READINGS

[Essay]

SEARCH AND DESTROY

By Joanne McNeil, from Lurking: How a Person Became a User, *published this month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

A user of Google products might be put off by the company's cheerfulness and believe that its old byword, "Don't Be Evil," was always bunk. But its steady dominance over internet infrastructure leaves skeptics with few alternative products. With consumers in this bind, Google released boggling ventures. At Gmail's launch, users complained about the ads—they're creepy and it feels like a robot is reading my email! Google Street View appeared, at first, as an obvious invasion of privacy, not to mention an act of hubris with an undercurrent of colonialism. But a person can hardly rail against a ubiquitous technology forever. It wouldn't be easy to give up searching and, above all, Google is easy. All you have to do is wonder about something.

Not so long ago, the company articulated its fundamental purpose as providing access to all possible online information. Google even assumed responsibility for the absence of information. "We're trying to build a virtual mirror of the world at all times," Marissa Mayer, then Google's vice president of geographic and local services, said at a conference in 2010. The comment was made when internet companies were thought to be quicksilver entities rather than institutions building legacies. "Mirroring the world," while impossible, was a coherent vision, fitting with the company's story and execution thus far.

In the Aughts, Google seemed determined to create a digital copy of everything. It was photographing all the streets and scanning all the books in the world, or so they wished you to believe. But one of its projects was an outlier—and in retrospect it signaled where Google was heading. In 2007, when most of the phones in people's pockets were still dumb ones, the company launched a service called GOOG-411. If a user dialed 1-800-GOOG-411, provided a city, and made a request ("Miami," "Thai food delivery"), the service would connect them, like a more personalized Yellow Pages. But then, after three years, the service shut down. It turned out that the point of the project had been to collect audio samples of accents and pitches and voices for artificial-intelligence research. "We need to build a great speech-to-text model," Mayer had said in 2007. "So we need a lot of people talking, saying things so that we can ultimately train off of that." All the data it indexed and represented would be thrown in the bin when it wasn't necessary.

The following decade saw the quieter deactivation of services and deletion of some of the same archives Google once boasted about acquiring. Jessamyn West, a librarian and writer in Vermont, told me that part of the issue with the

company is that Google has nothing like a support line. Even Comcast lets you call in and ask a human a question. Comcast has customers. Google has users. If a Google user has a question about Google, well, Google wants them to google it. The company's approach is to give a user tools to find things, which is, as West puts it, the "opposite of what I do. One of the things that is really important to libraries is the concept of institutional memory," she explained. "It's not just that you've got this building full of information in whatever form it is in, but that you've got human beings who understand the corpus of what's in your buildings or what's in your collections." Libraries are designed to serve their communities. Someone's ability to use the library is a "factor in whether you are doing a good job as a librarian," West said. "That's not true with Google. They're not answerable to people."

Google had once tried to ingratiate itself to the librarian community. Representatives went to conferences like that of the American Library Association (ALA) with great enthusiasm, eager to partner with various groups, and especially to find librarians who might help scan books. In 2007, Google started a blog called Librarian Center. They hired a "Library Partnership Manager," who sent out the Google Librarian Newsletter. But by the end of that year, the newsletters were sent less frequently, and they finally came to a stop in 2009. Later, the Librarian Center page was taken offline.

So much had changed in those few years since Google's ALA debut. In the Aughts, Google was deliberate about identifying itself with book culture. Now there was more knowledge spread digitally over different formats and platforms than ever. An individual might turn to the web before visiting a library to research a subject. With this shift, Google no longer had to associate with libraries—or librarians.

