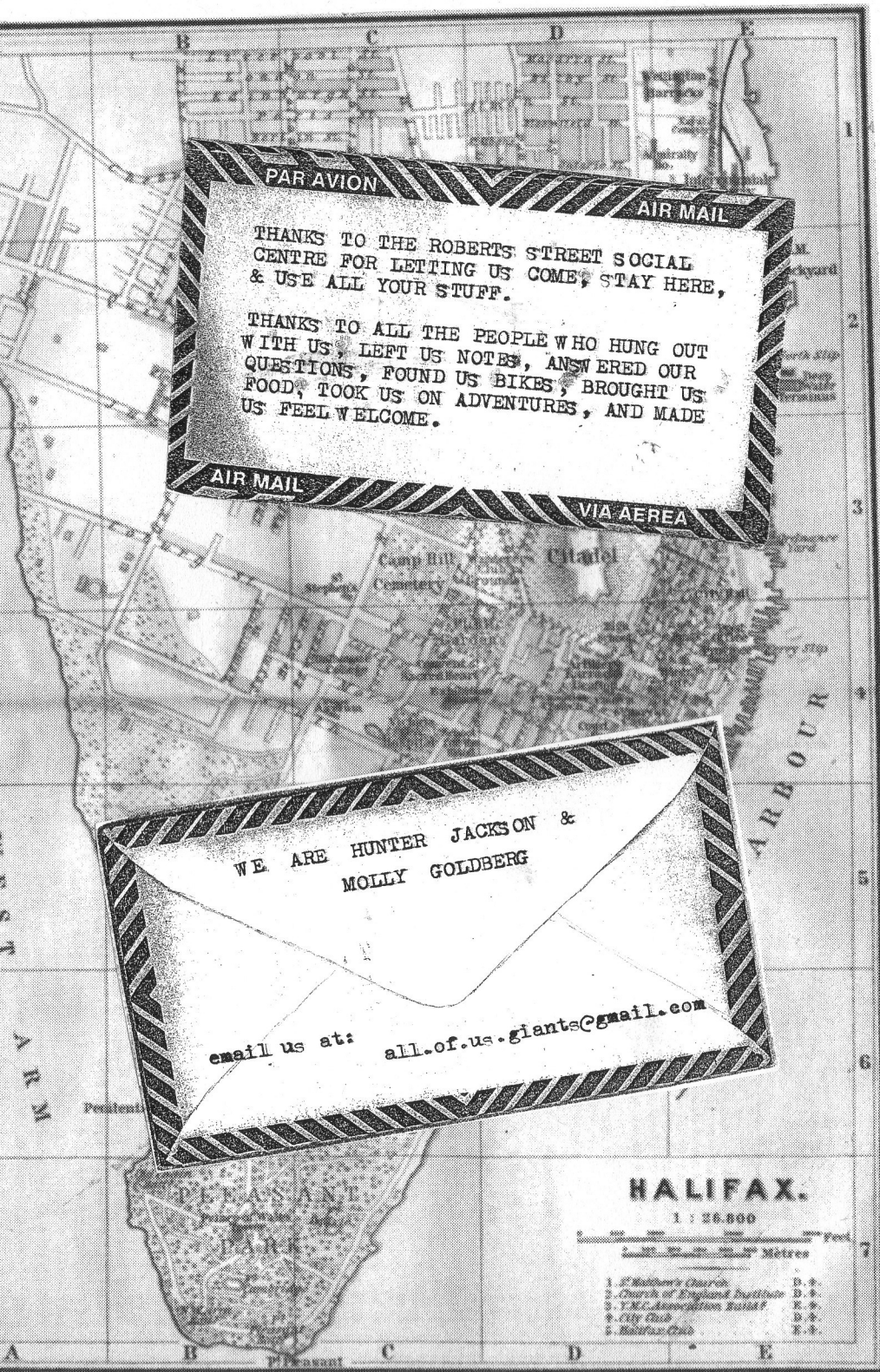


ALL OF US
GIANTS





PAR AVION AIR MAIL
THANKS TO THE ROBERTS STREET SOCIAL CENTRE FOR LETTING US COME, STAY HERE, & USE ALL YOUR STUFF.

THANKS TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HUNG OUT WITH US, LEFT US NOTES, ANSWERED OUR QUESTIONS, FOUND US BIKES, BROUGHT US FOOD, TOOK US ON ADVENTURES, AND MADE US FEEL WELCOME.

AIR MAIL

VIA AEREA

WE ARE HUNTER JACKSON &
MOLLY GOLDBERG

email us at: all.of.us.giants@gmail.com

HALIFAX.

1 : 25 000

1. St. Matthew's Church D. 4.
2. Church of England Institute D. 4.
3. Y.M.C. Association Building K. 4.
4. City Hall D. 4.
5. Halifax Club K. 4.

The stories other people would tell about my life, my mother's life, my sisters', my uncles', cousins', and lost girlfriends'—those are the stories that could destroy me, erase me, mock and deny me. I tell my stories louder all the time: mean and ugly stories; funny, almost bitter stories; passionate, desperate stories—all of them have to be told in order not to tell the one the world wants, the story of us broken, the story of us never laughing out loud, never learning to enjoy sex, never being able to love or trust love again, the story in which all that survives is the flesh. That is not my story. I tell all the others so as not to have to not tell that one.

Two or three things I know, two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is that to go on living I have to tell stories, that stories are the one sure way I know to touch the heart and change the world.

— Dorothy Allison
Two or Three Things I Know for Sure

Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story.

