

# HGGS Summer Forum 2025



Photo: Zeynep Göksele

US  
AND  
THEM



# CONTRIBUTIONS

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Beware of Them  
They are different  
Difference is fear  
Difference is futile  
Difference is annihilation

We are not different  
We are the same, We are One  
We are the fortress, We are safety  
Fear Us not, for we are Them



# **I am a social worker - and she is ...?**

## Reflections on Difference and Relationship

### **An ethnographic miniature**

At 11:30, I'm going on a home visit. I'm a social worker at the youth welfare office. She opens the door for me with a smile and greets me in a friendly manner. Her voice carries a distinct Croatian accent - and I can also hear a hint of some excitement. She has been living in Germany for over 10 years. She came hoping for a different and better life.

In her youth, she lived through the Balkan War. She told me that she was raped by soldiers. That her father dragged her mother across the yard by her hair. That her mother was the most important person in her life. She was also beaten. She had bad experiences with men.

At some point, she found herself alone with her four small children in this tiny social housing apartment, in the entrance to which we are now standing. She wanted to forget. She wanted to function for her children. She became massively overwhelmed. The children stopped going to kindergarten and school. The fridge was empty. The children increasingly appeared neglected. She could no longer stand up because of the pain. A father of two of her child's called me and said: she's taking drugs. That led to a test. The result: strongly positive for amphetamines, cocaine, and THC.

She has now been living in this apartment without her children for almost eight months. I have placed them in state care. It's the first time I've been back to this small apartment since then. It's on the ground floor and dark. You can still see the children's lines and pictures drawn with crayons on the walls.

For me, this is a sign of a lack of boundaries and deep overload. The apartment smells musty - trapped air and cold cigarette smoke, even though the window in the kitchen is open.

The hallway is narrow. Right next to the front door, on the right-hand side, is a tiny bathroom where you can barely turn around. It's hard to imagine how she managed to get four small children ready in here in the morning.

In the opposite of the bathroom was her bedroom - today it is a children's room without children. A carpet lies in the middle of the room. A child's bed stands against one wall, a wardrobe against the opposite one. Bags of clothes and a baby bathtub are in the corner.

She tries to brighten up the graying walls with pictures. There is no money left for new paint at the end of the month. At the end of the short hallway is a small kitchen. Its best days are long gone. The chipboard worktop is swollen from water damage. The electrical appliances are old.

There used to be plates with leftover food and pots with moldy fuzz. Today, the kitchen is tidy. I can see the stainless-steel bottom of the sink and the clean stove tops. Before, there were cockroaches. They're gone now - just like the children.

On the open kitchen window stands an amaryllis. It's the first time I've seen a flower in this apartment. It stands there, stretching toward the sky - one last bright red trumpet calyx blooms. She sees me looking at the amaryllis and says: "I don't have a green thumb, but it's blooming. It's blooming for Papa, Mama, and the children." I don't ask what she means. I leave her words in the small kitchen. We've had several conversations over the past years in which she told me about her desire for a real family - and the failed attempts to create one.

Next to the kitchen is the smallest rooms. Back then, it was the children's room. There was a bunk bed and mattresses on the floor, but none of the four children slept here.

Instead of toys and children's clothes, a double bed fills now the room.

In the opposite lies the living room - the largest room. The shutter from the window is down. It is dark. Two large couches stand in the room, in the opposite a TV bench and a big television. This was the center of the family's home. They ate, slept and lived here. All together on the couches. She has hung pictures on the walls. The room feels now more homely. In the middle of the room stands a large coffee table with an ashtray, cigarettes, a picture that her daughter draw the day before during a mother-child contact, and a teddy bear mug as a gift for her youngest, whom she visits in the children's home. The balcony door is open, yet somehow, no fresh air seems to find its way in. We sit down on the couches and talk. While we speak, she's sorting paperwork. She plans to enter a rehab clinic the next day. She wants everything taken care of before she goes. She asks me for help with the paperwork. It's not my job - but I can't refuse her.

She's in therapy and wants to change her life. Her last drug test - aside from THC - was negative. She says she's doing this for her children. Today, I see a woman who wants to fight to get her children back. Who speaks clearly about what she wants. That wasn't always the case.

As I leave, she thanks me for placing her children in safer places - so that she now has time to get well. She doesn't understand how things got so bad. She says that if nothing had happened back then, she might not be alive today.

We speak about her wish for the children to come back one day. I tell her, that it will still take months. Tears fill her eyes. She thanks me again.

