knowledge
Rick H M
The more I express myself, the more I am drained.  
The more I run after myself, the more tired I get.

– The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection*
know/ledge
or, what do i do now that i know?

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In memory—
you need to know that i am not Hawaiian, i am from Hawai`i – though, this assertion is something i feel uncomfortable making. this land was never mine to claim. but, if there is anything i will claim, it is having grown up on the most geographically isolated archipelago on this planet, in a place that is (still) engaged in a distinctly american robbery. i descend from asian settlers and migrants who moved to the island of O`ahu for work opportunities on plantations, or away from their warzone hometowns, or because we were fed gilded narratives of progress that have all led to this moment: where it is more likely for someone to be living on stolen land than for the original inhabitants to still be there.

i am from nowhere; a nothing-being, i desperately chase scraps of american-interfered repackagings of my “ancestral” history as though, if i digitally hoarded enough of the pieces, then maybe i’d have a story that’s worth telling.

i don’t care to tell the story that “makes sense” because none of it ever did.
here's The Story:

also here:

guilt is perhaps the most pervasive emotion i feel throughout life. i think abt growing up on a land that isn’t mine (i.e. growing up), i think abt all the ancestors who migrated (ran) so i could become whatever it is that i have most recently grown into. i think abt not trying to feel useless guilt and instead substitute not-eating?for non-feeling interchangeably

( i’m trying to get over myself enough to share myself enough,

recently, i was inspired to compile these written works b/c i’m a student and my worth is dependent on my artistic output b/c there are rare instances in my lived experience where words sometimes feel like all i have. when the body cannot get out of bed & when i cannot run away from my body & when i have run too far from my body & i think sometimes words help ground me in a reality that often feels unreal but is exerting too real of consequences on ppl who never asked for any of this. [by “any of this” i mean “if you have to ask then this isn’t for you”] [[ by “this isn’t for you” i mean “you have never known the flirtation of freedom from being pushed to the ledge,”

or, sometimes, things fall apart to reveal that things were never quite as neatly unbreakable as we were once primed to believe.

this writing is broken into two short sections. “re:late” is a lyric essay that traces the unreality of news coverage in the wake of 45’s presidency, in tandem with the unrealities generated by being a trans individual surviving an unaccepting, heteronormative social environment. this essay further incorporates engagements of the indigenous mythologies that comprise the place i come from as a means of combatting the tyranny of dominant, europeanist forms of knowledge. “unsettling” is a selection of poems that grapple w/ feelings of guilt and alienation rooted in my difficult relationship to my “home/town.” this selection of poems considers the possibilities of queer(ed) individuals to build new worlds for, and with, one another – worlds worth living in.

the title know/ledge arises from an academic panel discussion with Robin D.G. Kelley and Fred Moten at the University of Toronto in 2017. Kelley states, “Universities are often anti-intellectual in that they actually disavow certain forms of knowledge and put other knowledge above that.” here, Kelley refers to the prioritization and hierarchization of europeanist knowledge within the academy, and how this has hystorically been made possible through the delegitimizing of opposing, subaltern knowledge.

this writing is me exposing myself, for all the truths i still am not clear on, for all the times where the lie mixes in with the truth to create some queer hybrid of the two, for all the truths that have pushed me to points of broken skin.

i am still here, i Swear.
re:late
i’m convinced we live in a world where we consume tragedy like pop culture. i wake up to five breaking news articles about two new bullshit things 45 has done along with three more tragedies that, thank god, have not happened here,,,,,yet. i think about that commercial from the radio about disaster preparedness—the “It’s not a matter of if,,,,,but When disaster strikes…” tagline that (re)fixes my eyes to the News app on my iphone. the other day at one of my part-time jobs, a jehovah’s witness womyn came in and handed me a pamphlet about disaster preparedness with a little white square on the back page enclosing the text: JW.org.

wine country is on fire for the second day now; i check my aunt’s facebook when i wake up and before i go to bed to alleviate my guilt complex make sure her family is alright. i read recently that the rush to compensate for guilt through wanting to appear as though you were helping a situation beyond your immediate locus of control—this underlying desire to be perceived as good, then simultaneously defines natural disasters as a form of bad, or evil; then, this makes us look away from the evil everywhere—the communities
that get rebuilt, that receive mass media attention, versus the places where squats and shacks stand no chance. biocracism and bioplaceism. Sarah used to joke about the bi- prefix being employed by writers in the sociological discipline (biopolitical subdiscipline) to basically create new words, and i thought, well, why not create new wor(l)ds? if biopolitics is the enmeshment of life with politics (as generated by the political worlds we’ve inherited), then certainly these concepts fuel discriminatory racism/placism; certainly, politicized lives are at stake when (or, if) we talk about race/place.

