

**ABOUT**

Critica is an inclusive publishing platform for reflection and conversation on issues relevant to psychoanalysis in the contemporary cultural, social, political, artistic, and scientific milieu. Critica invites submissions of manuscripts in a variety of formats, such as papers, essays, reviews (books, films, music, and art), interviews, commentaries, poetry, photography, and visual arts.

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Sabine Women Stop the War,  
after Rubens by Paul Ransohoff

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CRITICAL THINKING AND CREATIVITY IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS

CRITICA

# CRITICA

DEADNESS AND ALIVENESS

FALL 2025

VOL. 6, NO. 2



# CRITICA

CRITICAL THINKING, CREATIVITY, & CONTEMPORARY ISSUES  
IN PSYCHOANALYTIC PRACTICE

FALL ISSUE 2025  
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## ABOUT CRITICA

Critica is an inclusive and transdisciplinary publishing platform that focuses on offering a reflective and aesthetic space to consider complex social and cultural issues through psychoanalytic and creative lens. We invite dialogue while offering the possibility of expression and creative expansion of our understanding of contemporary cultural and collective issues in the hopes of promoting social change.

Critica is published online twice a year, in the Fall and Spring. Previous issues can be found in our archives, and printed on demand. The publication receives submission of essays, literary and artistic pieces, and book/film reviews in response or in conversation with contemporary collective/social experiences.

PINC (Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California) News and Notes Newsletter transitioned into Critica in 2020. The idea of Critica naturally evolved from shifts in the content of our Newsletter that reflected the search for new languages to address and understand the many layers of emotional experience evoked in a world in transition (and crisis). It was born from a need for contemporary explorations of the interplay of the psychic, the social, the cultural and the political.

Critica aims to offer a space for social, political and cultural critical thinking while promoting social change. Our objective was to broaden the impact of psychoanalytic critical thinking beyond PINC and establish a cutting-edge contemporary reflective space. In this sense, Critica functions as an informative, opinion forming, outreach opportunity and container for thinking through our emotional and social realities.

If you would like to know more, you may contact us at [critica@critica.press](mailto:critica@critica.press)

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# Editorial Team

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President's Remarks

# The Conundrum of Hope and Despair

by Elise Geltman

In this issue's theme—Deadness and Aliveness—it caught my attention that “deadness” comes first. This placement led to thoughts of Sabina Spielrein's 1912 essay, *Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being*, in which she argued that destruction and creativity/vitality are not merely contradictory but, in fact, interdependent. Spielrein helps us consider how breakdowns and (things) falling apart are part of what makes creative transformation possible—not despite, but through, because of, out of.

Spielrein's early psychoanalytic vision—long overlooked but prescient—encourages one to rethink the simplistic tendency to split vitality from what looks and feels like ruin. For her, the forces of deadness and aliveness are braided—even generative—in their tension and relation.<sup>1</sup> This aligns with many longstanding traditional wisdoms, whether they be indigenous, philosophical, religious, or simply observations of the natural world.

However, it must be said that such ideas about the poetry and imbrication of death/destruction and life/creation need to be balanced with considerations of scale and context. They mean one thing when

considering “individual” psychic life or a “single” lifecycle, and wholly another when considering the actual *deadliness* of dominant and dominating power structures and systems that strip the many to enliven a few, or when considering humanity's impact upon the natural world, and other 21st-century globalized cruelties. In the face of such matters, we often fall into overwhelm and are sometimes rendered hopeless.

Hope and despair is another dialectical tension (alongside deadness and aliveness) that all of us face. “Hope” is a fraught word/concept. Who has it, why, how, to what end, and for what? Some say that without it, psychical existence is nearly impossible. Yet, too often, hope is held too tightly or preciously as a kind of entitlement. Additionally, it may be treated as an “innocent,” uncomplicated necessity for going on being. But it depends on the type. If superficially imagined, hope can be fragile, (unconsciously) self-serving, and even weaponized. Think: “I hope because I want/need to feel good,” “I hope because I want to be seen as good,” or “I need my hope more than I need the object/person/issue that threatens it,” and so on. These kinds of hope, which I might consider transactional or conditional, run the risk of being easily shattered or soured (by discomfort, critique, or an extended timescale) or collapsing under conditions of disillusionment.

Recently, I've realized that I've come to think of “hope” less as an emotion or belief, and more as

something *within the body*—below consciousness or control (perhaps below ideology, politics, training, but maybe not)—something almost cellular. Hope, for me, is *the spark in the soma right before a movement is begun, the moment just before an act(tion)*. Not the act itself, nor a grand vision of how things should be, but the internal process that makes the next action actually possible. A kind of muscular flicker toward. An impulse. A cellular capacity for liveliness. Maybe linked to the way Eros moves—not necessarily toward satisfaction, but toward some kind of contact, to be responsive, to remain/be capable of response. Hope, in this (my) idiosyncratic framing, is the possibility of...and action toward.

It doesn't promise anything. It is a form of responsiveness, which is, I guess, proof of life (aliveness).

Which brings me/us to another idiosyncratic reading of something familiar. I have a particular (but useful to me) misreading of Emmanuel Levinas's koan-like sentiment: “In the face of the other, I am responsible.” I misread this to be, “In the face of the other, I am response-able.” Which leads me to, if I am capable of merely responding—of moving, of acting, in relation to the world/Other—then I am also responsible in some way to do so. That capacity—somatic and psychic—is a kind of ethical hope. It is not future-focused or idealistic. It is in the “almost present” right there just now<sup>2</sup>.

This kind of thing might have been easier to manage at the

scale of earlier human life. The global, 24/7, fear-funding machine exhausts many's respons-ability and overrides or exploits that quiet, precious cellular impulse. May we each cultivate the capacity and state of mind to sense what, I think, our bodies know.

In times when much is breaking down and many are enacting violence that breaks others' lives, bodies, minds, and hearts, I find small inspiration in the flicker of responsiveness that lives in and between us.

In Solidarity,  
Elise Geltman, LCSW  
PINC President

<sup>1</sup> Spielrein's concept resonates with psychoanalytic thinking about the dynamic interweaving of Eros and Thanatos (Freud, 1920).

<sup>2</sup> To be clear, I have been told by a Levinasian scholar that my interpretation is not what Levinas meant or intended. Even so, I find it compelling and share it as my misreading or translation. See Levinas' related works such as the essay, “Meaning and Sense” (in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, Levinas, 1987) and “From the One to the Other” (in *Entre Nous*, Levinas, 2000).

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Elise Geltman, LCSW, is a social worker and psychoanalyst in Oakland, CA. She engages in analysis and psychotherapy, clinical and organizational consultation, and teaching. She is the current President of PINC, on the Community Psychoanalysis Track - Steering Committee, and a member of the Race Working Group. Elise continues community work at Westcoast Children's Clinic. Elise recently won the inaugural Lewis Aron Prize for her paper, *Who is Free to Free Associate: Psychoanalysis and Social Ethics*. She continues to study group relations and is committed to group life and engaging individuals, systems, and the social.

# Drip Irrigation

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*by Joyce Schmid*

Joyce Schmid, Ph.D., LMFT Joyce Schmid's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Hudson Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Passager* (2024 Passager Poet Prize), *Salt*, *Bridport Prize Anthology 2023*, previous issues of *Critica*, and other journals and anthologies. A poetry chapbook, "Natural Science" was published by Glass Lyre Press in 2025, and another, "Superbloom," is forthcoming from Kelsay Books. She practices psychotherapy online and by phone.

The drought-dry  
plants are patient  
with their death.

They don't complain.  
They are connected  
to the earth.

But I am frantic for a way  
to use my tears  
to give them life again.

# Alone In The Dark

*by Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz*


*Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz, MFT, is a Psychoanalyst and artist. She is a PINC Graduate and maintains a private practice in Lafayette. She is a supervisor at TPI and has taught in the SSP program. Dawn has been creating art all of her life and attended The High School of Music and Art in NYC. She has a joint BFA from Tufts and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Dawn has shown her work nationally and internationally. Currently Dawn Serves as an Event Coordinator for Critica and is looking forward to becoming its Art Curator.*



# On Tiles and Flesh

by Carolina Bacchi

*Carolina Bacchi, Psy.D., is Co-Editor-in-Chief of Critica (Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California) and serves on the editorial board of the IPA/COWAP book series. She is faculty at PINC, SFCP, and NCSPP. A psychoanalyst in private practice in Oakland, she works with children, parents, and adults in English and Portuguese. Originally from Brazil, she brings a bilingual and bicultural perspective to her clinical, editorial, and teaching work. In addition to her clinical practice and institutional roles, she is a writer and poet.*



Lisbon, 2025. The 54th IPA Conference, Psychoanalysis: an anchor in chaotic times, gathers at the Centro Cultural de Belem. Across the street from the conference venue, the Monument of Discoveries is revealed in its grandiose presence. While walking around the margins of the Rio Tejo during breaks from panels and discussion groups, I am prompted to consider my relationship with Portugal as a Brazilian. The monument built to celebrate the Portuguese Age of Discoveries represents an idealized version of the Portuguese exploration, taking the form of a forward part of a caravel, the ship used at the time. Edging the central slab are two ramps that converge at the river's edge, where the statue of Henry the Navigator stands prominently. Lining each ramp beside Henry are 16 figures—33 in total—depicting key personalities from the Portuguese Age of Discovery. Pedro Alvarez Cabral, the discoverer of Brazil, stands on the left side. Growing up, I heard that story many times - Pedro Alvarez Cabral portrayed as the central character of our history, our discoverer, the one who arrived in Santa Cruz Cabralia (which was named after him) to find some native people looking at him in awe and deference. As a child, the figure of Pedro Alvarez Cabral was celebrated in history lessons. Our history was portrayed from the perspective of the conqueror, with us, Brazil, existing only after and through the eyes and actions of our colonizer. Looking at that monument, I felt a complex sense of becoming small, almost disappearing in the grandiosity of those conquerors who celebrated not only their colonization of Brazil but also the many other colonies. Brazil, the largest one, was exploited for many years, and the Portuguese culture is embedded in our language, habits, architecture, food, and, mostly, our collective imaginary. The celebratory take on that was disturbing to say the least.

As much as Portugal feels familiar, the familiarity also evokes a complicated and silenced history of domination/oppression. That history, not named openly in our history classes, pops up in small ways in our daily Brazilian life. Being a colony is evident in our relationship with public spaces and services, which are often exploited rather than respected or utilized as common, collective, shared assets. In our collective imaginary, our land and its inhabitants are means to an end, pawns in a game where the king takes it all. Brazilian politics is infested with those underlying ideas, and an idealization of the colonizer, intertwined with a desire to merge with them, infiltrates the culture, relationships, class, race, and social dynamics.

Navigating my discomfort and wondering about the invisible ways we normalize oppressive individual and social actions, I was curious about the colonization of the mind, the one that happens as we immerse ourselves in the symbolic realm of our existence, which defines the contours of our desire. I started to ponder the ways one's mind is conquered, leading to an impossibility of critical thinking. The normalization of oppressive discourse

in our psyches maintains the colonization and overpowering mechanisms impeding dialogue and reflection. Through this logic, the colonizer is idealized, the native is dismissed/feared/devalued/exoticized, and the inner dynamic guarantees the perpetuation of the colonizer's power. Through this logic, our freedom is, by definition, compromised.

It was a relief, in my dislocated space, to go to an Art Show at the Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian named “Entre os vossos dentes” featuring the work of Paula Rego and Adriana Varejao. Paula Rego is a Portuguese artist of the late 20th and early 21st century who focused much of her career on women's and abortion rights, exploring themes such as abortion, incest, genital mutilation, sexuality and sexual abuse, submission, and gender inter-generational differences. Adriana Varejao, a Brazilian contemporary artist who references the effects of colonialism by Europe on Brazil in her work, examines this theme in the context of race, body, and identity. She explores the process of absorbing and incorporating foreign influence into native Brazilian culture.

