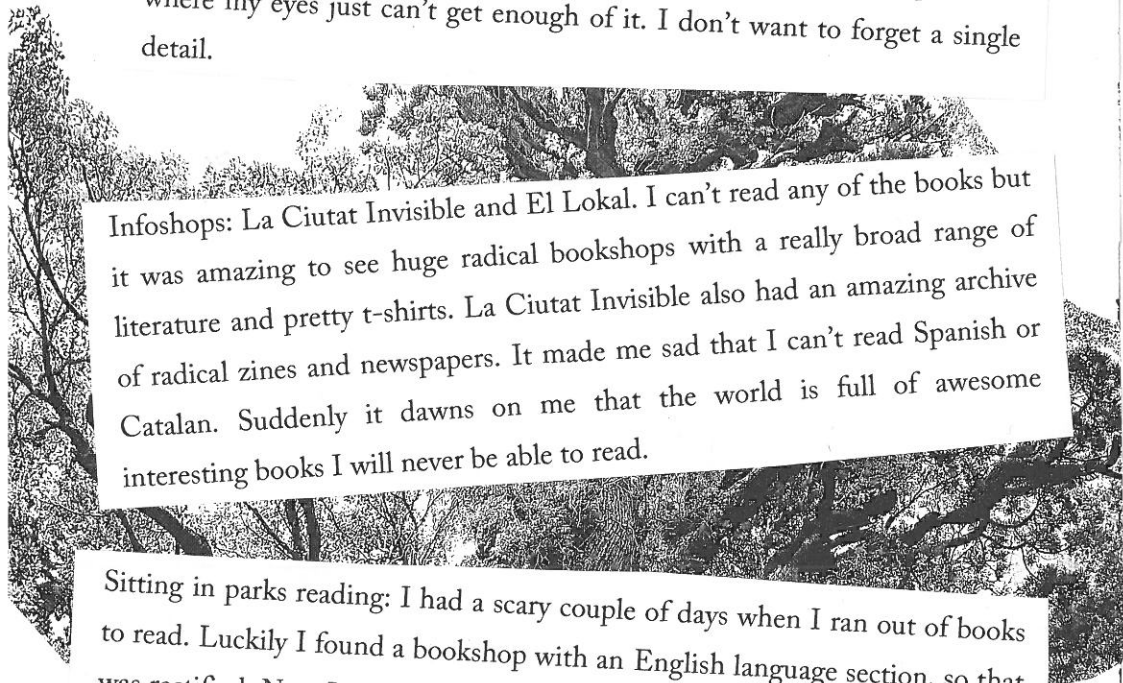
But I'm determined not to let anxiety fuck up my travels, so here I am trying to remind myself of all the good things that have happened to me in Barcelona:

Staying in La Kasa De Muntanya: Because this place is beautiful and amazing. Like a castle in an anarchist fairy tale. I love it.

Finding places that serve amazing vegan food: My favourite kind of tourism. I recommend Gopal's for burgers and cakes, Juicy Jones for salads and smoothies, Maoz for falafel.


The Picasso museum: I'm a bit museumed out after Berlin but it was still overwhelming (in a good way) to see his paintings in the flesh. Especially the blue period and early cubism. I wish I had more time to look at them — a few hours just isn't enough. If I lived in Barcelona I'd come here once a month.

Park Güell: I've had a fascination with this place since I was a teenager so it was amazing to finally be here. There are so many weird crazy details to it, total hippie architecture and I love it. It's one of those experiences where my eyes just can't get enough of it. I don't want to forget a single detail.

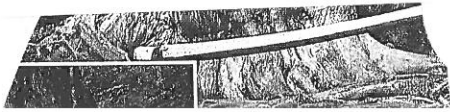


Infoshops: La Ciutat Invisible and El Lokal. I can't read any of the books but it was amazing to see huge radical bookshops with a really broad range of literature and pretty t-shirts. La Ciutat Invisible also had an amazing archive of radical zines and newspapers. It made me sad that I can't read Spanish or Catalan. Suddenly it dawns on me that the world is full of awesome interesting books I will never be able to read.

Sitting in parks reading: I had a scary couple of days when I ran out of books to read. Luckily I found a bookshop with an English language section, so that was rectified. Now I am overcompensating by schleping around way too many books. Books are really cheap in Europe. This makes me happy, but it also makes my bag heavy.



Meeting cool people: I didn't get to know many people here, because I speak fuck all Catalan and not much more Spanish. But I did have a beer with a cool woman from the Libertarian Students' Assembly, we talked lots about Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain and Europe: the independence movement, xenophobia, Islamophobia, squatting, student politics and feminism.

