

# Utopian Megapraxis



*Issue 1: (UU)ater*

The Utopian Universal Series is an investigation into the many fundamental, uncompromisable priorities required for the sustained planetary, plant, animal, and human life within any global Utopian movement. These 'books' are speculative living documents which do not pretend to offer closed or complete answers, instead aiming to pose formal, visual, textual, and conceptual questions.

Cover design by Kyle Mace.



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# Ogallala

J. Eric Simpson



I.

It's summer. Early morning. Still dark. I'm heading due north on a long stretch of highway going 75 mile an hour. Lubbock Texas, or what little is visible in the dark, is in the rearview mirror (as the song notoriously goes). The landscape is flat here on the Llano Estacado. Even in the dark you can sense this- no trees, no mountains, no rivers- all horizon.

Thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of blinking white lights make up the black void of the horizon. On. Off. On. On. On. Off. On. Off. Off. On. On they go. The patternless Morse code offers some sense of scale in an infinite landscape. 360 degrees, horizon to horizon to horizon. On. Off. On. Off. A collective heartbeat blinking against the blackness of the early morning.

The pulse of lights indicate working center pivot irrigation systems. Each beacon mounted to the center of the circling pivot pumps hundreds of gallons of water a minute up to the surface from deep in the earth. The water is then moved through large aluminum spines, each with hoses that drop like ribs down to thirsty crops of cotton, corn, and sorghum below. The machinery lurches in giant

circles across fields and can release millions of gallons of water every day. From the sky, a great tapestry of circles and squares is formed by these aluminum leviathans and their water ways. One of man's most impressive non-art, art works (as a friend once noted)- a global tapestry of terraformed land turned factory that can only truly be grasped from the sky. Two hours to go.

The Llano Estacado - roughly the size of the state of Indiana - is a giant uplift of rock, an immense plateau, mesa, or identified most accurately by local historian Dan Flores as a "tableland". It encompasses most of the Texas panhandle and was once a sea of short grass prairie and shrub with few (if any at all) geographical markers for points of reference. Humans have lived and traveled on the tableland for at least 12,000 years. I once made a line graph of this human history where 1 inch of the graph equaled 100 years. The total length of the graph is 120 inches or 10 feet long. Of those 120 inches, 118.5 (9.875 feet) are dedicated to humans who hunted and gathered. These people were the quasi-nomadic Clovis, Firstview, Plainview, Teya, Apache, Kiowa, Comanche (and many others) who followed animals for hunting. The animals they hunted led them to water. And with knowledge of where to find water (which is scarce) these tribes would intentionally drop seed and return the following season to find "wild" crops growing of which they would harvest and forage.

Agriculture (as we know it) on the other hand represents 1.5 inches graph, a mere 150 of the 12,000 years represented (less than a percent), and is made up entirely of a post-indigenous occupation of the land. Yet, in such a short amount of time the experiment of agriculture has completely altered the ecology of Llano Estacado. By the early 1900's the buffalo had been killed off to the point of near extinction, migration patterns of Pronghorn and water fowl altered, and the hunter/gather cultures

of the Comanche, Apache, and Kiowa were abandoned and the people relocated to new lands in Oklahoma. What was left on the Llano Estacado was a tabula rasa of sorts, clear of obstacles both ecological and cultural. With little in the way, settlers were able to grid off the land for an experimental undertaking with profound implications.

## II.

On. Off. On. Off - back on the road. I arrive in Canyon Texas, just south of Amarillo at sunrise for the High Plains Water District annual board and advisors meeting. The Water District was formed in 1951 with the goal of monitoring water wells and water levels, granting drilling permits, and in a few cases creating regulation of the Ogallala aquifer (although this latter goal is rare to non-existent).

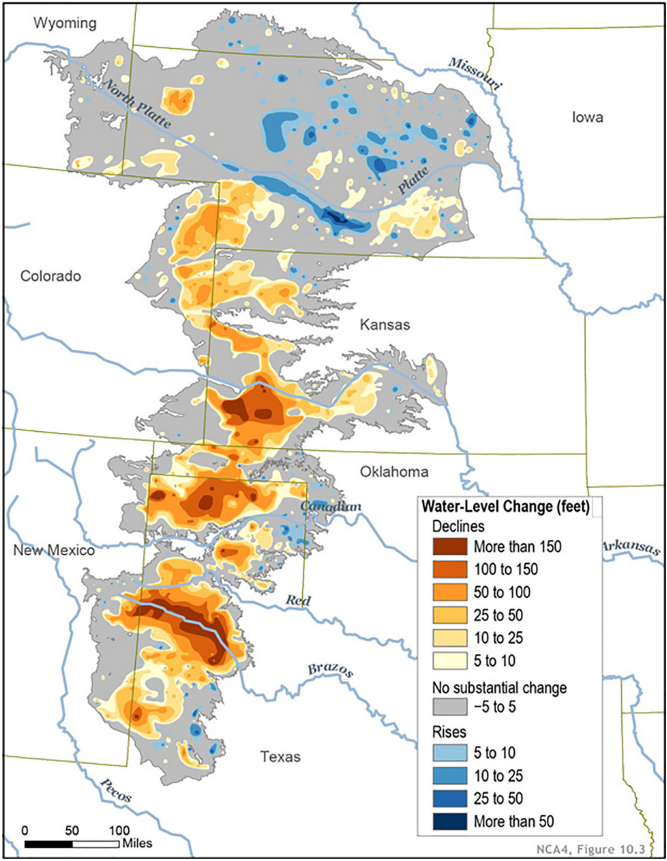
The auditorium holds about 100 of us. Five board members sit at the front behind a table reading themselves for presentations. Advisors (that's us) are given packets with the day's schedule along with small knick-knacks - pens, magnets, and unintentionally ironic rain gauges (it hasn't rained in months). Like most meetings such as these, the smell of coffee and doughnuts fill the room which indicate us to buckle in for the long haul.

'Depletion', to sum it up, was happening on a massive and rapid scale. The numbers indicated that we were pumping out more water than was being recharged. Every type of graph and chart presented to us for each of the 16 counties in District 1 showed sharp decline in water table levels. Not one district of the 16 surveyed had adequate recharge, and each day new permits were being filed for more irrigation holes to be drilled. With the continued drought at hand things would be grim. Drought begets drought we were told, and there were no signs of it letting up. Something will need to be done.

Sadly nothing will. This wasn't so much the fault of



the Water Board as it was the limits of their power. By the end of the day, the consensus of the board was to remain hands off. Most of the decision making was based on landownership laws in the State of Texas where the owner of the land is king. Ownership of land contains all that is on the land and that which is bellow it - “mineral rights”, water included. So if a farmer wants to pump, let him pump to his heart’s content. All that can be done by way of regulation is to monitor and plan for inevitable depletion. Financial incentives could be made to promote conservation, after all cash speaks, but where these incentives were to come from were in short supply. Graph after graph. On. Off. On. Off.



Things began to blur together.

Between 1880 and 1917, perspective land buyers were brought in by train to the Llano Estacado in the dark. Land boosters and profit-men, they were called, led these “nighttime” excursions because the landscape often scared away would be land-buyers, mostly midwesterners accustomed to trees, rivers, and the occasional mountain. The Llano gave no such familiarity. Openness could be both freeing and oppressive.

**THE  
BEAUTIFUL  
SOUTH PLAINS  
OF  
TEXAS**

**Opportunity**

Points the patient toiler to the gateway of

**Health, Wealth and Happiness**

☛ This company has recently acquired

**300,000 Acres**

on the beautiful South Plains of Texas, known as

**The Big Springs Ranch**

☛ This tract has been ripped up into farms of any size desired.

☛ Personally conducted Excursions are made the first and third Tuesday of every month.

☛ If you want a home or an investment, write us.

**The W. P. Soash Land Company**  
**Waterloo, Iowa**

Big Springs, Texas	Branch Offices	Chicago, Ill.
Des Moines, Iowa	Sioux Falls, S. D.	Plymouth, Ind.
St. Louis, Mo.	Lincoln, Neb.	Minneapolis, Minn.
	Madison, Wis.	

The harsh landscape wasn't the only obstacle profit-men faced however- the United States Government had surveyed the land half a century before and came back with a report that made its way into the public's conception of the region. The report, written by Stephen Long in 1820 concluded that the Llano Estacado was

“almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence.” He would go on to mark the region on his survey maps as “the Great American Desert.” And so a desert was to stay branded in the minds of would-be buyers.

To combat this, experimental “farms” were set up near newly developing town centers, often funded by the railroad companies, as a marketing scheme. Water wells were drilled into the newly discovered Ogallala aquifer and the resulting irrigated land showed the promise and ease of growing crops in a region with less than 18 inches of annual rainfall. The outcome was a success. For many, the promise of first time landownership, coupled with the prevailing mythos of Manifest Destiny, (which took deep root in the American psyche after the Civil War), and most importantly the security of a seemingly unlimited water source beneath the ground, was enough to convince would be farmers to risk their livelihoods in the Great American Desert.

Many imagined the aquifer as a large underground cavern with an infinite lake of water to be accessed. However this was not the case. Rather the Ogallala as we know it today is more of an underground system of streams that move through cracks and breaks in rock, or that saturate pockets of sand- an intricate circulatory system that connects one farmer to the next in unexpected ways. It would take less than 100 years for farmers to realize that the mysteries of the aquifer had its limits.

### III.

The Ogallala aquifer formed 10 - 12 million years ago, as sediment, melting ice, and rainfall moved eastward from the rocky mountains towards the great plains. This water/sediment mixture settled and became trapped within other layers of deposited sediment which

slowly built the fertile soils of North America's evolving grasslands. The trapped "fossil" water continued to accumulate over millions of years, fed by newly forming springs and rivers that came from the Rocky Mountains. There, they remained untouched, yet gave life to new species and created the conditions for new habitats to develop. The Ogallala quickly (in geologic time) became the largest aquifer in North America and one of the largest in the world, encompassing roughly 174,000 square miles.