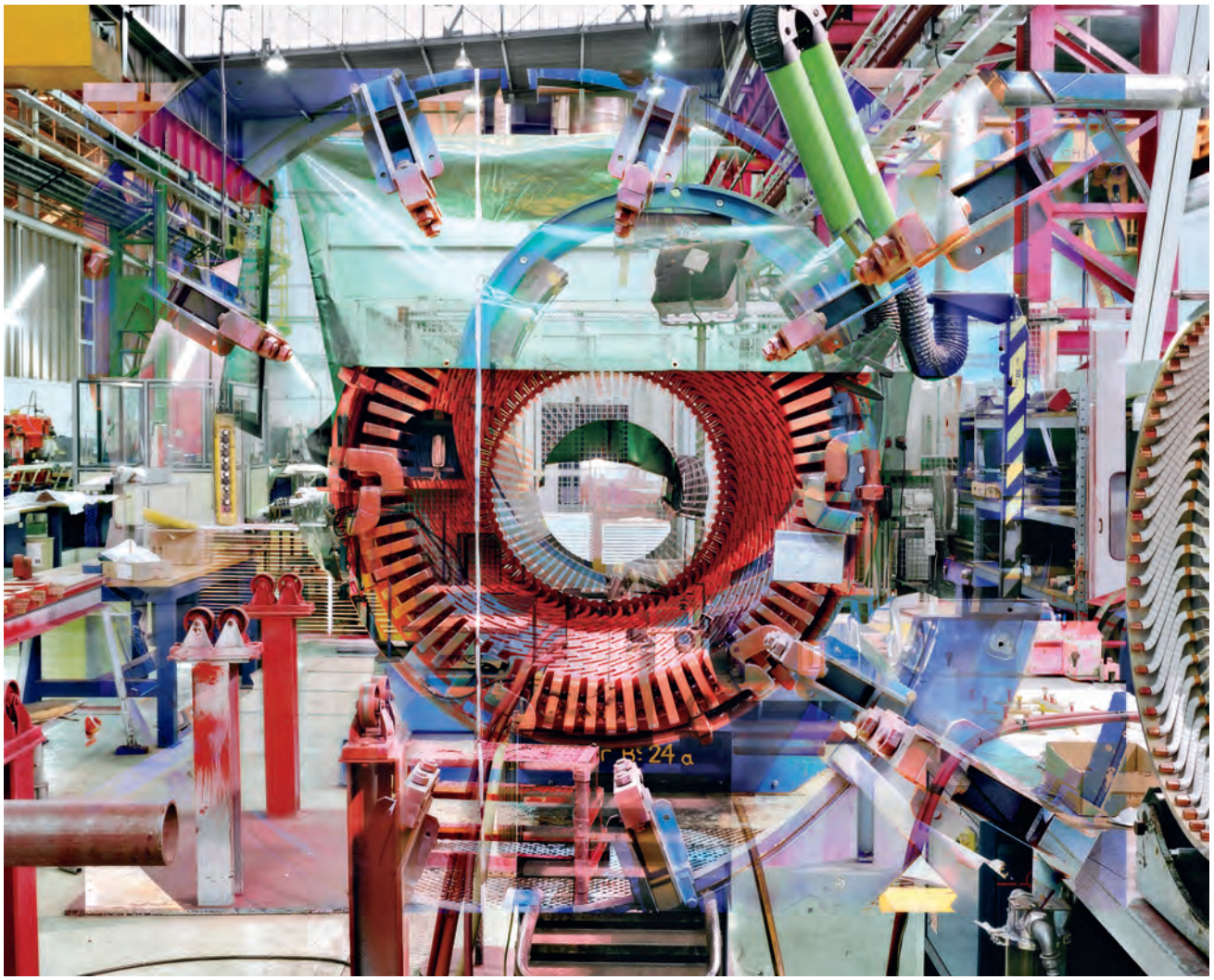
If Google had ever been sincere in its desire to mirror the world, the company's carelessness and lack of archival standards hindered its execution. In 2014, I was part of a panel discussion organized by the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London and hosted remotely over Google Hangouts, as a collaboration between the museum and the Google Art Project. Recently, I went back to the video to verify something another panelist had said. I found the video on the website for the ICA, with the familiar black rectangle. But when I pressed play, there was a notice on a blank screen that read, "This video is unavailable." I contacted the museum first. The developer, who was new to the position, explained that it was a direct-to-YouTube recording and no separate file existed. I wrote to several contacts at the Google Art Project, but no one could help. It could be that someone switched jobs and had a new email account and now there was no one who could log in to update the settings so that the YouTube video might be made public once again. That's what comes from rapid growth: Google prioritized scaling up over the maintenance and continuity of its archive and older products.

[Revocations]

AS YOU WISH

From actions since 2006 taken by American companies and institutions to appease China.

Censored music that refers to the Tiananmen Square massacre
Canceled a lecture on women's rights
Removed an app that allowed protesters in Hong Kong to track the location of police officers
Barred discussion of Hong Kong politics on news shows
Removed any reference to Taiwan's status as a country from the corporate website
Apologized for a T-shirt design with a map of China that did not include Taiwan
Removed the Taiwanese flag from emoji keyboards in Hong Kong and Macao
Canceled a campus visit from the Dalai Lama
Ejected a researcher from campus for investigating the Chinese government's influence on the school
Suspended a professional video-game player and forced him to return prize money after he expressed support for Hong Kong protesters
Fired a hotel employee in Omaha, Nebraska, for liking a pro-Tibet tweet
Removed a submission to a sneaker-design contest that depicted Hong Kong protesters in goggles, gas masks, and hard hats
Removed an advertisement for a Tiffany & Co. ring showing a model with her right hand covering her right eye for its resemblance to a pose adopted by Hong Kong protesters
Rewrote a Tibetan Marvel character as a white woman
Cut a movie scene shot in Shanghai in which Tom Cruise walks past a clothesline strung with underwear



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND CHRISTOPHE GUYE GALERIE, ZURICH

"Usine Alstom Belfort Photo No. 5 Halle Alternateurs," a photograph by Stéphane Couturier, whose work was on view in January at Galerie Kornfeld, in Berlin.