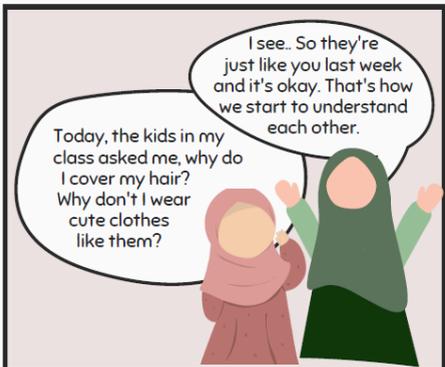
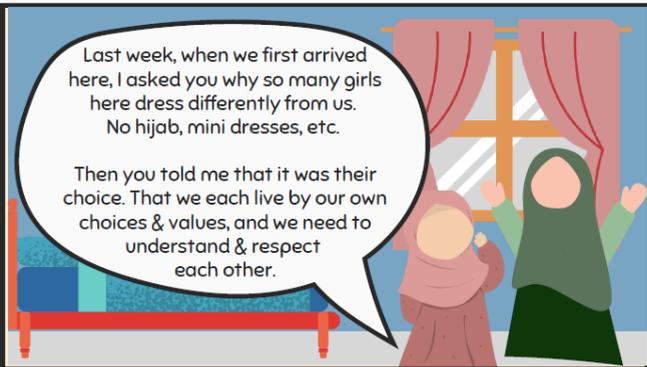
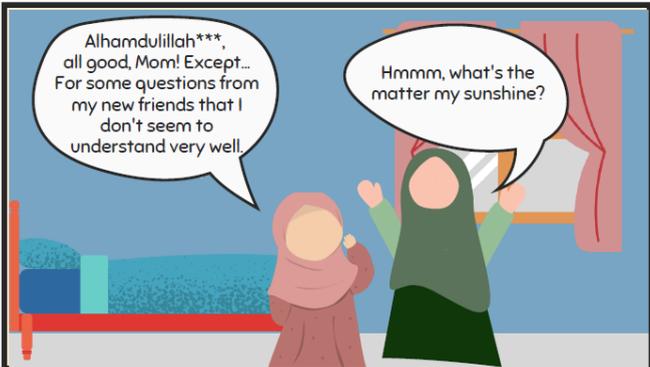
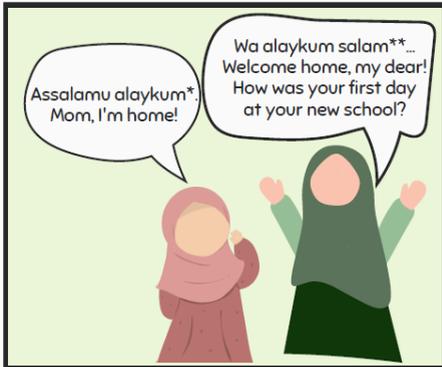
I wish her all the best and ask her to stay in touch.

I say goodbye, and she closes the door behind me.

I leave.

She stays.

# Mom, why do they ask about our hijab?



\* Assalamu alaykum" (اَسْلَامًا وَسَلَامًا) is an Arabic greeting that means "peace be upon you". It is a traditional greeting among Muslims.

\*\* Waalaykum salam" (وَعَلَيْكُمْ سَلَامٌ) in short, is the response to the "Assalamu alaykum", means "And upon you be peace".

\*\*\* Alhamdulillah" (أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ) is an Arabic phrase meaning "praise be to God" or "thanks be to God," often translated as "thank God".

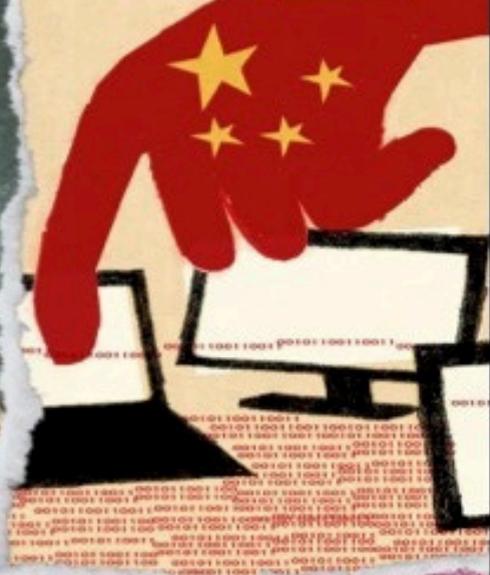
It's a common expression used by Muslims to express gratitude and acknowledge God's blessings.

