

CUS! 'zine

edition 2 | March 2016

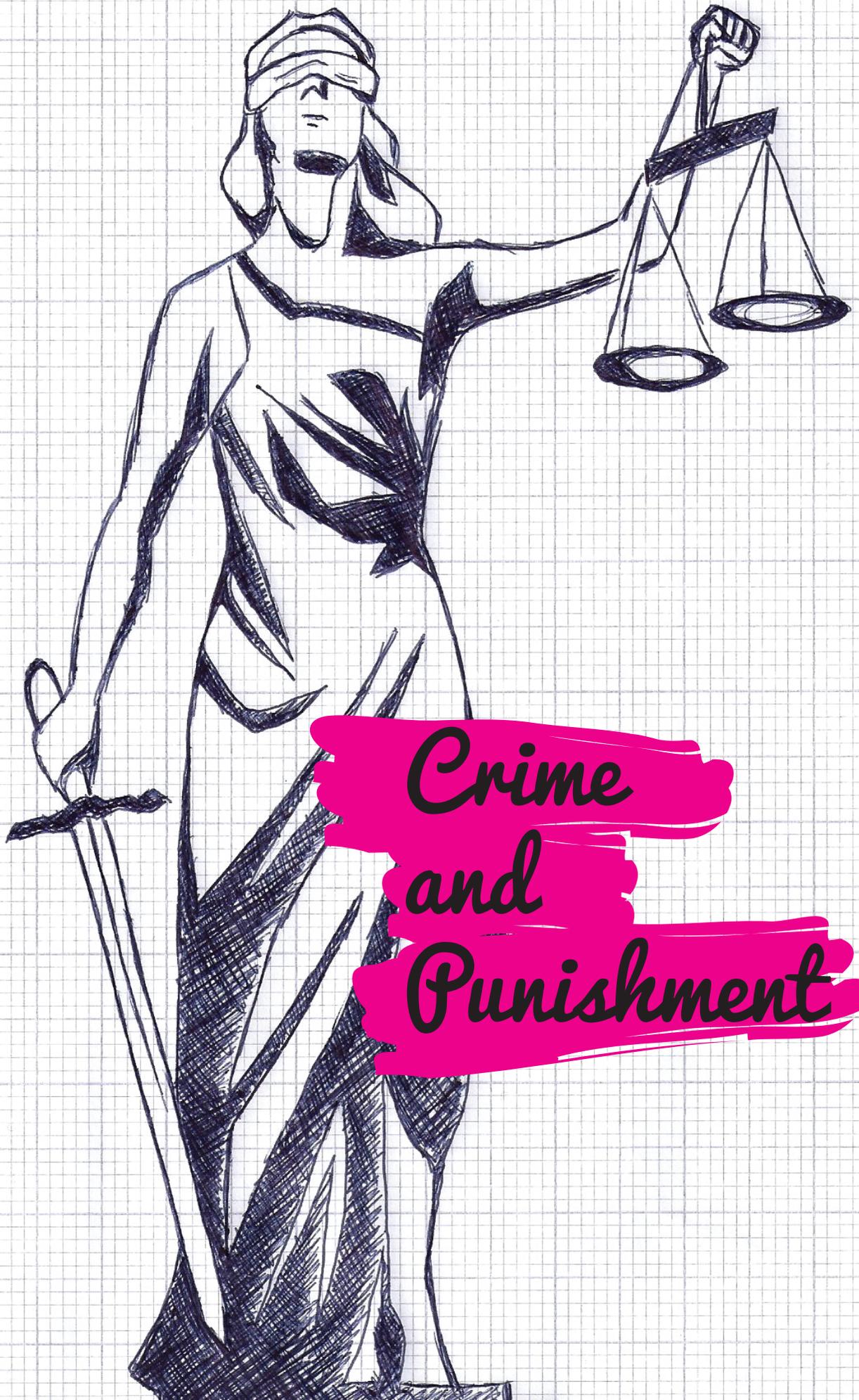


CUS! 'Zine
Edition 2 – March 2016

CUS! 'Zine is a quarterly collaborative 'zine which combines art and politics.
For more information go to: tankgreen.com/cus-zine/. Twitter: twitter.com/cuszine.