The hidden implication of "mirroring the world" was that Google could replicate information on its own terms, and with no further commitment to maintaining data; any information erased or lost could be interpreted as something the world itself was missing. The company coasted on user trust garnered from its robust appearance. Why use products other than Google Docs or Gmail, if a startup's competing offerings are more likely to break down or get hacked? Why bother uploading videos to any service other than YouTube, where it will be stored on Google servers, which are reasonably secure?

You—a user—or a school, or an institution, or any other body smaller than Google, now have habits shaped by Google's influence. The ICA is a museum, which has standards and practices of archiving, collecting, and preserving objects and information. If Google had never had a hand in the event, the video would probably be available today. One consequence of Google's dominance is that public institutions have relaxed certain functions and services that they believe Google's tools provide for free.

I wonder how often Google strips its archives for parts, as it did with GOOG-411, before burying the data. How about the search itself? Are your queries nothing more than raw material to assemble into something else? There are reports that Google will eventually do away with search—do away with googling. The company hopes that you will talk to it like a maid in the kitchen, rather than search it like an archive. It would like to predict what you want to know with the data it has collected from you and about you.

When he was the company's CEO, Eric Schmidt called multiple search results a "bug."

Google "should be able to give you the right answer just once. We should know what you meant." When a YouTube video ends and an algorithm selects another, that's Google's attempt at a "right answer." Today, YouTube's "autoplay" is notorious for pushing users toward men's rights and conspiracy theory videos, as a consequence of the most common user choices on the site and how the platform's predictive algorithms are written. The company also has the power to invent what it does not know. Errors on Google Maps have resulted in the renaming of neighborhoods. Fiskhorn in Detroit is now known as "Fishkorn." Google posted this typo years ago; now some local businesses, published advertising, and other services have codified it.

Google harvests inquisitiveness: something so fundamental to being human. It has so firmly embedded itself in the experience of learning new things that "search"—once a word that signified quest, yearning—is now synonymous with "googling." Google has monopolized the act of asking a question as it whittles down possible answers and influences to determine which is the "right" one.

More than search or connection, or even artificial intelligence, Google should be remembered for its ceaseless practice of secret deletion and careless disorderliness. In the end, the company's branding of itself as a fun-loving, ski-bum-in-a-ball-pit workplace is a fitting image: Google is a burnout, a flake. It bails on people.

[Mishaps]

BABY BOOMERS

From actions of hosts and attendees at gender-reveal parties since 2017.

Struck a grandfather in the face with a baseball filled with blue powder

Broke an ankle kicking a football filled with pink powder

Shot the father in the groin with a blue-smoke air cannon

Exploded confetti poppers at the entrance to an Applebee's and pelted a hostess with menus after being asked to clean up the blue confetti

Set a car on fire after attaching a "burnout kit" to its tires, performing doughnuts, and covering the street in blue fog

Set a lawn on fire and burned party attendees after launching pink fireworks horizontally

Crashed a crop duster in a field after releasing 350 gallons of pink water

Ignited a 47,000-acre wildfire by shooting a Tannerite target filled with blue powder

Detonated a pipe bomb filled with colored powder, blasting shrapnel that killed a grandmother of the baby, whose gender the family has declined to reveal

[Testimony]

INVISIBLE MAN

From a deposition given last year by Dominic Ryan, the general manager of Founders Brewing Company, to Jack Schulz, a lawyer for Tracy Evans. In 2018, Evans, an employee at the Michigan brewery, sued the company for racial discrimination, alleging that his co-workers used slurs in his presence, and that he was denied a promotion because of his race and fired after complaining to human resources. The lawsuit was settled in October. Patrick Edsenga is a lawyer for Founders. Kwame Kilpatrick is the former mayor of Detroit.

JACK SCHULZ: When did you first meet Tracy Evans?

DOMINIC RYAN: 2011, 2012. We had mutual friends before working there.

SCHULZ: So you knew Tracy prior to his employment at Founders?

RYAN: Met a few times, yes.

SCHULZ: Are you aware that Tracy is black?

RYAN: What do you mean by that?

SCHULZ: Were you aware that Tracy is African-American?

RYAN: I'm not sure of his lineage, so I can't answer that.

SCHULZ: All right. Are you aware Tracy's a man of color?

RYAN: What do you mean by that?

SCHULZ: Do you know what a white person is versus a black person?

RYAN: Can you clarify that for me?

SCHULZ: No. You don't know what it means for someone to be a white person or a black person?

