

The broken



The ESP detective squad
A few human drunks got rolled
“Your father is not your father”
The time machine in MIT’s basement
My robot double

The Future



“If you ask most people what they’d do with a time machine, they’ll give you totally heroic answers. They’ll tell you that they’d piggyback Anne Frank out of her concentration camp, or better yet, that they’d kill Hitler back when he was just an art school wannabe. They’d make sure those dorks on the Titanic knew that the whole iceberg thing was serious business, or they’d tell Janis Joplin to ease up a bit, take her by the hand and show her some love. But most of these hypothetical people, when faced with the reality of a time travelling device—be it DeLorean, phone booth, hot tub or otherwise—wouldn’t actually do any of those things. They’d be taking Future Thems on dates to the mall.”

The broken

Prose Poetry Photography Art Music



Summer 2012 Issue 10

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On the Web:

www.thebrokencitymag.com

Submission Guidelines:

www.thebrokencitymag.com/submissions.html

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In this issue:



While we were shuffling through the submissions for this future-themed issue, an interesting trend rose to the surface: writing about the past, which, we came to realize, is essential for defining and shaping the future—for setting it up. That's why you'll see personal history

popping up in this issue's pages—like in Julian Berengaut's poem on page 10, and Mei K's illustration on page 3. Elsewhere, dive into tales of mutating siblings, visit the mean streets of Remnant Land and learn about the unified theory of complete grooviness. The Future awaits!

Cover Text

The cover passage is taken from Suzanne Sutherland's short story, "Going Shopping With Future Me," which appears on page 6.

The Broken City is currently accepting submissions for its summer 2013 edition: **Eat this magazine.**

That's right, armchair chefs; *The Broken City* is running a food issue. Send your grub-related poetry, fiction, essays, comics, illustrations, photography, music/book reviews to thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com. We may publish some recipes, but they'd better be mind-blowing; we're not looking to make a cookbook, here. We're more interested in seeing how a ham sandwich might make its way into a sonnet.

Deadline is: May 1, 2013. Submitters will be contacted after that date, with news of acceptance or rejection.

Nothing that fits the theme? Send something anyway—there may be room for non-conforming work too.

The Broken City is also pleased to announce a very special upcoming issue—number 11, overall—for winter 2012: **Reunion**. The magazine won't be seeking unsolicited submissions for this sorta-anniversary edition (10 in the bag!). Instead, we plan to make contact with long-lost contributors, to see if they've got anything new to offer. We'll be heading back to the Issue 1 archives, then moving forward, hitting up old e-mail addresses to see if they're still manned. Only folks whose work was previously accepted to the magazine will be contacted; don't call us, we'll call you—but if you were previously published and you don't hear from us, do drop us a line.

You need to let go.



The sooner the better.

Mei K

Warning From The Future

skawt chonzz

i don't wish to alarm you
but i thought it best that you know
they have a time machine in the basement at MIT
and one day, soon
they're gonna power that motherfucker up

it doesn't look like much
a cylinder, some magnets, coils that hum
but inside that unassuming silver can
they slow down light
to a crawl
and what this means for you, the laymonkey, is this:
when some egghead mashes PLAY on that apocalyptic jambox
on some random Tuesday afternoon
within the machine it shall remain
that random Tuesday afternoon
though the rest of creation marches on to Friday

and through that tiny pinhole in the week
THE FUTURE will come pouring through
not gradually or gently with excuses and shy glances
but ALL AT ONCE and all our days and years to come
will come screaming into the present
the ultimate simultaneous chronogasm
the money shot to beat all money shots
and it's gonna be pearl necklaces all round, baby

i'm receiving this warning via sorcerous transmission
from a future self in the post-Eschaton
he says the weather is fine
but the music has become very very bad
he apologizes because that's somehow his fault?
but never mind! he wants you to know
I want you to know
a few things about the future
that will make the transition a little easier

in the future
everything will cost money

in the future
death will be no more or less

in the future
television goes straight to your brain
and dreams come shiny, pre-packaged in foil

in the future
where we're going...
we don't need roads

in the future
computers will be more like drugs
and drugs will be more like computers

in the future
you can change your personality
as easily as you change your socks and as often

in the future
they've dispensed with light
because it's too damn slow
so that the only constant
is the speed of God
Godspeed
where everything (literally!)
is consumed and made one
in the shuddering rush
of consciousness

in the future
they have already developed
the unified theory of complete grooviness

in the future
everything is amazing
nobody is happy

in the future
(terrible burst of howling static)
i've lost the feed!
transmission ends!
you've been warned!

see you in the future!

skawt chonzz is a Plutonian crime lord, a profession that corresponds to 'poet/spoken word artist' here on Earth, where he's currently hiding in a witness protection program. You can lap up his brain-drippings on the twittah @PimpMyShoggoth and get his electronic chapbook R'LYEH SUTRA at martianmigraineypress.com.

