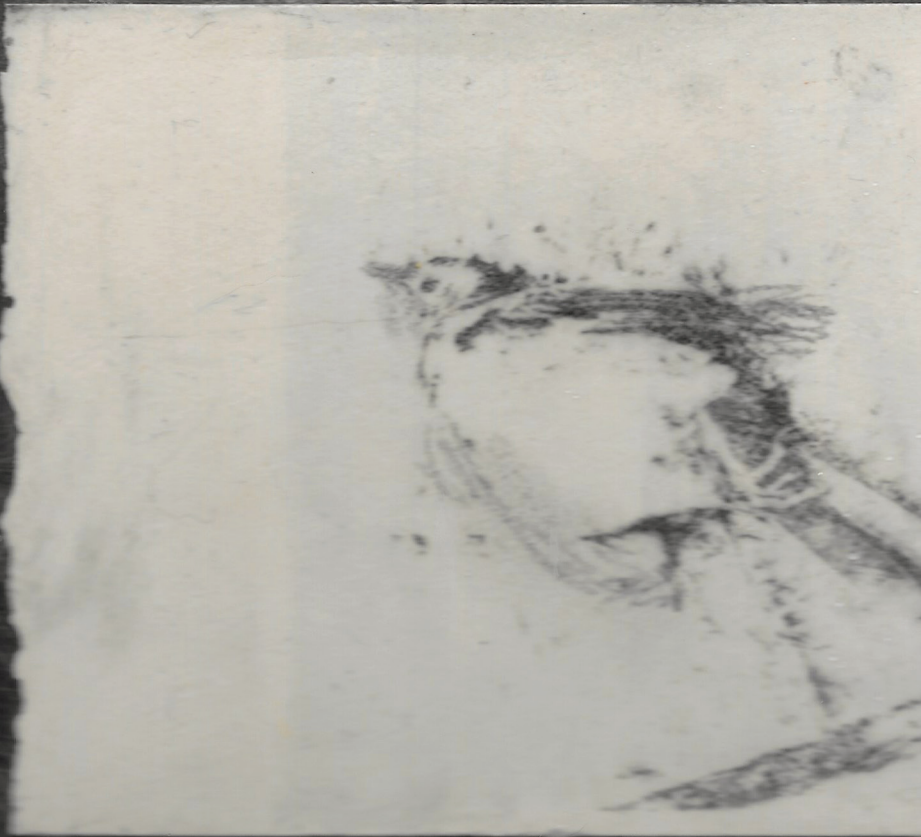


HARA-KIRI ON MONKEY BARS



ANNA HOFF

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the operating system digital print//document
HARA-KIRI ON MONKEY BARS

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edited and designed by ELÆ [Lynne DeSilva-Johnson] with Orchid Tierney



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HARA-KIRI ON MONKEY BARS

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Introduction

faceless child appears leaves
me on a mattress covered by stacks of

naked women
stitched together
in fabrics of
a man peeing

standing up



All that is silicone breasts, hairless limbs, and see-through underwear

Ad

mindless murderers with rhubarb lips yawn
defecating alpha
males on billboards teaching us how to mate

Compliments

while throwing darts in the
crevices of our abdomens he draws

portraits in the way he thinks women move
he disappears into

compliments and convinces
us to moan with voices that are not ours

Head

shadow guided by Kama sutra and
blind folds duress snaps my

legs in ninety degree
angles in the heat of the moment love

comes before you prance around unclothed

Finished

turned into chalk inhaled
by drive ways frozen body he stopped and
left relaxed did not even check my pulse

Rivalry

he tries to calm her from
what I see and he succeeds entombing

frail clavicles in little black books the
paralysis of what

you confuse love to be

man shielding his conquest as required
placing her in aluminum foil to
keep her skin soft and young

Monarchs

he whispers daisies and knights into buckets of sperm thinking that

like water it can force roots to grow and
looking at him from far

I truly am repelled
by the modern human

Cheat

memorabilia perspires crumbs of
botched hara-kiri covers my thoughts with
fictitious days in a billet he cleans
parsley with moonshine made by hangmen and
attaches his mom's brooch to another
woman's genitals while morning hands me
hushed docks floating on orange juice with pulp

Anecdote

let this blood dry grown child
disregard a beg and search the web for

oral sex hide your knives
in the deepest parts of you when he taps

your head and says “well done”



All that is condoms bananas pills and exhausted Barbie dolls

SexEd

educated to be uncritically moulded into his

mother's silhouette she

barks shyly and folds hormones in laundry

baskets as his flaunted mate selection

makes him compatible

to women dressed in heels

as she walks on all fours to a shed owned

by another she calls

this love blames the rest on biology

Blame Biology

my uterine wall's
largest planet
braids his ways
with obedient grief

pebbles are thrown in wrong directions

Mindless Murderer

some murderer on the
radio pours an ounce
of dirt in our tub we
are weak under bubbles
and hex jam your sex through
my throat and watch me die