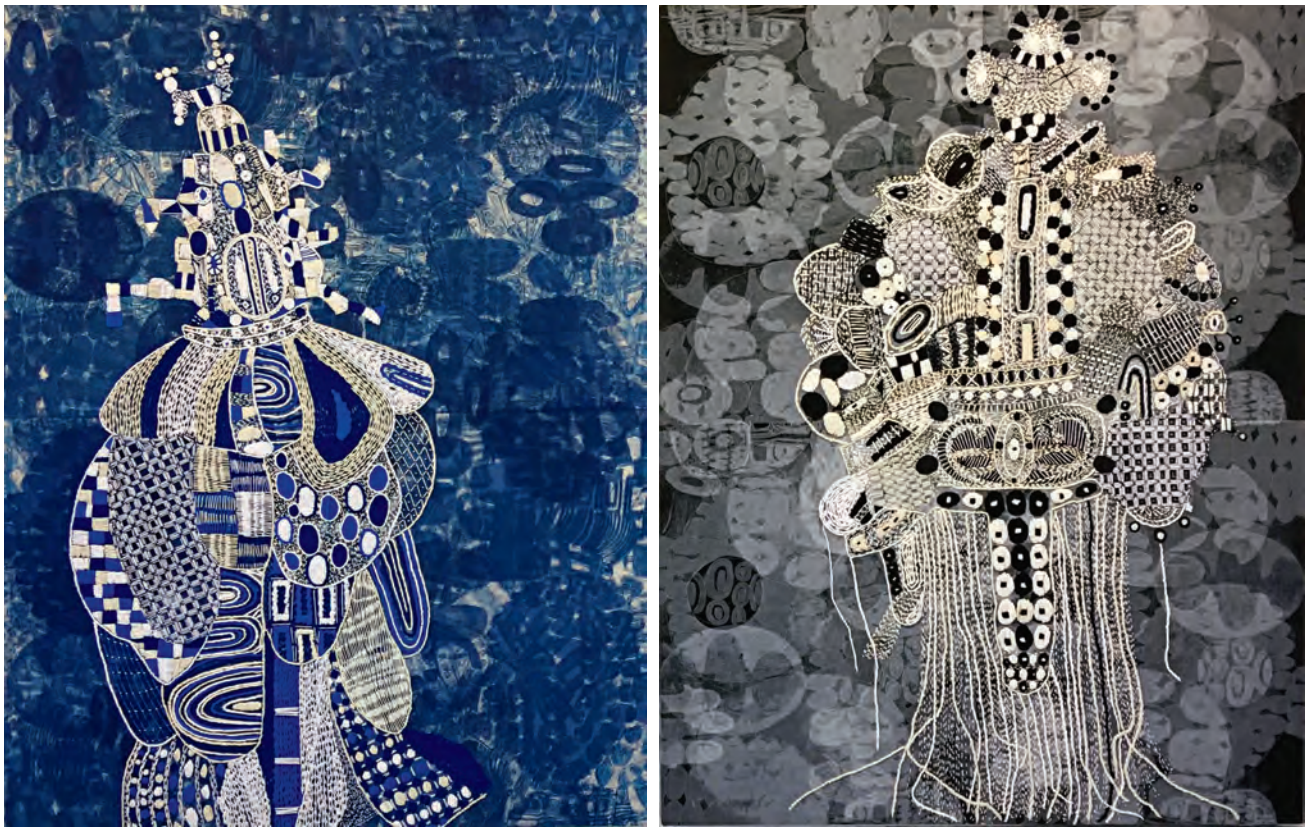
RYAN: I'm asking for clarification.

SCHULZ: You don't need any, I can promise you that. Someone's skin color, a white—

RYAN: So that's what you're referring to?

SCHULZ: Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah.