the departmental chair of sociology from the university i just graduated from once guest-taught one of my classes. that day, he distilled anxiety from every “established” train of thought: every problem every man ever created, can be traced to an anxiety of losing control. i create rules for myself, every waking/sleeping moment of my life. beauty regimens, improv scores, food allowances. Baudrillard: rules are the simulacrum that hide the reality of no rules; i.e., the power of rules is not in how they manifest a desired somatic disciplinary response, but that they’re powerful enough to transcend their deadness. my life is governed, no, maintained by the illusion of governance. i think we must maintain many illusions for ourselves in order to live; for example, i must maintain the illusion that the world is not in a heightened state of ecological/humynmade turmoil in order to feel remotely okay about slithering out from beneath my covers. anxiety establishes a morning routine of coffee, cigarettes, face cleanser, and facial moisturizer, despite the fact that in a world that is ending/has ended for many people, i have no immediate reason to feel my time is running out. i have done too many mondays to remember. my atrophying body, a symptom of depression and anxiety, there’s so much to do but also close to nothing i can actually do, guess i’ll just roll another one.

one of my old poetry professors told me that i tend to write about where i am not. perhaps the idea of “here-and-now-ness” sometimes psychically displaces me into a nostalgic longing for someplace that either a) might not exist presently, or b) exists in the ephemera, in what we do to/with/through each other via response (dance, sex) to eliminate our need for comprehension and Knowing, I don’t always know what this is but it feels right, it feels right in a world where nothing feels right.

the night he made me feel sexually desirable again, i returned to those tight spots where the heat between our bodies made me forget about myself as removable from the scene. i think sex is often like building a world with your partner(s). i was made to feel fuller through abandoning myself, abandoning my rules, making up new ones, plunging into the hotzones, the spaces where all my normative senses seemed incapable of articulating how pleasurable it was to not see, not taste, but feel—in all its capacities—the heat generated
by our entangled, working, pockmarked bodies. A person can become a place, something unfamiliar you learn to navigate (physically, psychically). A person can also become a place when your memories rooted in a particular geography are attached to said person. I am unbecoming Connecticut and trying to rebecome Hawai‘i, but this lack of anchor in selves/places keeps me in a dissociative state. I am a steady ghost, displaced from the here-and-now, waiting to reckon with the past, and realizing that even when we reckon with something, it does not keep that thing from haunting us still.

_{Being overwhelmed is a tired recurrence._} As I’m writing this, I agonize every word as I simultaneously recall past writing processes— all the deleting and wondering if it’s worth it to distill a particular energy into words when you don’t know if it will even relate to an eventual, overall narrative. All the doubt brought on by the specific loneliness of feeling like you write with an intended audience in mind, when your actual audience is a pixelvoid. _Being overwhelmed is a tired recurrence._ With writing as a practice to ground the selves, I ground myselfs with digital words against a digital page. Try to make sense of recent traumas, how they relate to old traumas, how to recirculate the knowledge gleaned from trauma to prevent its cycling. I try my best not to mistake my obsessive romantic tendencies with feeling happy but I’m starting to remember now that I don’t believe in a singular idea of happiness— tied- to-productivity- tied- to-heteronormativity. I want to face whatever it is I’m supposed to be healing from during this time of painful transition. I try my best to be “open” to the “possibilities” of “spiritual enlightenment”. I read all the horoscopes and the horoscopes read me, especially regarding the fact that I have been in an extended phase of growing pains, and that I have been using this strange time to finally deal with all I couldn’t deal with while in school. I don’t know what it is I’m supposed to be “deal”ing with because I’m so used to getting too overwhelmed thinking about one thing, which subsequently opens a vault of other suppressed traumas. I am bursting with it. Often, I wish to cry, and often, I question my self- obsession with my anguish. Mostly, I pass my time staring blankly at nature or walls. _Being overwhelmed is a tired recurrence._ I don’t know how to explain this feeling to you, but it feels like a haunting, like I could outwardly be perceived as having my shit together because I’m always throwing myself into situations to take up all this fake time we’re all passing through, but all these things I do to occupy myself actually do very little to make me feel personal fulfillment. I don’t even know what personal fulfillment would look like in these circumstances, but I can tell you when I’m experiencing it. It’s kind of like the word ‘hegemony’— I have heard this word tossed all about classrooms, looked up its definition, and have written on it before; yet, I still can’t provide a clear definition of this word that illustrates how it is experienced physically/psychically. Perhaps I am searching for a queer definition: it’s like waking up in your grandparents’ home and trying to decide what to wear. I keep most of my femme-presenting clothing in one drawer that
accumulates dust. i know that nothing’s really stopping me from putting those clothes on, but there are social codes of conduct that haunt me the moment i step off that property. i walk around town and represent some outward perception of family. i do not want to be seen – i do not want to be seen as deviant – i do not deviate. i drab down. then,