— Arundhati Roy
The God of Small Things

A START

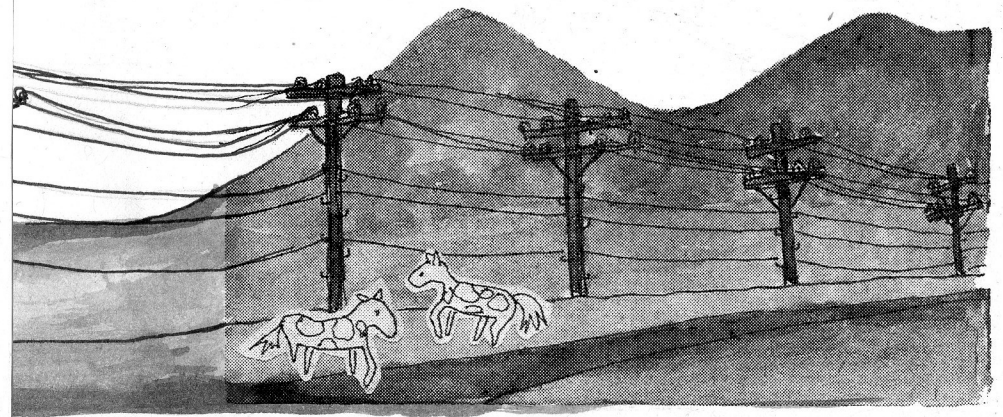
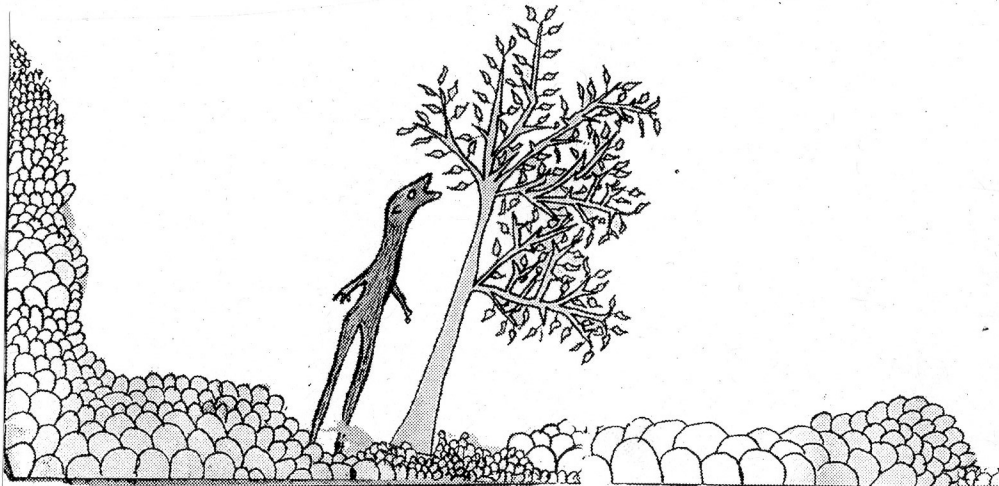
There are so many things to be angry about, and we are both embedded in communities that are excellent at naming those things, at articulating the cracks in our system, at (to very roughly paraphrase Arundhati Roy) exposing the apparatus of the empire for all its brutish inequities.

But we are afraid of building a politics of Not, of **DO NOT** and **SHOULD NOT** and **WILL NOT**. We do not want to define ourselves only in opposition to what we see broken around us; or rather we'd prefer to define ourselves by what we see as positive and encouraging and hopeful. We are fairly sure of what we are against; this may change and shift, but it is there, and it is nameable, grabbable, real. But what are we for?

This zine is our attempt to focus in on & to name what we like, what we want, what we believe can, should, or could exist. Moreover, it's an attempt to explain why we think that matters, why we think it is important to think hard about what kinds of values, people, and communities we want in our

these complicated tensions forever. It's exhausting and confusing, especially when we're alone. Sometimes we get tired, need a break or a snack. And what we're trying to do is understand—or imagine—ways to make sure we don't just fall off the wire whenever this happens. Ways to prop each other up while we take deep breaths and prepare to keep going. Ways to make it possible to come back out into the shaky scary middle again if one of us feels the need to try out one side or the other for a little while. And most importantly, we need ways to love the middle, to find our balance on the wire.

What could that look like? It looks like some things already around us. It looks like the queer rejection of binaries, an infinity of genders, sexualities, and possible relationships. It looks like *This Bridge Called my Back*, like a celebration of hybrid identities and intersectionality. It looks like the anarchist commitment to directly engaging with the tensions between the individual and the society. It looks like giving each other the benefit of the doubt. It looks like the story of an interviewee who told us she is grateful for her friend that still calls to invite her on trips and adventures even though she usually says no. It looks like an always-outstretched hand. It looks like things we are still imagining.