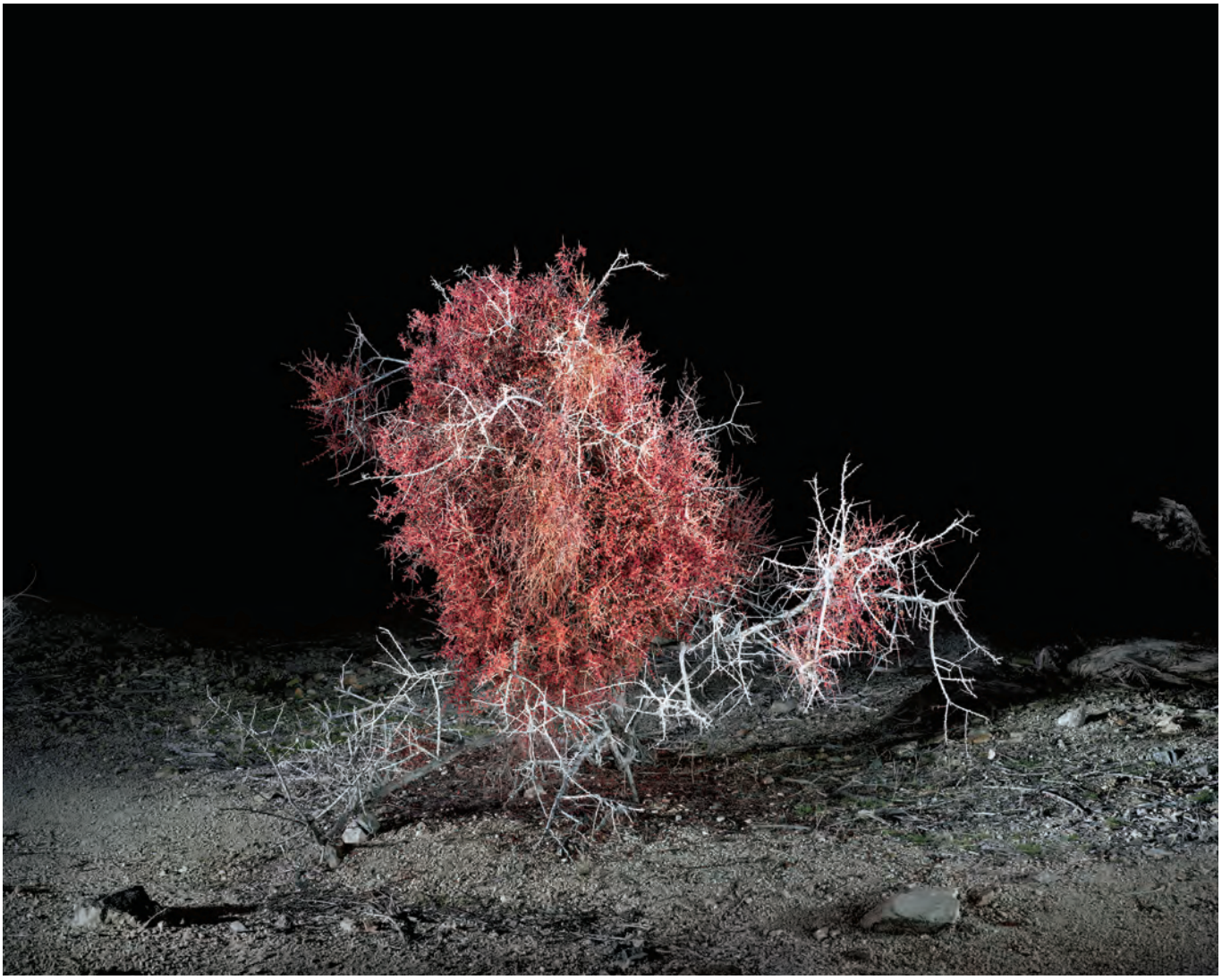
RYAN: Okay. Yes, I know the difference in skin tone.



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HEATHER GAUDIO FINE ART, NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

Blue Isabelle *and* I Stop, I Look, *mixed-media artworks by Sarah Amos, whose work will be on view in March at Heather Gaudio Fine Art, in New Canaan, Connecticut.*

SCHULZ: Are you able to identify individuals by their skin color?
RYAN: What do you mean identify?
SCHULZ: I mean that have you ever looked at Tracy Evans in your entire life? Have you? That's a genuine question.
RYAN: Yes.
SCHULZ: And did you ever realize that Tracy's skin color is black?
RYAN: Is his skin different from mine? Yes.
SCHULZ: How?
RYAN: What do you mean how? It's a different color.
SCHULZ: Correct. And what is the difference of that color?
RYAN: It's darker.
SCHULZ: And that means?
PATRICK EDSENGA: Objection. Vague question.
SCHULZ: This could be a one-sentence answer, you know. I guess your testimony is you have no idea if Tracy is a minority, if he's African-American?
RYAN: I don't know Tracy's lineage, so I can't speculate on whether he's—if he's from Africa or not.
SCHULZ: What do you mean lineage, from Africa?
RYAN: I mean I don't know his DNA.
SCHULZ: Have you ever met black people who aren't from Africa?
RYAN: Excuse me?
SCHULZ: Have you ever met a black person born in America?
RYAN: Yes.
SCHULZ: Have you ever met a black person who didn't tell you they were black?
RYAN: Can you rephrase that?
SCHULZ: Is Barack Obama black?
EDSENGA: Objection.
SCHULZ: To your knowledge?
RYAN: I've never met Barack Obama, so I don't—
SCHULZ: So you don't know if Barack Obama is black? What about Michael Jordan? Do you know if Michael Jordan is black?
EDSENGA: Objection.
RYAN: I've never met him.
SCHULZ: So you don't know? What about Kwame Kilpatrick?
RYAN: Never met him.
SCHULZ: To your knowledge, was Kwame Kilpatrick black?
RYAN: I—
SCHULZ: You don't know?
RYAN: I don't know.



"Thief of the Tree," a photograph by Michael Lundgren, whose monograph Geomancy *was published in September by Stanley/Barker.*

[Reflection]

FREE BIRD

By Sierra Crane Murdoch, from Yellow Bird, *published this month by Random House. The book investigates a disappearance on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota and explores how the Yellow Bird family has dealt with the trauma of colonialization.*

At times in her life, Lissa Yellow Bird had felt proud of her relatives' successes and their piety. But now, suddenly, she found herself resenting it all. The rosary beads. The university titles. The fancy words used to describe the Indian Condition. These seemed to her like props in a performance meant to trick an audience into believing everything was okay. But everything was not okay. What was wrong with plain suffering, with showing the world how much you hurt? This, Lissa decided, was why she had drawn so close to her uncle Chucky. While others hid their shame under glossy exteriors, Chucky had not tried to hide his anymore. Chucky had suffered in the open.