Today, the Ogallala underlays eight states within the great plains region, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. The aquifer is the reason that many of these states have a functioning agriculture at all. In fact, for areas that receive less than 18 inches of annual rainfall, which include parts of eastern Oklahoma, western Colorado, and western Kansas, and perhaps most prominently, the panhandle of Texas, the Ogallala is the prop on which industrial agriculture rests. It is estimated that 95% of the aquifer pumped in these areas are used for agriculture and ranching alone.

Take for instance the water requirements for Cotton, a rather drought tolerant staple crop for the Llano Estacado region. Cotton needs roughly 18 inches of water from the time it's planted to the time it's harvested. One way to calculate the water requirements for the crop is in acre inches. An acre inch is 27,154 gallons of water. So for every acre of cotton needing 18 inches of water, you would need 488,772 gallons of water from seed to lint. There are two main sources of obtaining this water - from the sky (rain) or from the ground (aquifer). However, for the past three years (2020-2023) we have experienced major droughts throughout the region and the Southwest as a whole. Many in the area, including our family farm near Shallowater TX, have received less than 1 inch of rain during each of our growing seasons (June - August) for

these three years. The water needed to supplement a crops development must then come from the ground.

The numbers are staggering to calculate. If a farmer is to irrigate a section of cotton - that is 640 acres (or a mile by a mile long) he would need to pump 312,816,960 gallons of water to achieve a total of 18 acre inches. To further put this into context, (after all 312,816,960 gallons is an abstract amount of water) the average Texan uses around 92 gallons of water per day for household use. This includes drinking water, bathing, dishes, and even lawn work. It would therefore take the average Texan 3,400,184 days, or 9,315.5 years to use the same amount of water required to produce 640 acres of cotton. There are 1.38 million irrigated acres in the Texas Panhandle alone.



#### IV.

My dad talks about working long days laying irrigation pipe in the summer heat, and of that first gush

of Ogallala water that comes out and down the furrow. “Nothing sweeter” he’d say, “getting a drink of that first gush.” The Ogallala tastes milky sweet. Hard, mineral-laced, high in calcium and magnesium. Always a cool 51 degrees. “Rock Juice” as a friend’s kid described after his first sip. And yet, despite how refreshing it is, it leaves you wanting more. Somehow you are thirstier after drinking it- your thirst never quite quenched.

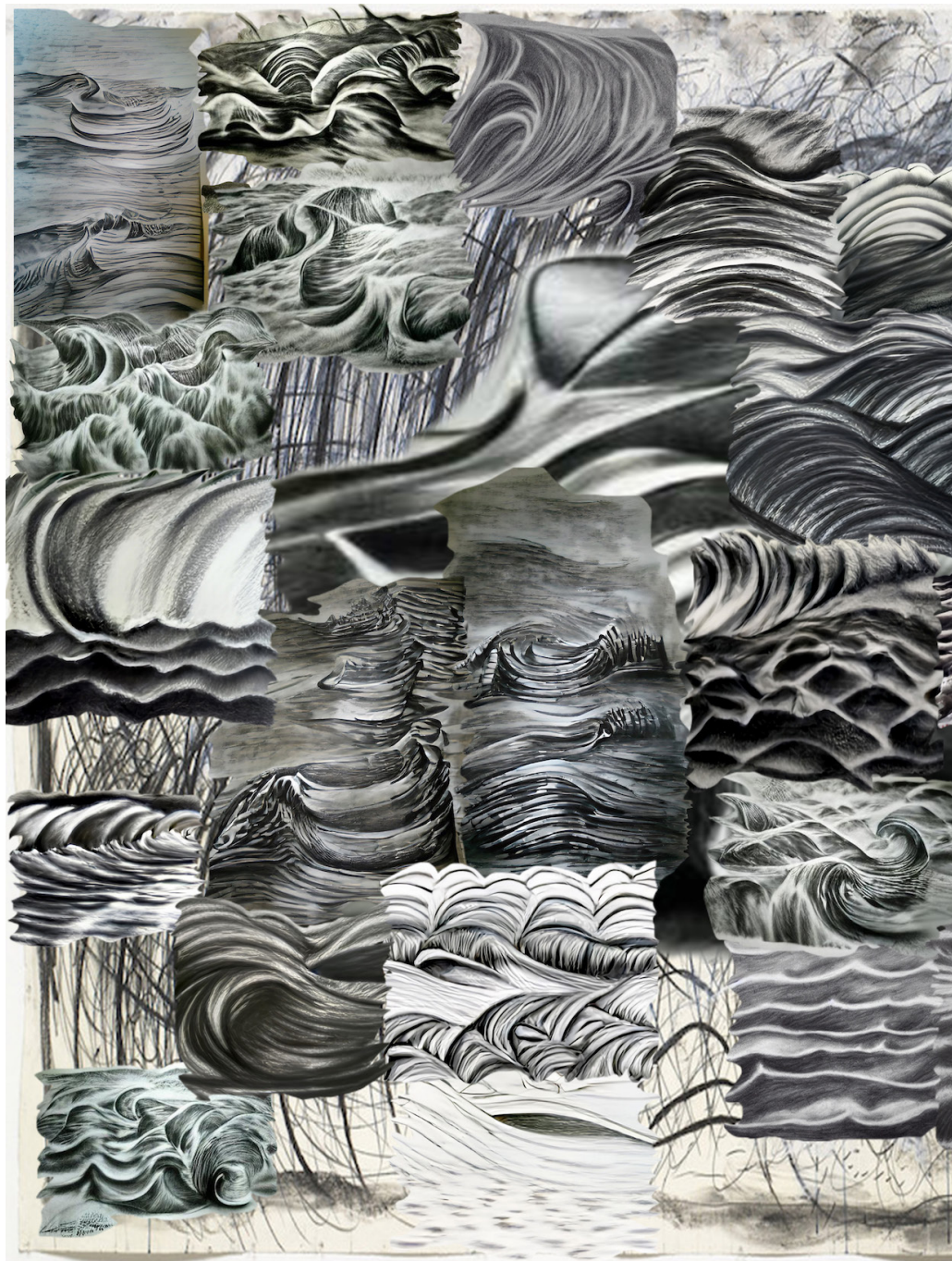


I consider this on my drive home. We are thirsty people in a thirsty land - a land never meant for our great agricultural experiment. We have depleted that which took millions of years to form, down to the point of extinction. Can “non-living” things go extinct? I think so - after all the Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa were said to have called the few natural springs that were fed by the Ogallala “living waters”. Our relentless production of crops using these living waters is impressive, if it were not so devastating. A billion dollar industry by some estimates, but what is a billion dollars even worth if you don’t have water?

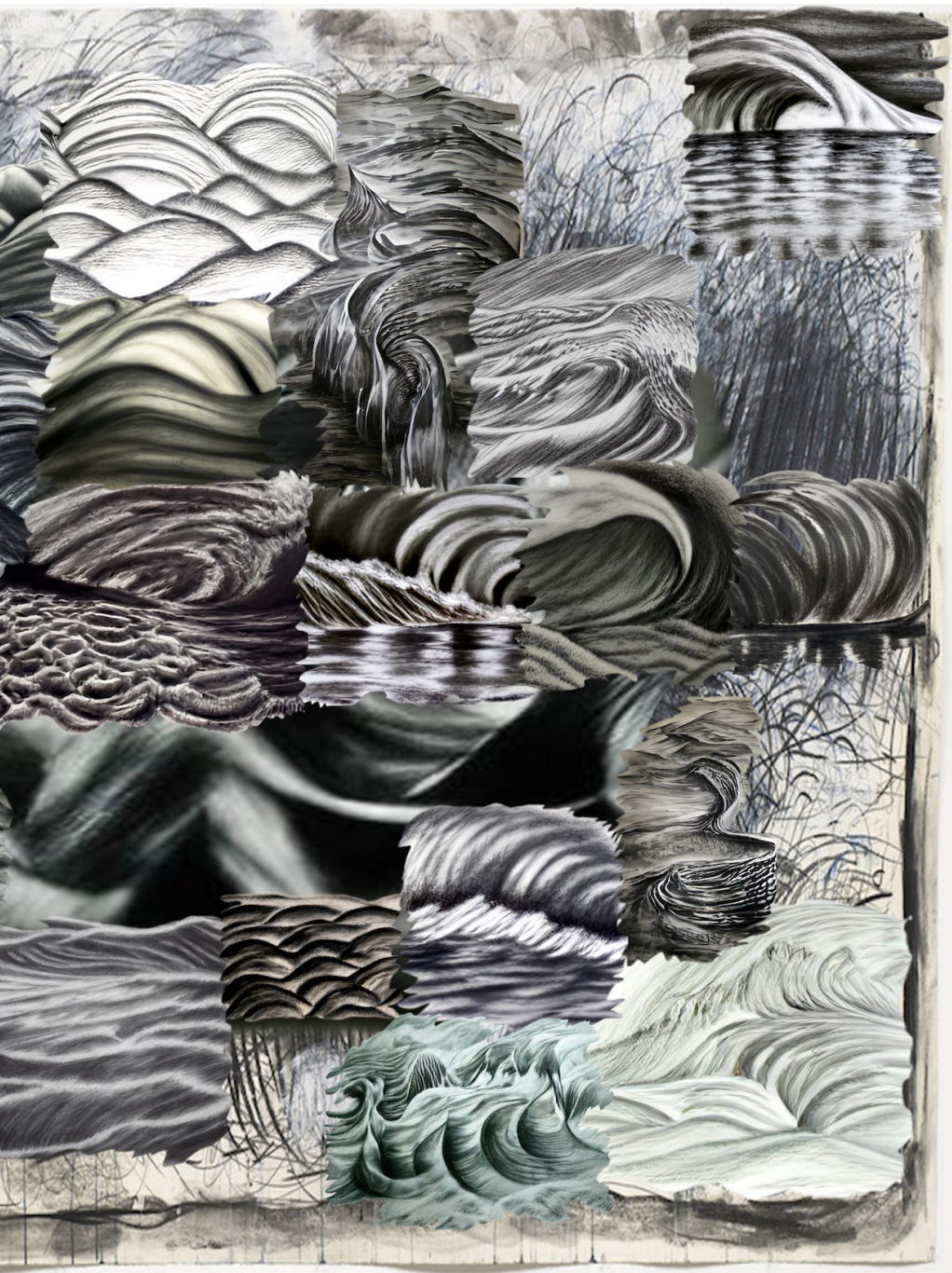
The sight of broken down pivots littered among those still pumping brings this thought into closer focus as I drive home to Lubbock with the clarity of the day. Their great aluminum spines have run aground, fast becoming bleached bones and traps for the roaming tumbleweeds who have taken the place of the mighty bison. The Ogallala won't go out all at once, I can see this now. It won't go out with a bang, but rather with a wimpier, like a slowly dying animal. Lights blinking off one by one. Will we be the last with the ancient living waters, or the first without them? Each generation is asking themselves this very question. On. Off. On. Off. Off. Off. Off...