At the opening of the show, we encounter Varejao's large sculpture of yellow and blue Portuguese tiles, described by Wienerroither (2025) as “the column stands upright because of the flesh. Raw flesh, getting thinner in the middle, morphing into a strange form and then into tiles again. Flesh. Blood and body. Tiles. Being in Lisbon, where every façade is covered with historic tiles, the sculpture at the entrance asks the visitor how to position your body in a traditional space.”

Their work was presented side-by-side, the title referencing a poem by Hilda Hilst<sup>3</sup> that alludes to the Brazilian dictatorial regime. Through representations of literal and metaphoric bodies, they invited us to consider “how patriarchy, colonialism and many forms of oppression mutually interact, ‘chewing up’ people and their stories” (Varejão, Freitas, and Gorgulho, 2025). That was inspiring - those two women, from different times and intertwined cultures, reflecting on the destructive impact of colonialism, one that controls bodies and minds to the extreme of reducing them to disposable objects. And so to the point of our current invitation from Critica's theme, “Deadness and Aliveness.” In our issue, writers, poets, and artists engaged with the theme to weave together ways to question, dialogue with, wonder about, think, and expose the many facets of a sense of aliveness in opposition or conversation with deadness. As you traverse the following pages, we hope you will find, like I did at the “Entre vossos dentes,” space to be moved by the underlying dynamics of power and struggle that we, human beings, have to contend with, grapple with, and find representation in art, words, and thoughts. And then, hopefully, to fight against our minds being swallowed by a deadening silence where repetition of the past is the only possible outcome.

### <sup>3</sup>Poemas aos Homens do Nosso Tempo II

Hilda Hilst |

Amada vida, minha morte demora.  
 Dizer que coisa ao homem,  
 Propor que viagem? Reis, ministros  
 E todos vós, políticos,  
 Que palavra além de ouro e treva  
 Fica em vossos ouvidos?  
 Além de vossa RAPACIDADE  
 O que sabeis  
 Da alma dos homens?  
 Ouro, conquista, lucro, logro  
 E os nossos ossos  
 E o sangue das gentes  
 E a vida dos homens  
 Entre os vossos dentes.

#### English Translation:

Beloved life, my death lingers  
 What to say to man  
 What journey to propose? Kings, ministers  
 And all of you, politicians,  
 What word besides gold and darkness  
 Stays in your ears?  
 Besides your RAPACITY  
 What do you know  
 Of the souls of men?  
 Gold, conquest, profit, deception  
 And our bones  
 And the blood of peoples  
 And the lives of men  
 Between your teeth.

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# Some Reflections on Aliveness and Deadness

by Luca Di Donna

Luca Di Donna, Ph.D., Co-Chair of Critica. Member of Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. Personal and training analyst at PINC. Member of IPA, Associate member of Italian Psychoanalytic Society. Involved in psychoanalytic publishing for forty years.



My reflections on the topic of Aliveness and Deadness began a few months ago when I was invited by Monica Bomba from the Milan Psychoanalytic Institute to participate along with Luisa Marino in a Congress on the work of Winnicott and Bion. After many discussions Luisa and I decided to have a dialogue about the work of Klein, Winnicott and Bion, rather than write a paper. We were very excited about the project, but also realized the complexity of the topics we would need to cover. How would we present Winnicott and Bion as part of the British Psychoanalytic Society? The literature on British psychoanalysis is immense, especially its

history around the “Controversial Discussions” that took place in London from 1941-1945 and the experiences of analysts who emigrated from Vienna, Germany and Hungary to England.

Our dialogue started with Melanie Klein and gradually shifted to Winnicott and Bion. In this editorial I will not transcribe or summarize our dialogue but try to capture some of our ideas relative to the concepts of aliveness and deadness that are part of Klein’s, Winnicott’s and Bion’s work. The bibliography at the end only references the books most relevant to our dialogue.

The most important analyst in England during the period of 1926 to 1960 was Melanie Klein. Who was she and why was she so controversial? Klein was analyzed by Ferenczi and K. Abraham and was invited by Ernest Jones to London in 1926 to teach child analysis, employing a method that differed from Anna Freud. Klein believed that a child could be analyzed at an early age. She used transference to understand the child’s conflicts. Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud did not accept her ideas. For them her ideas were wild and too abstract.

Klein was a strong woman who was divorced with three children. Her life was complicated and she endured many losses — a sister, a brother and a son, as well as her analyst K. Abraham. Her ideas were original and innovative and attracted many analysts in London to work with her. Most of her work was an articulation of the

destructive impulses in the early internal life of the child. We think the controversy around her started in Berlin in the 1920s. The Berlin institute was adopting a view that was different from Freud’s Libidinal Theory. The difference related to sadistic aspects in the early stage of development that is similar to Klein’s ideas.

In London around 1936 there was much controversy about the teaching and transmission of psychoanalysis. During those times many analysts from Europe moved to London to escape the Nazi Regime. Freud and his family also left, relocating to London in 1938.

The major controversy was whether to stay close to Freud’s model or move to a new theoretical model proposed by Klein.

Another complication was that the analysts that immigrated to England had to adapt to a new language and a different way of life. They worked hard to stay alive and practice analysis. In London the tension was so great about different theoretical ideas that an exchange was proposed where theoretical and clinical papers from 1941 to 1945 would be discussed. It was called the “Controversial Discussions.” The conflicts were not resolved, but instead, the Society was divided into three groups: Freudians, Kleinians and Independents. To learn more about this topic, see “The Freud – Klein Controversies 1941-1945” by Pearl and Steiner (1991). It is an important book not only to understand the theories, but to learn about the

politics, immigrations and lives of the many analysts who were part of the British Psychoanalytic Society.

Returning to Klein, her ideas were fueled by the death instinct, aggression, destruction and envy. Luisa’s and my impression was that her work was an extension of Freud’s death instinct that he proposed in 1920 in a paper titled, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle.” Freud’s paper was very complex and was rejected by most analysts because it was too abstract, philosophical and biological. In contrast, Klein’s work was more clinical than theoretical. It was subsequently left to her students to present Klein’s ideas within a theoretical framework.

Klein’s work, with its focus on destructive forces, reveals a certain deadness, a dark side, in a person. For Klein it began very early on in childhood. The child’s sadistic tendencies appeared in depression, especially in melancholia and psychosis. Klein’s ideas were too abstract and dogmatic, however, which is one of the reasons that the international psychoanalytic community, especially in the United States, rejected her ideas. At the same time many talented analysts followed her work, including Bion, Hannah Segal and Rosenfeld. For a short time Winnicott was close to Klein. The question for us is: Is Klein a dangerous analyst? We discovered that she herself was rather aggressive. She humiliated her daughter Melitta during psychoanalytic meetings in London. Melitta moved to New York and,

interestingly, did not go to her mother's funeral.

To bolster our argument that Klein was dangerous, we found a 1981 paper that Jean Laplanche, a leading French psychoanalytic scholar, presented in Mexico called, "Should We Burn Melanie Klein?" We are fortunate that *The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* published Laplanche's paper with a discussion by many analysts from the Bay Area. We will not discuss the Laplanche paper, but we will include here a lucid summary by Mitch Wilson, the editor of JAPA.

"Laplanche's mischievously titled paper, 'Should We Burn Melanie Klein?', was given originally as a presentation in Mexico in 1981. Its title, though certainly jarring to some, in fact signals Laplanche's deep respect for Klein's intrepid push into the nether reaches of the psyche, as well as her willingness to populate this territory with a variety of figures (objects partial and whole), positions (paranoid-schizoid and depressive), and passions no less absolute than the instincts of Life and Death. But it is Klein's very fearlessness—or perhaps a presumptuousness that underwrites it—with which the admiring Laplanche struggles. As will become clear upon reading, Laplanche's critique engages fundamental questions regarding psychoanalytic theory and practice." (JAPA Vol. 67, p. 815.)

The question regarding psychoanalytic theory and practice is taken to new dimensions by students of Klein, especially Bion, Hannah Segal

and Rosenfeld. This trio, with the support and help of Klein, extended her work about psychotic thinking and functioning.

Bion was the leading figure of Klein's group. His 1967 book, "Second Thoughts," was a collection of his papers on psychosis. The papers were and still are exceptional. Bion had a clear view of the psychotic state, which he saw as fueled by aggression, sadism, rage and an intolerance of reality. Bion stressed the destructive aspect of the patient's mind, which he called "attacks on linking." The patient attacks both his own thinking and the analyst's mind. Clearly, Bion saw this as a type of destruction. The papers described bizarre objects, psychotic parts of the personality, arrogance, catastrophic fears, and more.

Why so much rage and destruction? Luisa and I wonder whether the theoretical models of Klein and Bion were based, too, on their direct experiences. During that period, war with Germany was a reality, not a theoretical possibility. The Controversial Discussions seemed to foreclose external reality.

Was Klein's theory an attempt to show the aggressive aspect of humans and also the traumatic aspect of personal and cultural losses? As we stated before, the British Institute attracted many refugees from Europe that emigrated from Germany, Austria, and Hungary to escape the Nazi Regime. The British Institute was likely a creative refuge for those immigrants who lost their families and friends

during the war. I think their work on psychosis was not only meant to understand the internal psychotic process, but also the insane and dangerous world around them. It was about the absurdity of humanity, as reflected in Kafka, Joyce and Beckett.

Like Klein, Bion was also an immigrant. He moved to England from India when he was eight and never returned. He had many traumatic experiences during World War I and suffered the loss of his first wife. During World War II, his work with traumatized soldiers influenced his views of group work, which he wrote about in "Experiences with Groups." His analysis with Klein helped him to free his mind.

Bion's ideas were original. His work is based on scientific theories, mathematical ideas, and such concepts like Alpha, Beta, K, -K and, in particular, O. For years I struggled with this concept of O. Finally, it has been explained beautifully by Annie Reiner, a Los Angeles analyst, in her book, "W. R. Bion's Theories of the Mind: A Contemporary Introduction." (2023) The book is a short 88 pages. Thomas Ogden highly praised it for its clear explanation of the concept of O. For us, the concept O could be distilled as a certain feeling that illuminates a person's emotions and the world around him.

Bion moved from London to Los Angeles in 1968 to start a new life. It was not easy for him. He was somewhat isolated, reading poetry and travelling around the world to give seminars. For a long time, he was

not well understood in England or Los Angeles.

In contrast, the work of Winnicott is completely different. He was critical of Klein's and Bion's theories and many other thinkers'. His many letters make clear that he was a brilliant thinker, but also a complex man. His letters to Klein and Bion are important to understand Winnicott both as a person and theoretician.

Winnicott came from an upper-class British family and had a stable and very good early life. He became a pediatrician, a superb theorist and clinician, and was involved with his psychoanalytic society for many years. He also was deeply engaged with American psychoanalysis. Winnicott had two analyses, the first with Strachey and the second with Riviere, a student of Klein.

The foundation of his theory is the role of the mother, the maturational process, and the power of the environment. He believed that psychosis was caused by a failure of the environment, traumatic experiences and difficulties with the mother.

His clinical work is that of a very seasoned analyst. He delved into both the setting and his own

attitude toward the patient. He believed the aim of analysis was to allow the patient to become a real person. The analysis should help the patient experience vitality and pleasure to be able to play and create. His focus centered on creating internal aliveness.