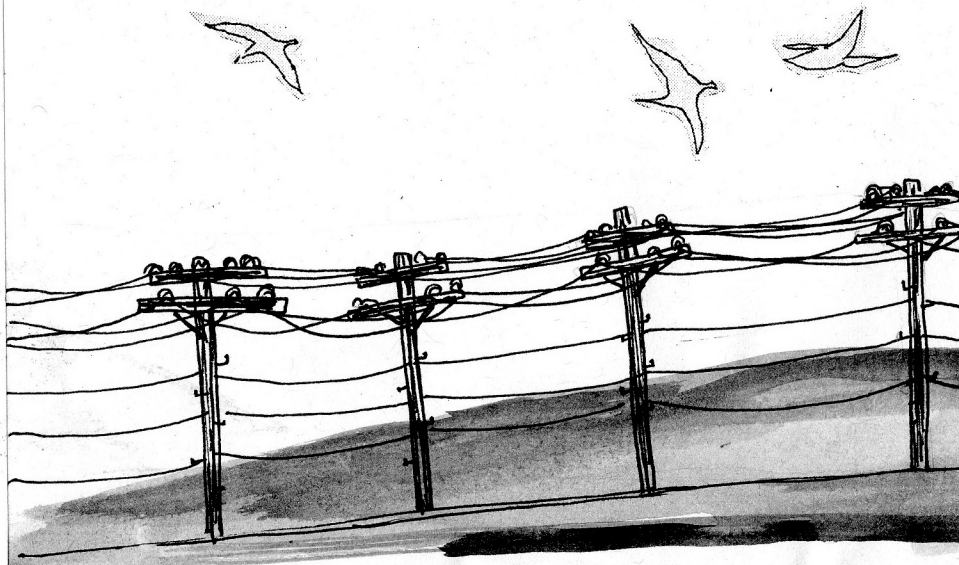


We need communities built around tension, communities that help us navigate the tensions and give us places to rest. Communities that are comfortable existing in liminal spaces. What are liminal spaces? They are gray areas, margins, hybrids. They are the spaces where borders begin to fade, they are thresholds, they are what is in-between.

In the introduction to her anthology *This Bridge We Call Home*, Gloria Anzaldúa writes, "To bridge means loosening our borders, not closing off to others. Bridging is the work of opening the gate to the stranger, within and without... To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy, to risk being wounded."

We need communities that transform the wires into bridges. That make it possible to take the risks we need to become bridges ourselves. In one of our interviews, someone said that they feel like they can be friendly to new people, outgoing, because they know they have a strong fabric of friends behind them. Because they feel supported and loved, they can reach out to someone who might reject them.

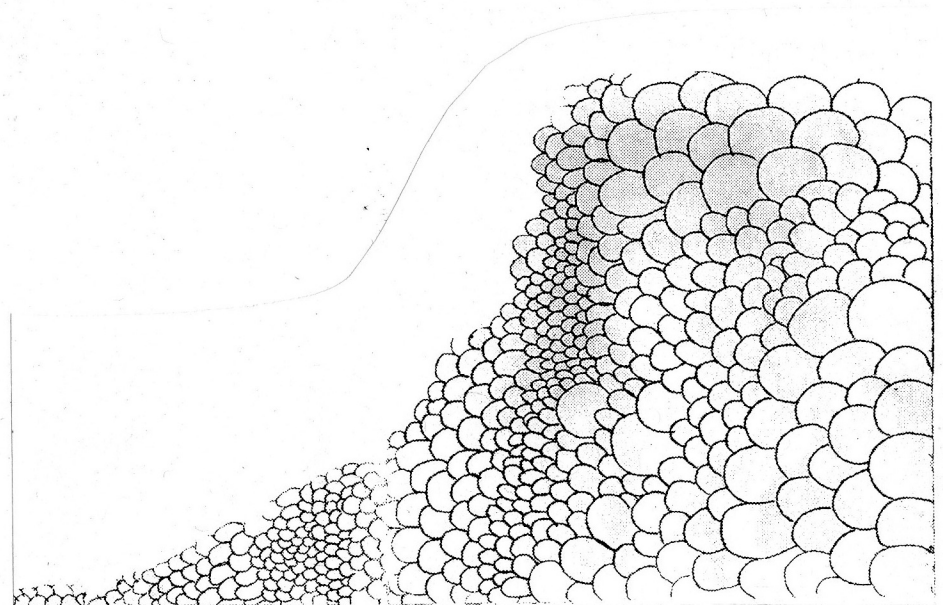
Uncertainty, indecision, ambiguity... it's hard to wade through



lives, in both the short and long terms. In one sense this means working to identify the things we like and enjoy that lay hidden in the world we walk through every day, pieces, perhaps, of another world to come; but that also means learning to imagine what's not here, and thinking about how to combine it with what is.

Revolution, or insurrection, or social change, or a better world is not some far-away place—it is lurking all around us, struggling to emerge. We just have to recognize it, care for it, encourage it.

To be clear, we are not arguing that if we were all just nicer to each other the world would be okay. It's important to fight, important to recognize your enemies and struggle to subvert, displace, disable, or destroy them. But none of this is enough; as Frantz Fanon said, "hatred is not an agenda." And so we ask, and will keep asking: What do we want? And where does it already exist?



WHAT'S GOOD

At the library in Halifax, there was a panel discussion about independent media and the G8. At the end, a woman in the audience stood up and asked: "So, I get that capitalism is bad, but it's what I know. I know how to operate in it, get its rules. If we get rid of capitalism, what would there be instead?"

GOOD QUESTION

A number of people fought back laughter. A few gave in to it. The moderator, with five minutes to wrap up the panel, said there just wasn't enough time to address that question. But a couple of people in the audience shouted that they wanted to hear the answer too. Ten hands shot up.

The question of What We Believe, of What We Want to See, is an infinitely hard one. But why? Maybe because it feels like you only get one chance, one shot at describing all its complicated edges. And who can do that? Who's ever been able to do that? It is bigger than any of us, can't fit in any one mouth, changes too fast to make a name for it.

Our intention has never been to concoct a perfect model or theory for an idealized future, nor has it been to conjure some romanticized notion of an idyllic past. And we are certainly not alone in this reluctance, which has long been an easy way to criticize anarchists and radicals (and some not-so-radical leftists as well): *Do you believe in ANYTHING other than critique?*

Sure, we often respond, we believe in things, we just can't see them yet. As the logic goes, capitalism and domination have infiltrated and corrupted every aspect of our lives, all of our relationships and institutions, even our dreams. And if this

TENSIONS

Here is a metaphor:

Each thing we love is a telephone pole and our lives are the power lines strung between them. Pulled taught across thousands of possible resting places, each a bit too small to comfortably stay on, each a little too plain, a little too heavy.

