

A BLIND KIND OF VIOLENCE



Works by

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A
BLIND
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OF
VIOLENCE

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INTRODUCTION

“Understand that sexuality is as wide as the sea. Understand that your morality is not law. Understand that we are you.”

—*Derek Jarman*

In 1994, British artist Derek Jarman passed away from AIDS-related complications, later that same year I was born. It’s been hard for me not to think of this chunk of time recently. My 30th birthday is a looming presence and as I contemplate how I’ve spent my time on Earth, it has put into perspective the enduring nature of Jarman’s work—continuously relevant for three decades after his death.

Jarman’s artistic expressions have persisted through law reforms, attitude changes, marriage equality movements, HIV and AIDs medical innovations and over 50 iterations of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. And yet, the themes and ethos of his works remain relevant. In a rise of right-wing and anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment we are reminded to be open, proud and relentless—to challenge our oppressors through unapologetic authenticity and direct action.

This zine, *A Blind Kind of Violence*, is a testament to the historical significance of Jarman's artistic expression. Thirty years after his death, we have gathered five local artists to forage in the gardens, in the prose and in the cinema of his creation to fuel their own practice. In these persisting places a reflection of queer life in Aotearoa through the lens of Derek Jarman is found.

Samuel Te Kani positions the man himself as a 'Faggot Saint', a romance blooms in poetry from Ruby Macomber, Micheal McCabe recalls the gardens of his grandmother, Hannah Patterson finds inspiration in "iridescent solitude" and Brandon Lin pulls colour and shape together to package it all up.

In responding to Jarman's multi-disciplinary work we help to keep it alive through reference, homage and sanctification. Although a generation has passed since his death, art continues to be made in his Dungeness cottage, exhibited in places like Gus Fisher Gallery and introduced to people like you through publications like this zine. So take in these words, find yourself a place in Jarman's worlds and keep the candle alight for those to come.

Damien Levi

Editor

A NOTE FROM GUS FISHER GALLERY

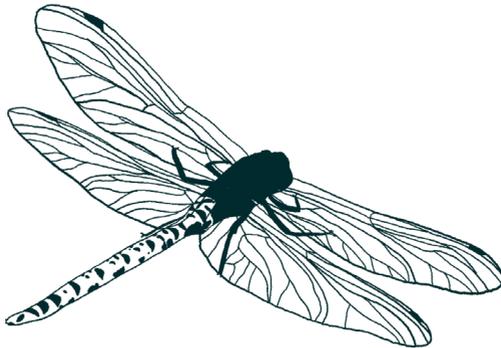
Gus Fisher Gallery is proud to present *A Blind Kind of Violence*, a publication created by *bad apple* in response to the exhibition *Derek Jarman: Delphinium Days*, 15 June - 14 September 2024.

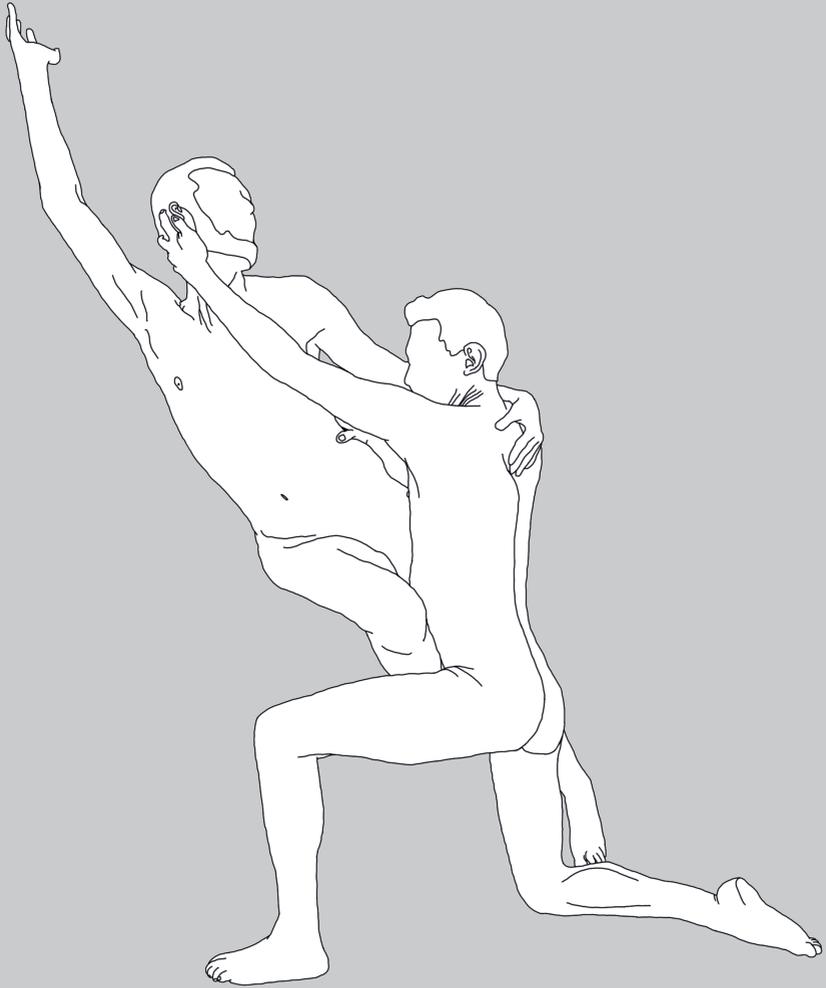
Artist and activist Derek Jarman (1942-1994) is one of the most important and influential figures in twentieth century British culture. Fighting restrictive political and artistic orthodoxies, he created art that sought to challenge the normative culture and reigning neoliberal politics of his (and our) times. Jarman's artistic practice spanned painting, film, installation, writing, set design and performance. Possibly his most enduring legacy is his garden and former home of Prospect Cottage in Dungeness—a refuge and retreat that fuelled Jarman's creativity and has become a site of pilgrimage for visitors worldwide.