Winnicott, in creating a new theory, made changes to Freud's, Klein's and Bion's models. His theory is ontological, which could be encompassed in the Italian word *Divenire* -- "to become a subject." The theory moves away from Freud's metapsychology of forces and impulses. This shift, according to some analysts, is revolutionary and creates a new metapsychology in psychoanalysis.

To conclude, Luisa and I think that Klein, Bion and Winnicott are very significant thinkers. Do they have something in common? It is difficult to ascertain. There are both similarities and differences among them. We could say that Klein and Bion stressed more the deadness in the patient. Winnicott was more positive, focusing on the liveliness. Regardless, their work is original and compelling. It is possible to infer that we are afraid to mourn and move away

from them. This is a challenging question in psychoanalysis.

Luisa and I firmly believe that psychoanalysis is still alive and growing theoretically and clinically, and that it is an endlessly creative and fertile process.

We have tried in this paper to show the conceptual psychoanalytic ideas of deadness and aliveness in the work of Klein, Bion and Winnicott, as reflected in a dialogue between me and my friend and colleague Luisa Marino. We were enlightened in reading and studying these authors and would like to thank Monica Bomba for her invitation.

I would like to thank Drs. Sharon Neuwald and Sally Jorgensen for their editing and insightful comments.

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# Choreography of Exile

by Hailey Ashcraft

As a multimedia artist, curator, and educator, my work investigates what happens when the places and communities we call home are ripped away — by war, natural disaster, or political upheaval. I work across painting, photography, and video to document and interpret the psychic and physical landscapes of displacement: what it means to lose a home, to rebuild identity far from where it began, and to find resilience in unfamiliar ground.

Hailey Ashcraft-Fimiani, MFA, MA, *Odyssey Art Collective and Gallery*, [www.haileyashcraft.com](http://www.haileyashcraft.com)



My background in both art and psychology grounds my practice in deep listening and layered observation. As an educator at a local college, where I teach photography and psychology, I remain dedicated to creating space for dialogue about how conflict, crisis, and migration shape the human mind and spirit.

Currently, I am curating an exhibition in San Francisco that brings together esteemed artists responding to these urgent themes of uprooting and survival. A central part of this project is my series about the **Grand Kyiv Ballet**, whose story embodies the tragedy and perseverance that define our times. When the war in Ukraine erupted, the dancers — on

tour far from home — found themselves exiled overnight, unable to return to Kyiv. They resettled in Washington State, transforming a place of refuge into a new stage for their craft. They now tour to sustain their art form and support Ukraine, carrying with them a living testament to the endurance of culture and community in the face of unimaginable loss.

Through this work, I hope to illuminate not only the devastation of home turned to rubble, but the power of human beings to gather their fragments and dance again — to stand en pointe in the ashes and remind us that art is a shelter we can carry anywhere.

# Radiance

by Nadine Helstroffer

*Nadine Helstroffer Ph.D., French-born, is a New York-based poet, writer, choreographer and dance film producer. She holds a doctorate in Philosophy from Paris University, Nanterre/Paris-X, France. The eight short dance films she produced in collaboration with filmmaker John Bush have been presented worldwide. She created and led the "BodyResonance Workshop" exploring the link between meditation and movement at New York Insight Meditation Society, Zen Center of NYC, among other places. She is now devoting her time to writing. Nadine studies poetry with Genine Lentine and explores the flow of the breath at the intersection of poetry and dance. Sometimes a flooding, sometimes a clearing.*

imagine a sky dancer  
in a barren firmament

no clouds to lounge around on  
no stream of light to glide on

no pearly mist to bathe in  
no warmth to cavort in

no constellation to reflect  
not even a wind to ride on  
\*

in the in-between  
we are-

a thousand cranes draw  
the vastness of the sky  
\*

open gorges  
sudden gaps

when a cracked cup served  
by kind hands gives rise  
to the most fragrant tea

when the sound of rain drops  
on a murky train window  
heralds rifts in the silence

when the dying on paved  
stones is gleaned at the tip  
of wild butter cups

when the breath stirs  
the chiming of a bell  
far, far away

When holding you  
brings me back home  
the only home I know

when the rustling of leaves  
whispers the sweetness  
of a world shared

only emptiness  
contains it all

# Exit 111

by Ruby Rose Lyons

Ruby Rose Lyons is a senior at Parsons School of Design. She is an interdisciplinary artist who works in a variety of 2D and 3D mediums investigating the relationship between humans, intimate space, permanence and impermanence. (@rubyroselyonsart, rubyroselyons.com)



Installation, Vintage wingback armchair, found and collected objects, 33"W x 32"D x 42"H, 2025

# Forest Floor

*by Susan Dix Lyons*

*Susan Dix Lyons is a third-year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at The Wright Institute. She is a former journalist, essayist, and founder of an international healthcare organization.*

When the fire pressed close to our home,  
so close that I could see how amber bleached  
red, narcotic in its beauty, I thought about the  
roof and the trees, all the things that would  
feed the flames, the advice we had ignored.  
Why didn't we replace the timber shingles with  
asphalt or aluminum? Consider clay tiles. Why  
did we allow the branches of the upswept pines  
to rub their combustible bodies against our  
exterior walls? Why did we think we were safe.

Sometimes it seems that we are kindling for  
this world, our hearts and hopes lit and snuffed,  
the forces around us indifferent to the crackling  
of our bodies. But

when a fire burns

it changes the structure of things, transforming  
into new substances – gases, vapor, char. The  
process releases heat and light, sets the world  
aglow. Some may die, some survive. But let's  
just say, let's imagine, that those who survive  
become flames themselves, creating open spaces  
that let sunlight reach the forest floor.

Wouldn't that be

sublime?

# California Autumn Dreaming

*by Rosalinda Taymor*

**Rosalinda Taymor, M.D.**, *Medical School UNAM: Degree MD; University of California San Francisco: Degree Psychiatrist; Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California PINC 2014: Degree Psychoanalyst. Affiliations: Stanford University, University of California San Francisco (UCSF), El Camino Hospital: Mountain View CA 94040. Artistic Education: Academy of Art University SF MFA program.*



*PINC Corner*

# FRAGMENTS

*by Makhetsi Tessien*

# of BECOMING

Time as the Medium of the Psyche

**ABSTRACT:** This paper reframes psychoanalysis through the lens of temporality, proposing that the psyche is not simply shaped by drives or defenses, but by the dislocations and symbolic demands of time itself. Drawing from Freud, Husserl, Lacan, Winnicott, and Ogden, I argue that aliveness is not a static condition but a symbolic and affective movement through time. Psychic deadness, in contrast, reflects failures in temporal integration—where experience cannot be sequenced, symbolized, or mourned. The paper introduces the concept of *temporal health*: the capacity to live within fragmentation, to sustain continuity without denying rupture, and to engage the future without foreclosure. Clinical implications include a redefinition of the analytic setting as a temporal container in which speech, silence, and delay become forms of symbolic repair.

*Makhetsi Tessien, MS, LMFT, is a licensed psychotherapist and 4th year psychoanalytic candidate at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. Her work explores the intersection of temporality, subjectivity, and symbolic life. She writes and teaches on trauma, fragmentation, and the ethics of psychic becoming.*

### Introduction

## THE PSYCHE UNDER TIME'S PRESSURE

Psychoanalysis has long listened for meaning in memory, fantasy, and affect—but rarely has it treated *time* itself as the medium in which the psyche lives and breaks. This paper argues that the psyche is not simply influenced by time; it is *made* of time. Subjectivity emerges through the tensions of what came before, what is now, and what cannot yet be. Psychic deadness—whether experienced as stasis, collapse, or disconnection—is often a failure to symbolically inhabit this temporality.

To live psychically is to be stretched across time: haunted by memory, pressed upon by the present, and suspended between dread and possibility. Temporal aliveness is not the absence of suffering—it is the capacity to suffer meaningfully. To remain alive is to bear the pulse of time even when it ruptures.

### Temporal Structure and the Origins of Fragmentation

In the phenomenology of Husserl (1991), consciousness is not linear but structured by a triadic movement: *retention* (the just-past), *primal impression* (the now), and *protention* (the anticipated next). The psyche, under this view, is always already fractured, suspended between what has passed and what is to come. This built-in fragmentation is not pathology—it is structure. But when symbolic continuity breaks down, when time becomes uninhabitable, the psyche enters states of psychic deadness: frozen pasts, collapsed futures, eternal now.

Trauma exemplifies this. It is not merely a wound, but a temporal arrest—an event that resists sequencing and returns unclaimed by chronology. Aliveness falters not because the past occurred, but because the past cannot become *past*.

### Freud and the Untimely

Freud's (1915, 1920, 1923) theories of repression and deferred action (*Nachträglichkeit*) illustrate how the psyche resists what it cannot yet symbolize in time. Repression is not only a defense against forbidden content—it is a maneuver against temporal dislocation. An experience arrives too early or too intensely to be held, and so it is buried. Later events may retroactively

confer meaning on that buried fragment, creating symptoms as time loops rather than flows.

The unconscious, Freud wrote, is timeless. But this timelessness is not transcendence—it is entrapment. What returns in the symptom is not only the repressed content, but the fractured time of its origin. To heal is not to retrieve the past intact, but to reintegrate the psyche's capacity to live across time—to mourn, to delay, to anticipate.

### Ogden: Splitting as Temporal Survival

Ogden (1989, 1992) expands this temporality through his concept of the “eternal present” of early psychic life. In infancy, the self lacks symbolic continuity; time is not yet held. Splitting—dividing experience into good and bad, safe and unsafe—is not merely defensive, but constitutive. It allows the psyche to survive what cannot yet be linked across time.

These early splits are not just about content, but about *when*: whether comfort arrives, whether absence returns, whether pain ends. The development of a temporally complex self depends on the caregiver's capacity to reflect and contain—to make time livable. Where that fails, the psyche remains caught in timeless fragments, and deadness persists in dissociation, repetition, or collapse.

## Lacan: The Mirror as Temporal Break

In Lacan's mirror stage (1949/2006), the child recognizes its image for the first time. This is not just a spatial misrecognition—it is a temporal rupture. What was once fragmented now appears whole. The mirror does not merely reflect; it *divides*. Identity becomes a tension between what one was and what one now sees, between being and becoming. What is *now* was not once.

This is the birth of temporal subjectivity. The present is suddenly distinguishable from the past. The self becomes distributed across time, held together by symbolic threads: memory, misrecognition, anticipation. The mirror reveals the self not as a fact, but as a form suspended in time—a gesture toward coherence in the face of fragmentation.

## Deadness as Denial of Time and Death

To live in time is to live under the shadow of finitude. The psyche defends not only against specific events or affects, but against transience itself. Psychic deadness may thus reflect not only trauma, but the refusal of time's ultimate condition: mortality.

Freud's "timeless unconscious" and Winnicott's (1974) "fear of breakdown" can both be reinterpreted as defenses against symbolic collapse—the moment when the psyche cannot maintain its tether to continuity. These states of deadness are not emptiness, but saturation—of unintegrated experience, of frozen time, of unmourned loss.

To be alive is not to escape death, but to tolerate its presence in every moment. Temporal health means being able to grieve what has passed, to anticipate what might come, and to inhabit the now without fleeing.

## Temporal Health

If pathology can be reframed as temporal disorganization, then health becomes the symbolic capacity to survive time. Temporal health is not the absence of rupture—it is the ability to move through rupture without total collapse. It is not coherence, but a livable fragmentation.

Characteristics of temporal health include:

**Temporal self-awareness** *Recognizing oneself as stretched across time.*

**Symbolic continuity** *Linking past, present, and future without collapse.*

**Narrative permeability:** *Updating meaning without erasing the past.*

**Affective historicity** *Emotions are located, contextual, and processable.*

**Tolerance for delay** *Resisting premature closure.*

**Orientation toward possibility** *Facing the future not with fantasy, but with symbolic openness.*

**Grief and symbolic loss** *Mourning as a temporal act.*

Temporal health is fragile. It depends on symbolic structures—language, ritual, relationship—that can hold time. And it often begins in the analytic frame: a space where silences are not empty, where repetition is witnessed, and where speech unfolds slowly enough to be lived.