And there we are at the top, balancing. Tiptoeing towards the vanishing point. Pole and wire to the horizon.

Over and over again in Halifax, in our conversations with each other, and in our lives in general, the issue of tensions emerges. As we compiled lists from our interviews, tried to pull out common themes, we began to realize that tension is really what this project is all about. More than finding a description of utopia, we found a need to grow comfortable with the idea that so many conflicts and problems and questions are un-resolvable and unanswerable.

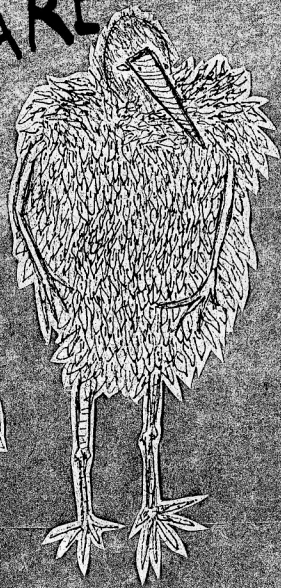
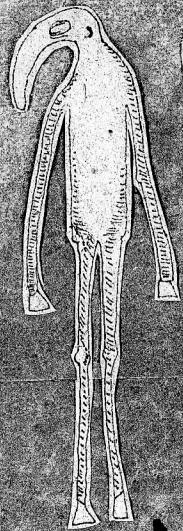
That's scary. Will we always be walking these power lines? Is there no pole built just for us? There is this icy stony fear that creeps up sometimes late at night when the two of us are sitting at the kitchen table, talking about our lives and what's to come: it's scary to feel like you and your future hang in the balance, to feel like things are so unsettled, or to think that things may *never* be settled.

And so, it seems, people disappear. They tire of walking these wires and make decisions that put them on one side or the other—they find a pole to rest on. We don't mean something so absolute as 'dropping out' or 'selling out,' because that sort of dismissive and unforgiving reaction to our friends' decisions seem to be part of what drives them away in the first place, or at least what makes them stay away.

My friend Morgan led a facilitation workshop recently where she talked about the challenge of dealing with that person who might be taking up a ton of space in the room. She said,

"We've all been to meetings where one person (or a few people) dominates the conversation in one way or another, and often we have pretty similar instincts for how to handle it: get that person to shut up, sit down, back off. MAKE THEM SMALLER. But what does making anyone small have to do with the world we're trying to make? With the non-hierarchical structure we are seeking to build in our organizing spaces or lives? The answer is not to make anyone shrink, disappear, but to make everyone else in the room BIGGER."

A WORLD WHERE ALL
US ARE OF



GIANTS

is true, then we'll never be able to imagine another world while we are still inside this one. We must first focus on destroying this world in order to make space for a better one.

We don't deny that we have all been poisoned by some of the TV shows, billboards, bosses, news broadcasters, teachers, Hollywood movies, politicians, neighbors, and oppressive stuff that we've encountered in our lives. But we think it's important to recognize that despite all this, people still manage to find ways to make their lives work, to find happiness, support, and hope in the most unlikely places. And in doing so, people can unlearn a lot of the problematic behaviors that can be so destructive, to both ourselves and each other.

It's not easy and it doesn't happen as fast as some would have us believe. But to us, this is a different way of challenging and destroying the oppressive world around us.

INSTEAD OF A BLUEPRINT

Here is an exercise in close looking, a study of the places where pieces of our imagined future world already exist. We take inspiration from the work of Peter Kropotkin, the early anarchist writer who looked not just at places where a new world might emerge, but also where the future already exists in the present.

It's not that we don't value history and imagination—both are incredibly powerful—but that we want to be better at naming what is working NOW. This is a project of describing not proscribing, of uncovering tendencies rather than making a list of absolute Shoulds. Our hope is that these tendencies will continue to grow and spread and combine with other tendencies and ideas and, ultimately, provide a path out of this world and into another. To us, anarchism is less about deciding how the world *has* to be than making room for people to experiment with other ways it *could* be.

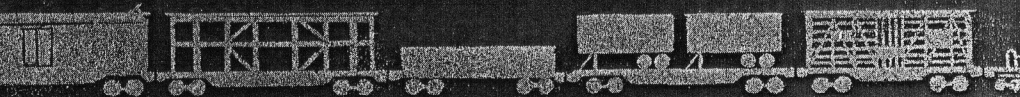
It doesn't matter if the train never comes.

You spend the day eating sardines and playing cards in the woods, surrounded by graffiti under the overpass and it can feel really good.

Sitting there in the yard you have no choice but to have faith, to believe that even if you don't get out of there that day, the train will come eventually.

You just have to be ready to go with it, ready to trust that it's going where you're going, ready to run when it starts to pull out.

And you can still care about each other, huddled together in the dark helping each other stay warm.



NOTE: When we talk about FAITH we mean faith in people, in each other, not faith that things will get better if we just wait patiently.

Imagination is the politics of dreams; imagination turns every word into a bottle rocket. . . .

Imagine every day is Independence Day and save us from traveling the river changed; save us from hitchhiking the long road home.

Imagine an escape.

Imagine that your own shadow on the wall is a perfect door.

Imagine a song

stronger than penicillin.

Imagine a spring

with water that mends broken bones.