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**Crime
and
Punishment**

My boss and I don't agree on too many things but we both love crime drama and Patti Smith, so we recently bonded over an episode from the singer's new memoir *M Train*, which goes like this:

Patti's connection flight from London is delayed, so she spontaneously decides to go into town and check into a hotel with the intention of watching detective shows all night on ITV3. In between programmes, a *Cracker* marathon is advertised for the following week. The show, in which Robbie Coltrane plays criminal psychologist Dr Edward 'Fitz' Fitzgerald, is one of Patti's favourites and she seriously contemplates extending her stay in the hotel to be able to watch it.

Later that evening, she leaves her room to go downstairs to the hotel bar for a drink.

Standing by the elevator I suddenly felt a presence beside me. We turned at the same moment and stared at one another. I was stunned to find Robbie Coltrane [who plays 'Cracker'], as if I'd willed him, some days ahead of the 'Cracker' marathon.

—I've been waiting for you all week, I said impetuously. —Here I am, he laughed.

I was so taken aback that I failed to join him in the elevator and promptly returned to my room, which seemed subtly yet utterly transformed, as if I had been drawn into the parallel quarters of a proper tea-drinking genie.

—Can you imagine the odds of such an encounter? I say to my floral bedspread.

This is the sort of magical alignment of the universe that Patti Smith's storytelling is full of, and apart from providing a bonding opportunity for me and my boss, this particular episode filled me with a sense of pride as it meant that my taste had just received validation by a proper cultural icon: I used to be mildly obsessed with *Cracker* when it was first screened in the 1990s and still watch the re-runs whenever I can.

What makes the show – a trailblazer for today's boxset crime drama – so compelling, is how incredibly well written it is, thanks to its creator, Liverpudlian working-class screenwriter Jimmy McGovern, who keeps on making relevant TV drama to this day.

His films tell stories of social injustice, which are brutal in their honesty and portrayal of morality. They hold up a mirror to society, demonstrating how fate and circumstance could potentially lead to anyone committing a crime. Recurring universal themes are anger, love and betrayal, loss, grief and guilt.

McGovern's characters are complex and sympathetic, but although the viewer gets an extensive insight in the protagonists' psyche and the reasons behind abhorrent acts, this is ultimately trumped by the quest for truth and justice. The devastating consequences of a crime on a person, a family, a community are always in the foreground; crime is never glorified or glamourised.

For McGovern, drama is politics, and more recently, he has turned his attention to the substance of crime and punishment. Usually, crime dramas end at the arrest of the culprit, and you assume a "happily ever after" scenario, in which justice will be done. In reality, this might be far from the truth. The justice system is complex on every level and the devil often lies in procedural detail – loopholes, grey areas, shortcuts and even misinterpretations of the law

may become tools that result, eventually, in justice not being done. On top of that, legal complications may go hand in hand with a lack of diligence by police and prosecution, who might follow a merely presumed course of events in their investigation. All these issues can lead to a tedious and frustrating trial, which debates over a long period of time the horrific, sad and traumatising event at the heart of it – the crime itself – causing even more distress for the people caught up in it, whether as the victim or the accused, and their families. In the worst possible case, what happens in court and behind the scenes could ultimately mean the dismissal of a guilty person or the conviction of someone who is innocent.

Such a scenario could, for instance, result from the "joint enterprise" law, which recently made the headlines, as the UK Supreme Court ruled that it had been misinterpreted for a number of years. The law makes it possible to convict more than one person out of a group for murder, if they were all present when the crime was committed and if it can't be determined who dealt the fatal blow. In many cases, "foresight" was cited as evidence of intent to assist in a crime, i.e. if one person knew the other was carrying a knife, both could be convicted of murder. This may seem fair but research has shown that, in metropolitan areas, where the resources of police and prosecutors are stretched, the law has effectively been misapplied for "gang-related" crimes, leading to a disproportionate number of young black men being affected by it in the south of England, and white working-class youths in the north.