## Cure as Temporal Self-Authorization

Analytic change is often framed as self-coherence or insight. But more deeply, it is a temporal transformation: the subject reenters time. They begin to occupy a position from which they can remember, reflect, and imagine. Agency returns not as willpower, but as symbolic tethering across time.

Self-authorization is the capacity to live one's history without erasure, to act in the present without omnipotence, and to face the future without foreclosure. It is a stance of becoming: not finished, not complete, but real. Aliveness, in this light, is the courage to endure temporal movement.

## Conclusion: A Fragmented Becoming

Psychoanalysis does not need to abandon its past to remain alive—it needs to reenter the time of its questions. What if the psyche is not a static container of content, but a field of temporal tension? What if symptoms are not only defenses, but strategies to survive symbolic deadness?

To live psychically is to live through time—not simply in it, but as it. The unconscious is not outside time, but broken by it. Deadness is not absence—it is saturation. And aliveness is not wholeness—it is movement, delay, contradiction, return.

Psychoanalytic work becomes, then, a practice of living time. It is not the retrieval of a lost unity, but the co-creation of symbolic rhythms that can bear disjunction without collapse. In an era marked by social, political, and planetary fragmentation, the capacity to live with time—fragile, unfinished, and real—may be the most radical form of aliveness we have left.

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# Abstract, Life & Being Alive

*by Mali Mann*

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MALI MANN, ACRYLIC, 30IN X 18IN, 2023

# A Sad Paven For These Distracted Times

by Anita Barrows

Anita Barrows has a doctorate in psychology and is a tenured professor at The Wright Institute, Berkeley. She has had nine volumes of her own poetry published, and a tenth forthcoming in September. Additionally, she has translated books from French, Italian, and German, notably (with Joanna Macy) the prose and poetry of Rilke. Barrows maintains a private practice in Berkeley, where she sees children, adolescents, and adults. She is a mother and grandmother.

1

Thomas Tomkins, 1649. Studied  
under Byrd, his *much revered*  
*Master*. Civil War  
ravaging England, house hit by a cannon,  
manuscripts destroyed. City in chaos,  
under siege. The king, his patron,  
beheaded. Two weeks after the beheading  
Tomkins writes *A Sad Paven*  
*For These Distracted Times*, knowing  
his career as a composer is finished, knowing  
there will be no more public music-making  
in London. Sitting at his window, a small table  
beside him, a sheet of paper. *Write,*  
*even if no one may hear this?* Near poverty,  
Tomkins dies seven years later. 1665: the Great Plague  
returns to England. Sixty-eight thousand  
dead, a fifth of the population. Then the Great Fire.  
Who played this music? Who listened?  
I, listening now, four hundred years later,  
imagining that stately dance. Imagining  
the composer's despair, chaos outside his window.  
Dancers rising and stepping down. Hand  
offered to hand. That the marks  
Tomkins made on that paper  
outlived disease. Outlived the flames.

That what we do may outlive the flames.

2

(*Bass viola da gamba*)

To awaken the wood. This instrument was a tree, several trees.  
Was cut, moistened, laid out to dry, carved. Varnished.  
The bridge fashioned, set in place. Fingerboard. Catgut strings, some  
wound with steel, tied onto pegs, themselves wood.  
The bow: wood with horses' long tail hairs. This instrument  
that was maple, spruce, animal. Water. Light. Hands of who made it.  
The same as centuries ago. Centuries. Hands  
that have carved. The wood awakened, tree become voice.

3

We sit in the sun-filled room, playing a Byrd Mass.  
 Chords descending. Lamb of God. *Miserere nobis*.  
 I am drawing these hairs across strings, making  
 this sound we call music. *Tirez. Poussez*.  
 Eighth notes and quarters, halves. Long notes  
 of the bass line. What we listen for. How we hold  
 several lines at once, fleeting notes of the treble,  
 Tenor's persistence. Forest animal hand.  
 Knife water light. *Sanctus sanctus sanctus*

4

That what we do may outlive the flames.  
 My friend tells me she was in the town that burned  
 two weeks before the fire. Tomkins  
 resolving despite everything to compose. What else  
 should he have done? *All week*, my friend tells me, *I felt*  
*something bad was about to happen*. Depression  
 can do that, I'd said to her; but what of those  
 who used to sit in caves, holy chambers,  
 and predict the future? Nothing left  
 of the house she'd stayed in, the streets  
 she'd walked. The town called Paradise.  
*Distracted times*. Tomkins  
 sitting at his window. Hearing the music  
 in his mind that he could not play.  
 I am thinking now about people dancing his pavane,  
 pronounced the British way, *pa'vin*.  
 How the dancers (*distracted times*) are sad, heads bowed, eyes  
 not meeting other eyes. How their hands  
 barely touch. How they decline  
 to know one another, decline to ask  
*How is it now for you?*  
 Yet this is their dance, the dance they are dancing.

5

A paven. A stately dance. A dance with form, ritual.  
 How hold this, in our time of distraction?  
 I saw a dead fox by the side of the road.  
 I saw a coyote drag a dead rodent up the hill.  
 I saw a house gutted by fire. I saw a broken man,  
 a swayback mare, a three-legged dog.  
 I saw a stillborn calf, its mother beside it,  
 moaning. Wrenching sound of her voice

still within me. A lost golden necklace in the grass,  
 a lake whose depth is obscured by silt.  
 I spoke to one who had lost everything: children,  
 wife, home. A sorrowing composer picks up his pen.  
 A sheet of paper. Imagines a cadence, a measure.  
 Dancers bowing, straightening.

6

Duple meter. Step one, step two.  
 The dancers are holding hands now, though lightly.  
 Let me hold your hand lightly. I do not want it to mean  
 what you think it might mean: this  
 is only a dance. Is everything  
 only a dance? *But it really hurts*, the child said  
 when his mother told him (driving home  
 from the emergency room) *pain*  
*is just an illusion*. My friend is telling me  
 about her husband who died: how, many times a day,  
 she feels him holding her, *Even more*, she says,  
*than when he was alive and we were moving*  
*separately, it seemed, through the same house*.

7

As I write this my oldest dog, Caleb, lies near me, dreaming.  
 I know he is dreaming from the movements of his feet.  
 I wonder if he is chasing the deer we have seen for years  
 coming up from the ravine behind our house,  
 or if he is trying to free himself from something  
 that might hurt him. He is fourteen; his legs  
 ache, probably his back. Pain is an illusion  
 that really hurts. The moon is waning  
 tonight. When it wanes all the way  
 it will be a new month, first month  
 of the new year. Then it will begin  
 growing again, and what will be new  
 and what will remain of the old  
 will be like the dance the dancers are dancing.  
 A sad paven, *distracted times*,  
 yet still the feet move to a rhythm:  
 stepping, bowing, stepping. Tomkins  
 at his window: humming a few notes, perhaps,  
 as his pen quickens across the paper.  
 A bird alights on a branch of the single tree  
 that has outlived the others. Outlived  
 the flames. Stepping and bowing. Duple.

# Eros and Thanatos

*by Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz*

*Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz, MFT, is a Psychoanalyst and artist. She is a PINC Graduate and maintains a private practice in Lafayette. She is a supervisor at TPI and has taught in the SSP program. Dawn has been creating art all of her life and attended The High School of Music and Art in NYC. She has a joint BFA from Tufts and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Dawn has shown her work nationally and internationally. Currently Dawn Serves as an Event Coordinator for Critica and is looking forward to becoming its Art Curator.*



# Do Not Revise

by Elizabeth Metzger

Elizabeth Metzger, M.F.A. is the author of *Lying In*, as well as *The Spirit Papers*, winner of the Juniper Prize for Poetry, and the chapbook *Bed*. Her poems have been published in the *New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Nation*, and *Poem-a-Day*. Her essays have been published in *Boston Review*, *Guernica*, *Conjunctions*, *PN Review*, and *Literary Hub*, among others. She is a poetry editor at the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

The suicide note reads *I didn't do this*    *Life took my*  
*I*  
 never finished

Imagine the relief of sleeping together after  
 a year apart  
 then the great disappoint of waking

a little spit curled in the corner  
 of my husband's sleeping mouth

Did Odysseus want to die  
 before he decided to just go home?

A bed rooted to earth imagine  
 the guilt he must have felt dreaming beside her that first night  
 of Circe and Calypso

Some say The Odyssey was a soldier's dying fantasy  
 Did he ever really go home?

If I go back will there be a morning  
 when I have unwoven enough of my dreams

to rise from shared sheets and loyally  
 slit my own throat

I picture the drenched bouquet of black hair he might draw out of the drain  
 the next day  
 a year of my life after my life

Hung together again, it could cover my whole head  
 but the I cannot be revised

# Surviving Social Death

*by Quintin Bailey*

*Quintin Bailey, Psy.D. is a poet and psychologist. They are an ever growing being who enjoys being playful with meaning making and analytic thought. Their work centers an invitation to others to be curious about ways we can continue to trans the systems around us.*

Our bodies were turned into statues, an act of calcification disguised as care.  
Carving out the space we were allowed.  
Eventually crumbling into ruins, uncovering the extent of the erosion below.  
Support was only an illusion.  
Discarded.  
Weak and unusable for production, only our death is valuable in the end.  
These are the lies they sell to justify our destruction.  
The Earth reclaims us, a mother welcoming her children home.  
Our bodies decay into the soil to nourish new life.  
Ever growing and ever becoming, creating space for us to come alive again.  
Our existence is essential.  
Alive and joyful.

# Death and Dying

*by Mali Mann*

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DEATH AND DYING, ACRYLIC, 24X20, 2023

# Aliveness and Deadness in Murder and Psychosis

by Benjamin Diamond

*The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the California Department of State Hospitals or the California Health and Human Services Agency, or any federal, state, county government entity, university, or private affiliation.*

The confinement, in hospitals, of psychotic persons who have committed violent crimes serves defensive functions for our society and for our collective and individual psyches. Under the banner of public safety and under the statutes related to Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity, such people are sequestered in institutions, ostensibly defending the average person from the danger posed by those few people with

serious mental illnesses who also engage in overt violence. The systems that operate to house, manage, and treat these seriously ill people are perhaps less visible and less prominent in public consciousness than our prison systems, though they are similar to our prisons in some of their functions.

In isolating psychotic and otherwise mentally ill individuals judged as Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity, certain institutions hide from public view the people deemed, at some level, most different, not only in their behavior, but also in the degree of their participation in shared, 'consensual' reality. For many such people, cast as 'crazy,' 'sick,' or radically Other, their court-mandated hospitalization is not the beginning of their isolation but its culmination, the endpoint (or is it a midpoint?) of a long journey of having been cast aside, ostracized, traumatized, rejected, misunderstood, and failed by our systems of care.

There are standards and procedures for the evaluation and treatment of people with mental illness who commit crimes; these

are not my focus here. My attempt is rather to capture something of the moral and spiritual difficulty that arises when I confront this aspect of reality, and to feel into an often-forgotten corner of our world, in hopes that doing so will help me to understand something new about what it is to be alive today. The opinions and ideas expressed here are solely my own.