# USA 2020

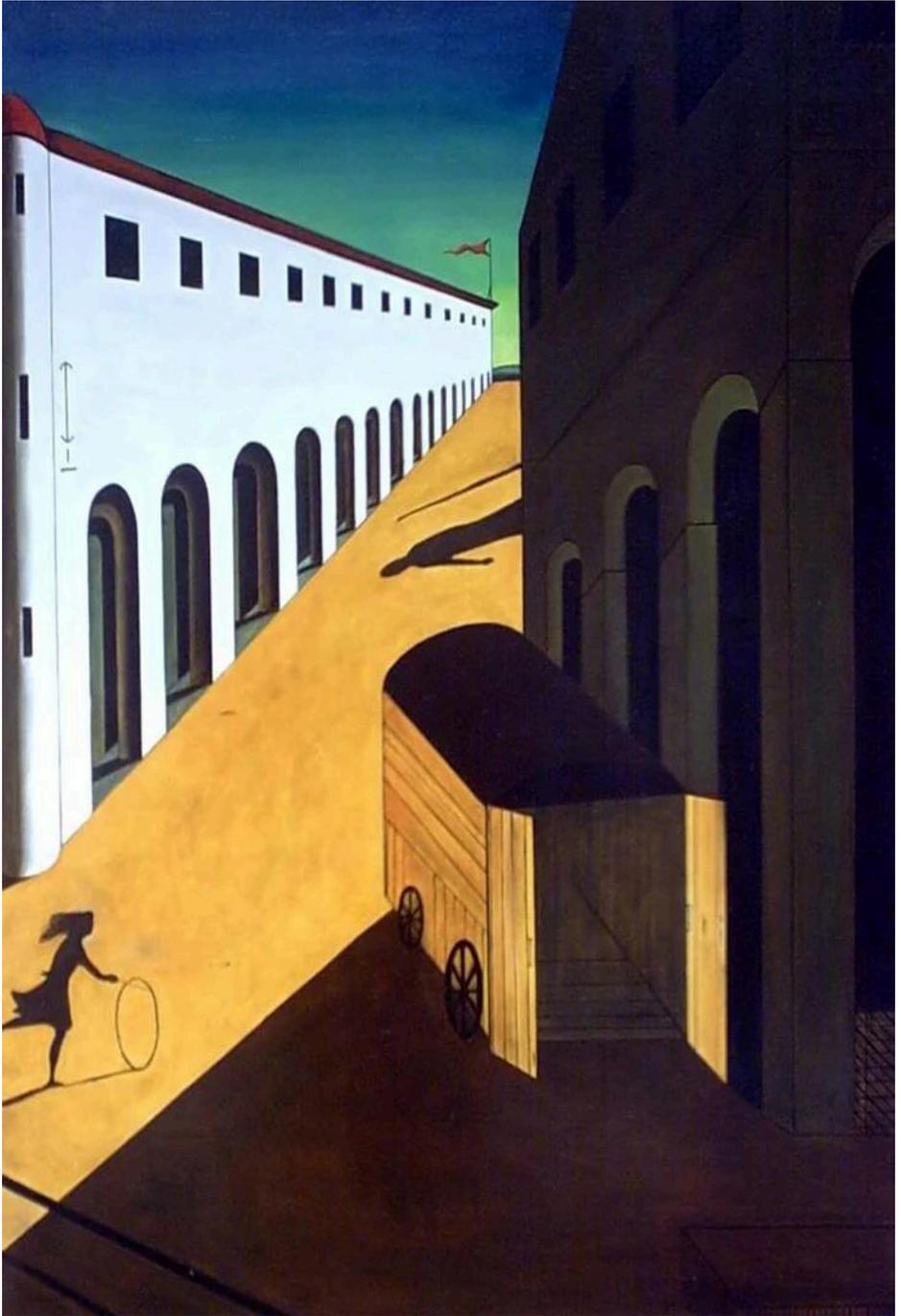


By KATEA ALE

# THEM



Alvarado



Giorgio De Chirico Mystery And Melancholy Of A Street

# Magical Urbanism in the Short Stories of Virginia Woolf, Clarice Lispector and Jhumpa Lahiri

## **Urban Transformations, Transitions and Translations Public, Private and Porous Urban Spaces Rhythms, Rituals and Repetitions of Urban Life**

"She felt herself everywhere, not 'here, here, here,' and she felt herself at one with the streets, the sky, and all that lies beyond, embracing London." Virginia Woolf

"Walking through a city, we observe others who are just as anonymous as we are. There's beauty in that." Jhumpa Lahiri

"In the city, we are always in motion, always in search of something we cannot name." Clarice Lispector

# **Games, Laughter, and Lessons: Reflections on a New Year celebration in Germany**

I am a South Asian; adapting to Western and German culture and ways. We recently celebrated the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on the 14th of April and I hated celebrating the New Year back mainly because of the customs and we had to adhere to. Often, the New Year does bring people and families closer and that is exactly what happened this year in Germany.