As part of the programme for this exhibition, we have had the privilege of working with many rainbow communities and organisations across the motu. Our goal was to create an expansive programme to connect audiences across Tāmaki to Jarman's art and activism which remains influential today.

It has been a privilege working with the team at bad apple, whose emphasis on uplifting and reclaiming the agency of marginalised communities strongly aligns with the values that Jarman lived by. The contributions made by Hannah Patterson, Ruby Macomber, Micheal McCabe and Samuel Te Kani have brought Jarman's legacy into a queer, contemporary Aotearoa, showcasing the relevance of his art and activism to this day.

This publication was brought to you by *Burnett Foundation Aotearoa*.





BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN

by Hannah Patterson

Latin names of flowers

queer histories

young men lubed up in golden fluids

old women who are cruel, except to their gardens

things are more beautiful when we let them decay

keep

the old phone booth

it lives next to

the new one

every bureaucracy is a blind kind of violence

a ceaseless hammering in the blindness of day

when storms shake the house so

think of him,

thinking of the flowers

thinking of the fragrance of the gorse bush

finally, living in its home

he prays the plants will live another year

Oh, the cold cold cold and the lost

generations

cackling down the phone line

Pick up.

Pick up.

like a nuclear power plant
raw
and communing
each day with the sun.

Pick up.

like a beach full of stone
and the moon collecting the stars from the water
scraping them up in
supplication
in a fist.

Pick up, for there is

a man in a cottage and
the sweet, inevitability
of purple
of violets

and the hammering goes on
long into the day
when the sun closes down
for the last time

for you.

TENDER LEGACIES

by Ruby Macomber

We are garden flesh // gutted hearts of Ngutu kākā // re-lining
the veins // monochrome
Blue // a radical responsibility
to see—from here

Is that comforting or cruel?
A burden or blessing?

Did we remember to water the liliesaw?
Those tender legacies // planted
in arid soils // sex and death
unearthed // washed // written in ruddy
truth

You have walked behind the sky for too long—
so you fall with the rain
between us // forming *Blue* ocean

No boundaries // just bodies
that keep growing

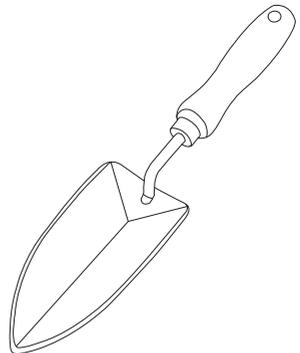
To the sun // like santolina // stubborn
like hawera // tolerating dry coasts

No boundaries // just bodies
that keep growing

Into // *Blue* ocean
bobbing in the tides of anonymity // so
tender

Felt // on the other side of the world // figureless
tohu carved into
first-person // poems
from an omniscient ocean // decades
between us // in visceral queer
closeness

Is that comforting or cruel?
A burden or blessing?