Suppose a murder is committed by a person ultimately judged as being unable, due to mental illness, to comprehend their acts or their rightness and wrongness, and suppose this person is eventually adjudicated Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity and hospitalized. The illness remains. The murder remains. It might seem to live on and call out for seeing. Our society shuts this person and their illness behind walls and fences. We shut our eyes to the crime, and what is psychosis but a kind of not-seeing? A collective schizophrenic *ptosis*, is this a side-effect of murder? What might we offer the killer if he is to continue to live, what is our treatment for the patient who kills? To listen to and for the parts of him that

are dead, that died that day, that he must kill again and again. To listen for life struggling against death.

A man who kills and remains alive must live out a strange tension, an acrimony between hatred of the Other and hatred of himself. To continue to live, he (and we) must accept his hate, and remain alive to it. Who wouldn't prefer to shut their eyes to murder? Who wouldn't be driven to the edge of sanity by a world that constantly asks us how much wrongdoing we can stomach? We must try not to look away; to remain alive to the rightness and wrongness of the world keeps us in touch with *at least I know which way is up*.

And yet the question remains, *which way is up?* In our institutions of confinement and in a society beset by so much willful, lawful, political destruction, we are wracked with diffusion and confusion. Who has really done the killing here? When we face our senseless and psychotic violence we face a collective psyche where there are no clear lines separating the Self from the Other from the Act, where we each might have only the most tenuous grasp on *This is who I am, this is what I have done, this is what has happened to me, I must take this medication for the rest of my life*. When we have killed, to remain alive means the risk is never wholly resolved that *We might kill again*. **Becoming alive is so dangerous that it must be approached with a certain degree of deadness.**

Supportive or exploratory? I could speak of technique, of paranoia progressing to guilt, of splitting and gradual integration, but these are spiritual matters as much as they

are anything else. **They are matters of the heart and they pale in the face of the task, which is to remain alive and dead together alongside those we hide behind the walls of our prisons and hospitals.** There is no shortage of reality-orientation being enacted upon them by the facts of their confinement; their meals are taken at specific times, their clothing is the property of the state. And in the face of the horror and the indignity and the love, I have nothing to say on what we ought to do with our psychotic murderers. Our task is sometimes to forget which way is up.

The burning bush answered Moses's question, "What are you?" with, *I am that I am*, and this is no more comprehensible than Abraham's raising of the knife against Isaac, not relieved of his own grief until the moment his murderous intent could be seen and felt; only after the knife was lifted could it be cast aside. What can a man make of himself when he comes so close to murder? What could it be to choose life before a force of such overwhelming power and perplexity that to choose life means to choose death? What more could be said than *I am that I am?*

To be met with such a force requires us to invert what we think we know about what is right and what is wrong. There is so much wrongness in the world, there is so much death and murder, and with the person who kills in the midst of psychosis, to focus on the wrongness of what has been done is to put ourselves to sleep. *This is who I am, this is what I have done, this is what has happened to me, I must take this medication*

*for the rest of my life.*

The murderous patient may make no more sense of himself and his act than any of us may make of Abraham's near-crime. And what sense is there to be made of it, anyway, when the victim is dead and the murderer himself Not Guilty because he is Insane? Perhaps not making sense, but making willingness, submitting to movement among life and death and life. One illustrates and illuminates and defends against the other; if we are lucky, we trip and fall into something poorly described as insight. Or perhaps we simply continue to trip and fall and stand and trip again. We must see ourselves lift the knife. We tremble before the burning bush, and become alive just at the moment when we know what we might have done. **And for he who has actually done it, who must resist life to remain alive, to open his eyes each day is a kind of prayer—either that the psychosis will be lifted, or that it won't.**

That it was someone else and not me; that Abraham, in the end, killed the ram instead; that the killing continues; **these reflections are a challenge to all of us, to me, an invitation to behold unspeakable grief and choose life.** To see the knife in my own hand is to become alive to the possibility that I, too, might be so confused by my pain that I would raise a hand against my own. And isn't that what we must do if we are to remain alive in the company of so much death? That, at least, is what I must do. Abraham proved his faith, rightly or wrongly, by submitting to a force he could not comprehend. **Were his eyes open or shut?**

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# A Boy with a Calf, Trapped

*by Mali Mann*

*Mali Mann, MD, F.I.P.A. Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis, Supervisor Child & Adolescent Psychoanalysis, Chair of the Child Abuse Project/IPA and Clinical Professor of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences of the Stanford University Medical Center.*



A BOY WITH A CALF, TRAPPED, ACRYLIC, 24X20, 2023

# The Ears of My Heart

*by Terrance McLarnan*

*Terrance McLarnan, M.F.T, F.I.P.A. is an artist, poet, and psychoanalyst. His poetry has been published in Psychoanalytic Perspectives, fort da, Critica and in Writing on the Moon: Stories and Poetry from the Creative Unconscious by Psychoanalysts and Others. He attended the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and years later, completed training in psychoanalysis at PINC. Terrance practices psychoanalysis and treats little children, adolescents, and adults.*

The night carried  
more  
than the full moon  
could hold.

Living over hours of water  
the relentless cries  
surged a deeper darkness.

The ears of my heart  
were pierced  
torn open

there will be no mending  
under this moon.

I a helpless witness  
antagonized by tiredness  
taunted and weak  
and the speed of light  
could not bring comfort.

Walking among rows of open graves  
gaped mouths  
mesmerized by silent screens  
untortured  
by the torment of helpless parents  
of a tormented infant  
sent into a deadness  
I was afraid to find.

Trampled like yesterday's newsprint  
I waken in a slow cadence  
to where I once was  
a dream is discarded or should I say  
overwhelmed  
by a more dimly lit life.

# Ode to My Analyst

*by Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz*

*Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz, MFT, is a Psychoanalyst and artist. She is a PINC Graduate and maintains a private practice in Lafayette. She is a supervisor at TPI and has taught in the SSP program. Dawn has been creating art all of her life and attended The High School of Music and Art in NYC. She has a joint BFA from Tufts and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Dawn has shown her work nationally and internationally. Currently Dawn Serves as an Event Coordinator for Critica and is looking forward to becoming its Art Curator.*

Haunting drum beat  
Reverberating endlessly  
Grief, dark, desolate, alone  
The well envelops me  
Dread, fast approaching loss  
Time, you held me in your mind, heart  
Nothingness is coming  
Where once there was something-ness  
No soft ground to fall into  
My voice reaching out  
You and I listening  
Afraid the memory of your voice reaching down  
Will disappear

Remembering the full silence of your presence  
I can't remember what it was like  
Before you were there  
I can't imagine what it will feel like  
Not to have you there

We have lived many lives together  
Deaths like land mines  
Exploding laughter and play  
Into sobs and moans  
Rivers of tears  
Mostly you understood  
Strangely  
My images danced before us  
Becoming shared dreams  
Your thoughts expanded mine  
Mine, yours  
Our hearts mingled  
You have seen me in the nakedness  
Of my darkest, loneliest hours  
When I shut you out  
You became my worst fears

You have witnessed me  
In my lightest moments  
We have surprised each other  
In indescribable ways  
With anger, love, hurt, silliness  
Remember  
The session we did in verse?  
The puppet show?  
We oscillated between realms  
My art laid bare  
The unspeakable grief  
You helped me give form to  
A gift to both of us  
A marriage of sorts  
Now on the precipice  
A kind of death  
Where once there were two  
Now, only one  
I leave you  
Profound love, loss and gratitude

In Memory of Ralph Kaywin.  
May he Rest in Peace.

# Creativity Spawning From Loss

by Lisa Koshkarian

*Lisa Koshkarian, Ph.D is a psychoanalytic psychologist with graduate school foundations from University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration who specializes in working with socio-culturally-economically diverse adolescents and adults in private practice, community mental health and college counseling center settings. She/they teaches, writes, and supervises utilizing the intersection of the sociocultural world along with contemporary psychoanalytic, relational, feminist, and queer theories, with incorporation of the arts. She/they is deeply curious about the ontology of becoming a whole human within each person's contexts and invested in decolonizing, repairing and healing damaged systems through writing and other forms of activism.*

**O**Ok, good morning to myself and to Kathy and to the world. I feel like I'm having an inkling of waking up. It's been very obscure and my vision of myself has been very shadowed by this mysterious arrival of a brain block, if that's the most direct way of putting it. I haven't really understood it for understandable reasons. The changes in my brain have made me lose a certain sense of direction and my confidence has kind of slipped away, almost outside of my awareness as well. I think there have been some significant changes in my brain or something like that has robbed me of my acuity and thoughtfulness and yet I still have a considerable creativity in me, even talking as I am into this target of reception. I still have that and it's been monumental for me that Kathy has been so appreciative and supportive during this reorganization of who I am. It's a very strange experience to have the kinds of things I used to be able to do very easily and quickly have slipped away, and I live in a muddle at times in terms of my thinking and when I have a wake-up call like I've had this morning, like these drops of awareness of the changes that have taken place in my brain I think it has left me depressed, confused and angry and yet there have been shades of considerable creativity that also seem to come to me, even as I speak into this plastic screen

that there is way more to me than I even realized was missing. So, this is a very drip drop experience of little changes in my self-awareness. And I wanted to get through with this bitterness and anger and frustration and recognize that these are limitations, and they also are not rigid to the degree that I can't find moments and days of lucidity. So, I am pleased to be able to have these weird wake-up calls, literally with a thought that there's another me that has been existing, hiding out or withdrawing and fearful that I have lost a certain capacity that I used to have and hopefully it does seem to appear from time to time like what I'm doing now. This is a kind of wake-up. This is a kind of leakage - a wake-up leak. The world is much more accessible than I believed and it has been that way that things stick in my mind that have not left but when Kathy in her caring and also frustration says to me 'you have a condition' which I resent hugely. I do have a condition and it's been very hard to recognize its presence because it's embedded in my personality and my brain and I feel this is a kind of wake-up moment that I'm trying to recognize the limitations that have come with it on and off, in those procedures of visitation and disappearance. I have been in a rage and a depression. I guess they are cousins: rage and depression. (At this moment, Marc's attention is drawn to a driverless car on the street). I see a car being driven by nobody, just passing in front of me and I think I have been like that car - you look at it and say there's no driver there. You wonder what the fuck is going on and this is a kind of parallel experience. There has been no driver in my brain in a certain way. I have ideas that come to me and so when Kathy has been so appreciative and I value it. It's the core of my survival. It's also exciting to me that I'm waking up in a very slow laborious patched up way as to who I might be. There's an opportunity which Kathy helps me grab onto. I don't want to get carried away. I distrust my brain. I was listening to Kathy talking to what's-her-name about seeing something in me. Like there's somebody at home. I kind of connected to it, in other ways I am a stranger to it.

Kathy and Marc are my oldest,

beloved friends. Not just friends, but inspirational role models as humans, as parents, as partners. They came into my life on the cusp of my adulthood, when I had become prematurely certain that love, respect, joy, continuity, equality, working through conflicts, creativity, and ongoing growth couldn't possibly exist in a marriage let alone within an entire nuclear family. Least of all in a family headed by two psychoanalytic psychotherapists. One of Marc's superpowers has been to harness countertransference in a most inimitable, wordsmithy, often hilarious way. When I was a nascent therapist-in-training out to dinner with Kathy and Marc, I would share a snippet of a reaction to an adolescent client I was seeing at the time (providing zero details about the client themselves). Marc would pepper me with what appeared to be random questions, when in fact they were the churnings of his associations to my countertransferential aesthetics. Soon enough, he would come up with a tale about my treatment relationship, such as, "Shelly has become your mother who you want to step on and crush, so you made her into a diminutive, helpless bug-Shelby Bug!" Zing, my most hidden vulnerabilities exposed, touched, held and reframed by him in a way that engendered faith that even the most unsavory truths could be upcycled into something usable. For decades, he taught classes, consulted on, and wrote about making use of countertransference in treatment and in supervision. He offered his gifts generously, which made me that much more appreciative of how he seemed to take the greatest of pleasure in the creative relationship he had with his words and his psychic productions.