Imagine a drum which

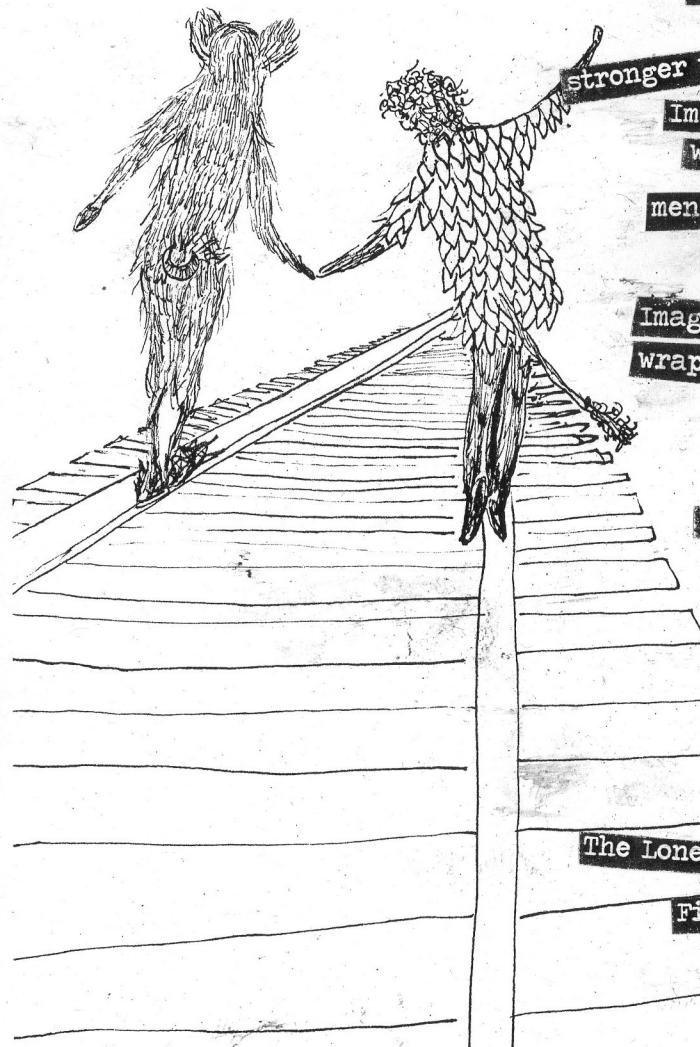
wraps itself around your heart.

Imagine a story that puts wood in the fireplace.