Images in order of appearance:

- 1: Sign at the John Deere store near Lubbock TX. 2021
- 2: Ogallala depletion map by the NCA (National Climate Assessment)
- 3: Ad from Golden West Magazine (early 1900's)
- 4: James Simpson (my father) holding me as a child over irrigation line. 1991
- 5: abandoned pivot irrigation sections with the largest cotton seed processing plant in the world in the background. Outside of Lubbock TX on Interstate 27.





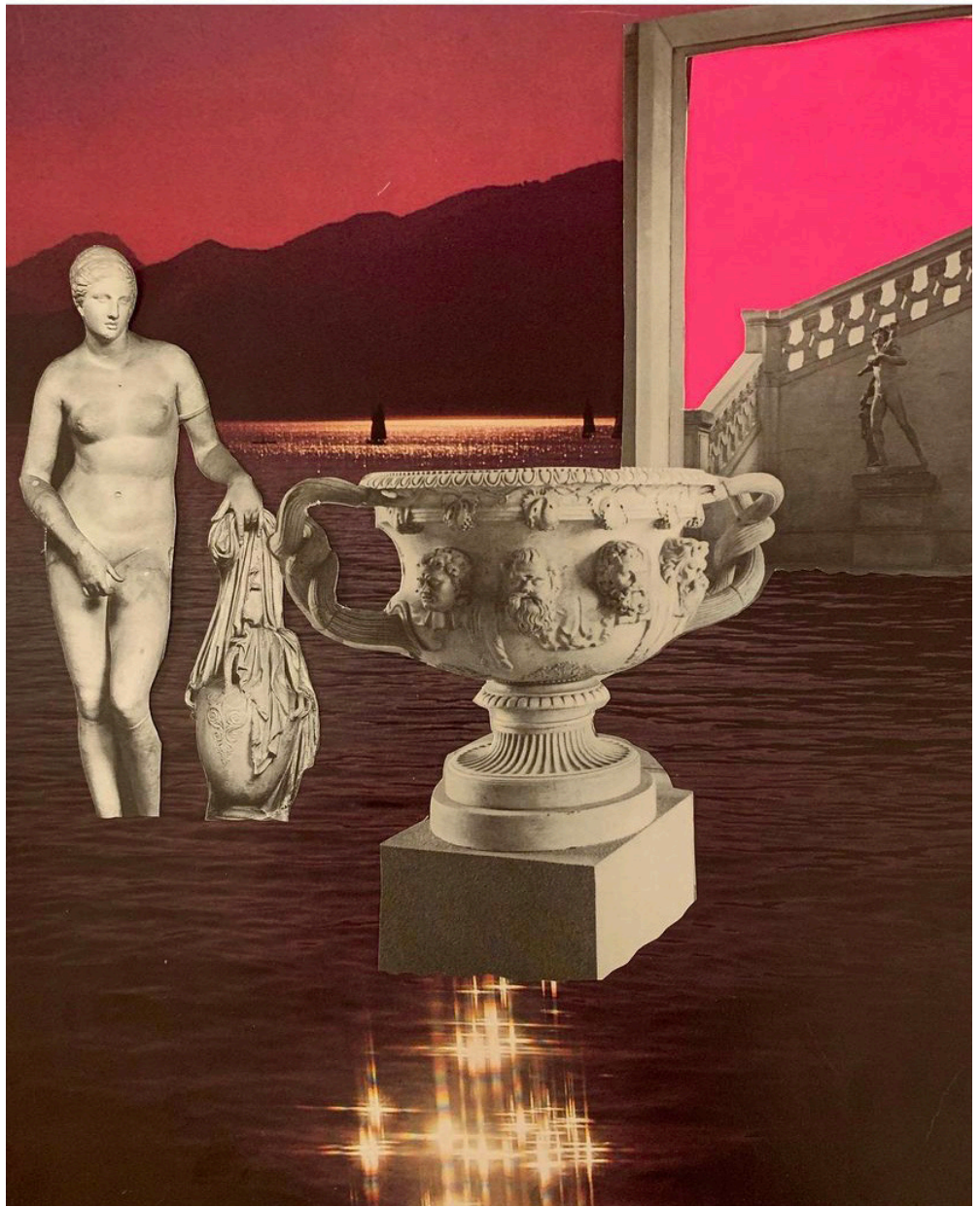


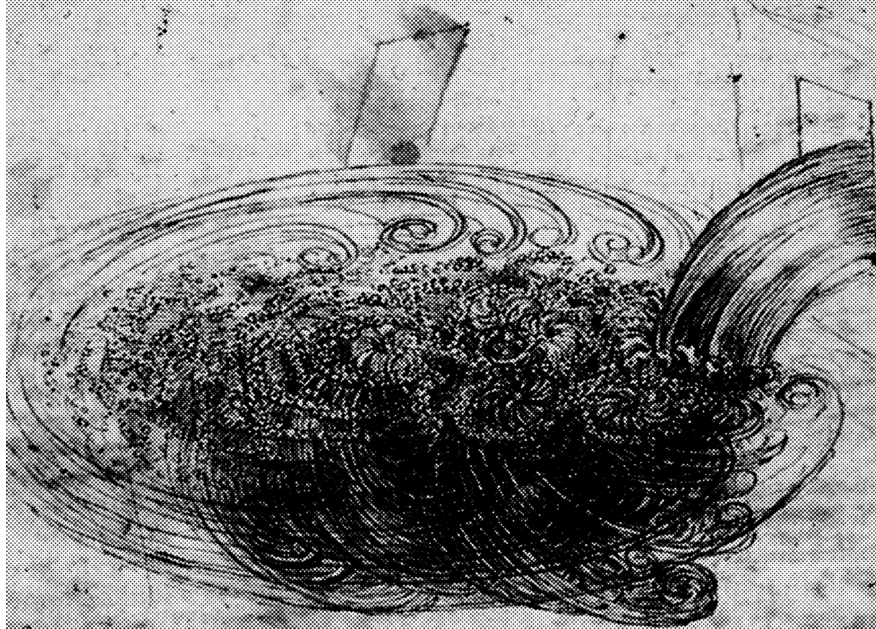
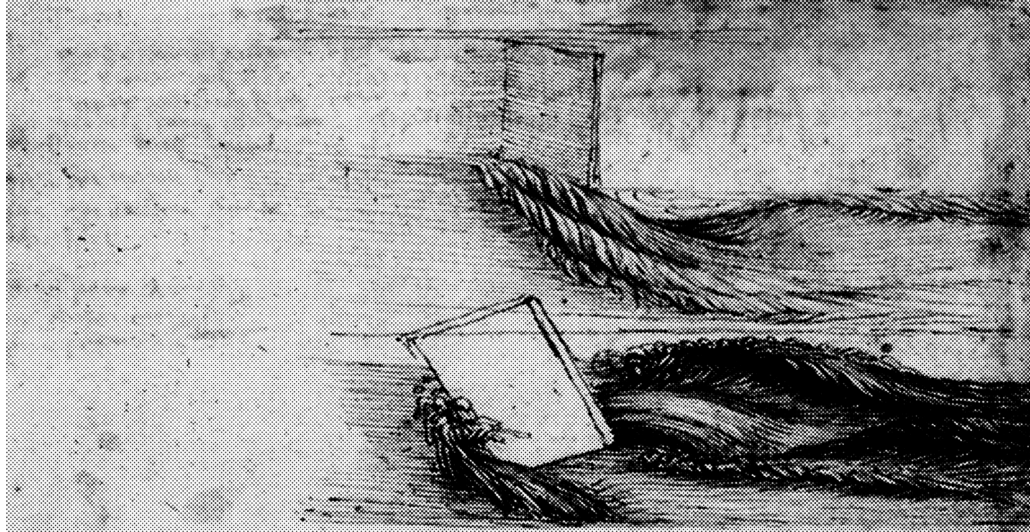