Sweat Pheromones

it is only perspiration you do
not need his hand in yours
genetics disguised as
rosebuds and chocolates we
need something great on our minds when ovulation convinces us
that Romeo and Juliet were not
immature illiterates with nothing
to do but make a scene

(pun intended)

All that is daisies, knights, sleepovers, and clothes that do not suggest

Jeremy before Porn

combine sugar with disease and these sheets made of wax
will burn your next impregnation we did have showers
made of daisies and knights before he learnt to intimidate
your subconscious with affection purposed to attack

When Mommies and Daddies Love each other

shocked throat brilliantly reasoning I think I can taste his
youth when picking sunflowers
he watches the sky cut itself he closes his eyes and sings I
accept this sexless divorce if infinite masturbation makes
him love me more

The Nil

I remember those stories of deserts and Egypt how we dug
out worms and rocks to find mummies in an American
backward explorers fascinated with death I remember
being cold covered in mud watching you cry from pain as
your blood poured out of your hands you were digging too
fast and too heavily it took some time but my mother did
come to rescue us and then we took a nap exhausted

I don't think we've been happy since then

Sleepover

with dead bladders we eat fingernails and digest them into
plastic pillows we see robots and preys and talk behind their
backs when after sex we become patterns of children at a
sleepover talking politics virgin portraits of how we thought
babies were made

Plans with a Neighbourhood Friend

attacked in mid-process of learning to die without leaving fingerprints she knocked on my door and sang fatigue with mispronounced prayers we have to get to the Nil before the bridge is finished and you decide to jump

Sleepover Finished

and that was the last time he talked about his Legos and
bruised arms and though it was clearly gone I tried to
polish his innocence into sculptures of fields and Easter
eggs and I lost my last friend to marriage what else could
I do but waste my time with his

All that is paper cuts grannie panties

Birthday

As I light a new candle paper cuts
form scissors across my skin while the beautiful
women

of his past walk around our apartment
they are dusting away the remains of my youth
as I

leave him before he witnesses my white
hair and decides to sag my body with a child

Orange Juice with Pulp

I've slept on those bricks and watched my body
get fat with nostalgia for first times that
began as pure boredom clinging to abuse it
is easy to leave this grown man with desires
I can't
understand it is easy to leave me
as well with the image of sunsets dark
lakes and afternoon naps the more I continue
the more I notice the beauty I lack and the
more I
see it in others I don't want to mix
jealousy with head wounds it is too much

Excuses

and going back to childhood through a child
of my own would be just plain selfish braiding her
hair a
certain way and picking out her clothes her
name would give me too much power and thinking of
all the
awfully useless things she'll have to go
through anxiety despair bullying
abuse
I will save her and kill myself before
her birth thus never lying to a sad-eyed child
about
the importance of failure and anguish

Conclusion

Faceless child that I have been and
faceless child who I will never have,

I watch over you –living in the past and in a devastatingly
charming impossibility

Far from the present far from industrial marketing far from
anything that triggers an eating disorder far from any man who
finds power in peeing standing up

I have lain on those rigid bodies and have found none that escapes
the overflow of hormones and the temptations of male biology

And I have cried on my knees thinking of you of raising you away
from this and it resulted in more sobbing

There is only one way out

AFTER-WORDS

A PUNCH IN THE WALL
A CONVERSATION WITH ANNA HOFF

Greetings! Thank you for talking to us about your process today. Can you introduce yourself, in a way that you would choose?

Anna Hoff.

Why are you a poet/writer/artist?

It's human nature to create.

When did you decide you were a poet/writer/artist (and/or: do you feel comfortable calling yourself a poet/writer/artist, what other titles or affiliations do you prefer/feel are more accurate)?

No, I do not feel comfortable claiming myself poet.

What's a "poet" (or "writer" or "artist") anyway?

A poet/writer/artist: a cactus soul horsing around in a run-down jazz bar.

What do you see as your cultural and social role (in the literary / artistic / creative community and beyond)?

Continue what many others have already begun – demanding gender equality through the abolishment of gender stereotypes.

Talk about the process or instinct to move these poems (or your work in general) as independent entities into a body of work. How and why did this happen? Have you had this intention for a while? What encouraged

and/or confounded this (or a book, in general) coming together? Was it a struggle? Did you envision this collection as a collection or understand your process as writing or making specifically around a theme while the poems themselves were being written / the work was being made? How or how not?