i Create an alias.

i hide in my childhood bedroom crafting a pop star i only exist on the internet i jump out the screen in the flesh sliding on walls at the function to hear drunk grls Call Me By My (Stage) Name i think wtf,, she only knows me by my stage/name?maybe this is how it should be(?) i am Very Much in control i - but only w my blue lightbulb - i, the family secret existing on/in the public domain : the family secret is

i talk shit i get over you And You i get over the limitation of my voice assigning my genitalia assigning my genitalia roles to play w all the voices that follow me from grandmother’s house that follow me around this town where i share a name w my father

i produce sonic environments as ephemeral escapism.
when “real life” becomes too much (again),
what decadences harmonize w life’s de/cadence?
what can we learn from redbull vodka, dreams of a queer marching band,
the feeling of staring at the ceiling long enough to fall up?

when u tell them why you’re leaving, u work up the courage to say “i can’t live in this house anymore” it comes out like “there are no jobs here” when rly u wanted to say “grandma’s fucken crazy” or “i’d rather struggle to make rent in a place where i’m not brought down by baggage from the past nineteen years growing up here” or “how can i ‘be myself’ when two ppl who share the same name still can’t figure out how to both live and talk with one another?”

you - “son” of a government employee u – Biiitch!

a term of endearment a “dream come true”…lol
when they ask Why Seattle?, u tell them “for work”
don’t tell them abt making a “for now”
or how the meds will make you feel
or how ur basically moving to be w yr best friend
and how friendship is partnership is romantic is also vulnerable to lapses in communication, judgment, geographic proximity

we make it.
Pele comes back to the public eye.

It’s been close to a year since the last time I’ve returned to this document to write, and eerily enough, it is because the world is on fire – both in the sense that there is a palpable, collective unrest, and because an environmental “catastrophe” has occurred in Leilani Estates, Hawai‘i, i.e., natural activity has once again interfered in our ability to run the American machine. Predictably, the agencies – such as EPA Region 10, which houses the café I currently work in – designated to “protect” “our” “environment” maintain the delusion that the world was built for us, as opposed to literally looking out the windows of their cubicles and spotting at least six new construction sites, and at least thirty cranes.

Yesterday, Chase and I reminisced about how none of the cranes in Honolulu really moved; as children, we would pass by construction sites that had been unchanged for months, an empty lot with a crane parked on top of wreckage.

Recently, while walking through downtown Seattle, I thought I saw a crane moving pretty quickly until I realized that the crane was just moving and my baseline for crane speed was zero.

Google defines the word ‘fissure’ as: (noun) - a long, narrow opening or line of breakage made by cracking or splitting, esp. in rock or earth; (verb) - split or crack (some/thing) to form a long narrow opening. When I type the term ‘define:fissure’ into Google, the top news stories that surface are “Here’s where all of the fissures in lower Puna have opened up” (3 hours ago) “New fissure opens in lower Puna; sulfur dioxide levels high” (14 hours ago) “New fissures and old ones spew lava, toxic gas in lower Puna” (36 mins ago). Only one of the articles I’ve read regarding the recent volcanic activity in Hawai‘i mention the Hawaiian deity, Pele – “She who shapes the sacred land” “ka wahine ai honua (she who devours the land)”