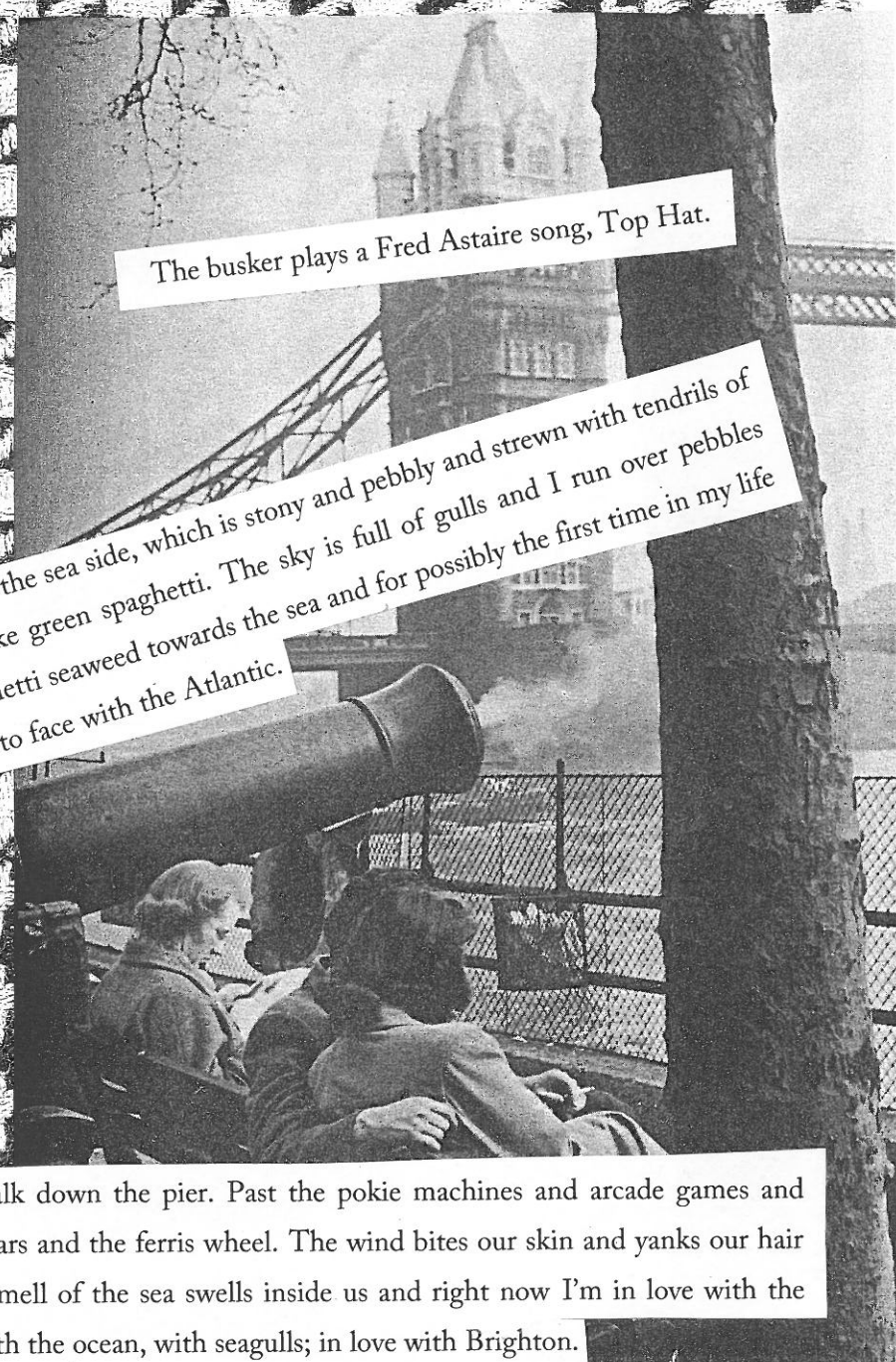


My Superpower

by Nausea

My secret superpower is that my body is actually a rotting cesspool, a receptacle for everybody's most horrible secrets. My body is like the wailing wall. People come to visit. They leave their fears and traumas scribbled on a scrap of paper and they slip it into the cracks in me. Deep within me are the festering rotting embodiments of all the horrible violations everyone around me has ever been subjected to.