Sherman Alexie

The Lone Ranger and Tonto

fistfight in Heaven

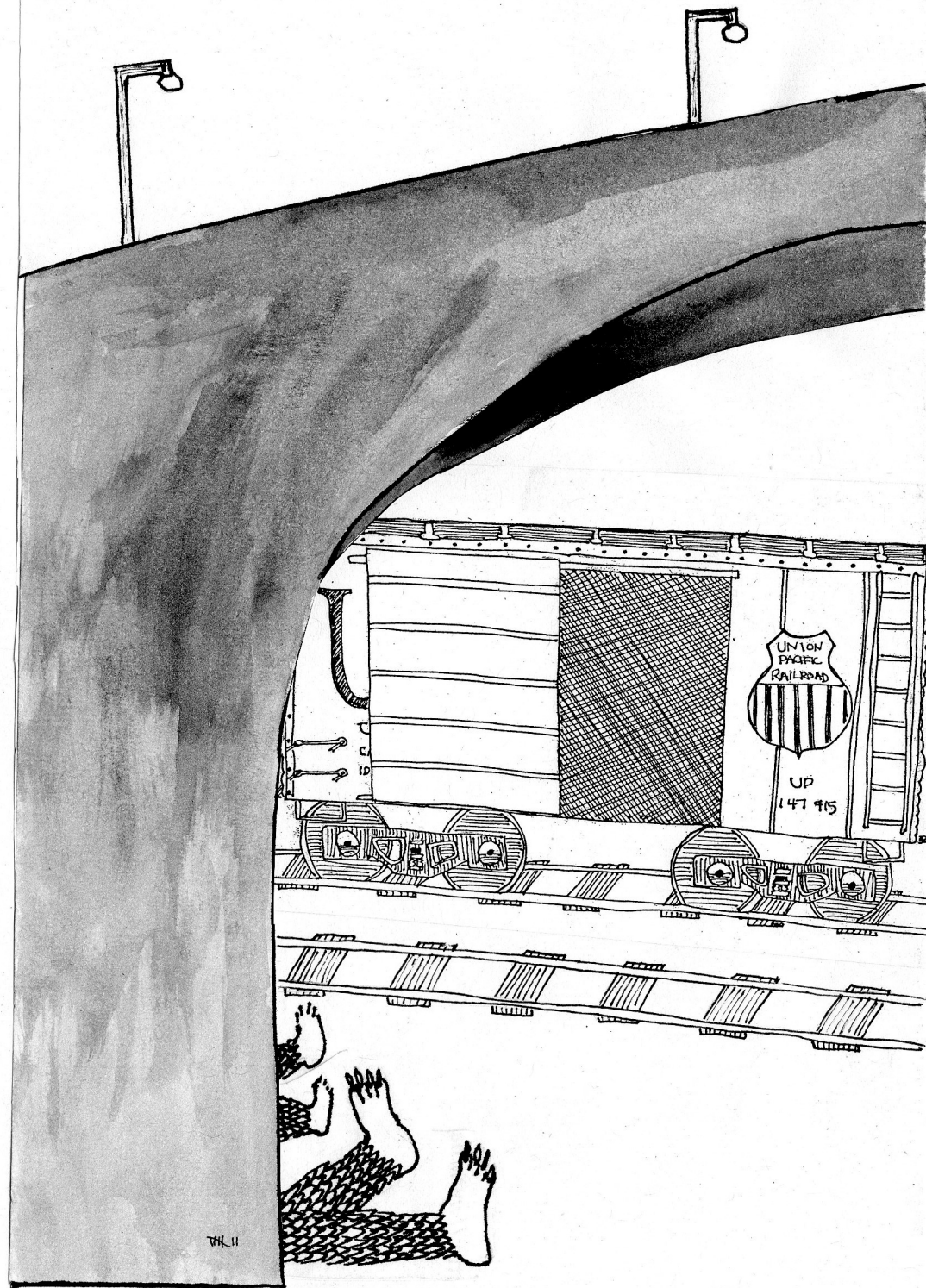


Beyond the question of whether it is *possible* to imagine and create radical, healthy, anti-authoritarian spaces within the frame of this pretty messed up world (and we'd argue that it is), is the question of whether it's the right thing to do. Does making capitalism/ imperialism/ a society based on domination more livable for more people just help it survive?

Maybe sometimes—this is a serious and complex question. But we need the tools with which to build a new world and challenge the old. We've had lifetimes of training in how to live in an oppressive society, and, as the audience member at the library pointed out, it's what we know. What would it mean to have a lifetime's experience dismantling it and building something different out of its broken pieces?

People aren't going to step off a ledge if they can't see, or at least really imagine, the ground below. Not unless we've been building wings together. And as we build wings we learn to trust our capacity to survive a jump. Or even a fall.

And who are we to assume we know what's off the edge of the cliff is any better? As we build non-hierarchical, autonomous worlds inside the frame of this one, though, we learn what they could look like. What works for us. What doesn't. We can choose to join iterations of the resistance that best fit us; people can come along if it feels right to them, or they can create their own. Like the Zapatista's say, we want in world in which many worlds fit.



We share a lot of perspective and context that has helped to shape this zine. We have lived together, organized together, traveled together, visited convergences and hometowns, been in crisis together, and had a lot of fun together. We read books the other recommends and talk a lot about our political ideas and our dreams for our futures.

But we are also pretty different, and there are a number of things that have shaped our somewhat distinct take on all of this as well, or have provided slightly different entry points for each of us. The next bits are an attempt to share some of that.

STORIES AND IMAGINATIONS

Coming out as queer was pretty brutal. Not really because of any extraordinarily harsh treatment by peers or my family—on that count, it was mostly okay, even supportive sometimes. And there were plenty of parts of coming out that were really great. The part where I discovered I liked kissing after all, that was fun. Having an excuse, an explanation, for my difference—that was at least a temporary relief.

The brutal part was suddenly losing a lifetime of imaginations for my future. I had stories about how it all would be, and I'd told those stories since I told stories, had them told to me since before I could hear.



finding that in riots, in the brief moments where everything is stripped away and glimpses of insurrection emerge.

But I want more than moments. I want places to rest & places to come home to. Often, right now, I feel like I have it. The question is how to imagine it ten, twenty, seventy years from now. The answer, I think, rests in looking straight at the places where we're living the lives we want now, and naming them, and telling their stories.

I didn't start believing I could be happy as an old queer because I stumbled into the retirement community of my dreams, with infinite combinations of relationships and identities, with families built like nets, webs of people and ideas. I started believing I could be happy because I saw that my peers were building lives on the assumption that they could be all the things they were and not be lonely and not be isolated. And suddenly it felt more possible.

THE HOME AND THE WORLD

After eight years living in the San Francisco Bay Area—the longest I've ever been in one place—I moved to Los Angeles for a year, and then to New York, where I've lived now for a year. During this period I've spent a lot of time trying to remember why I'd even considered leaving San Francisco—in retrospect, it seems like I had all the elements of a great life there: a strong sense of community, great houses to live in, access to jobs that felt good, and endless opportunities to apply my ideas and ideals to projects with people I really trusted.

MAKING MUSIC, BEING
THINGS THAT FEEL H
SHARES / LEARNING WITH
DOWNTIME / TIME AT HOME
MILITATING OTHER PEOP
IC, DOWNTIME, NOISE, SP
SSING CLASS BOUNDARIE
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IC ANNOUCEMENTS, PEOP
MAGICAL + STRANGE THING
LITTLE PUP, GETTING DR
AGIC, WRONG TURNS A
PEOPLE, EXCERCISE, SWIMMI
NG, BIKING, RIOTS, DIVING
HE CITY, CAMPING, SHAR
E OCEAN, EATING, BAC
ON LAKES, HANGING O
MER, SINGING, TALKIN
MAKING, CROSSWORD
HOME TO PEOPLE

We asked people what they do in their daily lives that they really enjoy, that makes them feel happy or sane or that helps them get through the day. Things they look forward to, things they like.

