

Editors' Note

We put this issue together with an awareness of what weathering looks like: coping and living with chronic stressors, big and small, and how that is killing us, even as we are still here. Asking people to take time to write about difficult material and the conditions we live, breathe, and create under is fraught. Extra consideration is required when requests are made of writers who are also members of communities disproportionately affected by the weather. Asking a writer to write about the weather makes the writing not just about the writing; it is at once asking the writer to reinhabit the climate, to return and reassume psychic costs. The writer also negotiates the ongoing tension of where to direct energy, at times leading to the calculated but difficult decision of saying “no” to an important contribution in favour of rest and one less commitment.

As Black guest editors who understand and are sensitive to how these conditions prevent folks made marginalized from producing and meeting deadlines, we were mindful of this reality. At the same time, impinged upon by similar weather conditions, and unusually this year under a global pandemic, we too made late and unexpected requests. And while we kept an eye on the production schedule, in our role as guest editors, particularly as Black guest editors working on a “weather” issue, we established the need to be accommodating and flexible, to acknowledge up front the labour and time of each potential contribution, and to commit to creating the climate we needed and wanted for this issue that doesn't exist for us out there. This included inviting emerging writers to contribute, relying on our extended communities, and opening up our networks of exchange. We wanted to extend “our ladder,” to borrow a line from our interview with Benedicta Bawo and Maysa Zeyad, who, in a brilliant exchange, explore the realities under which Black workers in the DTES labour. That this issue creates a space for ourselves and the contributors when the climate dictates otherwise, speaks, then, to a labour of love and careful consideration.

We included pieces that highlight the personal cost of weathering, such as Zehra Naqvi’s “Summer Day” and yamagushiku shō’s “this veil is thin and it is my body,” while connecting outwardly to the larger political and everyday climate of colonial and racial violence. We included pieces that delve into the physical manifestations of weather, such as Kimberly Bain’s “Spill,” which reveals the horror of “rains that wouldn’t stop” and Bopha Chhay’s “60 Knots of the Nor’wester’s Whistle,” which explores how both human and non-human beings can be “blown off course.” We included Rita Wong’s “Blueberry River,” which acknowledges how with a “flick of a light switch” we continue to be complicit in the extractive and violent production of electricity, in turn impacting Dane-zaa identity and survival on Blueberry River First Nation lands.

We also wanted to highlight how weather patterns can be recalibrated, examples of which can be seen in J.R. Carpenter’s “The Incremental Coast” and the excerpt of Jordan Abel’s *Empty Spaces*, a project which refuses the projection of colonial emptiness while asking, “What bodies fill the air with words?” In *Vancouver Special: Disorientations and Echo*, a selection of artists from different communities and entangled histories convened at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Visitors to this exhibition, on view until January 2022, are invited not only to consider how the tone and temperature of the gallery is changed by the installations, but how disorientation, often positioned as out of place, can be a reorientation to reconsider who and what else is *in place*.

The climate and the air you find in this issue is different, and would not have been possible to create without the support of *TCR* staff. The early visioning that occurred with outgoing Arts Editor, Emily Dundas Oke, the behind-the-scenes work of Managing Editor, Lauren Lavery, who made sure, for example, that everyone got paid, and especially the labour of Matea Kulić, the Editorial Director. She not only welcomed us as guest editors, she also danced the fine line between support and leadership, stepping back and stepping in as needed.

As you hold this issue in your hands, we ask you to hold the extraordinary work of all the contributors gathered here as well as those who had wanted to be part of the conversation but couldn’t, due to weather conditions.

—Phanuel Antwi & Junie Désil