In Remnant Land

John Grey

It was the meanest of the mean streets,
inner-city, across the green river
from the shimmering glass apartments,
the business district, the bustling nightlife.

The landscape never changed.
Toppling twenty family tenements.
Tunnels dripping with graffiti.
A desolate park. A rocket husk here.
A burning man there.
Creatures sunning themselves in the dark.
Dead factories. Remnant land.

All along Einstein Drive,
elders staggered from dingy pubs,
gripping, sucking flasks like oxygen tanks.
Young ones gathered in murmuring huddles,
in alleys, in doorways,
their shadows rippling in the moonlight
like snakes digesting.

I skirted their despair on my way home
from the human bar-code works.
Faces took me in, leathery, yellowy-brown,
even the young ones born ancient,
and the eyes... narrow, piercing,
the hatred, fear of any helpless world.

"Stay away from there," friends always warned me,
a mimed garroting for illustration.
Okay, so a few human drunks got rolled
every now and then,
some trespassing tough guys
got as good as they gave
with fists, with the glittering edge
of rusty knives.

It was my short cut to the monorail station.
It was their long road, circular by all accounts.

John Grey is an Australian-born poet who works as a financial systems analyst, and was recently published in Poem, Spindrift, Prism International and the horror anthology, What Fears Become. He has work upcoming in Potomac Review, Hurricane Review and Pinyon.

Going Shopping With Future Me

Suzanne Sutherland

I take a pair of jeans off the rack and examine the waist-band.

"You think these'll fit?" I ask.

"Oh no. No, no, no, no. Put those back," says Future Me. "I spent three minutes trying to get those on and ten minutes peeling them off. And they made my butt look weird."

"Cool, thanks."

"Seriously, I felt so awful afterwards that I bought a jumbo bag of caramel corn in the food court and ate it all while glaring at skinny 16-year-olds with their parents' credit cards."

"Right, good save."

I hate it when Future Me gets like this; she can be so bitter. Like the time she asked me out for coffee and girl talk right after I'd started seeing this guy I was really into.

"What's going on?" I'd asked, sitting down at a small table in the corner of our favourite coffee shop.

"Get out now," she'd said, "he has herpes."

If you ask most people what they'd do with a time machine, they'll give you totally heroic answers. They'll tell you that they'd piggyback Anne Frank out of her concentration camp, or better yet, that they'd kill Hitler back when he was just an art school wannabe. They'd make sure those dorks on the Titanic knew that the whole iceberg thing was

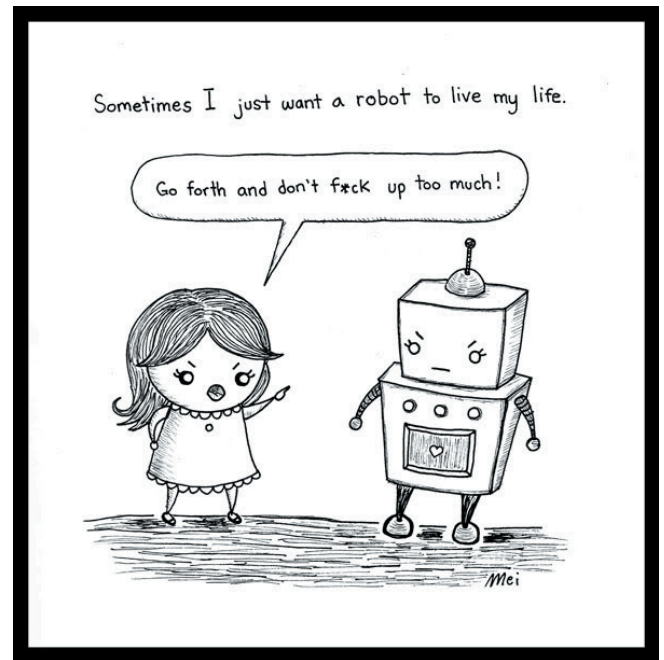


Illustration: Mei K

serious business, or they'd tell Janis Joplin to ease up a bit, take her by the hand and show her some love. But most of these hypothetical people, when faced with the reality of a time travelling device—be it DeLorean, phone booth, hot tub or otherwise—wouldn't actually do any of those things. They'd be taking Future Thems on dates to the mall too.

I unfold a sweater from the table in front of me.

"Future Me?" I ask, "What do you think of this colour?"

"It looks better on the table than it does on you. Put it back. That salmon one next to it though, that one looks good."

"Seriously, the pink one?"

"Yup, trust me."

And she's right, and I buy the salmon cardigan.

When we finish shopping we head to the food court and split a giant smoothie. She makes catty remarks about the girls she's already seen and I nod along in agreement.

"Future Me," I ask, "how come you never hang out with Future You?"

"Future Me is a real bitch," she says.