I was first made aware of this particular law as the subject of a one-off TV drama, *Common*, by Jimmy McGovern. I went along to a screening and subsequent Q&A with the writer a couple of years ago, and the audience was full of very vocal women, mainly mothers and sisters who had been campaigning against the wrongful convictions of their sons and brothers. According to McGovern:

"they are locking up kids in droves... to get the scum off the streets. It is symptomatic of what they feel. I know that the government in power has nothing but contempt for the British working class. Our job is to keep reminding them that we know."

The fact that the "joint enterprise" law has now been overturned appears to serve this notion right, but it is vital to recognise that there are victims on both sides – not just victims of crime but of errors in the legal system – and that both parties have been deprived of justice.

I am grateful to McGovern for creating awareness for issues like this and for giving a voice to the weak and the marginalised through his dramas, thereby empowering us as viewers to look up more information and to make up our own minds, whether we decide to come on board and to stand up to the establishment or not.

McGovern doesn't claim to be impartial in his work but it can only be a good thing to hear a side of a story which has previously been neglected. Because too often, no matter if throughout history or on today's news, only one side of a story, the one sanctioned by the powerful, gets told.

Christiane Eck

*Extract from Patti Smith's 'M Train', theguardian.com, 27/09/15
Interview with McGovern by Adrian Lobb, bigissue.com, 10/03/15*



Shut Up Dawn L. Hollis

Why use words at all
if just to use them for hate?
to make the world a
worsen place. Swimming with bile.

Past times had poetry, we have noise.
guardians of pain and daily disillusionment.
Listen up: hate your body, find love.
Listen up: hate your neighbour, get a job.

Ten years old, I dreamt
of being Lois Lane, writing
my way to truth and justice,
speaking a better future,

but who will speak for today?
profits, adverts, clickbait.
the more anger the more to sell.
Money is not the same as hope.