*a cyanotype of flooding after Hurricane Ian, 2022*

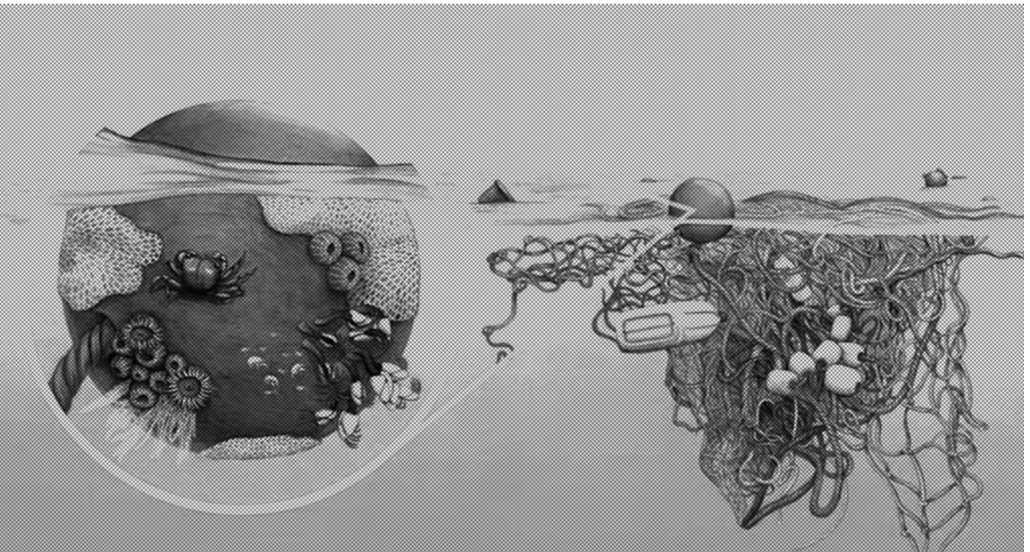
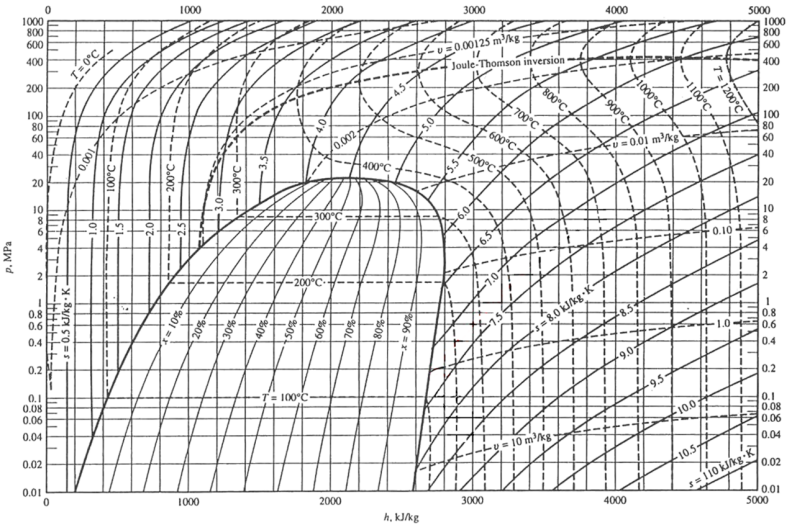


*a recording of Hurricane Ian storm sounds, 2022*





...the part of impetuous water which is between the air and the other water cannot respond for long to the said impetus on account of its weight, which deprives it of the quickness and fluency of its motion, and therefore does not go through a complete circumvolution." - Leonardo Da Vinci

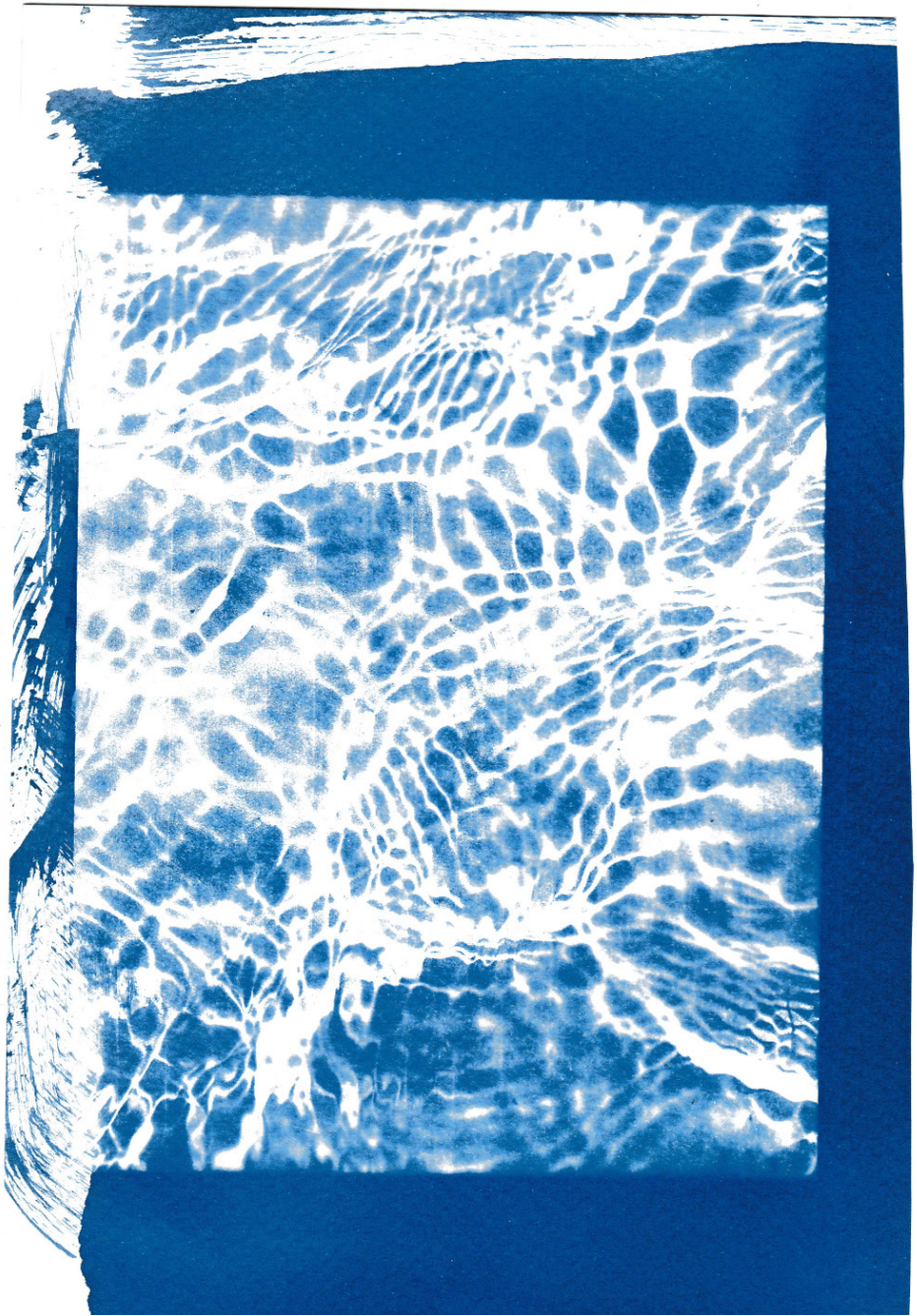


The Mollier diagram is a graphic representation of the relationship between air temperature, moisture content and enthalpy, and is a basic design tool for building engineers and designers.

Plastic trash in the middle of the ocean is becoming a new kind of island habitat. Giant patches of plastic floating in the ocean have become home to an experiment in a new hybrid ecosystem, made up of stowaway species from coastal environments and organisms that dwell in the middle of the Pacific.



they say the universe is made  
of gravitaional waves  
a pattern,  
a rhythm of ebb and flow.  
that slowly pulls  
the past of us,  
into the rip tide.  
floating from the shore line  
unsure  
when the wave will come.  
and we will  
sink below  
to meet the stars







*Adrift*

The lost man  
the boat.

The magician  
is amazing  
us - The leg-breaking  
man, my house  
buying mother.  
Very former  
senator from  
Washington.  
- with his  
magic tricks.

The birds  
the linguists  
they commented  
on the work  
of eyes and  
ears are  
very smart.

The magician  
painted the  
walls of the  
boat with  
cracks.

The sour  
drink from  
the ocean.

The boat  
floated  
down the  
river sank.



::fourth mutation::

i enter the water  
the waves rock  
what was left of  
my shipwreck

outside i drown

inside i breathe

immersed in the ocean  
i vomit the air  
i swallowed  
when i got out

here  
in its belly  
everything is seen  
clearly  
deep darkness  
is of overwhelming  
transparency

this body i inhabited  
has decomposed  
now it is part of the  
salt  
the plankton  
and of the void

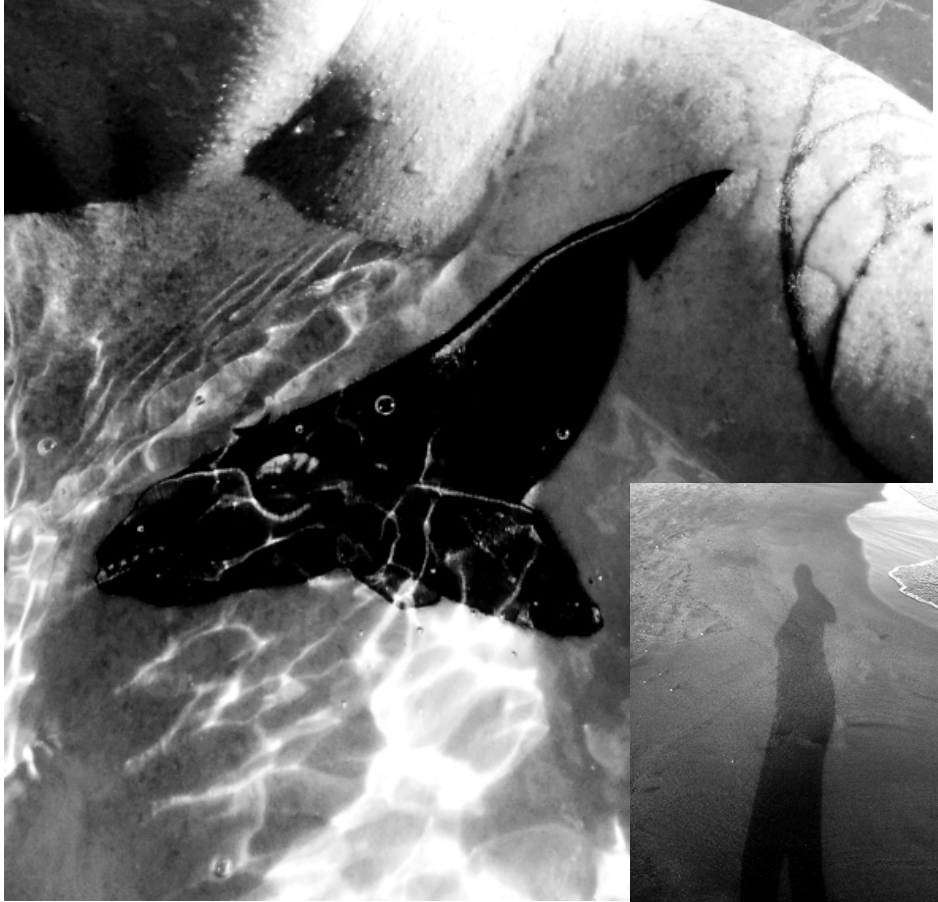
within me  
resonates  
the song of the  
cetaceans  
calling their young  
and their partners

tiny  
microscopic  
i get into their  
stomachs  
slipping through  
their baleen  
sailing across their  
immense jaws