THIS IS WHAT THEY SAID

EXPLORE IN THE CITY, DANCING,
AND CELEBRATORY, COMMUNITY, SKILL
HOME-BASE, READING, EVENING D
CLUBS, LEARNING NEW THINGS, FAC
THINGS LIKED, LIBRARIES, MAIL, MUS
PEOPLE FOOD, KIDS, MIX TAPES, CRO
FAMILY, KNOWING NEIGHBORS, MUSIC, ADVE
MEETING DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE, RV
DANCING, BIKING, SHOPPING FOR FOOD, SE
OPENING THE FRONT DOOR, LEAVING IT
STEP...FUL + STIMULATING PUBL
ENERGY FROM THE
TRANGERS, MY BUTCH
E AT THE COMMONS, M
SEWING, MEETING NEW
FIRMS, CAMPING, READI
GETTING OUT OF T
SPACE, GOING TO TH
MAKING OUT, GOING SKATING
THE SAME LAKES IN THE WINTER AND SUM
FIXING BROKEN THINGS, FRIENDS
ZLE...ING THINGS I NEED, COMING
DOING MONEY, MOOTHIES, GARLIC



In the Bay Area there's a lot of criticism of lifestyle politics, lots of accusations about all the self-righteous 'radicals' who never do anything but help themselves and the people just like them. While that may be true, two years in extremely alienating, centerless cities have given me such an appreciation of the importance of a social and cultural context. There's something powerful about knowing I can go to a certain house every Wednesday for a potluck and probably meet someone new, or to the free movie night on Thursday, or to the park pretty much any day to run into someone I haven't seen in a while. Of course some of this comes with living in a place for years, and of course these things exist in lots and lots of places. But leaving a city that I loved has helped me better understand what I want and need in order to feel happy and excited and hopeful.

Part of me was into moving to LA, an intensely different place than San Francisco. I thought it would give me a chance to get outside my comfort zone and involve myself in different kinds of things with different kinds of people. I've always seen these radical enclaves in places like SF as incubators, as places to learn about and experiment with new forms of politics and culture. But the point, I thought, was to take these ideas out into the rest of the world, to push them and share them, to apply them and make them as accessible as possible. I always think back to a zine by Sascha Scatter (*La Vida Secreta de los Gabachos*, I think) where he talks about spending some time living with and working for a retired military officer in rural Louisiana. All his friends thought he was crazy for spending so much time with this conservative old man, but Sascha was excited about the arguments and debates and challenges they presented to each other.

In LA, however, I found it wasn't so simple. At least not for me. I quickly learned the importance of a strong base, of having people and places to go to where I could let my guard down and talk and listen without constantly wondering if I would offend someone, or if they were about to offend me. In a city where I had few solid friends and only fragments of a community, I kept finding myself feeling like I was on the

defensive, like all I could do was make choices based on what I *didn't* want to do and who I *didn't* want to be around. For a while it made me *more* closed off, *less* willing to engage with some of the complexities of such a new and bizarre city. I was shocked and a little disappointed to see how much I needed this kind of base and how unwilling I was to be challenged all the time, but I think it was a valuable lesson.

It's become clear to me that what we fight against, in the most short term and immediate sense, is alienation. Loneliness. Isolation. We live together and form collectives and have big dinners and share our time and resources and eventually we learn to take care of each other. When it works well it's so amazing what we can do, how good it feels to believe you are a part of something. It creates a sense of value and meaning.

And I miss it. I lie in bed some nights and remember riding my bike home after some long work party where I felt like I was really able to contribute, or staying up all night with friends at our events space cleaning or fixing or building or getting ready for something that seemed totally worthwhile. Those were good days and nights, a period when things made sense. And part of the important thing is that those days and nights were not just spent working, but working with people, people who became some of my best friends.

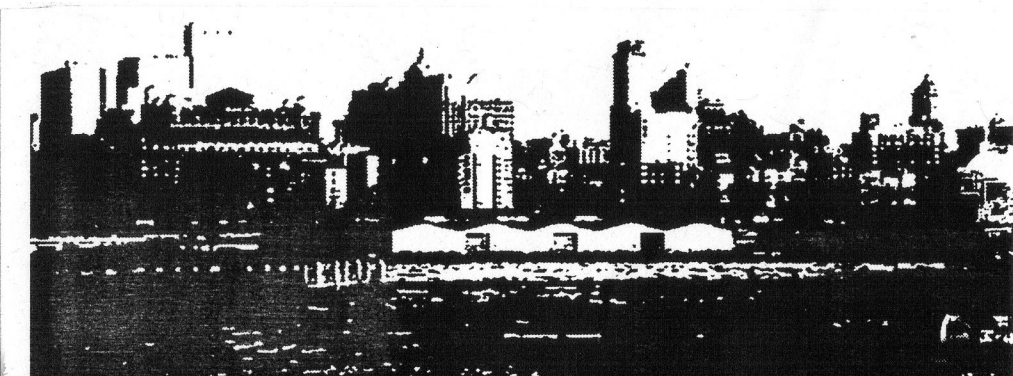
I've noticed that the times the world's problems come to seem the biggest and most impossible, when they creep in and occupy all the parts of my heart and brain that otherwise might be full of hope and plans, are the times I feel most lonely. When there are people around me who are fighting

communities, where they feel supported or constrained by their communities, where they are hopeful about their lives and the world, and what they would want to stay the same if they could change anything. In the process we gained a lot of insight into some of the questions and fears that plague us, and we also got to hear a lot of people say they're happy with their lives (which was *really* nice).

Most of our interviewees were drawn from the community around the Roberts Street Social Centre. Roberts Street houses the Anchor Archives Zine Library, the Inkstorm Screenprinting Collective, and a variety of other events and projects. It is a space to come together and work together to learn and make things. Though many of the people who run and use the Centre have political motivations (zines and silkscreening have always been ways to cheaply mass produce political propaganda), it does not have as explicit a shared political analysis or agenda as some of the communities we have been parts for the last several years.

This has made it a really interesting place to talk to people about their ideas about community. In a sense, it has offered us the opportunity to approach these issues from a different starting point: from SHARED ACTIVITIES rather than SHARED IDEALS. Clearly doing and thinking are not mutually exclusive; but it has been helpful to think of them as different entry points into examining the meaning of community and support in different contexts.