In the final year of his life, his slip toward death had become more determined. He had begun to pass out standing up. Lissa saw him in this state only a few times, but her relatives told her it happened often. Some no longer seemed to notice when Chucky fell, numbed by the regularity of his drinking.

The last time it happened, Lissa had been in Fargo. Her relatives told her their versions

of the story—how Chucky had been drinking when an acquaintance pushed him out of a car not far from his mother's house. His sisters Madeleine and Irene had gone out, and when they returned to the house, they found Chucky inside, still drunk. He lunged at Irene, pulling on her perm, as Madeleine yelled for him to stop. He spent that night in a mental-health clinic in Minot, where Lissa reached him by phone.

"I pulled your mom's wig out," he said.

"I heard," Lissa said. "That's fucked up, Uncle, but kind of funny."

Chucky did not remember the fight.

"Come down here to Fargo," Lissa said.

"No, you're sober. I don't want to do that to you."

"I tell you what, they opened a wet house here," she said—a place where he could drink but still have shelter. "Let's get you a room. That way we know you're safe. It's too cold for you to be just running around anyway."

"All right."

"Seriously, Uncle. If you want to die, go ahead. You're grown. You said that before, and that's your decision, but I just want to be there with you."

Chucky did not call Lissa when he arrived in Fargo. She heard he was there from an aunt.

Finally, Chucky called her from a hotel bar. He would not tell her which hotel.

"I'm drinking," he said. "I don't want you to come over here."

"I'll come sit with you," said Lissa.

"You're on probation."

"Fuck probation. I want to know where you're at," she said, but still Chucky refused.

After he left the bar, he called Lissa again from his hotel room. She pleaded with him to tell her where he was, but he would not. He told her he would die that night, so Lissa borrowed a phone and kept her uncle on one line while she dialed relatives on the other. It was late; no one answered.

At five in the morning, her phone shut off.

She had made Chucky promise to call her again, to meet her for breakfast, but he did not call. Just after eleven o'clock, Lissa received a call from a relative she had tried to contact the previous night. Chucky had been found in his hotel room.

Two days after her uncle's body had been returned to the reservation, Lissa went by the hotel where her relative said Chucky had died. She stood at the door, thinking of her uncle's body. She had been told that the belt left no marks. The ceiling was low, so he had landed on a knee, kneeling as if before a woman, or God, his arms lifted slightly and stiffened by his side. It was an odd pose, but it made sense to her, as if Chucky had at last confronted the spirit that possessed him. She hoped he had. She hoped he had broken free of it.

Now two years had passed since Chucky had died, and still Lissa recalled the night before his death so clearly that it was as if she had lived it not just once.

She often thought of what her uncle had said to her that night. He had said a lot of things, but one thing he kept coming back to. He had been reading about human DNA, about the way our family histories are imprinted on our nucleotides. He said that our bodies remember. Some scientists believed that our genes could be turned on or off by the things our ancestors had seen or done or the things we ourselves had seen or done, so it was possible that

[Taxonomy]

SMOTE LIKE A BUTTERFLY

From names of military drones used by countries around the world, as compiled in The Drone Databook, *by Dan Gettinger, published last year by the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College.*

Reaper
Stalker
Scout
Desert Hawk
Global Hawk
MicroFalcon
Raven
Skylark
Sparrow
Cardinal
Phoenix
Harpy
Tucan
Penguin
Stingray
Tiger Shark
Blowfish
Black Hornet
Wasp
Mosquito
Gnat
Improved Gnat

our fates were decided by former lives and that our lives, in turn, decided the fates of our grandchildren.

Imagine that, Chucky had said. No such thing as innocence at birth. Violence, like milk, passed from grandmother to mother to son.

Imagine that. Imagine how impossible it is to stop something like that.

[Diary]

SPIT TAKE

By Ludvík Vaculík, from A Czech Dreambook, *published last month by Karolinum. Vaculík, a Czech dissident, was the author of "Two Thousand Words," a June 1968 manifesto that called for the democratization of Communist Czechoslovakia. It was cited by the Soviet Union as a pretext for its invasion of the country. A decade later, Vaculík began* A Czech Dreambook *as a diary, but soon incorporated fiction and accounts of his dreams. It was published in Czech in 1981. Translated by Gerald Turner.*

TUESDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY 1979

Today I resumed dealings with the dentist after a two-year break. I had bumped into him before Christmas. "I have a bottle at home for you," I said, "and it won't be a bribe, because I haven't needed you once this year." He replied: "Then it will be a normal fee, as in ancient China. There they used to pay the doctor when he wasn't needed." Mind you, there is always someone from our family visiting Dr. Kurka throughout the year.