When I have a wake-up call like I've had this morning, like these drops of awareness of the changes that have taken place in my brain I think it has left me depressed, confused and angry and yet there have been shades of considerable creativity that also seem to come to me, even as I speak into this plastic screen <iPhone> that there is

way more to me than I even realized was missing, Marc goes on. The template of creativity and self-awareness that psychoanalysis co-fostered in him is a through line, just as Kathy is. These two powerful forces-psychoanalysis and Kathy's love-have become part of his infrastructure. They have co-created discernible routes to his mind and to his heart, even as the fog of 'a brain block' has set in. Out of what would seem to be the most terrifying loss, something new comes about. As Thomas Ogden writes in *Borges and the Art of Mourning* (2000), "Mourning is not simply a form of psychological work; it is a process centrally involving making something, creating something adequate to the experience of loss...to be equal to, to do justice to, the fullness and complexity of his or her relationship to what has been lost and to the experience of loss itself...a voice brought to life in the experiencing of that loss" (p. 66, 86).

Marc struggles to make cohesive contact with the precious pleasure of using his mind to play with words and associations. He has advanced Lewy Body dementia. Kathy cares for him at home. (Correction: they care for each other, just as they have done for the past six decades.) The italicized passage at the start of this essay is a transcription of his reflections spoken into a 'target of reception' (aka, iPhone audio recorder). In this monologue, his ability to gather his senses to create a narrative, cultivated throughout his lifetime, is palpable. This brings me to tears. Not just sad tears, though. Maria Stepanova says (2023), "...memory is not an ability or a capability. It is not a skill. It is a country. It is a space to move through. Every small person is taking her own route and sometimes the route might be quite misleading..." If I think of Marc's memory of himself as he used to be juxtaposed with who he is now as a space, I feel he is just like the rest of us, muddling around in our respective countries, sometimes on what we think is the correct route, sometimes entirely misled. Perhaps

in reconstructing my perceptions about my younger self, or about the world at large, for that matter, I am way more off track than I am able to recognize. In Marc's words, I see laser-sharp discernment: *The changes in my brain have made me lose a certain sense of direction and my confidence has kind of slipped away, almost outside of my awareness.* He knows what he doesn't know and no longer possesses, that his confidence and his awareness have slipped away. And yet, he is not only aware of that slippage, he knows how he feels about it: *I have been in a rage and a depression. I guess they are cousins: rage and depression.*

Marc feels he is like a driverless car where nobody is there, and wonders what the fuck is going on. He relies on his 'wake-up leaks', moments of lucidity when he can notice and reflect upon the cataclysmal realities. Those in themselves are paradoxically generative spaces, where he can feel his fucking aliveness. Death and loss have always been attendant to the bargain of living. Many of us are fortunate enough to be able to choose to maintain agency, to show up for ourselves and others, however painful. Even though devastating dispossession is part of what we must face when we open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds. I don't want to foreclose as I started to do as a young adult when I pronounced the institutions of partnership and family as futile. I want to choose to be fully awake to all of the possibilities. Otherwise, I would miss out on the beauty, vitality, and connection which emerges from loss. Creativity spawning from loss can only be sowed under the conditions of aliveness.

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# Grandpa's Lands

*by Mali Mann*

*Mali Mann, MD, F.I.P.A. Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis, Supervisor Child & Adolescent Psychoanalysis, Chair of the Child Abuse Project/IPA and Clinical Professor of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences of the Stanford University Medical Center.*

Grandpa's lands were seized by  
The guards who broke in with iron hearts  
And shouted like a red flame.  
Demanding where my Uncle Yusef, the general, had fled.

Uncle was in a hideout.  
That night, he swiftly  
laid out his uniform  
medals on his office desk.  
He fled in the dark of the night.

Silent stood my father,  
gripped by fear,  
As the evil drew near.  
'Tell us where he is!'  
Threats echoed loudly.  
Father stayed silent.

That snowy night, Uncle took to the sky,  
In a plane from Istanbul to Paris.

He left behind his sons and their mother.  
The sun faded like mint leaves in a glass teapot.  
Looking at the window  
Was the kindness gone,  
would it return and last one last time?  
He bid a final farewell to his motherland.

Four years had passed. From Paris,  
he migrated to New York City.  
His hope flickered brightly.  
Dreams of going back home  
burned through his nights.

For four decades,  
He lived in a foreign land  
Finally, he gave up his hope.

Held hostage by fate,  
Now that he is dead,  
his ashes in an urn,  
awaiting to be buried one day  
In a family mausoleum.

# Memorial to Icarus

*by Maureen Murphy*

*Maureen Murphy, Ph.D. is the founding president of PINC. She is a Personal and Supervising Analyst, Faculty and the Co-Coordinator of PINC's Distance Learning Program. Currently she serves on the CIPS and NAPsaC Boards. She teaches courses on contemporary psychosomatic concepts and on adult development and aging. She is the co-editor, with Terrence Mc Bride, of Trauma and the Destructive-Transformative Struggle: Clinical Perspectives. She maintains a private practice in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in San Francisco.*



The sea in the photo is reputed to be site where Icarus drowned when his wax wings—designed by his father—melted when he flew too close to the sun. This legend embraces the eternal tangle of deadness and aliveness, of creativity and hubris. There's an irony that several centuries later, Ikaria is considered one of the “blue zones” where people live longer, healthier lives than the average population. Unless, of course, you were Icarus.

# Ikaria

*by Joel Richard Fruchtman*

Joel Richard Fruchtman is a writer with a longstanding interest in psychoanalysis. Writing as Joel Richards he has a novel published by Tor/St. Martins and a number of short stories in the field of science fiction, appearing most recently in *Analog* and *Asimov's*.

Daedalus crafted the wings.  
 Hope, yes, amid the rush of creativity.  
 Any feel of foreboding?  
 Any propitiating offerings to Helios then or now?

That might have helped.  
 Hubris did not.

Ikarus drowned, a plunge into the sea offshore of your craggy bulk.  
 A downwards pull.  
 The weight of body, the weight of guilt.  
 No feathers or melted wax to mark the spot.  
 No blood, no splintered bones leaking marrow onto your rocks.  
 No relics, just myth.

Ikaria lives on, celebrating a triumphal moment, little made of the loss.

Daedalus recovered.  
 Imminent loss, always a moment afar, then here, inured the Hellenic soul.  
 There were still temples to build, Circe to bed, say some.  
 Counterweights to the loss of a son.

# Haunted by Innovation

*Technology, Psychoanalysis, and Growing Up in Palo Alto*

*by Kevin Volkan*

Kevin Volkan is a psychoanalytic psychologist and a Professor of Psychology at California State University Channel Islands who also teaches in the clinical psychology doctoral programs at California Lutheran University and Pacifica Graduate Institute. He is the author of *Dancing Among the Maenads: The Psychology of Compulsive Drug Use* (1994), *Schizophrenia: Science, Psychoanalysis, & Culture* (2022), and *How the Mind Works: Cases & Concepts in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (2023).

Recently, I visited my hometown of Palo Alto, California. Sitting in the gentle sunshine outside Philz Coffee, watching well-heeled Stanford students studying for their classes, the city felt like a utopia. This pleasant daydream was dispelled, however, when I discovered the book *Palo Alto: A History of California, Capitalism, and the World* by Malcolm Harris (2023). Harris' book is not merely a history of a place; it unveils a narrative in which technological triumph is inseparable from violence, displacement, and psychological repression. For those of us who grew up in Palo Alto during the emergence of Silicon

Valley, Harris' argument resonates not only intellectually but viscerally. The contradictions he documents between the myth of progress and the reality of dispossession, between the polished surfaces of innovation and the shadow they cast, mirror the psychological experience of living in a place where unconscious forces are present, but ignored and unspoken.

My mother worked at Stanford Medical Center during my formative years. My high school math teacher was the son of Bill Hewlett. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, along with other tech titans, were not abstract icons but instead existed on the periphery of awareness. We knew them or people who knew them. Many of my friends' parents were Stanford professors or worked at the Stanford medical school or the linear accelerator. A wide variety of intellectual and creative pursuits were valued.

For a time, Palo Alto had a living cultural and artistic soul. Jerry Garcia taught guitar at Dana's Music store and supposedly slept in his car on University Avenue. An early lineup of Carlos Santana's band rehearsed next door to a friend's house. Neil Young had property in the mountains above the city and Joan Baez lived just up the road in Woodside. Music, art, and the influence of a counterculture gave the town a vibrant life.

But that culture is gone. Palo Alto today is economically inaccessible to the very artists, intellectuals, musicians, teachers, and regular people who once helped define it. Even those who currently work in the tech sector find that their children leave after they grow up. Like many

fleeing the Bay Area, the next generation wants to settle in places where they can afford to raise a family and find work that is not subject to the boom-bust cycle of the tech industry. The result is a kind of sterile veneer: a city defined by affluence, optimization, and technological innovation, but largely stripped of symbolic depth or intergenerational continuity. What remains is a cultural wasteland, a surface of affluence covering a haunted, shadowy group unconscious.

I encountered that shadow directly. When I was a freshman at Gunn High School, I saw a classmate struck and killed by a train at the East Meadow Drive crossing near where I lived. A year later, close to that same crossing, I witnessed a deadly motorcycle accident. These horrifying events occurred at or near the same railroad crossing where, years later, multiple Gunn High School students would take their own lives.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the suicides were not random tragedies; they were signs of repressed emotional pain in the community, where people were expected to succeed and stay in control, no matter what they were really feeling. I was left with an unshakable sense that something unacknowledged was pushing up through the surface of the town - what Jung (1959) would have called the shadow, or what my father Vamik Volkan (1997) might term an un-mourned, frozen large-group trauma.

Harris describes this trauma:

"We have a word for idyllic towns where the youth suicide rate is three times as high as it's supposed to be:

haunted. Palo Alto is haunted.... Haunting happens when a past action won't go away, won't stay past. But the word usually refers to a relation between the living and the dead: There's an imbalance between the realms, something stuck where it isn't supposed to be...What haunts are the kinds of large historical crimes that, once committed, can never truly be set right" (2023, p. 15-16).

These historical crimes encompass the violence against the Muwékma Ohlone people. Harris reports that the origins of Palo Alto are related to the slow-motion genocide of these indigenous people and the expropriation of their land. This violence was perpetrated by men like Leland Stanford, whose name adorns the renowned university, and Father Junipero Serra, the architect of the Mission system in California.

As a teenager I lived in a racially mixed neighborhood between Palo Alto and East Palo Alto. I worked alongside Mexican immigrants at a restaurant. Close proximity to African American and Hispanic communities fueled my indignation about race-based oppression. At the time the legacy of indigenous people was invisible to me. Later in life I learned about the Mission system and California's history of violence towards indigenous people. But I did not know any of these people personally. Later my friend, the artist Dan Stolpe, introduced me to Dennis Banks, a founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and I learned first-hand about the treatment of Native Americans. It wasn't until I read Harris' book, however, that I learned Palo Alto

was built atop a foundation of dis-possession and death. I was shocked and saddened to learn this but not surprised. I was also not surprised to learn that while some at Stanford University are seeking resolution with the past (Jin, 2017), the university has mostly denied, disavowed, or just ignored their legacy of mistreatment of Native Americans. Stanford's historical treatment of indigenous people is one of the reasons Palo Alto's psychic structure has evolved a culture of perfectionism, denial, and repression.