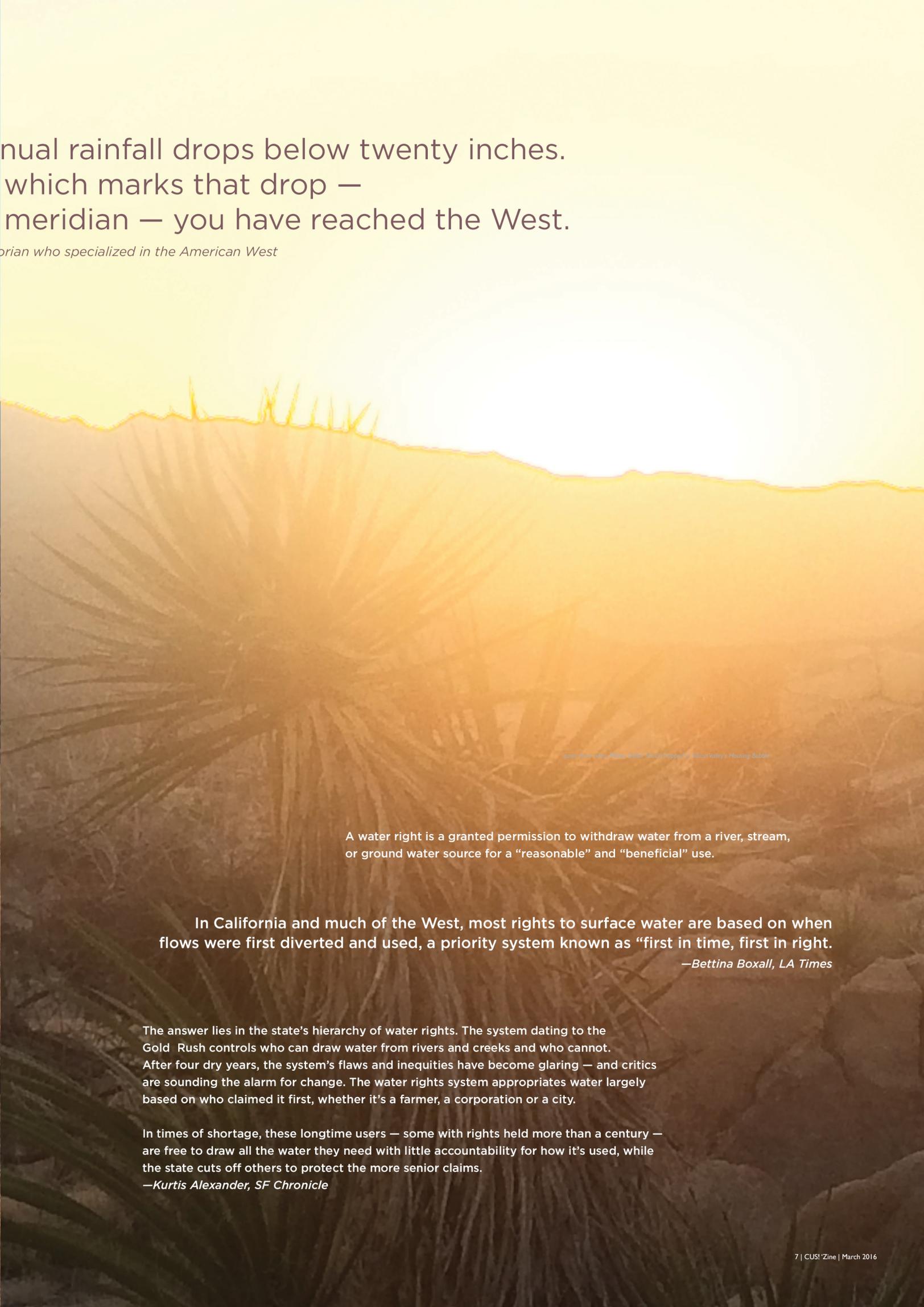
and I want to know,
from the hands that run this theatre
what it's like to sleep on words
that make the world a worsen place.

and then
I want you to shut up.

The West begins where the average man
When you reach the line
for convenience, the one hundredth

—Bernard DeVoto, 1897–1955, author & histo





Annual rainfall drops below twenty inches,
which marks that drop —
meridian — you have reached the West.

Journalist who specialized in the American West

photo from video "Water: Drought Shock Troops in Silicon Valley's Housing Bubble"

A water right is a granted permission to withdraw water from a river, stream,
or ground water source for a “reasonable” and “beneficial” use.

In California and much of the West, most rights to surface water are based on when
flows were first diverted and used, a priority system known as “first in time, first in right.”

—*Bettina Boxall, LA Times*

The answer lies in the state’s hierarchy of water rights. The system dating to the
Gold Rush controls who can draw water from rivers and creeks and who cannot.
After four dry years, the system’s flaws and inequities have become glaring — and critics
are sounding the alarm for change. The water rights system appropriates water largely
based on who claimed it first, whether it’s a farmer, a corporation or a city.

In times of shortage, these longtime users — some with rights held more than a century —
are free to draw all the water they need with little accountability for how it’s used, while
the state cuts off others to protect the more senior claims.