IN SERVICE

by Micheal McCabe

There is a kōwahi tree on our deck. It sits in a pot from Bunnings on three concrete feet that separate it from the timber below. There is a gentle lean in the trunk towards the Waitematā, from which the light rises above Rangitoto each morning. Last spring, leaves emerged from the rooted mesh of branches and as November slipped into January the leaves began to yellow and fall. Watching our tree now, again turning green, I wish I had the ability to *know* about plants. To understand how much water or sun they need. To know their signs, the speckling of a leaf or twisting of an unfurling shoot. To know how these shifts are for the seasons, for weather, telling us to watch cautiously. I'm not even a city boy, I should know better.

Growing up, summers and fortnightly weekends were spent on our family farm 30 minutes north of Whangārei, it stretched from the T intersection just before the small bridge on Pigs Head Road and down the gravel length of Kaikanui. Dad's house was at the beginning of this metal road opposite a creek bounded by water-cress. Up the drive to the Kauri House, there were a few garden beds intermittently tended to. Inside one wooden box the fennel, always gone to seed, greeted you with its thick liquorice scent. In this garden, my dad had constructed me a sleepout. A sloped

roof. Timber silts. Thick bolts. Exposed chicken wire and expol underfloor insulation. A demolition warehouse ranch slider.

Every night I would get my dad or stepmum to watch me make my journey across the garden to the 'Ratbox'. I would walk past the greenhouse where my mum used to grow green chillies and choko, pass a row of feijoa trees and up the three steps to my half-built bedroom. From inside the doorway, I would wave to signal that it was okay to leave. The backdoor would shut, and the porch light sensing stillness would turn the garden back into night. In bed, I wished the plants could be my companions in sleep, beans emerging from flowers or carrots growing deeper into the earth, but instead, I could only think about how all around me was the thinness of the roof and the possums scratching at the tin.

In the morning, on the back of a Yamaha Grizzly, my dad, my sister and I would head to the cow shed. Sometimes, I would head into a paddock by myself, occasionally with my sister, to dig up ragwort and thistles. I spent a whole year of second weekends doing the exact same routine: Have dinner, watch TV, leave the house, walk through the garden, wave goodnight, close the ranch slider, wake up, quad bike to the cowshed, grab a pickaxe, walk to a paddock and dig up plants cows won't eat. Field by field these invasive plants would be piled up ready to shrink in the sun to give space for the equally invasive but hardy Kikuyu grass to

flourish. This was the most time I ever spent outside. Growing up I loved the bush but hated the farm. I was not interested in the paddocks filled with cows, grass, and shit, or the exhausting trudge across clay paths in heavy gumboots and overalls that didn't fit.

I was interested in the creeks filled with tuna. Crossing their banks, water would trace the edges of your boots to press the lip of your red bands against your calves, and stream, insisting to slip inside. Above, kahikatea and mānuka would shade the steep banks and create deep shadows on the riverbed. These bodies of cool water traced the bases of hills and led into the churn of waterfalls where black kōura burrowed under sodden rock. But on the farm, outside meant being in the viscera of the cowshed or ripping through fields on the back of the bike, so when my weed-digging work was done, I retreated inside. Every summer from then on would pass, sitting at the computer in the corner of my grandma's lounge playing *Sims 3* and listening to Jimmy Eat World.

My grandma, Nancy, was a gardener. She would wake before me and step into her gumboots on the back porch, ready to plant bulbs if it was autumn, germinate seedlings, or clip her best flowers for the monthly garden club. Her plants encircled the house. To the north: veggie beds, dahlias, hibiscus, an ornamental pond often filled with mosquito spawn. A large lemon tree

covered in lichen dominated the east lawn, edged with hydrangeas and spiky succulents. In the deep recesses, a tamarillo tree hung its confusing fruit and my grandma burnt the rubbish by the dog sheds. To the left of my computer, tall cypresses broke the western sun and I would scrunch their plump waxy needles to release their green scent into my hands and inhale deeply. To the south lay the old post office and my dad's bamboo experiments.