The community in Germany is not that large and it was the first time I met most of these Sri Lankans. I've been avoiding all these get togethers like plague but this time I ran out of excuses. The event started at 2 in the afternoon and the organizers had planned so many things that extended the gathering until 10 in the night. While I was quite sceptical about me having a good time, it was not that bad; to be honest, I did have a good time.

One of the most common ways to past time during this New Year season is to play games which are played specifically during the New Year time. Some of them include playing musical chairs (Sangeetha putu tharangaya), blindfolded feeding of yoghurt (andhayata kiri kawema), bursting of balloons, playing the dice (keta gaseema) and the infamous marking the elephant's eye blindfolded (aliyata aha thabima).

During every single game, there were a couple of people who tried to cheat the system. For example, during the yoghurt feeding game, one couple secretly started eating before the whistle. During the bursting of the balloons, a person used his nails to burst the balloon. Thank god for the technology, we were able to identify who cheated using the video clips and we laughed it off.

The fascinating thing is this is so expected and nobody thought it was a big deal, nobody fought, laughed it off and moved on to the next event. And then I wondered, would it have been different if there were Germans or any other person from the western culture were present at the gathering. However, I am not implying that "all South Asians" are such and not all "white people" live with integrity. But, I have been in Germany for nearly 10 months and I really do not have an answer for this. I am inexperienced to do so.

When there is a significant event lined up, often cutting lines is very expected in South Asia and there are measures taken to prevent such. What I wonder is, does it happen in the Western part of the world too? Is cheating the system normalized in the Western part of the world too? And most importantly what I wonder is, is integrity nurtured and embedded as something valuable in the Western world? Something to ponder on.

A bridge was



built at the start.

us grow apart.

A crossing made

Sometimes I think of you  
In random moments.  
Yet, I'm starting to forget  
Which language you spoke,  
How your voice sounded,  
And what we talked about  
Back in the labyrinth.  
When I first saw you,  
Your mind was a mirror,  
Your story a sister,  
And you were a victor  
Ready to fight  
With a burning passion  
To escape from the labyrinth.  
But our adversaries were ruthless:  
It was us against the odds  
And the monsters and the gods.  
And I recognized my hubris -  
I'd flown too close to the sun.  
Still, I tried to run  
With you from the labyrinth.  
Suddenly, we'd lost each other.  
And I searched for you,  
Tried to reach out to you,  
Tried alone to get through,  
But you no longer saw me.  
Can't even tell what it was in the end  
That made you give in to the labyrinth.  
The memories are slowly fading.  
Some open ends are best left untied.  
But sometimes I still wonder:  
If I met you now, would we still be the same?  
Would we recognize the thread  
Between us again,  
When I make it out of the labyrinth?





## Us and Them

Two words—worlds apart—  
With a sea in between.

Thoughts that sailed past you and me,  
And reached the horizon of us and them.

How far is the distance between us and them?  
How deep must one dive, how long must one swim  
To reach the other end

Which bridge will reduce the distance between?

Each step forward, each stroke ahead,  
Meet tides that pull backward .

Yet still—boundaries will always be crossed.

Boundaries blur, meanings shift,  
And change becomes the only constant .

The best journeys cross the boundaries  
where us and them

Become we.

EISENHÜTTENSTADT,  
2024

1973

WÜRDEN MIR UNS GUT VERSTEHEN?

STEHT ES MIR ZU, DEIN LEBEN ZUSEHEN?



HAT DEINE WELT DICH VERSTANDEN?

WAS IST VON "DIR" NOCH HIER?



WARST DU HIER?



WER BIST DU GEWORDEN?



WAS MACHT(CE)  
DIR FREUDE?

WO  
HAST  
DU  
DEINE  
BRIEFE  
GE-  
SCHRIE-  
BEN  
?



WIE VERLIEF DEIN LEBEN ABSEITS DER ARTE?

Eisen

er Herr

war

Ich bisher

niemand?

ein halber

Mensch? Haben Sie

meinen Wunsch zu

leben auf dem Gewissen

Wir haben beide

Gründe

"ein richtiger Mann" zu

So viel

Sorge mit den Menschen, aber

ist keiner da, der den

Glauben

für alle

Dinge

herzlich

schreiben,

sprechen kann.