We pass the Mango Monsoon back and forth a few more times. Future Me slurps and I know that means she's hit bottom.

Suzanne Sutherland is a Toronto-based writer and editor. Her first book, a young adult novel titled When We Were Good, is forthcoming from Sumach Press in spring 2013. She has a blog, suzannesutherland.blogspot.com, as well as a Twitter account, @sutherlandsuz, which you may or may not find interesting.

Big Sister



Janis Butler Holm

I'm reading this book about life on other planets, and suddenly I hear a tapping at my window. "Who's there?" I yell, jumping to my feet.

"It's me!" my little brother shouts. He's climbed the tree again, despite Mom's saying not to. I open the window and let him into my room.

"What's the matter with your neck?" I ask. There are funny blue scabs on the skin above his collar.

"I dunno. It just itches." He scratches, and a gummy powder sticks to his nails.

"Your legs look really weird," I say. He's got scabs there, too, but they're a dark grey.

"So what?" It's clear the little monster is in a bad mood. "I'm hungry," he complains, scratching his head. I can see some purple scabs between clumps of hair.

"Well, Mom'll have lunch ready in a few minutes. You'd better wash up." My own stomach growls. I close the book on my desk. "In fact, you could use a bath. You're beginning to stink."

"Oh, shut up, stupid. You're the one who stinks." He bends down to scratch his feet, which are covered with black scales. His fingers are now blue and joined by stretchy webs.

"Ha, ha, ha," I sing. "You stink, and you're weird." I hold my nose and go "Eeeeeuuuwwww." I'm being really mean, but my brother drives me crazy.

"Kids, it's time for lunch!" Mom yells up the stairs. The little beast looks upset, and I begin to feel bad. His nose has morphed into a snout.

"Look, I'll say you're in the bathroom. As for climbing up the tree, that can be our secret." I'm a pretty good big sister when I decide I want to be. "Be right down, Mom!"

My brother's making dopey noises. Of course he won't say "thank you," but I can tell he's grateful. Still, I worry about him. What's going to happen when his sister's not around?

As I move toward the hallway, I'm shaking my head. "You'd better start behaving," I say, just like Mom, "or one day you'll find yourself in really big trouble."

Janis Butler Holm lives in Athens, Ohio, where she served as Associate Editor for _Wide Angle_, the film journal. Her prose, poems and performance pieces have appeared in small-press, national and international magazines. Her plays have been produced in the United States, Canada, and England.

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19.89	11.78	FelCor	dd	619.58	19.60	19.72
45.56	29.94	FidNFA	7	39.38	39.02	39.09
45.19	32.70	FidFed	20	46.10	43.40	44.81
49.50	30.00	FstArmOp	10	47.32	46.31	46.95
46.70	36.58	FirstData	22	45.24	46.60	45.05
44.80	34.78	FstHorizon	11	38.26	37.94	38.19
42.80	36.70	FstInRt	25	39.80	39.39	39.67
33.27	20.89	FstMarb	11	34.49	33.74	33.75
42.26	30.56	FstRep's	18	37.76	36.90	37.61
65.32	47.84	FstRef	12	64.50	63.09	63.35
53.36	39.42	FirstEngy	19	50.68	50.18	50.19
68.18	52.50	FishSci	26	67.85	67.22	67.37
67.98	36.00	FishRock	22	54.78	53.05	54.55
30.61	18.51	FlowersPds	31	28.06	27.44	27.81
45.64	23.69	Flowerserv M	...	46.75	45.10	46.23
87.92	51.07	Floor	36	687.50	87.51	87.79
29.95	18.74	FootLocker	14	22.55	22.34	22.21
13.54	7.57	FordM	8	8.80	8.57	8.77
52.30	27.10	FordCC pfs	...	32.48	31.85	32.35
44.69	24.77	FdgCCT gc	...	41.89	41.24	41.71
45.21	32.46	ForestLab	23	445.38	44.67	45.13
54.76	32.97	ForestOil	23	51.59	50.77	51.31
46.18	33.50	FortuneBr	17	76.86	76.29	76.76
46.98	20.65	FutCoal	31	44.64	44.17	44.54
82.20	46.85	FoursH g	...	59.13	56.87	58.91
32.00	22.49	FranceTel	...	23.22	23.07	23.17
32.80	63.56	FrankRes	23	101.63	100.36	100.47
68.20	54.46	FredMac	cc	668.35	67.05	67.55
64.00	31.52	FuICO	14	63.33	61.95	63.09
28.05	15.87	Freescale	19	25.82	25.30	25.58
28.11	16.20	FreesCB	...	25.97	25.49	25.74
26.99	18.86	Fremont	5	24.60	24.28	24.44
20.35	8.37	FriedBR	11	11.82	11.61	11.75
46.18	13.81	FrientOil	13	47.17	43.41	46.90
57.97	35.89	Frontline	3	40.35	39.71	40.11
37.99	25.25	FuilerHR	18	37.39	36.89	36.96
24.95	16.07	FurnBnds	21	24.66	24.21	24.43