They weigh me down. They latch on to my rib cage and press on my lungs. They are growing. One day they will climb up through my throat and unleash themselves on the world. They will fly out like vengeful cockroaches – the physical embodiment of all the rage and bitterness, the pain of a hundred people who had to quietly carry these violations around, because there was no way to carry them loudly, openly, stretched out in front of them. Not without becoming victims again. Without being told that they are being over the top, that they asked for it, that they are lying. In a world that hates people who get hurt more than it hates people who do the hurting, everything is upside down. The pain and the shame live in the victim and not the perpetrator. All we can do is carry our pain around hidden in our belly.



The busker plays a Fred Astaire song, Top Hat.

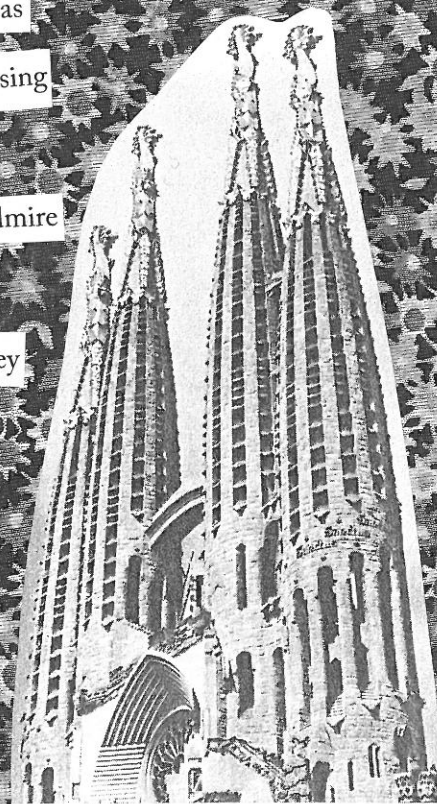
We walk to the sea side, which is stony and pebbly and strewn with tendrils of seaweed like green spaghetti. The sky is full of gulls and I run over pebbles and spaghetti seaweed towards the sea and for possibly the first time in my life I'm face to face with the Atlantic.

So we walk down the pier. Past the pokie machines and arcade games and bumper cars and the ferris wheel. The wind bites our skin and yanks our hair and the smell of the sea swells inside us and right now I'm in love with the world, with the ocean, with seagulls; in love with Brighton.

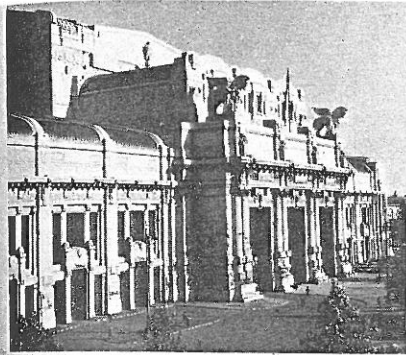
Looking at architecture

In Park Güell, I'm admiring Gaudi's house. It is a candy house — painted pink with art nouveau icing swirls around the windows and twisted wrought iron bars circling the balcony. I wonder if he painted it himself; if he painstakingly coloured in the pink and white swirls with the kind of love and dedication people have when they are building their own home. Or did he get some underpaid worker to do it?

It's hard to believe that this place was originally intended as a rich people's housing estate — a fin de siècle gated community. It's funny that we're supposed to come admire the brilliant design and landscaping without thinking about who it was that they were designed for. I'm glad Park Güell ended up becoming a public park, with people sleeping on the benches and all.



Milano Centrale station is an amazing building. A huge marble dome complete with statues of saints — or are they politicians? It's like a cathedral in here.



Milan, chief industrial center of Italy, has world's grandest railroad station.



'They must have been so proud when they finished building this thing,' I say.

'No. I think they were just tired,' Christopher replies.

