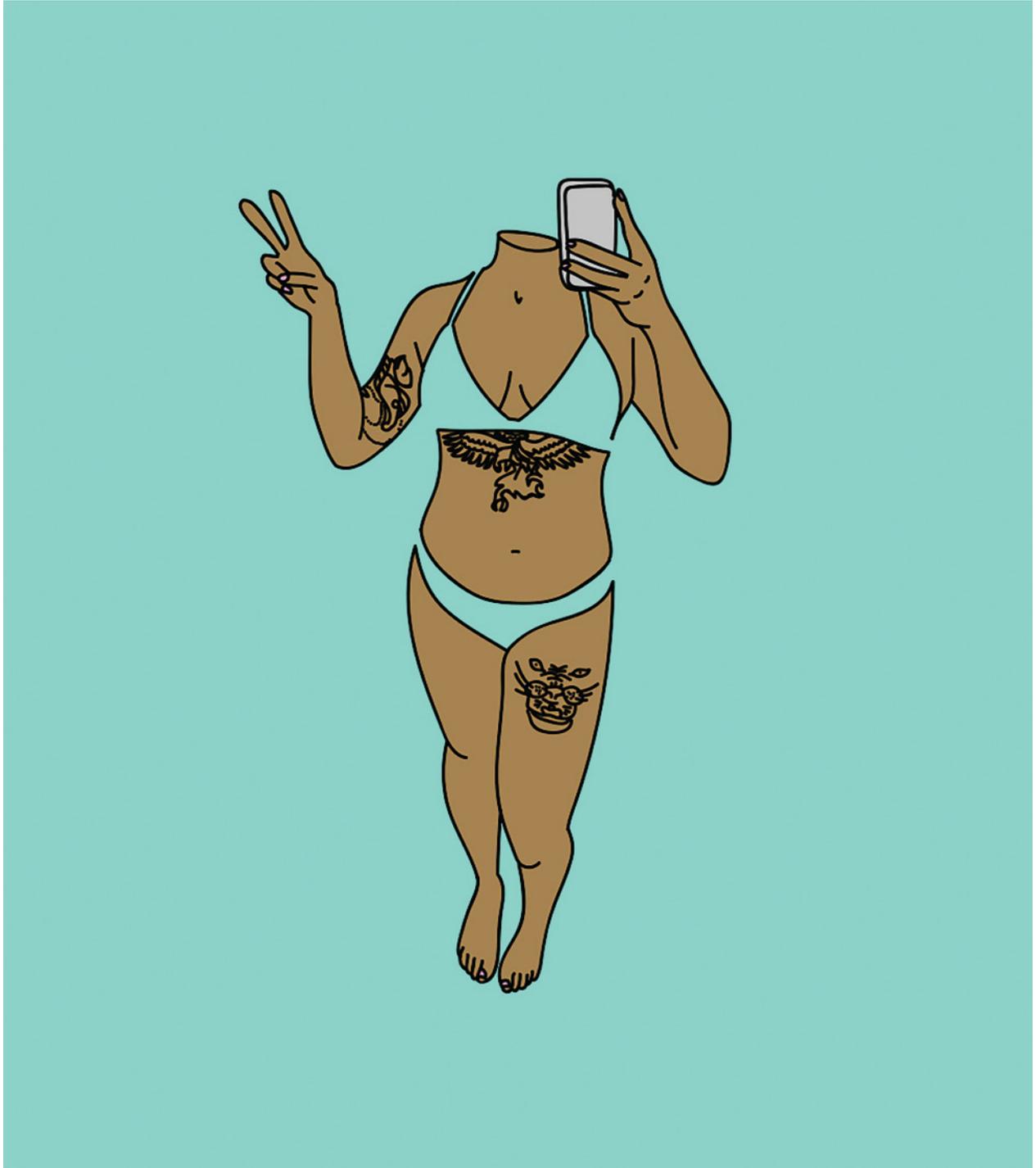


NOTTED

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Letter from the Editors

BRYN SKIBO-BIRNEY AND OLIVER WRIGHT

Unless you have been living under a rock this past year, you will have noticed the tidal change taking place in the discourse of feminism. Beginning with the global Women's March in January, and gaining momentum through the summer and autumn with the mounting allegations against those in seats of power in a variety of fields – from movie producers to actors and talk-show hosts, from politicians, coaches, and cops to newspaper and magazines editors and executives, and on and on and on – by the end of 2017 (truly the winter of our discontent), it felt like every time a headline included the name of an even-somewhat famous man, you expected to learn of the horrific things he had done, or tried to do, to those in his professional realm. From this waking nightmare, which most women didn't find surprising because of the alleged actions, but for the fact that people were *finally listening* and *acting* against these abuses, came an equally, and inversely, ferocious and inspiring response from women around the world: one among many, the #MeToo hashtag, for example, canvassed the globe through Twitter in less than a day. From this miasma of anger and abuse, scepticism and sisterhood, it should come as no surprise (though it nevertheless did) that this edition of *Noted* is predominantly filled with the voices of the women of the English department and beyond.