Nancy was a woman who spent her whole life in diligent service to her plants. In spring and autumn, she would churn plastic tubs of putrid blood and bone and showered this mixture over fluffy soil. The decaying animalistic scent would move through the lace curtains and into each room of the house. It sat with you while you ate your morning tea. When I moved in with her I spent a lot of time looking out my bedroom window. In a supine position, I could see the sugar cane growing from a silvering garden bed, destined as a treat for the Hereford cows. They would be let in through the paddock gate and ushered past the cypresses and dangling fuchsias, hooves tilling the mowed lawn. With jaws wide and wet with saliva, sugar cane turned into a sweet slurry in their mouths.

In a neighbouring plot grew black sunflowers. Their deep purple petals extended above the countryside and behind them, obscured by their gothic height, was the glasshouse frosted with

cobwebs. I was obsessed with this structure as a child. It felt sublime set against the verdant hues around it. Dry and sharp, the glass room filled with the crunch of scoria. Fuzzy cacti lined its length. As my grandma grew older, spiders continued their work and created opportunistic clouds of webbing in her absence.

I remember my dad worrying about my grandma's body and her garden. It began over morning teas. Then became the concern of lunch. Until it was a consistent meal for discussion at 3:00pm after the bulk of farm work had been done. My grandma was the last of her garden club, a network of women who had cultivated small pockets of vibrant abundance in the endless flat fields of cattle grazing. Like their gardens, my grandma's began to shrink. First at the edges where it met the farm. Her body, stiff at its joints, began to draw smaller and smaller rings of cultivation around the farmhouse. The banks that extended from the swamp below became covered in wandering willy (spiderwort). Hand-cut steps she had made in the orange clay turned slippery and overgrown. Green beans that had always been the accompanying vegetable for dinner were cut back to select plots and their seeds were not recovered. My dad eventually took a digger to the garden preparing it for sale. He cleared the hydrangeas, broke down the garden beds and scraped away the topsoil. Nancy's garden was undone with a tractor, bucket and a couple of weeks' work.

Reading *Modern Nature* this summer I saw all the labours of the gardener. I saw my grandma. I saw the continual dedication to the cultivation of living beings in soil and shingle. I saw the grief of growing and losing a garden. Across each page I took in the tethering of Jarman's body, failing and dying, and near impossible fruiting of life in Dungeness. Against the inherent gloom of the landscape was a tense hope, in the promise of his garden. This potential for life in the blossoming of flowers in spite of relentless weather and the indifference of sea spray. In his diaristic recounting of Prospect Cottage were glimmers of our future. A summer too hot. A frost come too soon. A cold that keeps work short.

Challenges of the body and garden contrast the bountiful compositions of flora that emerge throughout Jarman's life. Each description is kept with him throughout time, nurtured in the mind and vividly retold to us. I've tried to do the same with my grandma's garden to recall it through the lace curtains and over the top of a computer screen. I've captured some of it, although not completely. I can draw the borders of this garden and begin to describe the stems and buds that adorned their ends. I can begin to imagine the connection and joy my grandma and I might have found in Jarman's service to Prospect Cottage. I can see their patience and deep knowledge of the living world. A kind of knowing you spend your lifetime working towards.

Jarman has taught me that the garden cultivates the gardener. It tells you time. It captures the change in seasons we often forget. It offers you a way to think about the resilience of life underneath its end. The garden becomes a place that allows you to sacrifice the body and you do this willingly through the hauling of stones or the digging of earth. In writing this I've begun to think about my own aspirations. To create a companion to my body in fruiting trees and in pollen-dusted stamen. I can give up each thumb and turn it green. I can stain them with the cypress leaf and wait for the chlorophyll to bleed through the pink of my nail bed until it reaches the edge of each knuckle.

In this thought my grandma's garden and Jarman's flourish. It is a place abundant with life, but I have fears and doubts of it coming into being. In this uncertainty, I still imagine a house in the middle of a garden. I think of it encircled by a series of atmospheres; damp, garish, enclosing, and muted. This place through need nurtures change and possibility allowing for an unexpected shoot to pierce the soil. The garden is still possible even if autumn becomes too warm and disappears completely. My body has time even if it finds itself on the precipice of a failing ecosystem. In hope, I imagine insects continue to thrive and currents still cool the contours of the shore. Even if it is just a thought, these visions of a garden must begin somewhere. They have to be filled with work and promise before it has even come into being and today I'm starting with the kōwhai tree.



PUĀWAI

by Ruby Macomber

*Tar tricks memory
strips the days of colour—silences the sisters
wading knee-deep with us.*

Meryl and Hiwa want to live in every inch of their house.