He ordered me to climb onto the horizontal chair and pumped it in such a way that my feet ended up almost higher than my head. He gave everything a good poke and asked me when we would finally take out those three dead incisors at the bottom, which were already wobbly anyway. And at the top left it was perfect for a bridge: we'll do an X-ray. I reminded him that we had already X-rayed it. But, Mrs. Krumphanzlová read from the card, that was two years ago. I said that nothing was hurting me and I had come for the sake of good relations. Dr. Kurka scraped away at something or other of mine and said to the assistant: "Get me a temporary dressing ready." Then he said: "Rinse." But as I had my feet higher than my head, this was impossible. First he had to lower me to a more suitable position. "There you are," he said. "That's what happens when patients have to rinse out for themselves." I expressed surprise that someone else was supposed to rinse out my mouth for me. The nurse said: "It's supposed to be the assistant's job." Dr. Kurka said: "What's supposed to happen is this—" crossing round the back of my head and standing on my left. "The assistant is supposed to stand here, and here, as you can see, is a sort of hose. While I'm working in the patient's mouth, the assistant is supposed to suck it all out straight away. It has quite some suction." He pushed a button and the hose started to hiss. "And when the patient needs to spit, a funnel is pushed into the end of the hose and he spits into that. But we are unable to achieve that standard here, as the personnel is lazy." "And it's the same all over," the assistant said. We went to do the X-ray.

In 1969, I received a summons over the "Ten Points" manifesto and was expecting to go to court. I was terrified at the thought of all my teeth starting to ache in the cold concrete surroundings. The dentist we had before Dr. Kurka was not very well known to me. When he read my record card he asked: "Are you that Vaculík?"

"Yes."

He gazed at me for a moment and then said: "Forgive me, I know it's not the time or place, but such things interest me. How old were you when you joined the party?"

"Twenty."

"Open wide. So, from the age of twenty you worked for us to have the Russians here today. Now let's have a look at you and make sure we deliver you to your jailers in good shape."

[Fiction]

HERE AND THERE

By Colum McCann, from Apeirogon, *published this month by Random House. The book is a fictionalized account of the lives of Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian, and Rami Elhanan, an Israeli. Aramin's ten-year-old daughter, Abir, was killed by an Israeli soldier, and Elhanan's thirteen-year-old daughter, Smadar, was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber.*

When they slid Smadar out on the metal tray, Rami noticed her grandfather's watch on her wrist: it was still running.

After Smadar was born, her grandfather Matti Peled sat with her in the garden and taught her English and Arabic both. The General liked the role of grandfather. It softened something in him. He brought her to meetings of community boards, activists, human-rights groups. Until she was eight, he carried her around on his shoulders.

They worked on their cars together, Rami and his father-in-law. Peled was tall, taciturn, silver-haired. He talked more when he leaned over an engine block: it was as if he found it easier to address something ordered and logical.

He fumbled around under the hood. His fingers were thick and clumsy. He cursed as he unscrewed the carburetor.

Peled said to Rami that he was not one to suffer fools gladly, least of all himself.

He had been an architect of the Six-Day War. Lightning strikes. Bombing raids. The aura of surprise. He had become a general, revered all over the country—one of the original Jewish idealists: socialist, Zionist, democratic, but after '68 he grew almost immediately wary of the Occupation. It jeopardized, he said, the moral weight of the cause. It took away from the sense that Israel was a guiding global light. He went to meetings at the Knesset wearing a pin showcasing a Star of David alongside a Palestinian flag. He was no Lamed Vavnik, he did not want to carry the sorrows of his country. He had fought for Israel, he said, from '48 onward, and he knew a thing or two about military might. Holding on to the Territories was a mistake, contrary to a secure Jewish democracy. They needed to disengage. Get out.

Rami enjoyed the diatribes: there was something maverick about them. He sat on the bumper and listened while Peled tinkered with the engine.

Peled raised himself up and banged his head on the open hood.

—Go ahead, Peled told Rami, crank the engine.

Matti Peled died of natural causes eighteen months before his granddaughter was killed. It was the only thing, in either death, that Rami and his wife, Nurit, were thankful for.

On Peled's seventieth birthday—in a green Jerusalem garden—Smadar was videotaped in a light purple flowered dress and white headband reading a toast to her grandfather.

—*L'chaim, l'chaim,* she says in Hebrew, brushing back a strand of hair from her neck.

Then, in Arabic, she says, *Ahlan wa sahlan,* glancing up at the camera with an impish grin. Her front teeth are prominent, her eyes pellucid.

—Grandpa, she says, Nine years you have raised me, fourteen years Guy, sixteen years Elik, and ten months Yigal. You have raised all of us with warmth and love.

She then smiles again.

—You have taught us all chess, except for Yigal! Thanks to you, we know more about politics, about Israel, and about all the wars you fought. I am proud of you that you struggle for peace, she says. And that you are the leader, I think.

Here, in the video, the listeners, including Peled, erupt in laughter. The *I think* hangs in the air as Smadar plays with her hair and smiles.