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41.85	28.37	GATX	dd	40.27	35.56	39.98
31.94	26.48	Gallagher	38	29.83	29.35	29.45
41.10	18.53	GameStop	34	39.82	34.55	39.34
81.82	58.37	Gannett	13	64.49	63.42	63.56
22.70	15.90	Gap	14	18.07	17.70	18.06
52.54	32.82	GardDen	22	52.01	50.95	51.95
4.95	2.35	Gateway	46	2.80	2.74	2.77
48.97	38.20	GayIndEnt	dd	43.97	43.12	43.84
21.25	17.32	GenCorp	dd	19.90	19.72	19.85
100.20	49.90	Genentech	74	88.73	86.92	87.31
25.05	11.27	GoCable	44	24.79	24.40	24.55
122.27	140.72	GenDyn	16	118.11	116.30	117.91
37.34	32.65	GenElec	21	33.09	32.88	32.91
51.90	31.38	GoGrthPrp	cc	51.70	50.84	51.43
53.95	32.50	GenMarit	6	37.75	37.20	37.72
53.54	44.67	Gen Mills	15	48.96	48.38	48.64
17.90	18.33	GenMoDr	dd	24.55	23.90	24.44
25.10	20.05	GM d32A	...	23.06	22.80	23.02
22.47	14.40	GM d32B	...	16.55	16.35	16.61
25.53	15.22	GM d33	...	18.48	18.01	18.21
24.65	13.30	GM d352	...	15.74	15.26	15.69
46.64	40.75	GenPrt	18	43.10	42.88	42.94
35.37	26.31	Genworth	13	33.01	32.55	32.55
55.90	21.40	GoGull	31	32.46	31.54	32.41
7.90	4.13	Gordon g	6	0.75	0.66	0.74
22.12	8.72	Gordons	...	21.25	20.96	21.15
95.42	69.50	Gottlym	37	84.24	83.05	83.65
68.90	23.54	GlobeGa	12	67.65	67.24	67.61
47.80	17.91	Gordan's	...	44.5	44.16	44.34
30.52	12.82	Globo	cc	30.00	29.23	29.61
53.80	44.36	GlobeS&M	...	51	51.10	51.10
52.32	27.40	GlobePaye	39	50	49.56	50
61.75	32.27	GlobeS&P	62	60	59.07	60
30.83	12.18	Goldman's	...	30.96	30.96	30.96
72.39	9.40	GoldFlid	cc	...	71.83	...
25.97	17.04	Goldcorp	g	25.93	25.93	25.93
71.46	55.40	GoldWPr	...	74.55	74.55	74.55
139.75	94.75	Goldman's	...	138.75	138.75	138.75
26.00	25.25	Gold's p	...	25.25	25.25	25.25
26.39	24.25	Gold's m	...	24.25	24.25	24.25
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Fabio Sassi

+0.6	31.86	24.28	HighwayP
+0.6	57.00	44.83	Hillendb
-18	26.05	18.78	Hilton
-12	71.85	28.70	HollyCp
+59	43.98	34.56	HomeOp
-1.05	46.44	35.36	HomePro
-39	36.39	21.45	HomexDe
-38	34.36	23.75	Honda
+1.83	39.50	32.68	HomwBtr
-36	35.44	29.16	Hormel
+72	39.45	20.10	Hornbeck
+20	45.63	28.35	Hospira
+09	45.94	38.00	HospPT
+12	20.00	15.46	HoshtMa
+23	71.47	45.60	HoustonE
+60	73.40	42.50	HowatE
+42	54.20	42.56	Hubbells
-56	46.40	25.29	Hughspa
-05	58.26	30.53	Humana
+24	30.00	16.50	Huntsman
+2.20	32.42	17.50	ICI Bk
-22	16.59	11.38	IDT Corp
-47	53.80	37.97	IHOP Cp
-27	28.59	22.65	IMS Rhtk
+12	36.70	26.82	ING
-40	41.40	21.00	ISBrazz
-36	13.64	11.33	ISH HK
+01	14.10	9.86	ISJapan
+09	48.20	30.16	ISH Kor
+1.85	7.67	6.64	ISMAnks
+21	14.06	10.50	ISNTadm
-51	19.80	17.38	ISH UK
-05	64.60	57.80	ISBldJv
	107.90	101.65	ISLeTIP
	72.34	52.50	ISChn2r
	77.54	60.20	ISBldTr
-17	129.43	113.53	ISSPS00
-23	61.67	54.53	ISSP0th
+40	67.53	58.37	ISSPVAL
-04	78.07	62.36	ISSPMIE
+88	79.58	63.37	ISMACG
+98	74.94	60.40	ISMACVA
-02	69.14	55.06	ISMERSt
+25	65.13	56.77	ISBldBcr
-07	97.12	65.35	ISBldng
-33	62.72	49.19	ISSPSsm
+10	85.92	72.65	ISMER35
-80	70.00	52.04	ISBVCyd
-04	124.81	97.71	ISMSCGH
+02	44.49	35.16	ISlar
+46	67.65	41.58	ITT Ed
+05	116.10	84.53	ITT Inds
+60	32.45	26.22	IDecorp
+38	46.10	36.62	IDEX
-26	11.73	8.55	IronOffs
+34	94.64	78.50	ITW
+63	50.93	31.90	Imation
-44	13.48	8.44	ImpactM
-09	50.56	32.27	INGO
+1.06	49.50	21.59	IndefFd
-24	46.25	37.83	Indymac
-34	73.10	56.79	Indyme m
-80	15.66	9.53	Infraspec
+3.45	43.46	35.13	IngerInd
-78	10.14	14.58	IngramM
+3	55.17	31.27	InfocmEx
-87	26.81	16.68	Informec
-81	24.77	17.25	IBM
-68	25	31.19	InfFlav
-15	25	24.20	InfGame
-37	25	26.97	InfPap
+43	25	26.62	InfRect
-24	19.71	19.71	ISE n
-30	9	9.08	Interpab
-9	16	16.57	IntvTech
-10	49	41.63	Ipsco g
	29	26.66	IronMin
	15	5.17	IvanhM