Move-in weekend was spent weaving their furniture into a gentle embrace: croquet cushions and plastic stackable chairs, Arcoroc Fume mugs and the rice cooker acquainted in cupboards that could probably do with another wipe—but there is so much living to do!

Aunty Jada likes her tea scorching hot. She says the community is great here, yeah, real supportive. There's even a women's group on Tuesday nights, 6pm, at the Baptist Church. Do we think we'll go?

Meryl smiles and passes her the mug. She says, 'watch your hands' like it's an answer.

Before she leaves, Jada asks Hiwa where she'll put her grandmother's carved crucifix ornament.

Yeah, the one with *Kei runga i ahau te wairua o te Ariki* on the back.

Before Hiwa turns out the light that evening, Meryl kisses her—*forehead, chest, shoulder, shoulder.*

They love any chance to take photos. They don't have many in public yet, and the trees are a great backdrop this time of year. Hiwa says she knows a place. Drops her hand from tucking Meryl's curtain bangs behind her ear to her hand. Squeezes three times.

They didn't pack for swimming. They never do. But the lake edge is gentle, and there is still enough light to see when there's a log to avoid.

Hiwa raises her phone. First, she takes a photo of the cliffs. Then inverts the camera and pulls Meryl's chin to the fading light. Their pants hiked up to their knees.

Flash on—so she'll never forget the colour of her lover's blush.

I WANTED TO TELL YOU

by Hannah Patterson



I once read a story that was about life after the death of humankind due to some kind of climate catastrophe apocalypse. Creatures crawled through a wasteland of human destitution and everything was pink fluorescent plastic and the plastic caught the setting sun and glistened and jellyfish glimmered with pieces of tinfoil rippling through their bellies and new creatures were born into this world, where everything unnatural and symptomatic of destruction was just a new food to chew on, just another place to grow. I read this in the new city—away from where I lived with you—where I thought my solitude would be different, iridescent but instead, I was thinking of you and what you would think of it, the men, the gardens and beaches of shingle and buildings with poorly understood substances that could hurt people, damaging them not immediately but in two years, or ten—I was thinking of all this and walking and I was thinking about you walking around my room with shoes on and the way I pretended to enjoy it but I didn't—*it's not how I was raised*—not until much later when I got used to it and it grew to have a different meaning and I started thinking of my life in two years, or ten, as you lazed about my room, shoes dangling off the bed, it was normal, it was perfect, it repeated and compounded, I had lost it, there was something, passing through.

Note: the first story referenced in this poem is 'The Purple Epoch', a short story by Sam Cohen, from her collection Sarahland. The latter references are to Modern Nature by Derek Jarman. The poem is a response to both of these works and was largely inspired by the phrase "iridescent solitude," borrowed from Modern Nature.

DEREK JARMAN; FAGGOT SAINT

by Samuel Te Kani

A man. A gay man. A gay man with AIDS. The facts of Derek Jarman's life hinge compulsively on his gayness, and the insistence of his art on male beauty—even if and when that beauty found itself corrupted, subjugated, under the heel of persecution and unprecedented virulence. That said, Jarman's art (his films in particular) never succumbed to shock or deliberate ugliness despite his working conditions eventually containing all of this and more (which isn't to say someone like Pasolini lacks merit; *Salo* is a masterwork IMO). Jarman the filmmaker, the painter and the man found a state of grace, not so much overlaying as excavating from the acute angles of modern life a utopian fecundity.

The presence of the serpent in the garden did not detract from its beauty, couldn't sufficiently undercut the persisting facts of wonder and splendour. To (mis-)quote Anne Rice, yes the garden is savage but a garden nonetheless. And so, in being one of the first public profiles of an AIDS sufferer, Jarman continued this creative thrust of beautifying modern ugliness to his deathbed, earning an unofficial saint status for fags and artists everywhere. Unofficial only because the Catholic Church prefers its homos DL ("*There's too much faggotry*", Pope Francis, 2024). This begs the question; just what is a saint?

In 2005's French shocker *Martyrs* (dir. Pascal Laugier) an attempt is made to answer this question with a not-so-straight face, as part of a period wave of extreme cinema coming out of Europe (with some US imitators; notably Eli Roth). Its answer hovers somewhere between the Protestant work ethic's positive valuations of human suffering, and a leering sexuality not uncommon in thematically adjacent canons of Catholic art (a staple of exploitation genres). *Martyrs* puts the holies back in the body but through a brutal indoctrination of pain, a baptism of cruelty, a suffering so exacting and white-hot it spills over into the erotic before transcending sublime. For those who haven't seen it, it's about a cult that tortures women so in the moment before death they'll glimpse and relay the divine, taking their cues from classical depictions—namely women on the stake looking beatified as they're devoured by flame.