I recognize that it isn’t normal to be taught the folklore and mythology of the land you’re raised on, especially in a public elementary school; but perhaps this should Absolutely be the case, considering that 98% of ppl growing up in/through Amerikkka™ are on a landing that was never theirs. Pele is often portrayed in mythological tales as vengeful, which I used to believe was scary, but now I realize is powerful. When visiting neighbor islands, especially ones where volcanic activity is prominent, it’s important not to desecrate, disturb, or remove any lava rocks from her home, lest you suffer the consequences, i.e., a lifelong curse. To then think through an environmental “catastrophe” through the lens of a deity, how can you ascribe “evil” moralistic qualities to something
that cannot be contained, when no one stopped the Department of the Interior from seizing and developing on land that is still, to this day, illegally occupied?

to legitimize state and governmental power through misconstruing feminine divinity as catastrophic destruction. to wash over invasive infrastructure with fire. *this was never yours to take.* and this is a reminder that there are some who will run back to mainland sanctuaries, and there are some who will gather in awe, as she takes back what has always been hers.

misery loves company—i believe this to be a basis for most of my close friendships. misery loves to commiserate, loves to spout endless jazz conversations about how miserable we are in relation to how miserable we’ve been. companies love miserable people, but only a particular type of miserable person. to be truthful, i believe we’re all miserable, or have the capacity to feel miserable. i thought i was special going through my depressive shit until i had the realization that everyone is going through some shit—it just depends on if you have enough capital to delude yourself into forgetting about the shit for awhile. these days, companies love the type of miserable person who moves to NYC from a small hometown in the forgotten wild that encompasses most of America, who has the politically-fueled bravery audacity to spout some xenophobic nonsense in New York City.

do you know how loud ppl from New York are? do you know how many cameras they got?

a PR nightmare: a digital riot short in duration
up the street in midtown, a former Playbo(t/y) playmate jumps to her death with her seven-year-old son.

there is something missing in my life and i am often convincing myself that it is the presence of another body in bed with me. as i am also convinced that romantic love finds us when we least expect it, i convince myself that i am satisfied enough with me to not expect to fall deeply in love with a potential new partner. i am unbecoming Middletown (Connecticut), unbecoming Honolulu. i am becoming Seattle, until August, when i will unbecome Seattle and become Boulder.
after moving back to my hometown post-undergrad, i tell Maile that i am unbecoming Middletown, and rebecoming Honolulu. she asks, “What do you mean by ‘unbecoming.’” in this moment, i wonder how many times i’ve used the word “unbecoming” without questioning its direct translation. i wonder how many words i’ve done that with and how this might be a responsibility of the writer to choose their words carefully, yet graciously. ‘unbecoming’ is a word that has a meaning, but also bears personal resonance to the fact that it can’t be immediately translated. i feel the word. kind of like when i say words in Korean and people ask what they mean in English. i then think of my mom who is forced to constantly translate between one language to another and back. i try my best to discern a relatable translation. “You know when you’re in a new place, and the idea of ‘place’ fails you? When a place fails you, all you have are the people. And some people suck, but other people become that place. Proximity makes you see these people over and over. You stress different parts of your personality, some parts that you didn’t think existed, or parts that you forgot about. When I leave those people in Connecticut, I feel that I unbecome those people, those memories, and rebecome the ones from the place I grew up.”

i translate through experience and hope someone feels something.

when they do, i move towards that person.
unsettling
Kapahulu. Name/meaning: Kapahulu means the "worn out soul," or "the nightmare."

Location/Land Area: Kapahulu is a small stretch of land east of Manoa and Makiki and inland from Diamond Head. Its land size is included in the Honolulu District total of 272.1km² (105.1mi²).

Kapahulu - Hawaii News Now - KGMB and KHNL
www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/1885683/kapahulu
not The Departure, but

leaving for some familiar spacetime/
time extends towards imaginary endpoints
(a segment) the connection gets erased
(repressed) for some other time when i’meady to deal when ur ready to deal OR if u
even wanna deal

this isn’t how i wanted it to end (either?)
our friends keep joking abt crossroads but this
feels more like a point-blur, i step outside
myself & arrive at no end—a line that
curves, scrawls, sometimes filling in its own openings

seek the comfort of circles, their finite infinitude
i know the overlaps have become less but how
abt unbecoming? : pack up for this “for good”
sit in three cramped time machines for a return
that actually feels like a return i dissociate into
the landscape, repeating to myself