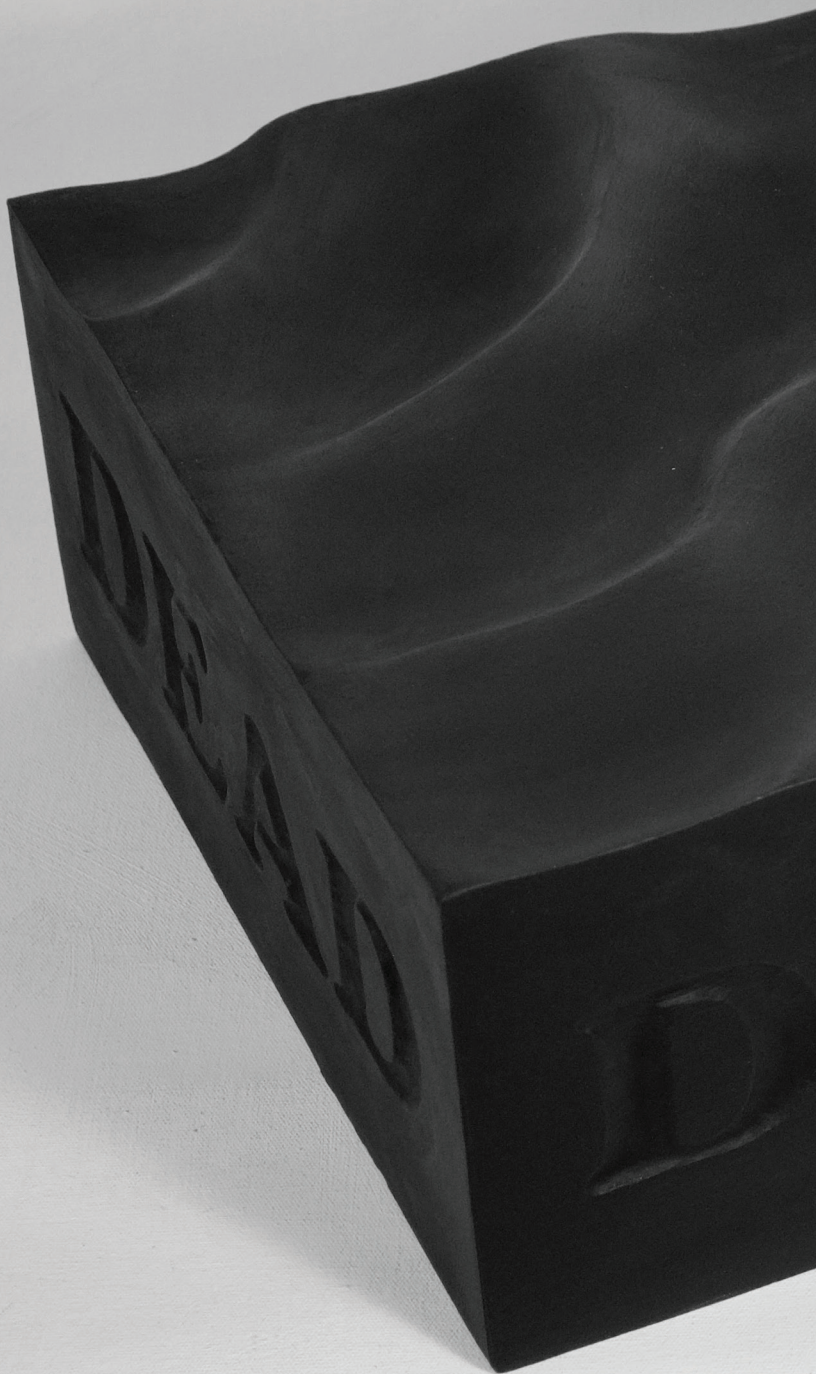
i take now  
a new form

i become flesh  
once more

flesh  
of another  
flesh



Irene Pe

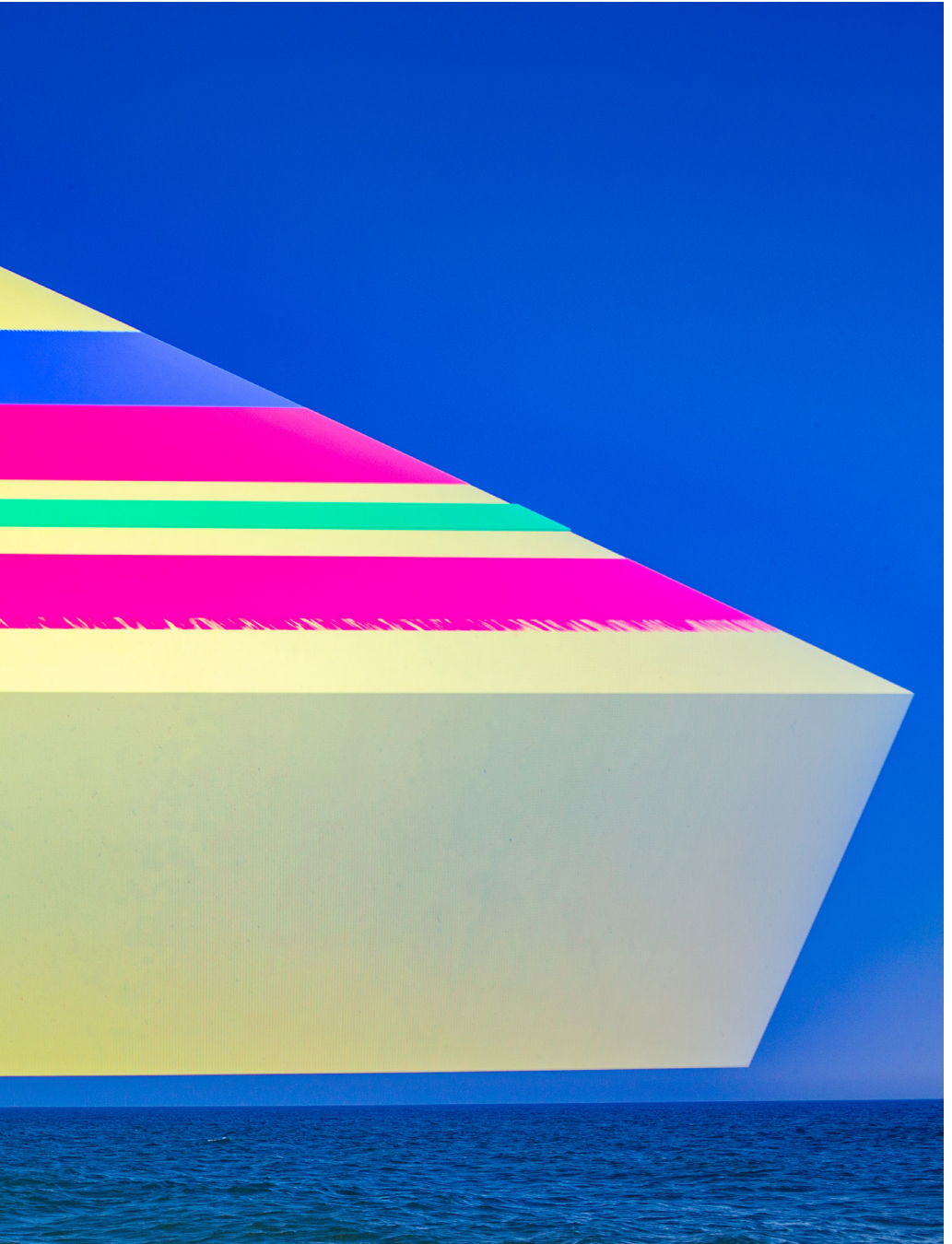




In several locations in fresh and salt water bodies, there are areas completely devoid of life. Some are permanent, others are periodic. This occurrence of the loss of oxygen in the water is becoming more common and appears across the planet. The source is thought to be a result of agricultural runoff and industrial pollution.