Like *Hellraiser*'s brilliantly conceived villain Pinhead (Clive Barker, notably a gay man, 1987), *Martyrs* and its ambitious sect of pain-lovers posits suffering as the only way to take a human life and make something singular of it, something worthy of its groundless potential so often marred by the confusing (and petty) banalities of daily life. Furthermore, the coda here is a cocktail of affective horniness, seeming to imply the body can only register extremes—like being skinned alive, or proximity with the divine—in the sexual.

My erection or pulsating prostate, your taut clit; these are Geiger meters for eternal values when raised in correct conditions, when appearing under duress of appropriate amounts of pressure and discomfort. Resistance—it's not just the generative principle of reality à la Freud, but also the most effective means to touch proof of meaning beyond the physical world. Without resistance, without suffering, then there can be no elastically rebounding ecstasy, no triumphant passing into heightened awareness. No enlightenment.

This is something that every faggot knows innately—and probably every birthing mother. That there's a threshold reached through pain and degradation which, once passed, nudges recipients into euphoric states. The body has a strategy for pain-management which can be bio-hacked for drug-like rushes and altered states of consciousness. The body can reinterpret scintilla of agony as exaltation, given it survives. The body rewards the subject willing (or not so willing) to confront abjection, exposed for whatever reason to the sensory cacophony of prolonged injury. The body stores gifts for the wary, the used, the care-worn. The body holds the greatest pleasures under lock and key granting exclusive access to victims. Jesus Himself proved this as a credible route to absolution.

If nothing else the crucifixion is a testament to the grace of pain, extolling the virtues of suffering in a homoerotic tableaux of

whipping, bondage, public humiliation, and penetration—culminating in a meeting with God and a triumphant return. But not before (allegedly) descending to Hell to swipe death's user manual from a conceivably reluctant administrative arm.

Jarman himself, and legion victims of AIDS (when little enough was known about the disease to properly treat it), faced degradation. Bodily yes, as his immune system turned against him, but also in the furious immunological response of a world that refused to equate homosexuality with ordinary citizenry—thereby siloing the suffering of this cross-section away from compassion, or even consideration. For gay men at the time, this must've seemed like the absolute reckoning of guilt and shame, a collective judgement carrying individual psychodramas to a deafening pitch of fated victimhood. In reality, this selectivity in granting recognised personhood to some and not others abides by the West's historical ascent as an empire, its practice of immiserating some for the benefit of others.

An obvious example is slavery. But even in this example, the will to subjugate extends beyond the practicalities of labour and passes through into theatres of cruelty that seem to satisfy the anxieties of a privileged audience. In slavery, in the categorical abjection of a certain kind of person, a magic circle is laid around primary subjects that limits the suffering of the physical world therein, relegating all the abyssal potential of the body to those

nominal unfortunates. The cosmetic nature of difference is unimportant (even arbitrary). What matters is immunising against abjection by sacrificial offerings. In this totemic warding the slave absorbs what the master knows cannot be properly vanquished, only deferred—the fact of pain.

There is perhaps a difference (rather large) between consensual ascetic practices and being an unwilling recipient of state (or any) violence. By ascetics is here meant the flagellator-passions of Catholicism, the advent of communion through denial and containment of the body as something constantly threatening to supersede its mores. In ascetics such as silence and isolation, fasting, or even self-whipping à la Dan Brown's seriously closeted albino (*The Davinci Code*, 2003), the body's pain receptors are willingly engaged in conversation, a hopeful dialogue pointed at overcoming corporeality. Or so you would think.

For alternative measures of pain, faggotry seems to have appropriated this notional conflict with the body away from transcendence and towards imminence, assuming the roles of punished and punisher for heightened sexual pleasure rather than guilty absolution. The faggot—theatrically assuming the subjugated position in a camp hierarchy of born males and Real Men—rides guilt and shame through ritualised disciplining to arrive at dopamine-rich plateaus of pure physicality. Whips, chains, enforced chastity, the stocks—all of these place both sadist and masochist

in doubled corporeality. The Holy Ghost secularised in latex and leather. The Father and Son tag-teaming lucky acolytes into pro-lapsed puddles of blissed-out fatigue. In lieu of the catechism and the vestments of mass, sweaty androphilia divinely salted with exhausted (and beatific) tears.