—I am proud of you that you write in the

[Survey]

FEAR FACTORS

From the 2018 Chapman University Survey of American Fears. The list is included in Fear Itself, *by Christopher D. Bader, Joseph O. Baker, L. Edward Day, and Ann Gordon, published this month by NYU Press. Each phenomenon below is followed by the percentage of people who said it made them afraid or very afraid.*

Sexual harassment in the workplace	7.5
Whites no longer being the U.S. majority	9.4
Sharing a restroom with a transgender person	9.5
Extreme animal-rights activists	11.3
Extreme environmentalists	16.4
Being fooled by fake news	17.5
Unfamiliar technology	17.8
Antifa	20.7
Illegal immigration	21.5
Police brutality	26.6
Computers replacing people in the workforce	30.7
Government use of drones in the U.S.	32.3
Government restrictions on firearms	37.8
Random mass shootings	41.5
Extreme anti-immigration groups	41.6
Government tracking of personal data	46
Corporate tracking of personal data	46.3
White supremacists	49.3
Islamic extremists	49.3
U.S. involvement in another world war	51.6
High medical bills	52.9
Global warming and climate change	53.2
Corrupt government officials	73.6

newspapers. You were always handsome. And don't say you were not, because I saw pictures!

She tucks her hair behind her ears again, before Peled leans down to kiss her cheek.

—Till you are one hundred and twenty years old. From Guy, me, Yigal, and Elik.

Smadar and her grandfather were buried side by side under a grove of knotted carob trees. The wall along the back side of the graveyard was made of limestone but had been reinforced with steel rebar, some of which was hollow. Gliding over the wall, the wind echoed as it caught in the lips of steel.

After the death of Matti Peled, Smadar got in the habit of winding his watch at bedtime. She didn't want it to stop while she was asleep, lest it signal that her other grandfather, Yitzak, had died during the night too.

Once she climbed into the pool still wearing the timepiece on her wrist. The second hand froze. She insisted that Rami take her to a jewelry store to get it fixed. He bundled her in the car to the house of a clockmaker, an elderly Armenian woman who lived in the Mea Shearim district.

Rami had heard about the Jewish woman from a colleague in the advertising industry.

While the clockmaker dried out the inside of the watch, Smadar walked around the house among the hundreds of working clocks.

Before they left, she nudged up against Rami and tugged his sleeve. Why, she asked, were all the clocks in the back rooms of the house exactly one hour off?

It bothered Rami, too, until he remembered that there was a one-hour time difference between Israel and Armenia.

Perhaps, he told her, the clockmaker wanted to dwell in her original time. Or maybe the clocks just reminded her of her homeland. Or maybe—he thought later—the clockmaker didn't want to dwell in that time at all, and she was, in the back of her house, always an hour ahead, so that the things that had happened there might not yet have happened here.

Peled had worn the Timex all through the '48 war, his days in the Knesset, the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the agreement with Sadat, the withdrawal from Sinai, the invasion of Lebanon, and the First Intifada. The timepiece was a talisman of sorts. In his personal diary, in the summer of 1994, he wrote that the only time he had not wanted to wear it or consult it at all was at the conclusion of the Oslo negotiations.

The agreement, he wrote, was like a piece of chamber music disguised as a symphony, a temporary salve for the Palestinian ear but designed, in the end, only for the Israeli violin.

After he left the morgue, Rami had to go to his father's house to tell him what had happened to Smadar. His father was in the small living room, watching the news. Yitzak did not yet know: none of the names of the dead had been announced.

Rami switched off the television, pulled a chair close. His father, almost eighty years old—a thin blanket across his knees—stared at a point beyond Rami's shoulder. He moved his mouth but didn't say a word. It was as if he needed to figure out what new taste this might be.

Yitzak put his hand to the bridge of his nose, then rose slowly and said: I'm awfully tired, son, I have to go to bed now.

As if things that had happened there might not yet have happened here.

[Poem]

FARTHER AWAY

By Srikanth Reddy, from his prose poem, Underworld Lit, *which will be published in August by Wave Books.*

Though my catalog search under "postpartum depression" turns up everything from Euripides' *Medea* to the historical archives of Salem Village Church to the latest report in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, I cannot, for the life of me, find any good books about sad dads. In the weeks and months after Mira's birth, my wife would occasionally observe that I seemed rather more distant than usual. She was right, but not in the way she supposed. It wasn't only other people. All manner of things seemed farther away from me—flowers, fire, the day after tomorrow. There must be a word in some other language for this dim sense of misplacement. "Sadness" is darkness in motion. "Depression" is darkness at rest. I felt neither here nor there, like a passenger quietly seated on a departing ferry who studies each fleck and flaw in the window's glass, without looking through it, for the duration of the crossing.

Stages of Life and Death within the Landscape and Still Life, *a painting by Mimi Lauter, whose work will be on view in March at Blum & Poe, in New York City.*