Ich bitte darum.

WER BIN ICH  
WEGEN "DIR"?

sozialistische Grüße

M.

(J.R., 2025)

WAS VERBINDET "UNS" ? ODER TRENNT "UNS"  
VIEL MEHR?

# Us and Them. A Story About Democracy

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom full of people. Some were black and some were white. There was no one in between. The blacks wanted to impose their will upon the whites, and the whites upon the blacks, and there was constant division and friction.

At some point, a *searcher* appeared. He wanted to search out the causes of such division. He was neither black nor white. Colours did not apply to him because he had another nature, coming from a different kingdom.

He discovered that in the beginning, there was neither black nor white. There were only individual colours, one for each person.

But at some point, a *dictator* appeared. He was neither the ruler nor the people, but he claimed space in all of them. His voice sounded like this: *There is only one way and one way only to be happy. Everyone has to follow the same path for collective happiness to be attained. If one person deviates from this path, it's all for nothing. Everyone has to be like everyone. Look at your neighbour with all his quirksiness. Don't you see the smug smile on his face? That smile has to be erased. Otherwise, you are disrespected.*

And the *dictator* went everywhere under the guise of a spirit and infiltrated the hearts of people. And he spread hate and division everywhere.

Before the black-and-white era, the kingdom was governed democratically.

That meant, in practice, that the people elected their governors, but at the same time, both the governed and the governors were bound by some rules that were not up for negotiation. They were absolute. They couldn't be voted out of the democratic system. That meant that democracy was not limitless. These absolute rules were found by common introspection.

They were extracted from human nature and then written up in a constitution. It was like a decalogue of democracy.

They sounded like this: No collective measure can impair individual freedom. Each and every person is valuable and has the right to be himself or herself in our kingdom. Each and every person can express themselves freely. This freedom is only limited when one violates another person's free will. Any conflict regarding the exact place where this limit should be set is solved by fair judges. No person has the right to harm another person. The majority cannot impose its views on the minorities. Any attack on human rights and freedom is illegitimate, whether it comes from the governed or the governors. Any person, belonging either to the governed or to the governors, who attacks these absolute rules, either by speech or by action can be reduced to silence and sanctioned by measures decided by fair judges, without infringing upon their human dignity, which cannot be rescinded by mere people.

The spirit of the dictator was not pleased with these rules, as they limited his thirst for evil and vengeance. Thus, he created his own twisted decalogue of 'democracy', spreading it in the minds of the people. It sounded like this: Absolute values do not exist because they cannot be defined. Free will is an illusion. Society dictates what human rights are according to its transient objectives. The will of the people, manifested by vote, trumps all other considerations. There is a 'right' way of being; everyone must be moulded into the same pattern. Any defense against attacks on these so-called 'absolute values' is abusive and can degenerate into autocracy. Thus, the dictator twisted everything around according to his selfish desires. (...)

Scan the QR code to read  
the full story at SSRN:



# WHEN 'I' BECOMES 'WE'

Notes on gender-based violence  
and the collective resistance  
that continues to emerge.

(or a poem)

Kanya Viljoen



I am both named and nameless  
I scream and am silenced  
I am both tragedy and  
Public and private  
Singular and individual,  
I am in time, on time,  
With time, timely and timid,

Safe and unsafe,  
Voiced,  
unvoiced,  
visible and  
invisible.  
Past and present,  
Myth and fact,  
Here,  
and,  
Not- yet- here.

I am the women that bends  
but doesn't break,  
Mass,  
Undefined and defined.  
Persisting,  
Resisting,  
'Are you home safe?'  
'Share your location.'

On our own.  
Existing in the utopia,  
Acting, enacting,  
Imagining,  
Re-imagining the  
Tragic,  
Tragedy,  
Of  
Here,  
Assembling, framing,  
intersecting and inscribing,  
What is, **what if?**

transgression,  
  
out-of-time,  
  
Tired.

dystopia,

being





Fist  
Falling  
Short  
Backwards,  
Forwards,  
Flashing through screens,  
Have you seen  
Missing  
Enough  
Time and time again.

D i s p e r s e ,   g a t h e r ,   c o l l a p s e   a n d  
**r e t u r n .**

Again and again,  
and  
again  
and  
again  
and  
again

A potential of elsewhere.