IKIL

54.50	16.90	JLO
10.87	32.92	JPMorgCh
41.29	22.73	Jabil
42.73	27.35	JackinBo
80.55	47.53	Jacobs
22.43	12.75	JamesCap
42.25	24.38	Jarden's
54.10	33.55	Jeffries
58.75	47.13	JeffPilot
69.94	58.00	Johnit

The Unearthing of Eleven Seconds

novel excerpt

Karen K. Hugg

Prologue

Yesterday I came across an old pocket watch my father had given me when I was a child. It was a silver, hunter-case piece from 1916 that had belonged to my fifth great-grandfather. On the back was an inscription: "Each man should frame life so that at some future hour fact and his dreaming meet." The advice, whose attribution I still don't know to this day, is a reminder to be ambitious, productive, to make one's ideas reality, yet the words rattled me with a dark irony. I thought of Paris and of my "dreaming" there. I hadn't been proud of it, and even less so after I learned what it all meant. I sat down on the bed where the coats I'd been sorting lay like a dead body. The clock with its ordered numbers and white face was a tidy artifact, a blunt contrast to my life a year ago, which had been wrenching, chaotic, and to say the least, shameful.

Chapter 1

Detective Gauriec came into my office and apologized for being new to "this kind of thing." He'd just been transferred to the EP unit of the Préfecture, he said, and asked if I wanted the wrapping taken off. Yes, I said, it helped to touch the blood. He laid a large kitchen knife on my desk and declared it the

murder weapon. A woman, in her fifties, had been slain. He was about to relay other information but I held up my hand. This was all I required. I asked for the lights to be lowered, then closed my eyes and set my hands on the cold steel, breathing into its scattered vibrations. The vacuity in my mind opened, bloomed in a sense, and flowed to my fingertips. Then my skull went numb and I felt a sharp dizziness. I pressed on the knife to steady myself as the spinning condensed and expanded, again and again, until it finally ceased and I saw an image of a man.

This man isn't a living man of flesh and sentience but rather stone, a sculptural column on a building. The face is bearded, the chest nude and muscular. He has sympathetic eyes that gaze at an empty beyond while his arms hold up the weight of the stone floor above. Just below the navel, the torso disappears into a plane, a horizon of sorts, or even a ground. Yes, it is a ground, a ground of grass with thick blades, black in color. It interrupts the lifeless body. A rumbling sound grows louder. A cluster of pigeons rises and flies through the air.

Afterward, Gauriec seemed perplexed by the image but was too courteous to complain. "Are you certain it's of the future?" he asked and

I replied that yes, I was certain. I told him to rate it a "Very Likely, 8." He had the sketch artist render what I'd seen, then thanked me for making time to meet on such short notice. "I know you can only give what you receive," he said and we shook hands but I could see the disappointment in his face at having to comb through every photo of a Telamon located in the city of Paris.

But what could I do? Ludo had asked me to assist and I did, and by the time Gauriec left, I was already late for class. My lecture was on Correlates that day, in which I would discuss the nature of what had just occurred, the touching of Objects and how they did or didn't relate to the Subject pursued. It was fascinating to me because the process was a giant interconnected web that sometimes made sense and sometimes didn't, but that day in class the students showed little sign of being interested. They sat doodling on their tablets in their inflatable hats or faux-porcupine capes. None had ever professionally put their hands on a trigger, only accidentally foreseen their mothers crash the family car or friends break up with mates. They did ask more questions than the first-years I was used to at Tulane-Clego, though. Those students carried a smug confidence that agitated my resentment, and if it hadn't been for the discoveries I'd made in my research

about how rigidly adults with EP follow the Code of Ethics, I would have been barren of motivation to remain an Associate Pedagogue.