The striking cover image, provided by the uniquely talented portrait artist, **Georgia Smalls**, opens the journal with a mischievously insouciant peace-sign-wielding model. The fact that "Sarah" is missing her head, and somehow still seems to smile in its absence (or due to its absence? **Smalls** discusses why this may be so), should be ample warning that the things in this journal are not what they may initially appear to be. Alongside **Smalls**, *Noted's* go-to cultural reporter, **Olivia Lindem** ably scrutinizes the nature, history, and the paradox of selfies: are they vainglorious exhibitionism or artistic self-empowerment? Do they buy into society's interest in objectifying women's bodies or do they rewrite the cultural narrative to alter *who* gets to be seen and *how*? This explicit challenge to how selfies are perceived and characterized on social media and beyond is a real-life example of the problems of perception, superficial judgement, and the damage they can entail, all of which **Donatella Avoni** addresses in her laudatory review of R.J. Palacio's novel, *Wonder*. Primarily, her review focuses on how perceptions – face-value and inaccurate though they may be – can be changed through interaction, a shared humanity, and the knowledge that our behaviour is always a factor in the happiness of those around us.

The Creative Writing section picks up similar topics, stemming from **Helena G.'s** interpersonal introspection over a couple's breakfast table wherein the couple's argument leads to a sense of fragmentation and disembodiment. Conversely, **Diana Moyo** heads to the gardens where her minimalistic and reverential speaker – the eponymous "Jungle Lady" – finds self-renewal and strength. If we're looking for a common humanity, we could do worse than to start with our common dependency on (and yet our often ignorance towards) the natural world in which we live and of which we are a part. Alternatively, we could follow the lead of **Lorraine Devillard** whose speaker finds, and dramatizes, "Reconciliation" through a meeting of languages, making word-play work across a battlefield of formerly antagonistic tongues; what you call poison – she writes, echoing Derrida – depends on your perspective...and your language. **Donatelli Avoni** again asks us to reconsider the nature of challenges and obstacles with her parodic and complex quest to find the infamous Bastions 307. Regardless of your understanding of Einsteinian spatio-temporal conundrums, anyone who has been late to class will find common ground with her speaker. In the vein of Avoni's allusions to knights and wizards past, **Helena G.** reconsiders the trope of medieval love from the point-of-view of the author and the female protagonist, illustrating how female authorship can re-appropriate common tales – of the handsome, *active* knight and the beautiful, *passive* princess (to borrow from Olivia Lindem's piece). Clearly, not all obstacles to progress are as visible as the stairway leading to B307. Finally, **Bryn Skibo-Birney** puts ink to the turmoil of sentiment that suffused this difficult year. Like **Devillard**, her poem explores the space in-between multiple perspectives and voices; yet, while "Reconciliation" offers enjoinderment for mankind, in "Superheroes," **Skibo-Birney** focuses more on the need to bear witness to these inequities and to legitimize the rage that rightly ensues.

Bringing some measure of light and levity is *Noted's* newest editor – **Oliver Wright** – in the reader-favorite "Proust Questionnaire." Immediate regrets include, but are not limited to, admitting to his caffeine addiction, spoiling his future chances at poker, and realizing that any Francophone pop-culture references he can draw on are over a decade old. In closing, this edition of *Noted* is itself a bit of a paradox – an opening at a close. After five years at the helm, Bryn bids you, readers and contributors all, a fond farewell, as she hands the keyboard over to Ollie. Keep writing, keep contributing, and, most importantly,

Happy reading,
Bryn and Ollie

Breakfast

HELENA G.

I was an ear stuck on a wall
A fly inside an eye
My lips were stitched to my head
And my tongue was tied around my neck

We sat across the table
Throwing darts at one another
The fire burning in the furnace
Heating our glances of unawareness

You had a thought that stuck like glue
A cryonic chrysalis never to bloom
You never said a word or two

My heart was in flames, it burst out of the room
You went outside to fetch some coal
opening the door to a celestial pole
Your hand was blue and mine was too

I was in parts, from toe to head
And spread like jam on toast or bread

I found little corners to hide my secret
They were so dark I hardly went to visit
This made you imagine I hardly existed.

And every morning I would wake up
Make breakfast
And spread some jam on toast or bread.

Miss Chance

HELENA G.

Eyes are twitching
Lips are pulsing
Hands are still
And eyes are looking

My fingertips touch the bleached white page
And feel the smooth surface ready to be laced
A pen dipped in ink makes its way between my hand
It tries not to forget how we once could throw a hex
It wiggles between my thumb and my index

It begins with a line
No straighter than a vine
It begins with a curve
No rounder than Arthur's table

It begins with a dance
In a country close to France
Where miss chance sings her ritual trance
And begins to notice the hidden glances

A fair lady steps in
From a land far or near
She's mysterious, you'll hear
That's the first thing that's clear

A dark knight gallops in
From a journey with a violin
He makes music you see
But there's more in the case

Miss chance makes them dance
Oh, what a night of romance

The day breaks and he's gone
She mounts her own horse and knows nothing's wrong
They catch up to each other
Chasing light and fair weather
They decide not to part

Not this time, nor ever.
"I love you a lot
My Sir Lancelot."