## ¿Dónde están los pies?

En todos lados

Como fantasmas en la hendidura del asfalto

Exhalando vapores de olvido en las marchas forzadas hacia cualquier lado

Caminando,

caminando están los pies que no conozco

caminando van en todas las direcciones

Están los pies como nervios de pollo, deshechos

Están los pies enredados en las lenguas perforadas de la calle y

gritan

Gritan los pies su derrota

Con el remiendo de los días, cada paso es una historia de

suelas de caucho hendidas, doloridas,

(El lugar del otro, no me pertenece)

(No soy el reemplazo permanente y silencioso de la facha)

(No siento el arrastre de los bueyes)

¿Dónde están los pies?

Allí están, cubiertos de polvo y miseria en un banquito de plaza

Los lleva el hombre hundidos en el chiquero de los cerdos

Los devora el día mientras los llueve la noche.

Abre la boca el zapato abandonado en umbrales mugrientos

Abre la boca y grita los nombres de la lista infinita de ellos, de

otros, de aquellos que cogieron camino calle abajo

Que cogieron camino hacia la selva y se los tragó la nada

¡Alguien te quiso una vez zapato!

Accesorio elegante de la puta

Trofeo colgante

Soñador hambriento

¿Dónde están los pies hipócritas?

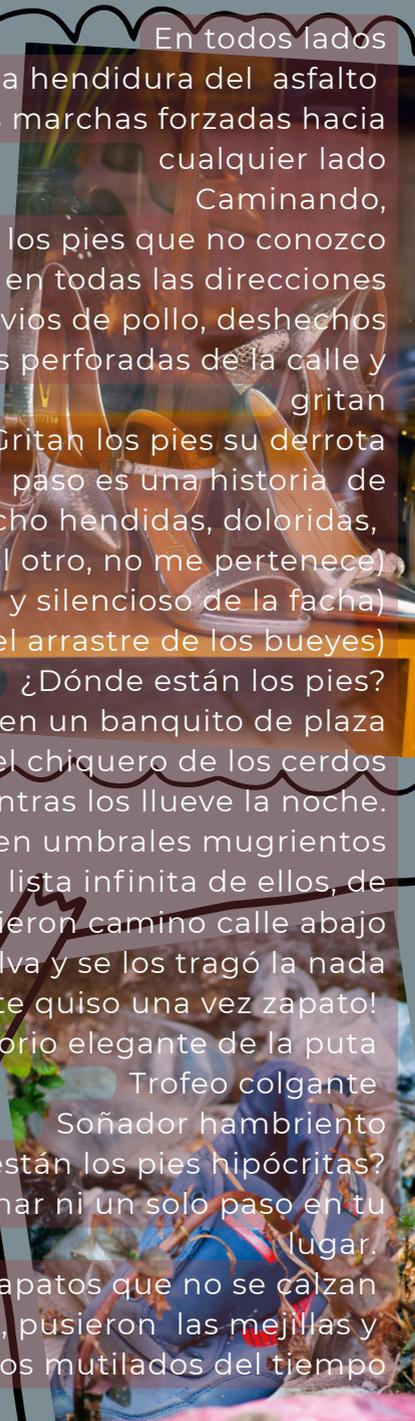
Tal vez mirando en las vitrinas sin caminar ni un solo paso en tu

lugar.

Hay pies que ya no sienten y zapatos que no se calzan

Ellos, los otros, aquellos, pusieron las mejillas y

Son ahora los mutilados del tiempo



## “Put yourself in someone else's shoes”

Where are the feet?

Everywhere

Like ghosts in the crevices of asphalt

Exhaling vapors of oblivion in the forced marches towards anywhere

Walking,

walking are the feet I don't know,

walking they go in all directions

There are feet like chicken nerves, shredded

There are feet entangled in the pierced tongues of the streets,

screaming

Screaming their defeat

With the patchwork of the days, each step is a story of cracked, sore

rubber soles,

(The other's place doesn't belong to me)

(I'm not the permanent and silent replacement of appearances)

(I don't feel the drag of the oxen)

Where are the feet?

There they are, coated in dust and misery on a small park bench

carried by the man sunk in the pigs' filth.

The day devours them while the night rains on them.

The abandoned shoe opens its mouth on filthy thresholds

Opens its mouth and screams the names of the endless list of them, of others, of those who took the road down the street

Who took the road into the jungle and were swallowed by nothingness

Someone once loved you, shoe!

Elegant accessory of the whore

Hanging trophy

Hungry dreamer.