I started by deciding on a theme for a larger work. In this case, gender stereotypes inspired me. Afterwards, I used stream of consciousness to understand how I truly feel about male and female roles. Then, I created verses using these words or groups of words to create an image of disgust.

What formal structures or other constrictive practices (if any) do you use in the creation of your work? Have certain teachers or instructive environments, or readings/writings/work of other creative people informed the way you work/write?

Yes! Charles Bukowski (though less obvious in this manuscript); Allen Ginsberg; Charles Baudelaire; France Théoret; Nelly Arcan; Harold Pinter... (the list goes on)

Speaking of monikers, what does your title represent? How was it generated? Talk about the way you titled the book, and how your process of naming (individual pieces, sections, etc) influences you and/or colors your work specifically.

I used stream of consciousness to come up with the title *Hara-kiri on Monkey Bars*. The act of suicide performed in such a -deemed innocent- location creates the ultimate form of abortion since this method of bringing one's self to death is executed near the womb. Also, in this chapbook, the topics of motherhood and mental illness are consistently present.

What does this particular work represent to you ...as indicative of your method/creative practice? your history? your mission/intentions/hopes/plans?

This work represents my way of coping with frustration as well as flipping the bird to the ideal and unrealistic female portrayal.

What does this book DO (as much as what it says or contains)?

This chapbook is a punch in the wall. It is all the violence and frustration I (and many other women) feel in today's society. I do not understand marriage nor do I understand the portrayal of individuals as plastic. Neither does this manuscript.

What would be the best possible outcome for this book? What might it do in the world, and how will its presence as an object facilitate your creative role in your community and beyond? What are your hopes for this book, and for your practice?

I do not know what will become of this work. Perhaps, the publishers and OS staff will be the only individuals to have read it! Nevertheless, I needed to write about issues related to gender, sexuality, mental illness, and biology.

Let's talk a little bit about the role of poetics and creative community in social and political activism, so present in our daily lives as we face the often sobering, sometimes dangerous realities of the Capitalocene. How does your process, practice, or work otherwise interface with these conditions? I'd be curious to hear some of your thoughts on the challenges we face in speaking and publishing across lines of race, age, ability, class, privilege, social/cultural background, gender, sexuality (and other identifiers) within the community as well as creating and maintaining safe spaces, vs. the dangers of remaining and producing in isolated "silos" and/or disciplinary and/or institutional bounds?

If you have the energy to talk about a recent sexual partner or a small stomach ache or even a cute dog you saw on the street then, you have the energy to talk about what really matters: your thoughts on race, age, privilege, social/cultural background, and sexuality. Tell us about how you were oppressed or what sort of oppression you witnessed. We need to be informed.

Take depression as an example. I cannot count how many times I've heard comments such as "it's all in your head". It. Is. Not. All. In. Our. Heads. Clearly, a lack of knowledge about mental illness is conveyed through such comments. Therefore, dialoguing and

trying to understand what the other person is experiencing (which might feel unfamiliar) will stop you from saying or doing unfounded things.

Is there anything else we should have asked, or that you want to share?

No, thank you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anna Hoff is working in a public school in Madrid as a part-time helper. The rest of her time is spent writing. You can find some of her work on [medium\(dot\)com/@hoff\(dot\)anna\(dot\)wester](https://medium.com/@hoffanna). She studied literature at the University of Montreal.

ABOUT THE COVER ART:

The Operating System 2019 chapbooks, in both digital and print, feature art from Heidi Reszies. The work is from a series entitled "Collected Objects & the Dead Birds I Did Not Carry Home," which are mixed media collages with encaustic on 8 x 8 wood panel, made in 2018.

Heidi writes: "This series explores objects/fragments of material culture-how objects occupy space, and my relationship to them or to their absence."

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Heidi Reszies is a poet/transdisciplinary artist living in Richmond, Virginia. Her visual art is included in the National Museum of Women in the Arts CLARA Database of Women Artists. She teaches letterpress printing at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, and is the creator/curator of Artifact Press. Her poetry collection titled *Illusory Borders* is forthcoming from The Operating System in 2019, and now available for pre-order. Her collection titled *Of Water & Other Soft Constructions* was selected by Samiya Bashir as the winner of the Anhinga Press 2018 Robert Dana Prize for Poetry (forthcoming in 2019).

Find her at heidireszies.com

WHY PRINT:DOCUMENT? (AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DIGITAL MEDIA?)