After class, Ludo's assistant came in and asked me to sign a few insurance waiver screens. She was a tall student, close to my six feet and a few inches, and walked as if her legs, too long and lanky, were appendages she could hardly control. In her mini-dress they revealed a scattering of blue bruises and a thigh tattoo that read *Trees Are for Climbing, not Wiping*. Being in my early thirties I could never tell if a young person's hair was fake, they so often wore wigs, and hers was no exception. It hung to her waist and was gold and glassy. The oddest thing about this woman, though, wasn't her appearance but how so closely she resembled a woman I knew but couldn't for the life of me place.

Her eyes were eerie, almost perverse. They had a perfect roundness to them that seemed foreign yet familiar. Deep set, opaque, the color of soil. Around them she wore makeup that looked like glittering dirt. It gave her a ghoulish style. But I'd seen the boxy shape of her mouth somewhere, that muscular arc in the eyebrow. The constancy of her unfinished presence disturbed me, and while the two of us went over the screenwork at hand, I couldn't help but glance away every time our eyes met.

"This last one says you won't bring legal action against the university if you're harmed," she said.

I signed the waiver, noticing a distorted reflection of my face in the screen. It struck me that I seemed secretive with dormant eyes and a wide slumped mouth. "Harmed?" I said.

"You know, attacked, like the man in Clignancourt?"

Family Tree from Provincial Poland

Julian Berengaut

Your father is not your father;
Half of your family is not your family.

Do you want to hear more?

During the War, your father was a POW,
Your mother hid a Jew—a lawyer from Lomza.
He stayed a year and had to leave
When neighbors started asking questions.

You are his son.

When your father came back from the POW camp,
He was told you were your aunt's illegitimate son
Your mother took in to protect her sister from shame.

So now you know why your father treated you the way
he did.

The new farmhouse built after the War—
And the orchards—was paid from the money
Your Jewish father had left for you.

If you go back to claim it,
Your brothers will kill you.

Julian Berengaut was born in Poland. He was educated at universities in Warsaw, Jerusalem, Waltham, Massachusetts and Madison, Wisconsin. He worked for many years as an international debt negotiator and has written poetry, short stories and a novel.

"No, I didn't know."

"A perceptivist was assaulted in
Clignancourt two weeks ago."

"Assaulted? As in harmed?"

"Yes. Has that not occurred in
America?"

Outside, thunder drummed in
the distance.

"Well, there has been distrust
and... criticism, but I haven't heard of
physical violence."

She pushed her hair behind a
shoulder but it swung back, brushing
my forearm.

"The perceptivist was at-
tacked," I said, "and was it unprovoked?"

"I think so. Three vigilantes
jumped him in a park and beat him."

My face warmed. "Did he sur-
vive?"

"No."

My lips moved but no words

came.

"You seem ill. Are you okay?"

"Yes, yes," I said. My eyes were dry and itchy.

"You're not well."

I caught the odor of her breath and the spicy coldness brought on a coughing fit. "No," I wheezed. "I'm fine." I coughed awhile, cleared my throat, then regained control and moved to sign the form I'd just signed. Her hand reached out to hold the stylus back. The touch of her hand on my arm gave me an intimate sense of déjà vu. I removed her hand with my free one. There, under my thumb, I could feel her luke-warm skin. I sensed her consciousness signature and felt her beating pulse: steady, faint, but present.

My vision blurred.

"Can I get you some water?"

The smell was aniseed. Her breath was aniseed. "Yes, I'm finished here. We'll continue another..." A blunt numbness spread over my head, then subsided.

Her signature hadn't felt particularly strong and yet a vision was coming. I massaged my skull to circulate the blood and stave off trancing out. "Yes, for now, bye," I said, and clicked off the projector. I threw my tablet in my bag, grabbed my coat and hurried to the door, swiping the light control to accidentally leave her in the darkness behind.

Outside, the Pantheon square pulsed with activity. Students with bulging backsacks jammed the sidewalks chatting on phones, calling to each other, eating sandwiches. Pedal cars and taxipods zipped through the cobblestone streets. A line of tourists holding photo-eyes waited beneath the floodlit columns to visit Voltaire's tomb. Giant buses maneuvered around. A man

beside a kiosk waved the flag of Crete in the air, calling for national independence. And on the terraces, anxious waiters arranged tables and unstacked chairs, hoping to make the most of the brief dry weather.

I was scheduled to meet my sister and her friends for dinner near the Place d'Italie. Julia would exaggerate any few minutes I might be late before outlining in dramatic detail how I'd always been late to everything my entire life and what a boring inconvenience it was to wait.