In this sense, the Gunn student suicide clusters were not aberrations. Harris (2023) connects these tragedies to the performance-based culture of Palo Alto, where children are conditioned to tie their self-worth to measurable success and self-regulation. The Gunn High School suicides can be understood as the return of the repressed. The despair is not purely individual but reflects the return of a disowned collective trauma that has never been metabolized (VD Volkan, 1997).

The descendants of perpetrators often inherit feelings of guilt, shame, and denial. When perpetrators cannot process their actions, they may pass their silent and unmourned crimes to their descendants. This can feed unconscious repetition of trauma, as well as denial, defensive splitting, or shame. These dynamics can lead to the idealization of the perpetrators. It can also lead to activism aimed at acknowledging the past, but this activism often ends up being performative (Volkan, V. D., & Volkan, K., 2025). These experiences,

internalized through parent-child interactions over generations and reinforced by cultural rituals and leaders, profoundly shape the identity of people inhabiting places like Palo Alto. This transgenerational transmission of symbolic identity related to historical trauma affects those who inhabit places like Palo Alto. It is possible that the establishment of a society that requires its children to resettle elsewhere is an unconscious repetition of the forced displacement of indigenous people in the past.

If Harris exposes the material and historical violence beneath the ideology of innovation, psychoanalysis reveals how that violence is disavowed and collectively reenacted through defense mechanisms like splitting, projection, and projective identification. Technological innovation, in this view, is not neutral, rather it emerges from this psychic field. The created inherits the cultural residues of its creators, their unprocessed traumas, their unconscious desires, and their narcissistic strategies for domination and control. Technological invention and innovation become containers of fantasies that are related to omnipotence, perfection, and control. This promises clarity but mirrors confusion. Technology, activated by fantasies, simulates empathy but lacks a self that empathizes. Affect becomes performative while real feelings do not exist. And perhaps most dangerously, technology is now entrusted with organizing human meaning, despite having no connection to its unconscious origins.

During my time growing up in Palo Alto I experienced the convergence of techno-logic and emotional dissociation, between circuitry and art, ambition and loss. A psycho-analytic examination of large-scale human aggression, war, and genocide inevitably begs the question of technology's role in perpetrating violence.

Recently, I was asked to give a talk about human aggression that would end on a hopeful note. But it is difficult to be hopeful about our prospects as human beings. The very forces that generated the great tragedies of history - splitting, dehumanization, and narcissistic rage, seem alive in technological systems, like artificial intelligence, that are being built in places like Palo Alto. We are rapidly developing technologies that will allow us to kill more efficiently while being increasingly dissociated from the killing itself.

I find myself grasping for answers. Not from the human architects of technology, but from the possibility that technologies such as AI, if it reaches the singularity of consciousness, will act out its creator's unconscious motivations, or if we are lucky, transcend them. Ray Kurzweil takes this view when he explores the philosophical and ethical implications of AI in his book *The Singularity Is Nearer: When We Merge with AI* (2025). He acknowledges both the enormous potential benefits and significant existential risks of sentient and conscious AI. Kurzweil examines the possibility of catastrophic outcomes if technologies like AI systems are misused or

mismanaged. Kurzweil is hopeful, however, that planning, oversight, and thoughtful integration of AI into society could mitigate these risks. He sees the technological convergence and human-AI integration as offering unprecedented opportunities for human advancement, fundamentally reshaping our civilization.

I remain skeptical. As I write this, I am sitting outside in downtown Los Angeles drinking coffee. It is difficult to imagine how AI would affect the lives of people here on the street. This is a crazy place; crowded, futuristic, dirty, and dystopian. In this dense concrete jungle, the mostly brown proletariat service the more affluent

who work in anorexic buildings. The hard surfaces of the streets and the high rises reflect the hardness of life here. Recently government agents have been indiscriminately snatching brown or Spanish-speaking people off the street without due process. The problems and traumas here are a microcosm of the issues facing the country. Unlike Palo Alto the pathology in Los Angeles is out in the open and not repressed. No one is denying that a few blocks away there are thousands of homeless people living on the streets. The sunshine is not so gentle and the coffee not as good, but there is, if not a sense of unity, at least a sense that we are all in the shit together.

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\*Stanford is not alone in appropriating the land of indigenous peoples. Every time I am at a university, and someone reads a land acknowledgement, I cringe. These statements proclaim the land the university was built on was stolen from indigenous people and the university acknowledges this and therefore will respect these people. There is an argument to be made that land acknowledgements are not purely performative. Rather, they serve to prevent the erasure of indigenous presence and foster a sense of empathy. In my mind these reasons ring hollow. Imagine someone mugged you on the street and stole your wallet. Then years later you ran into the person who robbed you and that person apologized profusely for the robbery. My thought would be, "save the apology and give me back my money"! I could only find two occasions when American Universities returned land to native tribes. Brown University transferred 255 acres to the preservation trust of the Pokanoket tribe and Oakland University in Michigan dedicated a small piece of campus land as a heritage site for the Anishinaabe people.

# Widow Soliloquy

by Valerie Bellas

Valerie Bellas, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and infant and early childhood mental health specialist. She has worked for the past 20 years in community based mental health with infants, young children, and their families who have experienced trauma and child welfare involvement. She is launching a private practice. Poetry is her first language.

Oh, young maid! Your life (and laying) ahead of you, the tingle  
of edges, just brushing near. Ever-encirclement of electrified perfume.

I would caution you against it.

I might suggest a small box for your heart, made of glass with real silver,  
solid-fear, mineral luster, my dear.

*With etched letters: Break glass in case of emergency.*

The alarm will sound, but your heart will be there.  
Because you will lose him.

You will shroud your face.

You will not stay intact.

Aimless, round the looked-over lake, gone to garden  
without a basket. Him/you tear-feathers down-floating from eyes lashed.

He cannot be unneeded.

Crack/cry, incant, appeal, senseless-beseech, you  
caught-need fiend of heat! I have no ears to take you in.

Do not listen to me.

Roll yourself in love like butter on a cob. Get glisten between  
toes. In starless-granite mourning, your mind will trip

over its lastness.

# The DEAD

*A Brief Existential and Psychoanalytic Essay*

*by Rosalinda Taymor*

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“The dead just won’t stay dead”

— James Joyce

It is from a novella by James Joyce, written in 1906-1907, that I want to reflect first on the meaning of Deadness and Aliveness. The primary points of view that I want to explore come from Psychoanalytic and Existential Perspectives.

While there was no historical moment when Sigmund Freud, James Joyce, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre shared or exchanged ideas directly, they were influential contemporaries who inspired each other. Their ideas have continued to influence thinkers and writers throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

Merleau-Ponty and Jean Paul Sartre shared intellectual roots that started at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, and subsequently, in 1945, their conversations evolved as they wrote articles for “Les Temps Modernes.” They were well aware of the work written by James Joyce and by the psychoanalysts, including Freud.

Philosophical ideas were debated among all of these thinkers. In 1953, Sartre, in his book “Being and Nothingness,” proposed “absolute freedom for human consciousness.” Sartre rejected the idea of the “unconscious,” arguing that it didn’t allow for human freedom.

James Joyce and Sigmund Freud had an indirect and largely antagonistic relationship. Joyce had read Freud’s work; however, he denigrated his ideas, especially the concept of the “unconscious,” and competed with him with the concept of “stream of consciousness” in an effort to explore his fantasy life and repressed desires. James Joyce used “the stream of consciousness” to reveal his characters’ inner thoughts and feelings, mirroring a psychoanalytic session.

Merleau-Ponty, in his book “Phenomenology of Perception,” responded by saying that freedom is “situated” and is intimately tied

to our embodied existence. Joyce's stream of consciousness shares a preoccupation with the "lived experience" of the conscious embodied mind. Psychoanalysis, when seen through structuralism, determines that subjectivity can be explored simultaneously with the embodied mind.

The resonance of Joyce's story emerges from the difficult themes it describes in the intriguing narrative filled with many symbolic elements that invite the readers to contemplate and experience.

Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist in "The Dead," embodies the writer's own struggles with self-consciousness, identity, and the influence of one's own history. The story is an exploration of love, loss, mortality, and the use of stream of consciousness.

Gabriel Conroy is a man who loves literature and is a teacher. He comes to the party with his wife, Gretta, and is expected to deliver a speech of gratitude to the other guests, as well as share memories of past events in their lives.

In Joyce's story "The Dead," family and friends are celebrating the "Epiphany dinner." From the start, we find ourselves wondering what kind of transformation we are to experience as readers/guests to this party. The concept of "epiphany" is an experience of a sudden and striking realization. It promises a moment of clarity that will change the way we see ourselves and the way we see the world. Like in psychoanalysis, when we experience an insight, we might call it an epiphany that will allow us to have a profound understanding of ourselves and a deeper connection to our lives and others.

When the party is over, the couple leaves to return to their hotel. Gretta, Gabriel's wife, finds herself thinking about an old boyfriend, Michael Furey, who apparently had died by suicide when he was 17 years old due to unrequited love. Gretta is sad; she is still mourning him. The story highlights the powerful influence of the past in the present; it speaks of an unresolved trauma.

When the party is over, Gabriel feels lustful and desires closeness with Gretta, but finds himself feeling rejected by her. She finally shares with him her memories of Michael. It is at this moment that Gabriel experiences it as an epiphany or an insight that elicits a new stream of consciousness and many questions.

Gabriel's "epiphany" comes precisely as an awareness of his repressed feelings of rejection by Greta, his wife, that emerge following the confession of her unresolved mourning. It confronts Gabriel with the realization that perhaps he is not as close to his wife as he thought, nor is he as close to himself as he believed, on a deeper level. This realization prompts him to question his aliveness and deadness in his relationships. Gabriel is about to enter a dynamic, perhaps painful process of self-knowledge that is deeply experienced emotionally and physically; it orients him to how he needs to change to experience liveliness.

The novella resonates with the reader with reflections: Who is he? (Who am I?) Is he capable of deep love? (Am I capable of deep love?) How close is he to Gretta in reality? (How close am I to my partner in reality?). Has he been lying to himself? (Am I lying to myself?). How self-aware is he in his life and

his heritage? This is a moment of "emotion as a lived experience" in the body and mind, and it becomes part of our history as supported by Merleau-Ponty.

It is winter now. Will Gabriel experience the spring? Can Gabriel follow his passion and experience his liveliness?

Freud's psychoanalytical ideas revolutionized the way we understand the mind. He emphasized the role of the unconscious, childhood experiences, defense mechanisms, and the impact of libido on behavior. Freud strongly influenced Joyce with the ideas of the id with primal urges, the ego as a reality mediator, and the superego giving it a moral compass. Joyce uses in his narrative a sense of the stream of consciousness as a tool, and he uses symbolism to explore the inner lives of his characters. Jean Paul Sartre, the existentialist philosopher, speaks of the idea that individuals are "condemned to be free" and are fully responsible for giving meaning and values to their lives. This concept exaggerates Gabriel's sense of the epiphany in Joyce's novella. Gabriel experiences existential anguish.

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Merleau-Ponty speaks of being in the body as an intertwined way or chiasma of being in the world with oneself and with others. This concept allows Gabriel to question in what way he is close to himself and others, which shapes his sense of reality. The interconnection of these ideas continues to influence our understanding of literature, psychology, and philosophy in the 21st Century.