*Time will tell*
*Time will tell*
*Time will*
Junior

busy myself with something
so my father will stop greeting me
with orders i gotta be put in some place
not my own: naming practices equivalent to
usernames already taken
doomed to learn the hard way that
two people are two people and
he won't show
he won't show up
he won't show up the way you want him to

you know best how you can’t expect
someone to fill some role
they never really wanted
waistaway

such an exceptional Korean girl, she
an exceptional mover and exceptionally bad at feeding herself (& So good at that!)
losing the body and subsisting on
words he only says when you have The Gender Pass it’s not right, you know
it’s not fine but it’s
whatever me admitting to my problems: i watch videos of Korean girl idols eating
together and not speaking, i bring them to the dinner table laugh with them,,,,,
imagine we’re all so sick and forced to perform this meal for the masses

hard to talk abt who gets to have this kind of a problem
easier to think of sooner endings if i can go on
depriving myself in this way
ghostride

attracted to ghosts since the teen years ( used
to be so bold And beautiful And
desperate to sleep in dirty dark blues : polluted with the barely-there
scent of boys you let sink into yr days Loooon after
they leave and if i have learned?anything abt boys
it is how i feel them most
in the absence
still on my knees for J.C.

choke out on the script and opt to inconvenience yrself for something/someone who
doesn’t give a shit  i have a Real problem w authority  as in  i still remember
how much better life could’ve been without hands gripping at
ears rushing into that color like  when you hold thin skin to a flashlight?
it’s late for reconciliation.  &we’re always late for mass.  &our breath goes stale
dissolving the body and letting the silence and Catholicism wash over us as if
silence and Catholicism were ever neatly separable and as if any of it ever mattered  
  to any of us
the w/hole way

This transition is *unbelievable* it “started” with locked hands  
 a begging to be taken (srsly) not necessarily anywhere other than  
 anywhere but *here,* i

made my life work while hiding my life’s work  stood  
 long enough for the veins to surface and infiltrated  
 the scene by night: connections with expiration sells  
 when i up-and-left-straight-back-to  
 where i came?from i remembered how it felt  
 for doing nothing to get so old  
 so quickly i fell into all the old traps of upbringing  
 brought down by violent comfort  an airplane shakily  
 landing on ground yet to be swept out from beneath me
living with a dead name  deadbeat
with a tendency to be a crustacean incarnate all the shit
we eat up  like father like father’s father dying in the living room
the whole time i died there  like mom i wonder if in the “future” i too
will stuff my dollars and cough drop wrappers into the well of my

purse abyss  me opening up to others : a backpack with eight zipper compartments
lookout

do nothing together, this time
we watch it all flatten out in color
while the years catch up to us & make us
forget / remember the forgotten
  memory like black hole
  energy like darkmatter    accustomed
to getting spewed : by current
                         by all the ghosts
  getting swept and swollen
we pack up our lives in earnest

to do it (again) elsewhere
the words don’t come easily because this is not & when i say that it feels like the first time experiencing wonder,,,Awe,,,,, i think back to boys who made me fabricate grandiose stories abt our non-happenings to cope with being so neglected and so , So : we talk abt fathers and daddies and their issues and how they make their issues become our issues as if we didn’t have our own : flood out information on the selves we’ve overcome (killed) and apologize again before explaining our/ selves again, we break down, we build the temporary fortress with our bodies and this comforter let it all collapse with our stink and chaos i fantasize falling asleep with it still inside me i want it so hard on the forest floor like the kind of mess we don’t have to clean up ,
choreographic abandon

& *what a disappointment* to set oneself up for a lifetime of disappointment: when a queerbody is only allowed to be conceptualized through the irrational, beyond a recognizable boundary/when a queerbody is always tasked with trying to convince the world of existence, it *loves* beyond a capacity it could ever be shown it accumulates scar tissue through old school coping mechanisms & going too hard on pulsating dancefloors it *loves* as fully as it believes it deserves to be loved

project desire, desire as a project a projection a dance in blue light *(w/o you?)* life, without you perform an idea of love maybe we can forget abt ourselves perform it so intensely for fear of abandon, choreograph abandon to convey the effort i will never be able to express as easily as

no words & heavy breathing

    if i ruffle my gown with
    enough rigor, you might lose track
    of whose body begins initiating
    a storm of fabrics (silk, skin, stage) or better yet,
    i might lose track of
    my flesh container / defy laws of fizzix, *I could be*
    water contained by flesh, a storm raging
    before your very eyes a dance i do

to disappear, to dissipate
fear of abandon, of “after all that work”
fear of self-fulfilling prophecy “i don’t want to hurt you”