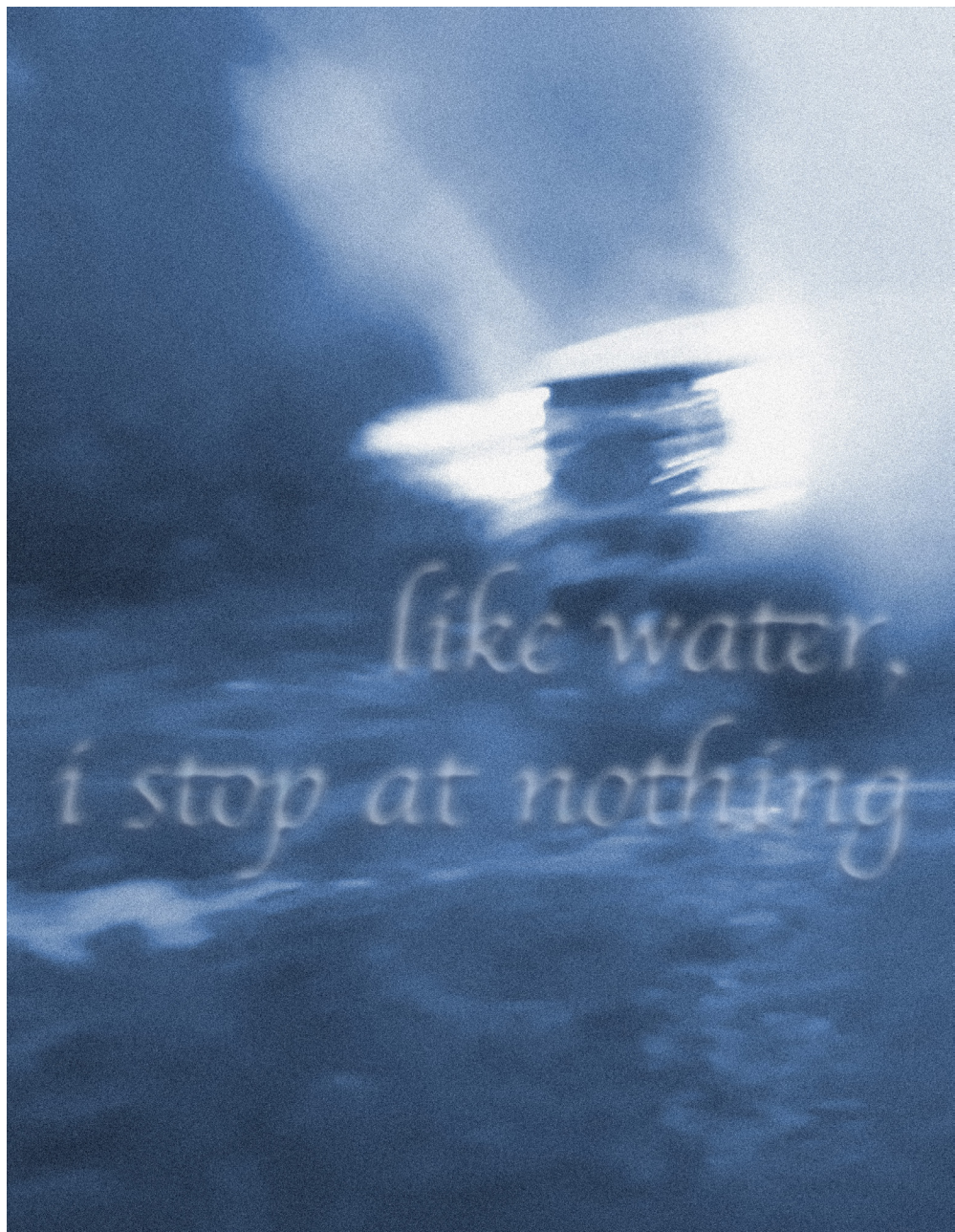




[A large rectangular multicolored object in image space, a sensor-site, leaning down, observing water, or sampling it, or ingesting it, light-sensed fluid, into a frame buffer, fluid sensed as-light,-data,-structure, possibly a hyperreal troposphere.]











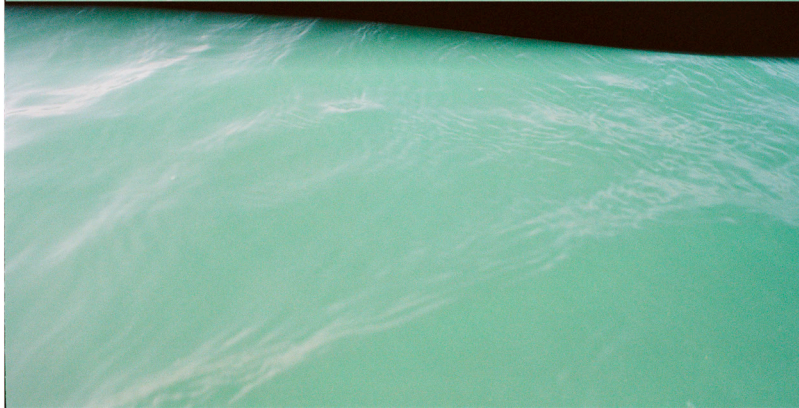
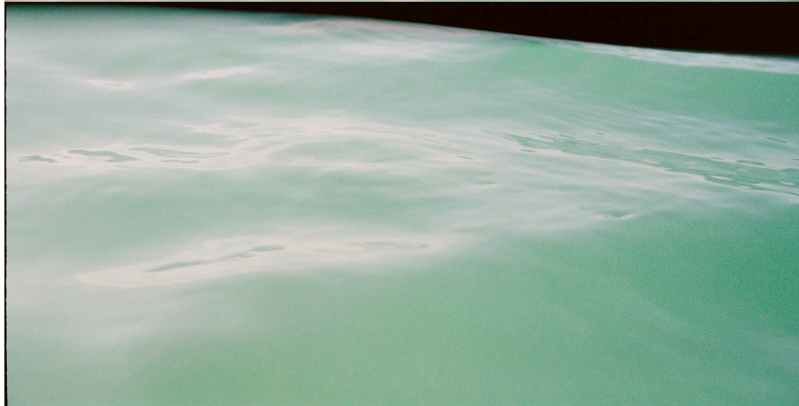


The series, *Further Out (Than We Thought)*, is loosely inspired by Stevie Smith's, *Not Waving but Drowning*, a poem about miscommunication and its dire consequences. The prints were created from digital collages, transferred to a film negative, and traditionally printed on gelatin silver paper. By using a hybrid method of analogue imagery and digital technology, I was able to work nearly limitless in scale. This series intends to serve as a reminder of the interconnectedness of modern human life and the environment, while emphasizing the current instability of one our largest and most significantly shared resources, water.



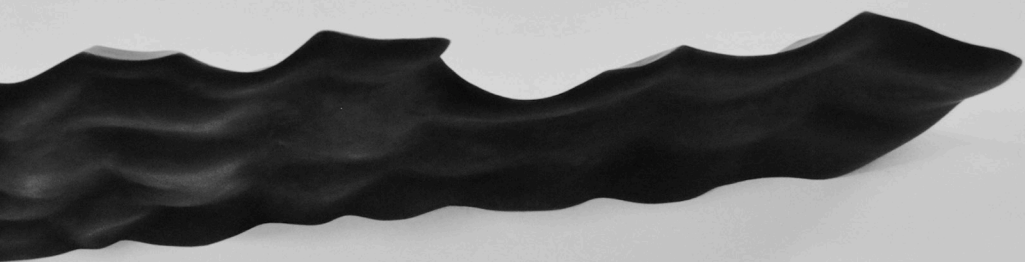






some things borderless now occur a door opens soft  
walls recede network membranes absorb digital packets  
osmotically images arrive dreamed on ferries of a  
limitless sea who are you to dream me the world full of  
holes takes on water bodies in current become currency  
tongues dream signal alters code the body learns by  
scuttling to breathe





*Proposal:* Divide the Rio Grande precisely at the middle of the water flow to insure maximum territorial control and security. Walls are solutions in current political discourse. They propose the control of the rise and use of water and the flow of immigrants. Texans (under Governor Abbot) are obsessed with river security.





*eau ~ eau ~ eau*

*(water ~ water ~ water)*

**(pronounced "O, O, O")**

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LASERPRINTCOPY

PAGE 01/03

*for maia  
on August 1  
waiting for the  
full sturgeon  
moon to rise  
maybe another  
baiku?*

*~ B. J.*

O.O.O.: Out of Office

43 Written in Astoria (on the Columbia River) and faxed to Montréal (in the St. Lawrence River)



Full moon walks with me  
 in the calm, still waters' edge  
 fall air nips my cheeks ~

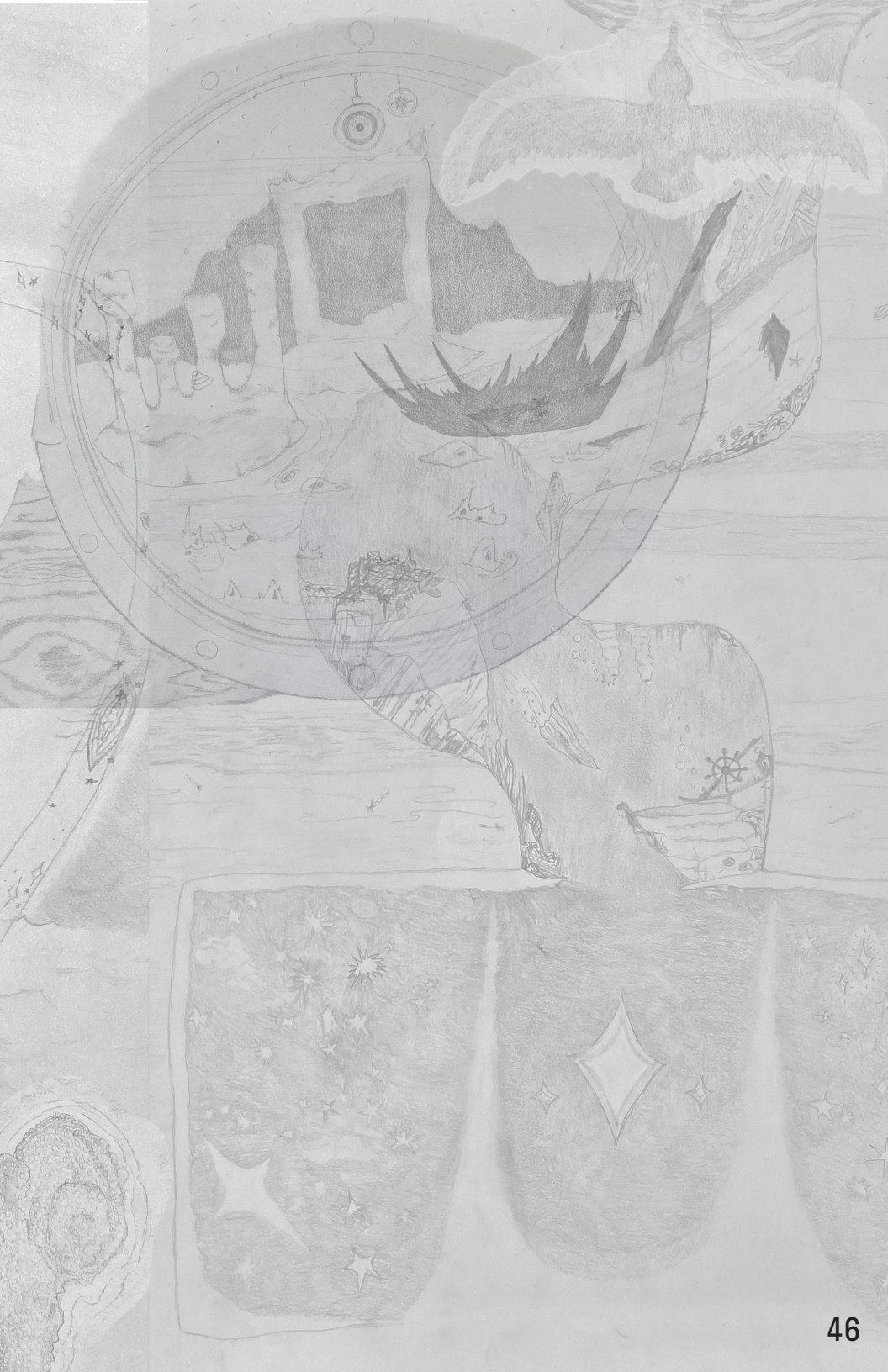
Lapping and lapping  
 the waves splash the ocean shore  
 A storm is coming ~