—*Kurtis Alexander, SF Chronicle*



blood, sweat & tears
gun, pen & treaty after treaty

a river, a sea, a ridge, a ditch, an inheritance

a red line
a fence, a wall, a claim, a gift

dead land tended with the greatest care

a solid comfort
a violent promise

space to grow, to love, to breathe
squeezed, crushed, erased

- Garry Freckleton



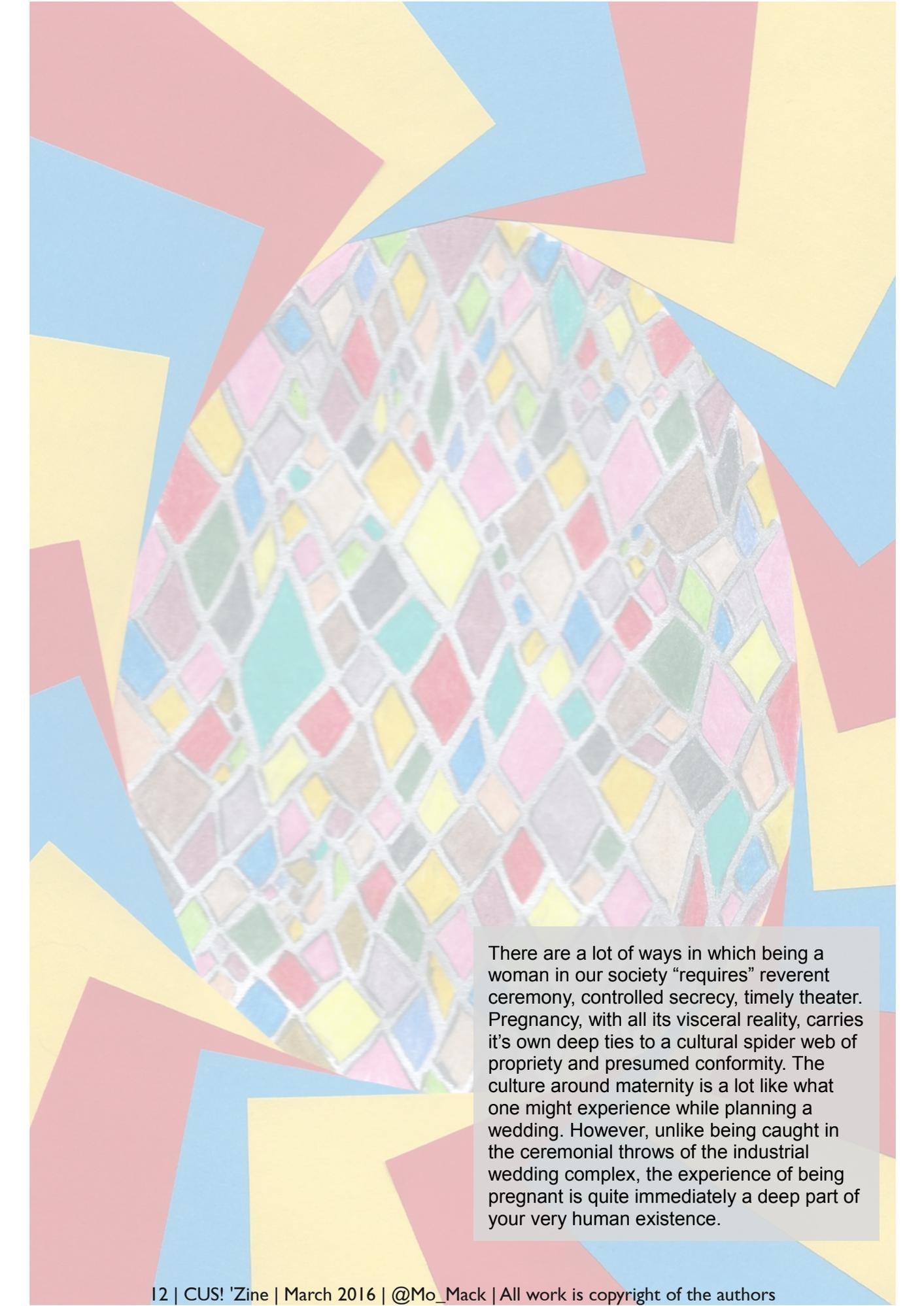
Having an uprising – and then what?