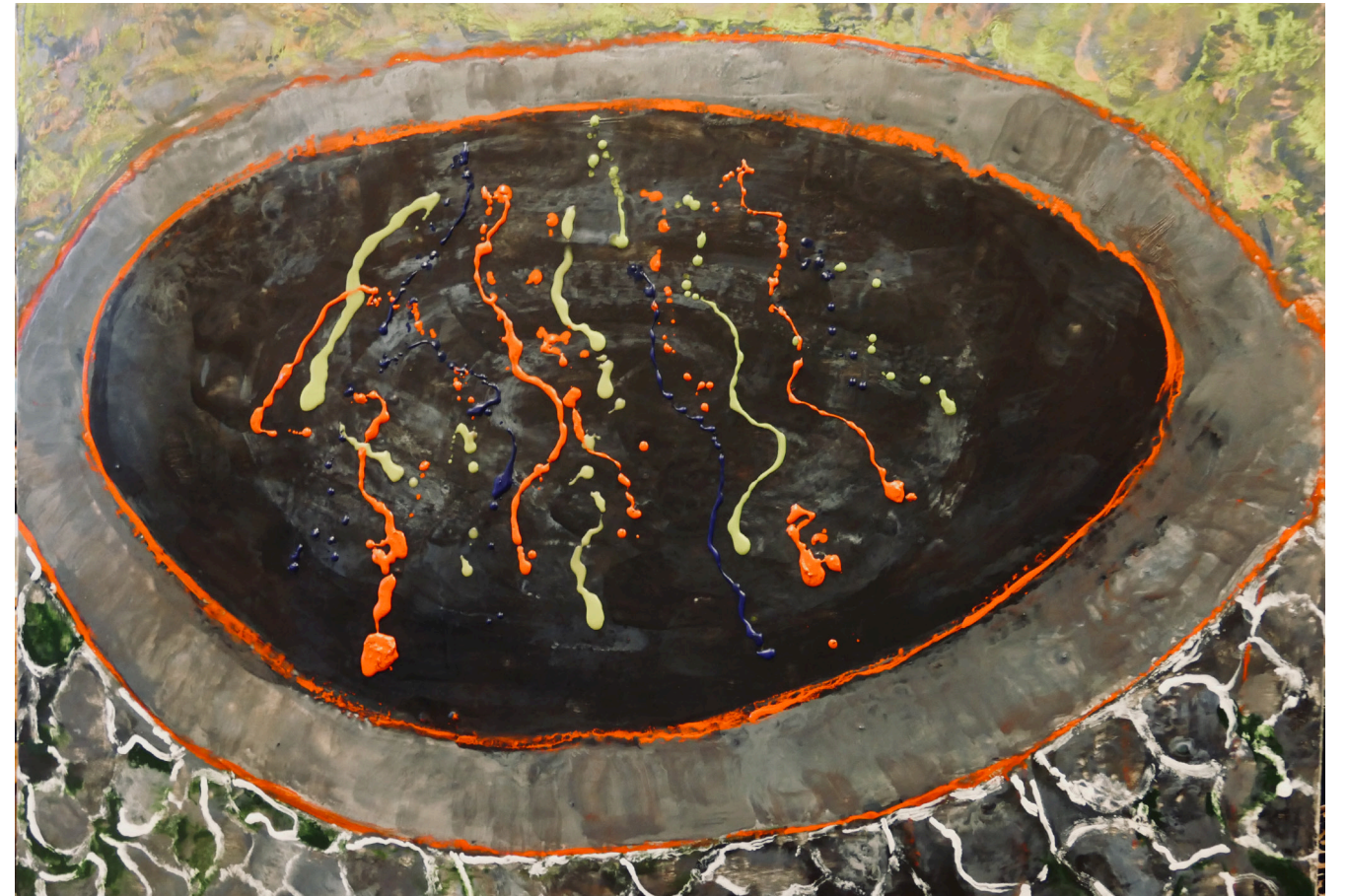
The moral compass of the story encourages us to live with genuine passion and sincerity to feel fully alive for ourselves and for others.

In summary, James Joyce, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Paul Sartre, and Sigmund Freud contributed significantly to our understanding of the human condition. Joyce explored the psychological depths of his characters through the innovative literary technique, while Freud provided a framework for understanding the unconscious forces shaping human behavior. Sartre emphasized freedom and responsibility within an inherently meaningless world, while Merleau-Ponty focused on the body's fundamental role in shaping our experience and perception.

# From the Depths of Deadness to a Sense of Aliveness

*by Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz*

*Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz, MFT, is a Psychoanalyst and artist. She is a PINC Graduate and maintains a private practice in Lafayette. She is a supervisor at TPI and has taught in the SSP program. Dawn has been creating art all of her life and attended The High School of Music and Art in NYC. She has a joint BFA from Tufts and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Dawn has shown her work nationally and internationally. Currently Dawn Serves as an Event Coordinator for Critica and is looking forward to becoming its Art Curator.*



# My Directive

by Nan Bryan

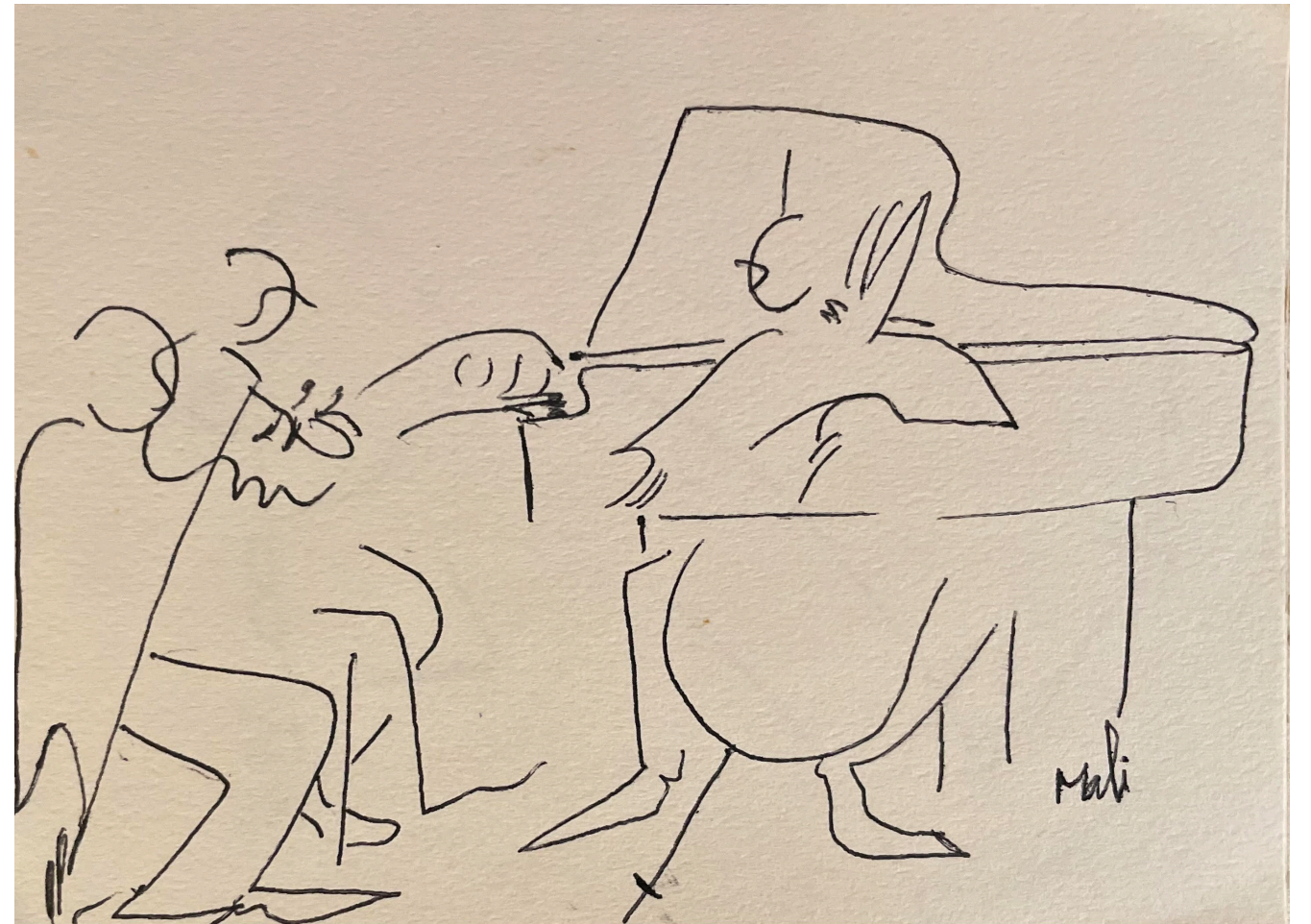
Nan Bryan, M.F.A., is a creative writing teacher, writer and Mom living in New Jersey. One of her poems was created in Erica Ehrenberg's class, which explored the intersection between psychoanalysis and poetry.

to walk, slowly, all soft fur  
 —I will not detach  
 from her body. Mountainous  
 lesions grow, now over her eye.  
 I have to remind myself  
 to slow my steps with her.  
 Last night, I lay down next  
 to her muted body  
 on the kitchen floor—  
 a pilot of islands  
 or her tail feathering  
 across the green grass—is it her body  
 or mine? The truth is,  
 she has already detached.  
 She just wants to sleep  
 in the cool earth of the garden.  
 This morning, she and I set out walking  
 at Fair Haven Fields. Could not reach  
 her *watering place*, Denny's Pond.  
 She stopped, looked behind her  
 for my son. He carried her to the car  
 at the edge of the woods.  
 Now, at my feet, her body is stately,  
 & whole—*beyond confusion*,  
 cloud sleeping under the table—  
 twitch of her dreaming, legs still running.

# Archduke Trio, a memorial music

*by Mali Mann*

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# Contributors

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**Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz, M.F.T.**, is a Psychoanalyst and artist. She is a PINC Graduate and maintains a private practice in Lafayette. She is a supervisor at TPI and has

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**Elizabeth Antonette Papagni, Psy.D.**, is a psychological assessor who specializes in diagnostic and psychodynamic evaluations across the lifespan to clarify complex diagnoses and gain deeper insight into personality functioning. She has offices in Oakland and Burlingame, California and serves as adjunct clinical faculty at The Wright Institute. She is the submissions coordinator and an associate editor for *Critica*.

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**Joel Fruchtman** is a writer with a longstanding interest in psychoanalysis. Writing as Joel Richards he has a novel published by Tor/St. Martins and a number of short stories in the field of science fiction, appearing most recently in *Analog* and *Asimov's*.

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**Miriam Barraza** is an LMFT, associate editor for the PINC Corner at Critica, and a third-year candidate at PINC with a private practice in Oakland, CA. She works from a trauma-informed and cultural humility lens with adolescents, adults, couples and families both in-person and telehealth. Her approach is warm, compassionate, collaborative, and relational. She offers somatic, psychodynamic, and psychoanalytic therapy, with an emphasis on working with interpersonal relationship challenges, trauma, anxiety, depression, ADHD, tech burnout, immigration, divorce, parent support, new parents with young children, eating disorders, adoptive children and challenges with identity and belonging. Additionally, she is qualified to offer Family based therapy, EMDR, ketamine-assisted therapy and group therapy. Miriam provides psychotherapy, supervision and consultation in both English and Spanish.

**Nadine Helstroffer, Ph.D.**, French-born, is a New York-based poet, writer, choreographer and dance film producer. She holds a doctorate in Philosophy from Paris University, Nanterre/Paris-X, France. The eight short dance films she produced in collaboration with filmmaker John Bush have been presented worldwide. She created and led the "BodyResonance

Workshop" exploring the link between meditation and movement at New York Insight Meditation Society, Zen Center of NYC, among other places. She is now devoting her time to writing. Nadine studies poetry with Genine Lentine and explores the flow of the breath at the intersection of poetry and dance. Sometimes a flooding, sometimes a clearing.

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**Valerie Bellas, Ph.D.** is a clinical psychologist and infant and early childhood mental health specialist. She has worked for the past 20 years in community based mental health with infants, young children, and their families who have experienced trauma and child welfare involvement. She is launching a private practice. Poetry is her first language.