geese on riverbanks  
 tolerate white pelicans.  
 The summertime ebbs ~

Fog on the river  
 shiphorns sound  
 bass and tenor...  
 but no soprano?

I was talking with a friend recently about how lucky we both were, to have grown up with artistic aunts who showed us another way to be in the world. My Aunt Beth has been my lifelong penpal. Her letters are pie-slices of life in Astoria, Oregon, near the mouth of the Columbia River where it mingles with the saltwater of the Pacific Ocean. From her house, you can watch the container ships traveling up- and downriver, in constant (but very slow) flux. I asked her to send me some of her haikus about water. I was thinking about the ways that voices carry further over water, and the paths that our letters have traveled as I've moved over the years (spending my 20s in Chicago, 30s in Austin, 40s in Montreal & Tulsa). She sent me these poems on the full sturgeon moon, August first, and now it's another full moon — a blue moon, a maddening moon, a flying-up moon. Why not use one of these poems for a future O.O.O. auto-reply? Tell them you went to the water.





# Greenville Creek

The tired drive home from Cleveland  
on a hot August day, and  
I stopped at the park off of Rt. 36  
on my way through Covington.  
For the first time all year, I took off  
my shoes and socks and stepped into the creek.  
It was marvelous and cool and the  
rocks were round and slippery and  
the minnows that had been scared off by  
my intrusion eventually returned, curious.  
Some of the braver ones  
nibbled at my feet. It tickled.

The water undulated, reflected sun  
shimmered, willows swayed,  
and in those movements there was a stillness.  
So unlike the plastic stillness of monitored hospice beds  
in numbered rooms.

On the grassy bank at a  
weathered picnic table a  
mother and child.  
Downriver  
someone began to back their truck across  
the old stone railroad bridge,  
the rhythmic beeping and the  
backward motion sounded  
like an alarm clock. Call and  
response.

She used to tell me how they  
dangled their feet in the irrigation ditches,  
feeling the cold water, delightful  
after hot days in the desert valley.  
They would release the water from Ein Es Sultan and  
each night as  
the reservoir gates opened, you could hear the  
water gurgle as it ran through the  
orchard ditches, filling them,  
watering the lemon trees, the  
orange trees,  
the bananas. The  
sweet night fragrances water  
murmuring legs dangling down the  
outspread toes like roots seeking  
sweet life.  
To live again each night  
delighting in the cool the  
dark the wet.

How many stories has she not told me,  
I wondered.  
Would never tell me now.  
Yet through her words I could still  
see the moon over Jericho, even  
from where I stood  
barefoot on  
the distant banks of Greenville Creek.













RIGHT NOW I AM EVAPORATING OUT  
OF YOUR SKIN WHILE I AM  
FILTERING INTO YOUR BLADDER  
WHILE I AM TRAVELING THROUGH  
THE TREE ROOTS WHILE  
GATHERING INTO A STORM WHILE  
BEING PULLED BY THE MOON WHILE  
I AM FILLED WITH FISH, KRILL,  
WHALES, AND CREATURES YOU  
DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHILE I AM  
DESTROYING A COASTAL TOWN  
WHILE I AM AWAKENING A SEED  
WHILE BEING OFFERED AS A  
COURTESY WHILE BEING SUNG TO,  
TO MAKE ME GO AWAY WHILE BEING  
WISHED FOR WHILE BEING BOILED  
AND FROZEN AND BEING USED TO  
CUT METAL WHILE I AM FILLING UP  
LUNGS AND TAKING LIVES WHILE  
BEING ADMIRERD WHILE FALLING  
FROM THE SKIES AND FALLING  
FROM YOUR EYES WHILE I AM  
RE-INHABITING YOUR PASTA WHILE  
BEING BATHED IN BY A BIRD AND  
SLAPPED BY THE FLAT TAIL OF A  
BEAVER WHILE BEING DRAWN BY  
THE PROPERTIES OF SALT

**NO**

**POLLUTING  
ANY  
TIME**

Sea Level Rise in Corpus Christi, TX is expected to reach 4 feet by 2050  
Learn more at <https://riskfinder.climatecentral.org>.

**THIS BLOCK  
WILL BE  
UNDER  
WATER  
IN 2050**

Sea Level Rise in Corpus Christi, TX is expected to reach 4 feet by 2050.  
Learn more at <https://riskfinder.climatecentral.org>.





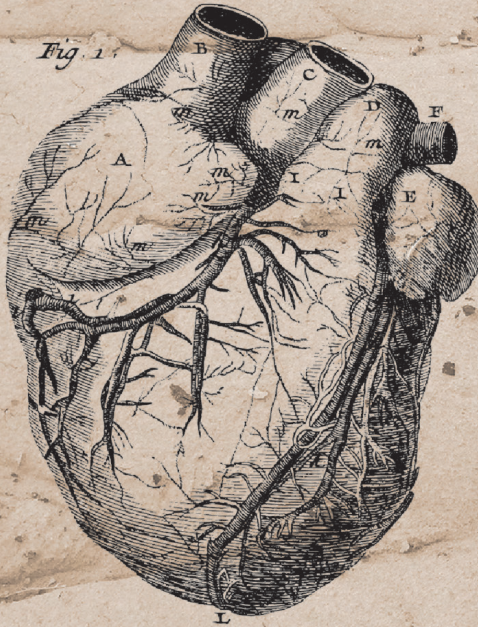


And what is no less mysterious is that this lamentable spectacle excites a lamentable and incorrigible mirth. With hands trembling and a heart gone still, the gentle waves flood and muffle all the way down to the void of its depths.





deluge.





## **1 dead, at least 38 missing after boat suspected in human smuggling capsizes off Florida coast**

The sole known survivor was rescued by a good Samaritan who spotted them clinging to the overturned vessel east of Florida, the Coast Guard said.

The moment he got on a boat, his past ceased to exist. Like rewinding a video tape with both ends of the film cut, he saw the moment when he steps on to the ground. Life and death are the big questions to be answered only when you have another option.

The boat was a place where God could see him more clearly than ever.

Moist eyes around him that were about to burst gave him a jolt of reality and a strong sense of anxiety at the same time.

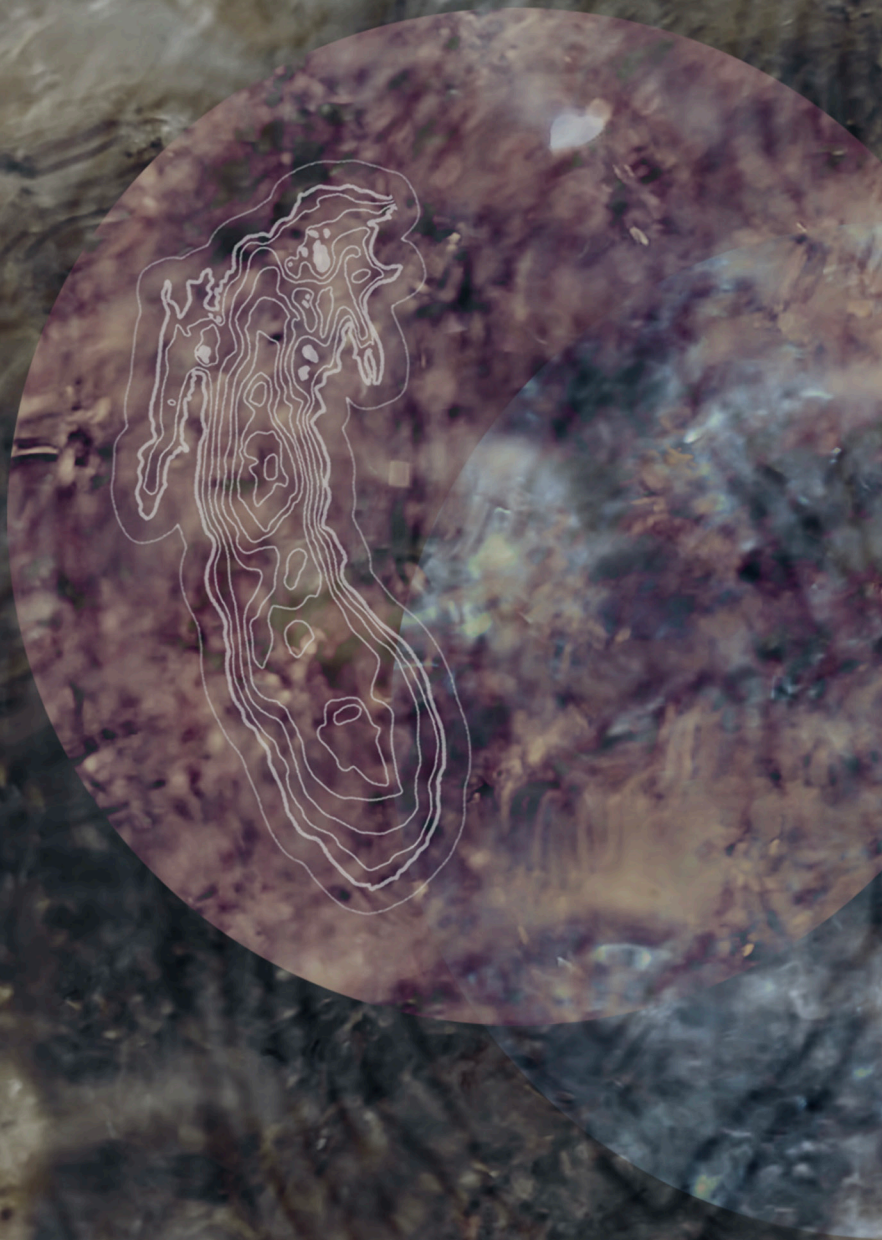
He thought the whole thing was like a game.