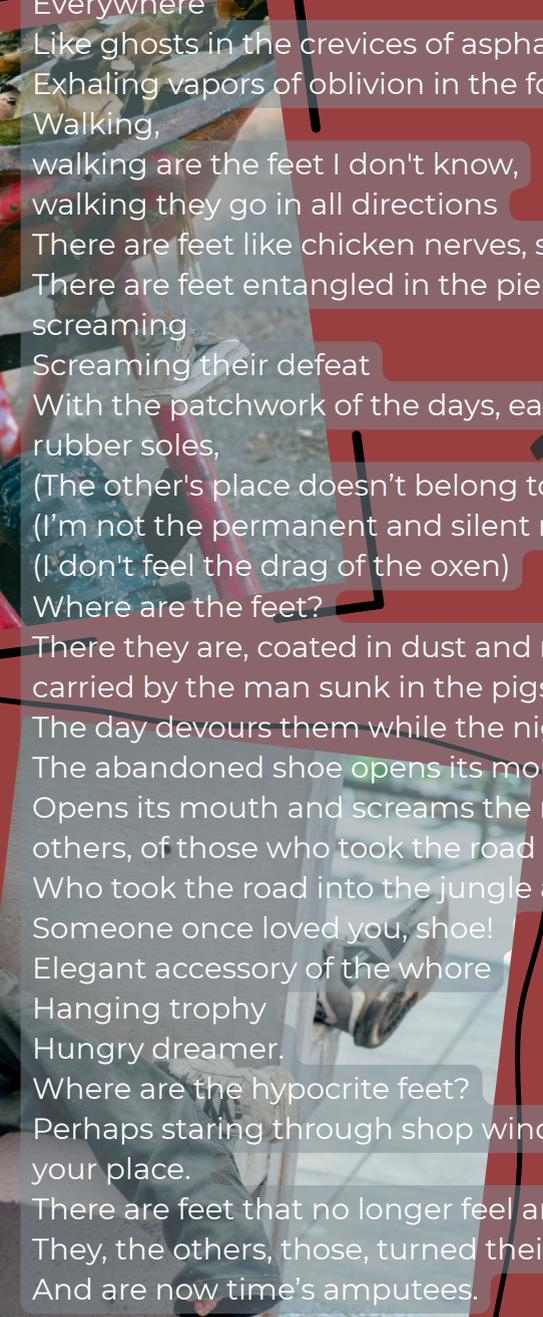
Where are the hypocrite feet?

Perhaps staring through shop windows without taking a single step in your place.

There are feet that no longer feel and shoes that are not worn

They, the others, those, turned their cheeks, and

And are now time's amputees.



**Vanessa A. Márquez Vargas,**

**translation by Javier Palomares**



# REPRESENTATIONS OF US



Nadja Samira Fraenkel, edited by Fabian Voelkel

„Excuse us“, they said, „but you are in our spot!“.

We looked around us. It all looked the same.

They seemed to know something we didn't.

So we took a step backwards.

“Careful“, they said, “you are coming too close, we will get mixed up.”

We looked around again. The all looked the same as us.

They seemed to be something we weren't.

So we counted and huddled together.

“Stop, that's close enough.“, they said, and formed a circle, facing us.

We looked back at them, into their middle. 'Twas the same all around.

Yet they seemed to have something we didn't.

So we split, and went away.