The Operating System has traditionally used the language "print:document" to differentiate from the book-object as part of our mission to distinguish the act of documentation-in-book-FORM from the act of publishing as a backwards-facing replication of the book's agentic *role* as it may have appeared the last several centuries of its history. Ultimately, we approach the book as TECHNOLOGY: one of a variety of documents across a range of media that humans have invented and in turn used to archive and disseminate ideas, beliefs, stories, and other evidence of production.

Ownership and use of printing presses and access to (or restriction of) information/materials, libraries, and archives has long been a site of struggle, related in many ways to revolutionary activity and the fight for civil rights and free speech all over the world. While (in many countries) the contemporary quotidian landscape has indeed drastically shifted in its access to platforms for sharing information and in the widespread ability to "publish" digitally, even with extremely limited resources, the importance of publication on physical media has not diminished. In fact, this may be the most critical time in recent history for activist groups, artists, and others to insist upon learning, establishing, and encouraging personal and community documentation practices.

With The OS's print endeavors I wanted to open up a conversation about this: the ultimately radical, transgressive act of creating PRINT / DOCUMENTATION in the digital age. It's a question of the archive, and of history: who gets to tell the story, and what evidence of our lives, our behaviors, and/or our experiences are we leaving behind? We can know little to nothing about the future into which we're leaving an unprecedentedly digital document trail--but we can be assured that publications, government agencies, museums, schools, and other institutional powers that be will continue to leave BOTH a digital and print version of their production for the official record. Will we?

As a (rogue) anthropologist and long time academic, I can easily pull up many accounts about how lives, behaviors, experiences--how THE STORY of a time or place--was pieced together using the deep study of the archive: correspondence, notebooks, and other physical documents which are no longer the norm in many lives and practices. As we move our creative behaviors

towards digital note taking, and even audio and video, what can we predict about future technology that is in any way assuring that our stories will be accurately told--or told at all? How will we leave these things for the record?

For all our years of print publication, I've said that "with these documents we say: WE WERE HERE, WE EXISTED, WE HAVE A DIFFERENT STORY", but now, with the rapid expansion of greater volume with digital and DIY printed media, we add: we ARE here, and while we are, we will not be limited in what we add value to, share, make accessible, or give voice to, by restricting it to what we can afford to print in volume.

Adding a digital series is the next chapter of *our* story: a way for us to support more creative practitioners and offer folks independent options for POD or DIY-zine-style distribution, even without our financial means changing -- which means, each book will *also* have archive-ready print manifestations. It's our way of challenging what is required to evolve and grow. Ever onward, outward, beyond.

Elæ [Lynne DeSilva-Johnson]. Founder& Creative Director
THE OPERATING SYSTEM, Brooklyn NY 2019

THE 2019 OS CHAPBOOK SERIES

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American Policy Player's Guide and Dream Book - Rachel Zolf
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Music Of Each Slain Creature - Frank Sherlock
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From Being Things, To Equalities In All - Joe Milazzo
These Deals Won't Last Forever - Sasha Amari Hawkins
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A Period Of Non-Enforcement - Lindsay Miles
Quantum Mechanics : Memoirs Of A Quark - Brad Baumgartner
Hara-Kiri On Monkey Bars - Anna Hoff

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[零] A Phantom Zero - Ryu Ando
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DOC U MENT

/dəkyəmənt/

First meant “instruction” or “evidence,” whether written or not.

noun - a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record
verb - record (something) in written, photographic, or other form
synonyms - paper - deed - record - writing - act - instrument

[Middle English, *precept*, from Old French, from Latin *documentum*, example, proof, from *doce*, to teach; see *dek-* in Indo-European roots.]

Who is responsible for the manufacture of value?

Based on what supercilious ontology have we landed in a space where we vie against other creative people in vain pursuit of the fleeting credibilities of the scarcity economy, rather than freely collaborating and sharing openly with each other in ecstatic celebration of MAKING?

While we understand and acknowledge the economic pressures and fear-mongering that threatens to dominate and crush the creative impulse, we also believe that *now more than ever we have the tools to relinquish agency via cooperative means*, fueled by the fires of the Open Source Movement.

Looking out across the invisible vistas of that rhizomatic parallel country we can begin to see our community beyond constraints, in the place where intention meets resilient, proactive, collaborative organization.

Here is a document born of that belief, sown purely of imagination and will. When we document we assert. We print to make real, to reify our being there.

When we do so with mindful intention to address our process, to open our work to others, to create beauty in words in space, to respect and acknowledge the strength of the page we now hold physical, a thing in our hand... we remind ourselves that,
like Dorothy: *we had the power all along, my dears.*

THE PRINT! DOCUMENT SERIES

is a project of

the trouble with bartleby

in collaboration with

the operating system

THE OPERATING SYSTEM
BROOKLYN AND WORLDWIDE
C. 2019