This March and April, the Republic of Ireland will celebrate the centenary of the Easter Rising, the legendary foundation of the independent state. Politicians have talked about the importance of making these commemorations inclusive and portraying plural narratives. But for the events surrounding the Easter Rising, politicians have been apprehensive about inviting international – especially British – guests. The feeling is that for the centrepiece of the commemorations, a national commemoration is more appropriate than a shared one. It seems that the only international groups that are taking an active part in the commemorations are the Irish diaspora. Does that make ethnic connections more important than political ones, for a substantially political event?

I imagine one reason for it is that it's much easier to remember a vague idea of a rising that links all Irish people than to discuss how the political aspirations of those men and women fighting in 1916 are connected to present political problems. Or as the Irish band The Rubberbandits say "The proclamation the boys wrote in 1916 has nothing to do with today's Ireland." The band, instead, wrote a new one – in which they "declare equality and freedom to all Irish citizens. Our sick and poorly are free to have the best healthcare available. In light of our previous long history of emigration, we express our freedom to put ourselves in the shoes of others in that position too." How will the official commemorations legitimise the use of violence in 1916, while also clarifying that it would not be appropriate for present political activists? Have the 1916 fighters already achieved everything Irish citizens in the present could wish for? Surely not, and The Rubberbandits don't seem to think so either.

Being independent is not just about gaining sovereignty in one strike – it is about continuously building a state, which its citizens want to live in, after independence is achieved. This should happen constantly in the process of democratic politics. It is also an international process. Ireland would not have become independent without diplomatic negotiations and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. There is more to independence than a revolution, and diplomacy and international relations – even, and especially, with the former British rulers – were essential to the making of the new state. Whatever is achieved in one national or regional resistance has to be understood within an international context. Change does not happen simply within one isolated country, and in one go. However much we would like to achieve our aims instantly on a small, even local level, they are connected with larger systems and institutions, and shaping these is much more complex. This could also remind voters in the UK that regaining "sovereignty" by leaving the EU would not simply solve every UK citizen's problems.

[With thanks to Adam Fusco](#)



There are a lot of ways in which being a woman in our society “requires” reverent ceremony, controlled secrecy, timely theater. Pregnancy, with all its visceral reality, carries it’s own deep ties to a cultural spider web of propriety and presumed conformity. The culture around maternity is a lot like what one might experience while planning a wedding. However, unlike being caught in the ceremonial throws of the industrial wedding complex, the experience of being pregnant is quite immediately a deep part of your very human existence.

The moment I realized I was pregnant, I immediately knew unwaveringly that I must take action but also that I was powerless against the will of my body. I knew that within my own body, I was no longer alone. When sharing this new experience with others, I was still coming to the realization of what this meant to my mind, my body, my career, my life. Others felt entitled and compelled to share their opinions and experiences with childbirth, whether personal or perceived. And so, I clung to whatever privacy I could, telling no one at first, then only a small few. For me, this also meant miscarriage specifically went largely unmentioned.

I knew that you should wait until the 2nd trimester before “announcing” your pregnancy. I knew not to tell the guys at work until I was sure there was “something to tell.” I felt guilty for how my paranoia seemed to affect my partner’s ability to be excited. I worried about how motherhood would affect my career in the “man’s world” of tech and started reading every article I could find with tips on balancing the two. I struggled to perform at work while experiencing extreme exhaustion.

My partner and I started talking about names; mostly joking at first but over the weeks these conversations slowly became more serious. Ruling out ones we didn’t agree upon, arguing for ones with which we felt attachment. We told a few more people about the pregnancy as the time and weeks progressed.

Welling with tears at the sight of the tiny beating butterfly of a heart at the first ultrasound, I realized unequivocally I wanted to be a mother to THIS baby. There was life-changing clarity in that moment.

Still no one mentioned the process of miscarriage aside from looking for the warning signs.