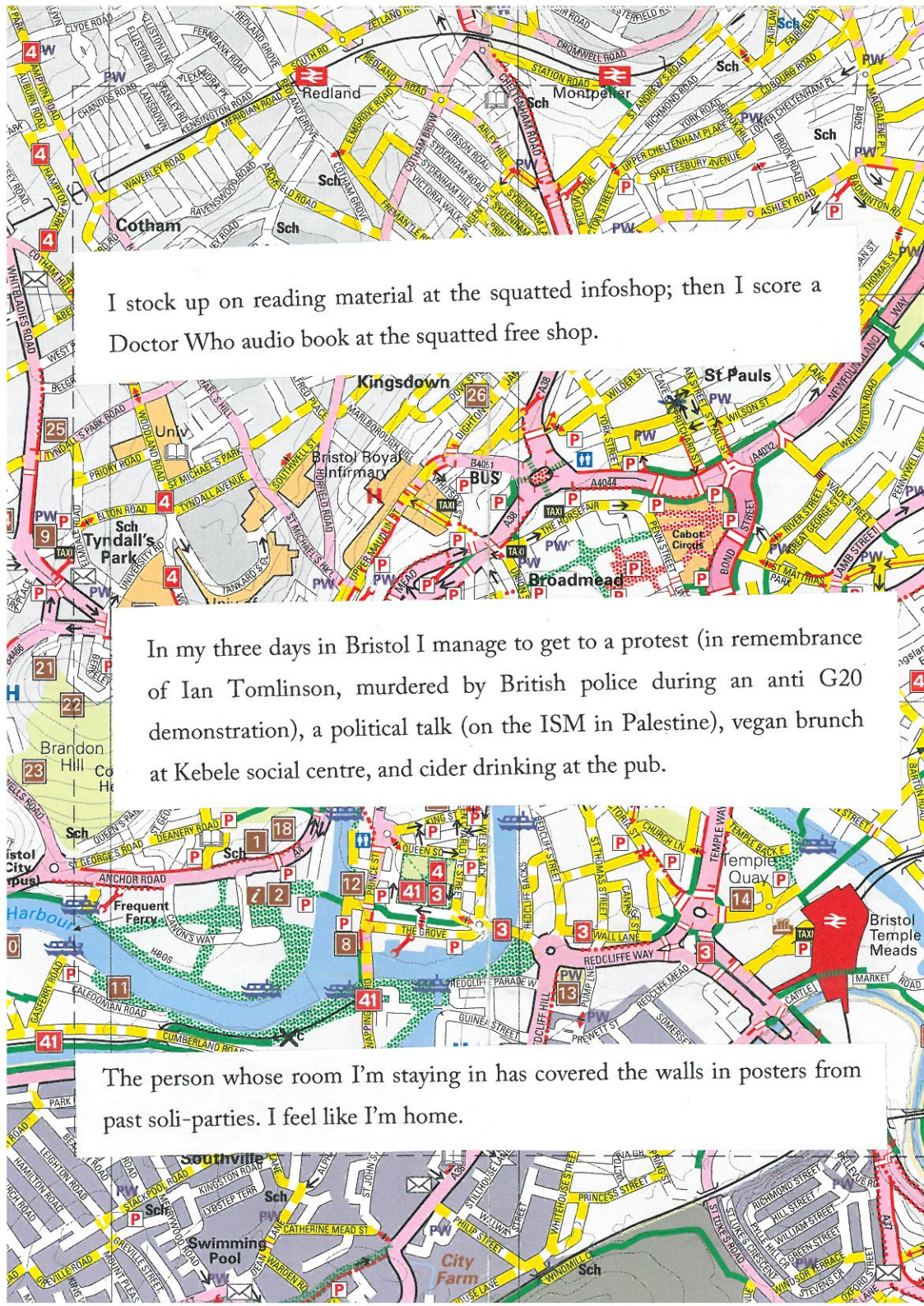
It takes us a while to decipher the Roman numerals above the entrance: 1933. When did Mussolini come to power? Suddenly my admiration for this building's grandeur is tainted by the association with fascism.

Brighton

We walk down the street, stopping to look at the windows of shops: the Cowlie Club, the Vegetarian Shoes shop, the veggie diner. We stroll til we get to the Royal Pavilion, snapping photos of each other on the street, gossiping about people we both know. There's a busker playing saxophone — a Frank Sinatra song. We sit on the grass admiring the architecture. It's like someone built a lego house and decorated it with chess pieces. We look at the turrets, with their slit windows for tiny archers, and the even smaller turrets, with tinier windows for even tinier archers. We talk about what kind of creatures might live there — dwarves, gnomes, elves.

The busker plays Connie Francis's I Will Wait for You and I get teary eyed thinking of the episode of Futurama where Fry finds his mummified dog... nerd alert.