I cut across the clover lawn, perplexed at what had triggered this. Touch was the obvious one, but there was also the smell of the girl's breath. A car honked. The arched windows of the lycée wiggled and snapped back into place. I massaged my head. Seeing the girl's future would be voyeuristic. A conflict of interest. Unprofessional. A taxipod zipped by and I considered flagging it down, then jogged a little. I had to get to the restaurant—or at least out of public view.

I stayed in the shadows, fiddling with the identiband on my wrist. Having my name and medical information etched in platinum made me feel more exposed, not safer. Just breathe, I thought. Thunder boomed and I hurried into Descartes Street. Its buildings, covered in spiky vines, rose like canyon walls. The windows above the shops and restaurants radiated a yellow warmth. I passed a waiter lighting candles, then a napping lounge where businessmen slept on a scattering of divans. Their large bodies rose and fell like hibernating beasts. Ahead, the clothing kiosk flashed an image of me in a Chinese war robe before I moved around some teenagers outside the curling hall. A few wore the heavy boot spurs of the Italian Suspects gang. They

jostled and guffawed and cussed. One brute with a thin mouth and pasty eyes called out in French, "Hé, Seigneur des Sciences," an insulting reference to my academic frock and cravat.

I wondered if these were the kinds of mates Ludo's assistant had to choose from. Thugs who wore shape-changing tattoos and decorated their shaved heads with feather implants. Few young people had any sense of right and wrong anymore—or so I thought then—and they certainly didn't know how to sacrifice their time in the name of work.

I found my padded skull-cap and put it on—just in time. My vision blurred. The street with its pedestrians and doors and lights spun around in a sudden lurch. I reached to a windowsill for balance but missed. Europa Creeper morphed into a cement fleur-de-lis, then a wrought-iron gate. It all smeared and separated and burst like a pulsating, rotating fern until my head ached and my face went numb and my muscles relented.

I walk along a river, a calm passage the color of soot. Steam curls from the surface and rises into a dense cloud of fog. The moist air smells sour and stagnant. The sky is gray. It may be dusk or dawn or some hour in between. On the far bank of the river there are stone buildings with balconies and black railings. I am in a park with an unblemished sidewalk, a groomed lawn, antique lamps, freshly painted waste cans. Beyond lies a parking lot in a series of clean white stripes.

My wristwatch blinks: "four minutes remain." I have to hurry, I don't know why. A car screeches to a stop. A metal door slams and when I turn my head toward the source, a man crushes me from behind. He's heavy. He locks

my torso and pins my arms. It's a severe, abrasive pinch. I squirm. My muscles strain. A cloth comes over my nose and mouth. I can't breathe. I flail harder. I manage to squeeze out of my coat and sprint but someone tackles me and suddenly my legs are off the ground. I'm carried in a fit of grunts and smashing hands and a view of the fog jostling.

I woke from the vision in a grainy darkness. The street was quiet, the air warm. That was a strange one. It wasn't about Ludo's assistant. And in the vision, I'd not only embodied a Subject, I'd embodied *myself*. Something unheard of. I tapped the Elapse button on my band. The neural wave pattern showed the vision had expired in 11 seconds. I'd been in recovery sleep for eight minutes.

A scraping noise echoed as if wood were dragged across rock. I sat up, a damp floor beneath my hands, a snug room in my sight. At the far end a wooden staircase led up to a faint light and beside it a man took out little boxes from a large crate, then stacked them on a rustic table.

I smelled smoke. I sneezed.

The man threw a burlap cloth over the boxes. "You're awake."

"Yes. Where am I?"

"Your sister is coming for you."

The man was slight, his hair black and bushy, his mustache thick. The sleeves of his embroidered shirt were stained and rolled back. He was sweating.

"Who are you?" I said.

"I'm Osman. I found you. It's raining. You could have been struck by lightning."

I stood up, my back twinged with a slight pain.

He watched, standing with feet apart, arms folded, in front of his burlap cloth.

The stuttering tones of an oud thumped out.

"Sorry. I get these headaches..." I brushed off my coat, thinking about the river and the park and the... men.

"I know what happened," he said. "I know about your kind. They're around here, at the university. I know where to get information."

"Okay. Where's the exit?"

He pointed to an orange silk curtain and pulled a handscreen from his pocket. As he read the scrolling words, his face turned tart.

"I'll wait for my sister outside," I said.

"Yes, you should go." He glanced at the burlap. "I have work to do."

The silk curtain fluttered and bulged. Julia appeared. "Monsieur Osman? Désolé, je viens de recevoir votre... Christophe, what's going on? What happened?"