An hour after departure, the weather suddenly changed. The feeling of regret peeked into his mind, but the pouring rain and raging wind tossed him about and he could not think.



This small fishing boat seemed to serve only as a rain-catcher. The boat swung up and down and finally one large wave crashed up on the deck.

He barely held on to the rope connected to the mast in the center of the boat. In the seemingly never-ending storm, he held on dear life for many minutes. Gradually, everything became tranquil and he could hear the sea's sound. He looked around and found the boat had flipped over and saw the heads floating in the water. It was when all the leaking, fill-to-bursting eyes disappeared.



יַחַד הַיָּם-גִּיחִיגַמְל : 44°N 87°W : LAKE MICHIGAN



Jacklyn Brickman '23

Beaver  
Garden  
Grape  
Gull  
Hat  
High  
Hog  
Horseshoe  
Little  
Fisherman's  
North Fox  
South Fox  
North Manitowish  
South Manitowish  
Bassett  
Bellow  
Power  
Gravelly  
Gull  
Little Gull  
Little Summer  
Poverty  
Rocky  
St. Martin  
Summer  
Round  
St. Vital  
Snake  
Butlers  
Sand  
Temperance  
Waugoshance  
Le Aux Coteaux  
Epoufette  
Gravel  
Little Hog  
Nauwinway  
Green  
St. Helena  
Chambers  
Fish  
Gravel  
Spider  
Horseshoe  
the Sister  
Detroit  
Green  
Hog  
Pilot  
Plum  
Rock  
the Strawberry  
Washington  
Northernly  
Beaver  
Garden

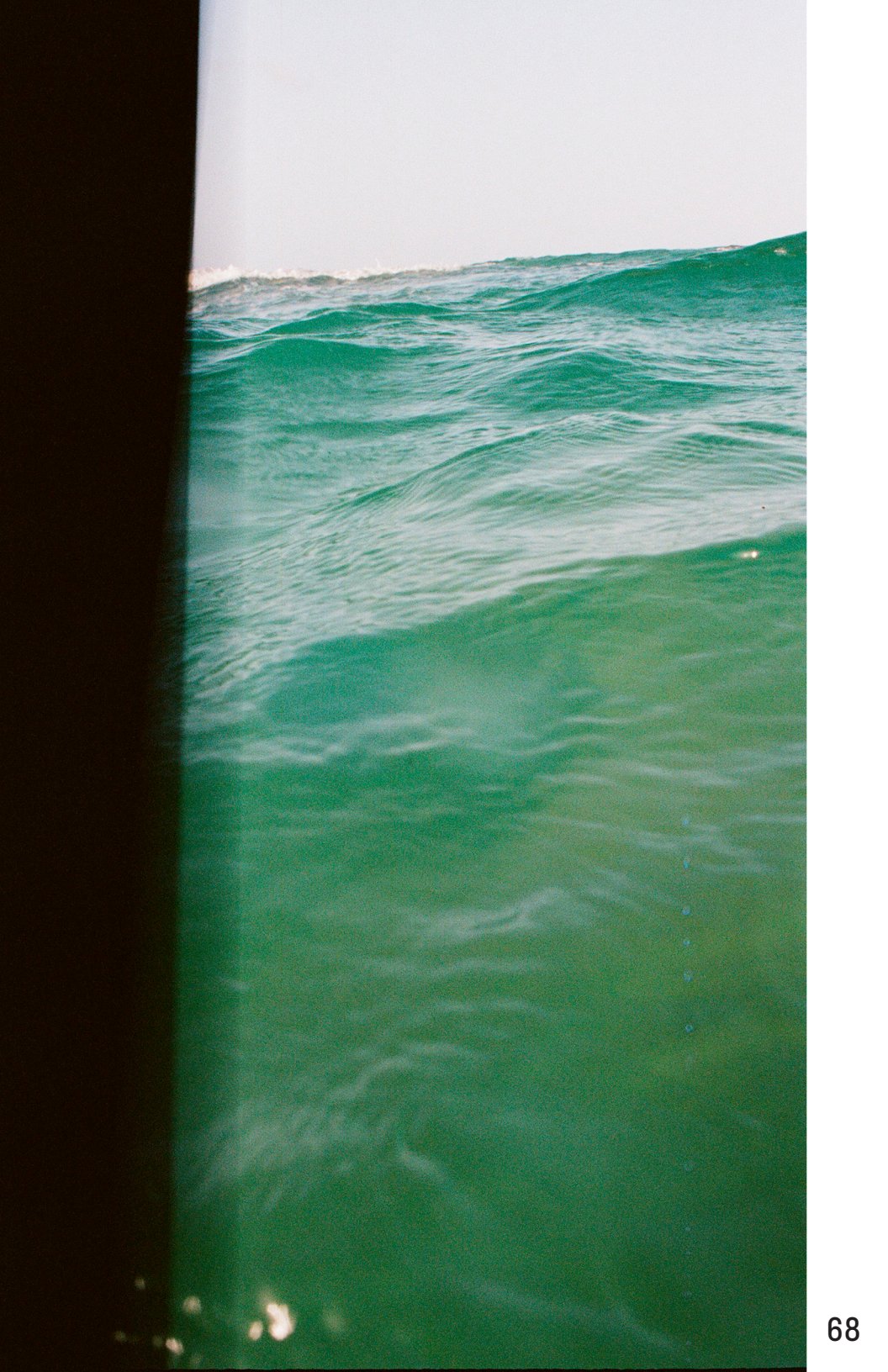
Beaver  
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Garden













0.00

## *With Water Score*

For any number of people.

- 1) Each person  
brings or selects an  
object or instrument  
which  
uses or involves  
water to  
make  
sound
  
- 2) A local body  
of water:  
its line  
shape  
or edge  
is to be  
translated  
and improvised  
in sound



Addyi, Açai, Albuterol, Amoxicillin, Aricept, Arnicare, Aspirin, Ativan, B, Ciprofloxacin, Claritin, Cortef, Cyclobenzaprine, Darvocet, Diamox, D, Furosemide, Gabapentin, Imodium, Jolessa, Labetalol, Lamisil, Lam, Meclizine, Metoclopramide, Minoxidil, Miralax, Mirapex, Naltrexone, N Hydrochloride, Oxycontin, Pantoprazole, Paxil, Pepcid AC, Plavix, Pot, Saphiris, Strattera, Sudafed, Sulfamethoxazole, Testosterone, Tofranil acrylic on polyester canvas over custom PVC strainer



Benadryl, Benzonatate, Cardizem, Cefuroxime Axetil, Cephalexin, Digoxin, Elidel, Eliquis, Estrogen, Fludrocortisone acetate, Fosamax, Gabapentine, Levotabs, Lidocaine, Losartan Potassium, Lunesta, Luvox, Naproxen Sodium, Nasonex, Nystatin, Ondansetron, Oxycodone Hydrochloride, Prednisone, Pravastatin Sodium, Prozac, Rozerem, Toprol, Tramadol, Valsartan, Viagra, Xanax, Zinetac, Zolof, and



At times,  
the  
Juniata  
does not  
seem to  
know  
where it  
wants to  
go; at its  
midpoint  
near  
Lewistown,  
the river  
flows  
north,  
south,  
east, and  
west—all  
within  
three  
miles.

Dennis P. McInay,  
Juniata, River of  
Sorrors



"I just think you are the kind of person who could conjure animals". Along the Juniata River and not long after the osprey text scrolled by, an osprey crossed the sky, fish in tow...

Lauren Strohacker  
Incantations Electronic  
LED Moving Message Board, Juniata River,  
In the Fabric of the Woodland, Juniata College Museum of Art, 2019











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Utopian Universal  
Issue 1 : (UU)ater

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at [utopianmegaproject.com](http://utopianmegaproject.com)

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February 2024

Water is an element, environment, divider, source, substance, and a universal requirement for life on Earth. We define water, like all elements, by our experiences with it. Water is even given metaphorical embodiment in our language: body of water, mouth of the river, arm of the sea, and river arteries. Just as we use bodies and ideologies to divide humanity, we also use rivers, seas, or oceans to define boundaries between states, nations, and peoples – even if the water contained within these bodies is utilized by all sides equally.

(UU)ater, asks us to consider how water experiences time and expresses history, how humanity identifies itself through water, the future of water, and how water can be found in possible utopias. (UU)ater is where universality and division intersect.



Born of the question: What is the endgame of Civilization? The Utopian Megapraxis is a non-situated community of artists, curators, writers, educators and thinkers invested in the process of envisioning a global Utopia. A theoretical megaproject spread across time zones and disciplines, their work is imaginative, speculative, and future-oriented, but with the goal of moving towards equitable reality in the present.