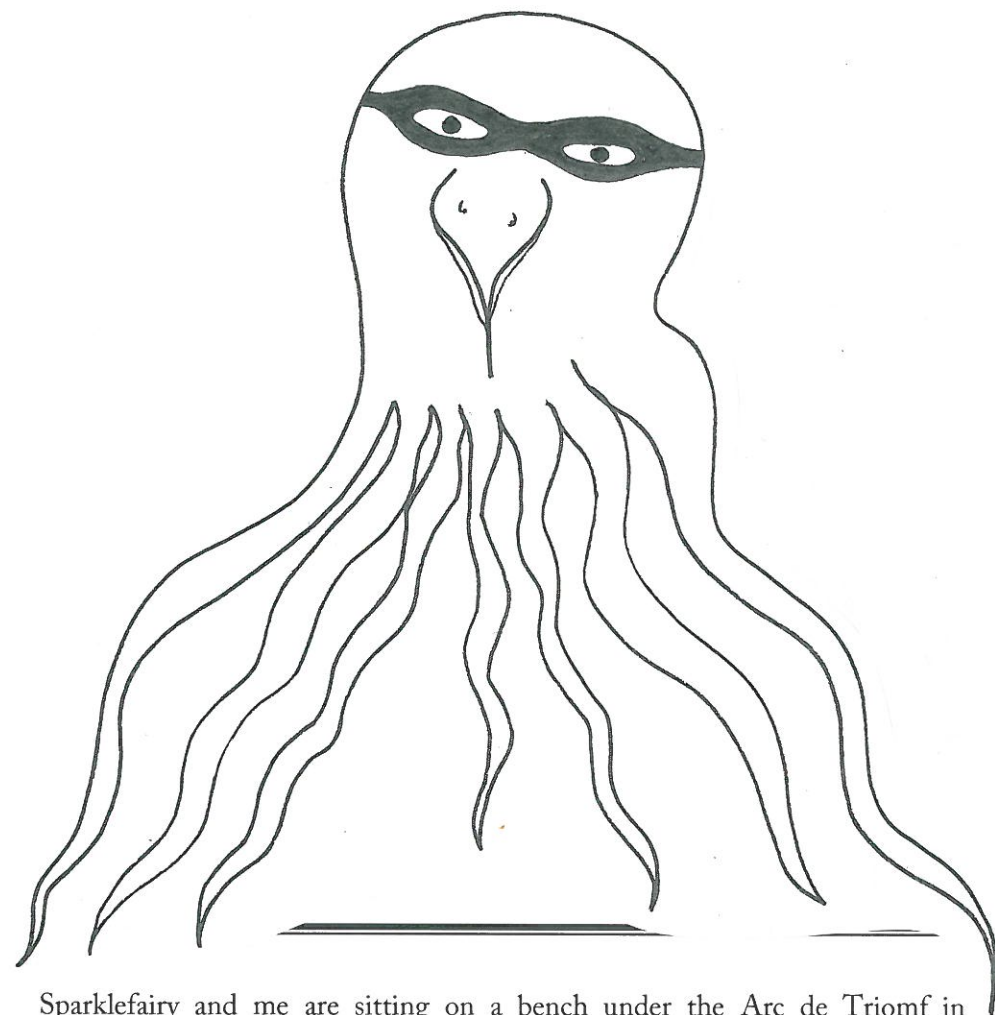
A seagull waddles towards us, eyes us warily. The seagulls here are huge. Roni tells me stories she's heard about people being attacked by them, or having food stolen. The seagull wanders off, and I wonder if he was casing us out before bringing his seagull gang to beat us down for our sandwiches.



I stock up on reading material at the squatted infoshop; then I score a Doctor Who audio book at the squatted free shop.

In my three days in Bristol I manage to get to a protest (in remembrance of Ian Tomlinson, murdered by British police during an anti G20 demonstration), a political talk (on the ISM in Palestine), vegan brunch at Kebele social centre, and cider drinking at the pub.

The person whose room I'm staying in has covered the walls in posters from past soli-parties. I feel like I'm home.



Sparklefairry and me are sitting on a bench under the Arc de Triomf in Barcelona. We are talking about architecture. We have seen plenty of impressive architecture on this trip. Sparklefairry says that it makes him feel a little guilty. We know that so much capitalist exploitation went into constructing these beautiful buildings. But when we see them our gut reaction isn't one of disgust, it's awe. It's hard not to feel a little implicated. As if by being able to admire these buildings for their aesthetic beauty we are somehow complicit in the exploitation that went into building them.



Bristol

quickly sucks me into its anarchist bubble. This place is squatters' paradise. Lou takes me on a tour. We start with Bristol's oldest squat, the friendly man who lives there makes us cups of tea and talks about cricket. Then on to the factory — a squatted abandoned factory, part social centre, part housing co-op. The factory is like a maze, every room has something new. There's an infoshop, a kitchen full of dumpstered veges, a trapeze, a room full of dumpstered herbal tinctures. From the roof we have a view of the whole city.