We weren't trying to find a representative sample of Halifax or to rate it on some happiness scale. What we wanted instead were examples, stories of what's working, ideas to borrow, inspiration to take home with us in the fall. We know we would have gotten very different answers if we looked elsewhere for people to interview. But that's fine, because we feel like we got what we were after: a little more hope and a few more ideas about what makes strong communities.



HALIFAX

Over the last several years we've spent a lot of time thinking and talking about these ideas. We've lived in, worked with, and visited projects around North America that attempt to embody and actualize their values, from collective houses and radical events spaces to political convergences and remote desert camps. We have been engaging in similar conversations about common questions, borrowing good ideas other people have thought of, and exploring different ways of creating space for people to experiment, create, and inch closer to the worlds they want.

Our most recent stop has been in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In some ways Halifax is pretty different from where we have been living—huge, expensive urban hubs full of tourists (and visiting friends) where people go to make their fortunes, be it in software programming, the movie or music industry, banking, art, or whatever else is attracting enough investors to make it hot. Halifax, on the other hand, is small, feels far away, and is on the way to very few places. It is not a place to get rich, but it is a place where it is possible to live cheaply.

In other ways Halifax is familiar—it has a community of DIY-oriented people making art and music, writing zines, running events spaces, and living their politics and beliefs. People here are friends or friends of friends, or soon to be friends.

We thought Halifax would be a good place to talk to people who might share some of our values but enact and articulate them in different ways. We made a list of questions to ask anyone willing to sit down with us, which proved to be a great way to learn a lot about a stranger.

In interviews that ranged from 35 minutes to many hours, we asked people about what's working for them in their lives and

back in their own little daily ways and I can see it, can feel what it's like when they win, when sometimes I win with them, so much seems more possible. When I can see that there are people who haven't compromised everything, that they have held on to things they believe and are still alive, still smiling, still working hard, I feel so much more able to describe what I want and believe. But when everyone's a stranger and it's cold and gray and I'm in a hurry and everyone else is too, everything can so quickly seem so doomed. It's then that I feel alone in such a massive and unwinnable war. It's then that I feel like maybe I should stop trying.

Of course people are always fighting and struggling and working, be it to survive or to keep their infoshop open, be it alone or collectively. I in no way mean to discredit all the ways people fight that fall outside the limited range I'm describing, or the people who believe they can't afford to fight, or that they can't afford to compromise. I'm talking about a fairly specific set of people who are defending a fairly specific set of ideas and ideals, people whom I identify with and have learned so much from.

It is with their support that I have managed to push beyond the narrow confines of our little communities, and it is only by moving away and drifting to the edges of this community that I have been able to more fully appreciate how much it enables and how many opportunities it creates. I certainly don't expect everyone to fit inside our little bubbles that are strung across the continent and globe. But I hope that everyone can and does have their own bubble where they can rest and explore and feel better about themselves and the world.

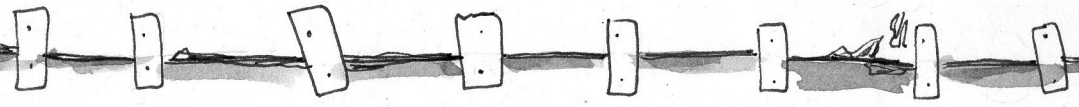


When my partner and I had a baby and our community cooked us meals for 30 DAYS! after the birth... Amazing.
We felt so supported in a town where we don't have "family".

I love walking down Gottingen St and seeing so many nice people! Strangers smile & say hi, people I know chat. I love my community!!!

The saved house ~~from~~ from Hobbs + Morris. One of the 4 oldest buildings in Halifax. It is dwarfed by the white box offices next to it but it is so so so full of hope.
There is also a beautiful garden on Agricola + Bilby. It makes me feel like this place is home.

Question #1
Answer:
Halifax and I have had a tumultuous relationship. This town on.
It is hard to hide from your problems here. You just keep meeting them in the street.
The first day of summer weather in Halifax always reminds me why I stay. Halifax summer makes my heart swell. Bike rides to the lake, stoop drinking, roof top reading, napping in parks some times even sleeping on the porch.
Every year it sneaks up on me and says "Aren't you glad you live here."



Today!
Sitting in someone's living room, sharing food, trying to work out our differences.
♡

Q#2
There are lots of ideas here and people willing to support another in realizing them.
Thanks for that.

What's Good

WE ARE COLLECTING STORIES OF PEOPLE, PLACES, & THINGS THAT YOU LIKE, THAT MAKE YOU FEEL HAPPY & SAFE, HOPEFUL & EXCITED. INSIDE THE BOX ARE PAPER & PENCILS. PLEASE USE THEM TO ANSWER THE QUESTION POSTED HERE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS FOR US, WRITE THEM TOO, & WE'LL TRY TO GIVE A RESPONSE FOR YOU.

The strangest thing remind me how much I like being around my friend... Things like bacon being on sale at the grocery store, or finding a pretty vintage apron, or listening to spoken word poetry at work. I miss her, because when I'm around her she reminds me that it's okay - it's more than okay, it's great. - to be exactly who I am. She doesn't worry about fitting in to a particular scene or being a kind of person that others can easily categorize and judge. She is awesome and real and does things like going to playgrounds and wearing pretty dresses and reading poetry, and when I'm around her I feel like I have space to be enthusiastic about whatever really makes me excited, without living up to anyone else's standards (whether real or imaginary). It is a breath of fresh air when I start overthinking who I am and who I want to be... I'm just your friend. Yay!