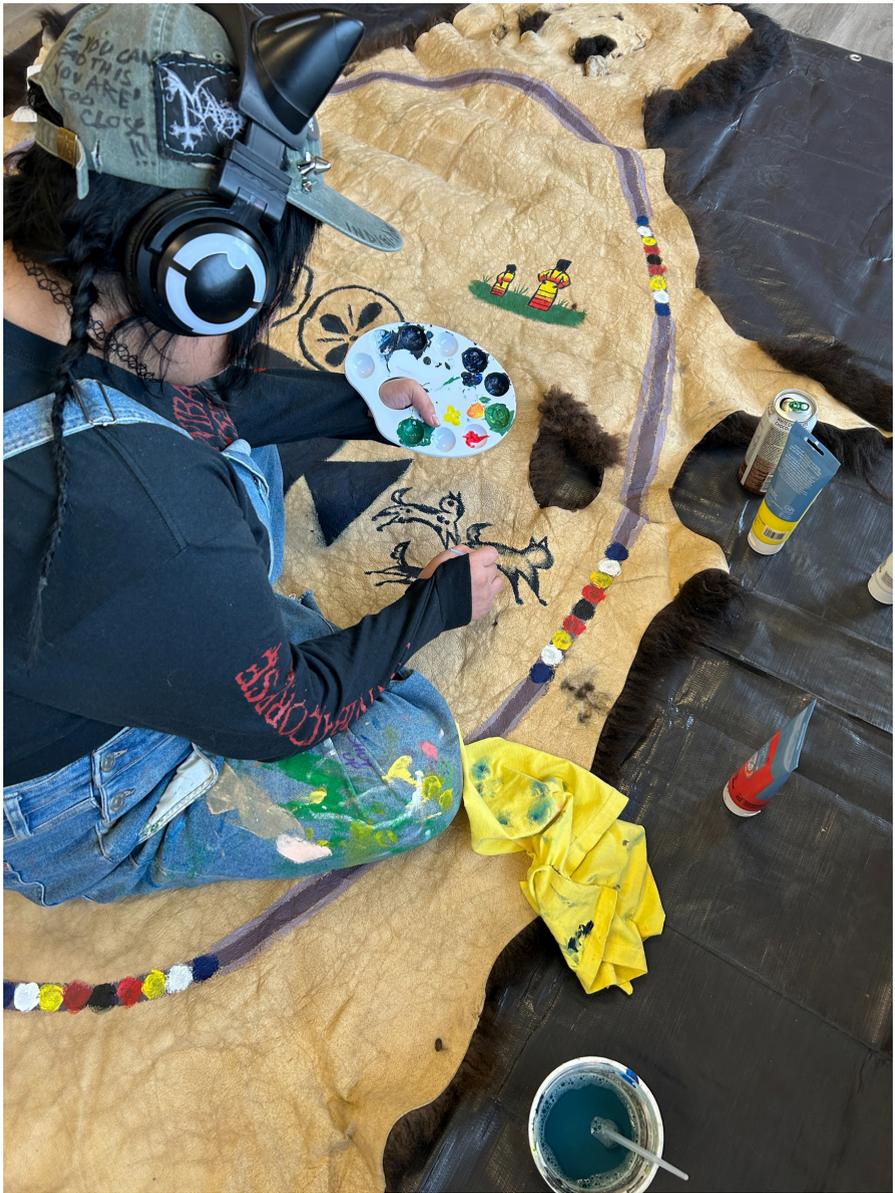
“Hey“, they yelled, “you can't leave us. Who will protect it all?”

We stopped and looked, looked again. It was still the same.

And yet.



And yet they had turned what was only us into us and them Until finally it was me, and her, and him, and them, instead of we.



The Woyuha Hnebi Bathtabi are:  
Cheyenne Suwataga Mu (Stoney Nakoda)  
AJ Benjamin (Stoney Nakoda)  
Giona Smalleyes (Stoney Nakoda)  
Amber Twoyoungmen (Stoney Nakoda)  
Aiden Powderface (Stoney Nakoda)  
Kelsey Twoyoungmen (Stoney Nakoda)  
Kes Lefthand (Stoney Nakoda)  
Amanda Foote (settler/white)

People in the Îethka community, our relatives, wanted to know where the late Hector Crawler's belongings went. We didn't know, so we went visiting to find them. We visited museums, archives, galleries, historic sites, webpages, belongings, peoples, and lands.

While we were visiting, we asked questions. Who works in museums and how do they feel about it? What does a museum do? What kinds of museums are there? How do Indigenous people interact with museums? What is the difference between "art" and "artifact" and does this matter to us? How did belongings leave Îethka communities? What's the difference between ownership and stewardship? What can the Îethka language tell us about museums? What can the belongings tell us about the world?

Here's a few tiny things we found.

Looking for them, and visiting them, brought our group together, we don't all agree on everything, but it helped us get to know each other, across generations, families, clans and bands. We learned more about museums, and about the culture that took our belongings away.

We're seeking things that we care about deeply, they're so important. Finding these things showed me that there is language, design, stories, cultures, and traditions of our people traveling the world, they're waiting for us to welcome them home. Some might not be done traveling yet. Some may never come home. We'll see how this journey unfolds, but I want to be ready for them.

They're sitting on shelves, and they keep being piled up. The newest ones are from 2013. They'll keep being piled onto shelves unless we find some way to make them part of our lives. We need their knowledge, and we need it in our lives today.

Can you help us find the Îethka belongings and welcome them home?

[www.iethkamuseumresearch.com](http://www.iethkamuseumresearch.com)

Woyuha Hnebi Bathtabi (The group looking for the important belongings)

There is no 'them'  
When love arises  
in our chest  
It is only us



# THANK YOU!

The HGGGS Summer Forum Team would like to thank all contributors for their wonderful work. It is amazing how many different, creative ideas our theme inspired! We would also like to thank the team who organized last year's Summer Forum for their idea to make a fanzine in the first place. We hope that this turns into an annual tradition.



On behalf of the whole team,  
Laura & Nadja



Editors: Laura Herges &  
Nadja Samira Fraenkel