When the bleeding started at ten weeks, I knew enough to call the midwives. They told me to head to the ER and the OB on call would take care of me. In fact I didn’t see the OB until the end of my 5-hour visit. At the hospital the bleeding picked up. Every member of hospital staff I saw told me how sorry they were for my loss. At the end, they confirmed the miscarriage was underway, that the baby’s

heartbeat was lost, gave me two Tylenol, and sent me on my way. I was told I would probably bleed for a few days and maybe see some tissue. The OB asked me if I had any questions. I said I didn’t know what questions to ask. I had no idea the worst was yet to come.

My partner left me still in bed the next morning to run some errands. About 30 minutes after the truck’s wheels left the driveway, I experienced blinding pain. I had no idea what was happening to me. Unsure which bodily movement would come next, barely unable to pull my body into the dry tub, the contractions became nearly constant and my phone was across the room. I did my best to practice ujjayi breathing to keep from passing out (thank God for yoga.) As time passed, I shifted my weight as the balls of my feet started to ache from the cool tub floor. Finally, Chris crashed through the bathroom door and just as we got a midwife on the phone, I saw the soft golf-ball sized fairy egg of the amniotic sac slide out onto the tub floor. Within minutes the pain subsided.

Because of all the secrecy and delicacy around the topic of pregnancy and miscarriage, I had no idea what experiencing a miscarriage might be like. I did not know what to do; I was terrified. Quite honestly, I thought I was dying. In reality, my body knew exactly what to do. My body was on autopilot and my feeble brain was along for the ride. My body knew this pregnancy wasn’t meant to be, and did the best thing it knew how to deal with the situation.

People expect you to be the human embodiment of sunshine and rainbows during your pregnancy, glowing with anticipation and filled with dreams. There really is no discussion about the experience of miscarriage, which statistically occurs to somewhere between 15–20% of all pregnancies. This is not an insignificant statistic. I’m sure the experience differs greatly from person to person, week to week, trimester to trimester.

Doesn’t this variation make it that much more crucial of a conversation?

Thinking back now, I resent those doctors for every apology they gave me. I was paying them for science, not consolation.

Oppressed, oppressor
Wind blows in new directions.
Once was, now are.



This much I know

(tank green is i)

'...does the Jew have a divine claim on oppression?

When does one sequence of history cease
and another begin?

How long will it take before
we recognise that

yesterday's oppressed may be
tomorrow's oppressor?

And how long will it be before we shall cry out?

...how long shall we indulge in the self-flagellating guilt
that allows us to overlook the sins of others

only because they were once ours as well.'

Ambalvaner Sivanandan, 1969

I went to Palestine a decade ago now. It was one of those moments in life which started off somewhat innocently but, in the end, became a paradigm shift. A moment in which the obfuscating word 'occupation' got revealed in all its stark brutality: a ripping asunder of the meaning of the word and in its place only horror. And me, grappling around in the dust searching for a new word to describe the truth of what I saw; and me, finding nothing, felt only rage.

Horror. I used that word because what the Israelis are doing to the Palestinians is a horror. A horror for the second half of the twentieth century like the Holocaust was a horror for the first half. A horror which is spilling out into the twenty-first century, a seemingly endless river of blood. Horror: I use that word because in the sixties, when Sivanandan said those words above me now, we in Britain condemned racism because of the horror of the Holocaust. Not for slavery or any manner of colonial crimes, nor for the deep-rooted and vicious prejudice of the white citizens of this island. Racism was a horror precisely because of what had happened to the Jews. It was a horror because it had led to the cleansing of a place of a people.

The cleansing of a place of a people. When you go to Palestine, you cannot fail to see that the Israelis, in turn, are cleansing a place of a people: the Palestinian people. A people who the Israelis say are not their people; a people racialised outwith the borders of the Israeli state. A people who do not belong and who must be contained behind giant walls with giant guns and hatred aimed square at their temples. A people with more than a yellow star and less than a gas chamber and yet, slowly, slowly, the same bloody effect.