My sister had always been a pixie made from steel. With a narrow nose and high cheekbones, her face seemed as if it had been chiseled rather than born. Her smooth complexion collapsed into deep-set eyes of dark brown judgments and her mouth was locked in

a perpetual crease as if to display a pre-irritation with whomever she met. She often wore glossy black coats and stiff pants that crunched and crackled when she walked, the constricted outfit of an urbanite who rarely set foot on grass or gravel. And she always wore high-heeled boots, which made her dainty frame seem as if it were about to blast from a cannon.

"Your brother," Osman said, "fainted in the street."

"I'm sorry, he does that sometimes," she said, "he has a condition."

"I know about his kind."

Osman and Julia eyed me. I shrank into the boy I used to be when Julia would scold me for reading instead of unclogging the algae chute.

"Are you injured?" she said.

"No, I'm fine. Let's go."

We thanked Osman and passed through the curtain into a room whose ceiling was draped with purple and gold cloth. Candle sconces dotted the amber walls. Bowls of lentil soup steamed before diners sitting on floor cushions. In the corner, an old woman sat slouched in a sapphire robe, squinting in meditation out the window, a muddy hookah on the floor before her, its tube clipped to her mouth. It was the kind of deadly pipe I had read about in history books. And she was the kind of person who seemed to see right through you as if you had no clothes or body or voice but were just a hovering presence in time.

Karen K. Hugg is a writer, gardener and mother, in Seattle. She has published fiction, non-fiction and translations in Hip Mama, Shangri-La Shack, Specs, Opium, Poetry East, Northwest Garden News and others. Her novel was inspired by a stint working in Paris, and a dream. Her e-mail is karenhugg at gmail dot com.

This issue, *The Broken City* asked contributors to make a prediction about the future

Julian Berengaut:	Someone smart said, That in the future, There will be two kinds of jobs: Writing code and delivering pizza;	Some poets will write code With rhyme and meter in 0s and 1s; Others will deliver pizzas With a side order of sonnets.	None will make any money.
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Mouki K. Butt: By 2032, Flintstones cars will be all the rage. Auto mechanics will be replaced by physiotherapists and podiatrists. Brake shops will focus on heel repair and rejuvenation. The hiring process for bus drivers will be based on leg strength.

skawt chonzz: Prophetic dream: the year 2059. Bio-engineers, using a new 4D hex-tech process, create a ghost-virus that not only removes the Y-chromosome from existing males of all species, but effectively flat-lines the male “life-wave” altogether. All boys die, and no future boys are possible, not even clones. Also, this really awesome new chip flavour comes out? I can’t even describe it. Tastes like outer space, kinda. Yup.

John Grey: My prediction is that by the year 2015, I will finally clean my study—i.e. arrange the books, CDs and DVDs in alphabetical order, pick up the masses of papers and magazines from the floor, deposit the coffee cup in the kitchen sink and see a smile return to my wife’s face.

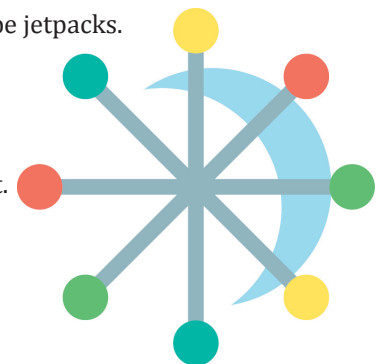
Janis Butler Holm: As economic conditions deteriorate, the U.S. will continue to see protests such as those by the Occupy Movement.

Karen K. Hugg: In some ways, my excerpt reflects my prediction. The world will neither be dystopian, nor, of course, utopian. It will simply be ‘topian.’ Our civilization will still have problems and humans will still struggle against these, toward happiness. Paris may flood regularly via warming, but if one café stands, people will sit and drink in it. And humans may evolve. Massive shifts in living conditions may prompt changes to the brain we can’t currently imagine.

Mei K: In the future, we may eventually grow bored of the Internet, but no worries, there will be jetpacks.

Fabio Sassi: In the future we will breathe through masks!

Suzanne Sutherland: In the future, you will tell me what you want. What you really, really want.



Illustration/Art Contributors

Mouki K. Butt (doodads on front cover and pages 7, 13, back cover) is an illustrator and animator. She currently resides in Vancouver. She often refers to people as “Biff,” “Doc” and “McFly,” in order to make real life more like the Back To The Future movies. minorepic.net/~mouki.

Mei K is a self-taught Vancouver-based artist who makes simple yet powerful images. She’s currently a Production Coordinator in the animation industry and helps bring drawings to TV life. Her favourite musical artist is Kanye West. That’s right. She often draws while listening to him. Check out her work at tiny-vices.com.

Fabio Sassi is experienced in music, photography and writing. He has been a visual artist since 1990, making acrylics via the stenciling technique. He uses logos, icons, tiny objects and discarded stuff. He often adds a quirky twist to his subjects, giving them unusual perspective. He lives in Bologna, Italy. fabio.sassi@ymail.com; fabiosassi.foliohd.com.



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