And when you go and you see the blunt, brute force of the Israelis – their money, their technology, their military, their might – you will not fail to understand the methods of Palestinian resistance in the face of that stark, vicious brutality. And you will know, if you have rage, if you have anger, if you have hope, you will know that you would fight like the Palestinians were you to have been born a member of a people that another group are trying to cleanse from a place. You would fight against the brutal face of hatred and injustice because to do anything other is to die silently. Better instead that you cry out and hope that you are heard, that you are witnessed, that you are seen.

So know then, when you truly stand witness to the horror being inflicted on the Palestinians, know that you are,

witnessing racism, in all its naked reality, rising slowly with a snarl, like a wounded monster, ready to engage the revolutionary hordes surrounding it in a titanic and desperate struggle for survival.

And know, that the words of Oliver Tambo fighting the South African apartheid state in 1969 are as true for him then as they are now for the Palestinians. Know that both Tambo and the Palestinians are,

part of these hordes. You call them terrorists; I call them the standard-bearers of the forces of freedom, the sworn enemies of racial tyranny and colonial exploitation. [...] I call them the true leaders of the crusade for a world community the faithful upholders of the doctrine of human dignity in the defence and assertion of which they are prepared and willing, if needs be, to lay down their lives; volunteers who have freely answered the call to rid mankind of the scourge of racism, colonialism and imperialism.

And know then, know that none of this need go on. None of this, none of this is just. None of this, none of this is anything other than a tragedy that we watch, and fund, and support.

And know, know now, know from many decades back, that **the oppressed have become, and continue ever daily to be, the oppressor.**

The voices in edition 2 of **CUS!** are:

Christiane Eck is a London-based culture worker who pursues a gallery day job and is also following a newly found passion for graphic design. Informed by an academic background in history of art and architecture and inspired by an eclectic love of music, films and fiction, she occasionally blogs/tweets/instagrams as (@)frankandfloyd.

e bond is a maker working in Northern California after recently completing an MFA in Creative Writing and Book Arts from Mills College in Oakland, CA. Under her studio roughdraftbooks, started in 2003, e makes one-of-a-kind hand crafted books, journals, stationery and art pieces that blur the line between fine art and utilitarian objects. Her artwork has been exhibited at The Paley & Levy Galleries, The Kimmel Center and in conjunction with the Philadelphia Center for the Book. It has been published in *500 Handmade Books: Inspiring Interpretations of a Timeless Form*, by Lark Books and *1,000 Artists' Books: Exploring the Book as Art* by Sandra Salamon. Find her work online at cargocollective.com/ebondwork, 365daysofwork.com and roughdraftbooks.com/blog.

Dawn Hollis is a PhD student and writer currently living and studying in the East Neuk of Fife, Scotland. She can be found in various guises across the internet: muttering about history @HistoriansDesk, musing on writing @The_WritersDesk, or cartooning gently @The_PinkNarwhal.

Garry Freckleton spends most of his time designing & making Things, Spaces & Places. An Architect based in Scotland, he's eternally curious about almost everything & never stops reading. You can find him contemplating work & life in his studio next to the river, with a cuppa. Twitter: @garry_architect.

Leonie Wieser is a PhD candidate at Northumbria University, where she researches people's engagement in local history and the different ways histories are made. Her interests are the interactions between the past and the present, and social and political change. Email: leonie.wieser@northumbria.ac.uk.

Mo Mack lives in Burlington, Vermont, USA where she works for "teh man" as a Quality Assurance Engineer. She also founded her local chapter of Girl Develop It, a non-profit that teaches women how to code. Mo is on the constant search to find Champy, Burlington's legendary lake monster. Twitter: @Mo_Mack.

Tank Green is a hoarder and a wanderer and a site of opposition. She very much doubts that any of it will ever make sense, but she'll keep working through things nevertheless. She's currently in the final year of her PhD and to deal with the stress, she is practising Muay Thai as much as she can and holding on to a vision of the end. Her collages are usually made old skool style: newspapers, glue and scissors; but this month she had a go at modern, digital life.

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