Sebastiane (1976) is perhaps Jarman's purest distillation of this androphilia (not so) latent within the Catholic imaginary. Rather than an indictment, Jarman lets beauty reign, tilling classical iconography and the tropes of the Bible-epic genre to nail (pun intended) something quieter, contemplative, reserved. And headily gay. The film centers on a barracks-like group of men in which the eponymous soon-to-be-saint weaves dreamily, a conspicuous contrast to the martial characters he shares space with. Clearly he has a relationship with divinity the others cannot access, can merely observe with contempt, even jealousy. *Sebastiane* has all the maddening quirks of the canonical elect and the group reacts to this exceptionalism the only way it knows how—by sentencing him to death.

Like Christ, *Sebastiane's* ritual killing is a necessary spectacle, as if death were a public good requiring visionary production management and curation; which, in fact, much religious iconography points to, and our modern (passive-)witness network of global atrocity besides. Of course, *Sebastiane's* death is ordered by one general in particular whose disdain is frequently and

tellingly interchangeable with lust. So, subjugation is here a love language, an affection, a means of cutting through mores and of satisfying passions too great for conventional intercourse. Or, in rituals of purging our oppressive conditions as embodied beings, desire is easily folded into proceedings like a spice. The hated object is still one invested with obsessional interest uncannily resembling love. And, in fact, if the martyr's service is one of mollifying existential dreads, the blows are loving, grateful. The suffering of the elect is a gift and cherished as such. May Christ be with you etcetera.

So, the martyr, the saint; these are typified by capacities for suffering. As immunising capsules (pills?), they hold at an imaginable remove the unimaginable extremities of experience, bestowing notes from the borderlands where propriety fails and unsafety reigns. It's like martyrs are avatars of a salaciously human hunger for knowledge that can't quite see beyond the event horizon, where the light bends—but oh, how we would like to. And so, the martyr is ritually selected and burned, subjected to unspeakable anguish so that—like McConaughey in Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* (2014)—they might relay the wealth of knowledge we suspect lies outside our reach from where we are, in the magic circle of a protected citizenry.

The martyr is systematically untethered from human civility, from rights, and sent into a black hole, forcibly held in

manufactured crucibles so we might observe what happens when a body turns on itself, so we might learn how a mind reacts to unendurable threat, so we might satisfy our curiosity about our own limits. The existence and valorisation of martyrs speaks to our need to master pain and despair, an impossible task; and so the march of elect martyrs into the abyss is never-ending. To our gain the martyr-industry proffers viewing pleasures beyond the function of mapping extremes of human experience, beyond immunising exceptional populations from misery. And show business is booming.

It's not just individuals held up for the martyr's cleanse now—it's whole populations. Where Jarman was canonised as an early public face for the physical withering of AIDS, so African and Middle Eastern countries are kept at a distance, the better to observe their ravages (from famines to coups to ruinous extractive mining; and genocides) in service of Western wellbeing, in service of talismanically containing our own potential for corporeal misery. Faggots like Jarman, or even Michel Foucault, have known forever the transformative power of ritualising what oppresses, finding a control-suite to sublimate the predatory decider that seemingly picks martyrs at random. That fetishist games of slave and master hinge so specifically on male domination is no accident—it's our world's essential dynamic reduced to bare bones, an isolation of the common denominator (Big Daddy in an SS uniform), and a repurposing thereof towards pleasure. Taking

subjugation in its industrial context and making of it a sacrament, a covenant, an art form rehabilitating a sort of negative respect for the infernal depths of embodiment that its religious equivalent once comfortably lauded.

In this way, the terror of being punished like non-Western countries, or for being an unfortunate in the Western lottery of pain (read; disenfranchisement), is managed. The Big Man (or Big Other, Lacan might say) brandishes his stick and we get wet. We (the faggots) say no to reproducing systems of orgiastic harm as we freely assume the position, climbing bare-assed into the stocks, happily clamped and quartered by the master's lashes. We come full-secular-circle and welcome the obsessional fetishes of brutal love, rejecting the ideological reproduction of family and country. Why play house when you can play dungeon? In the words of Bruce LaBruce; "Don't be a fascist. Be a faggot."



BIOGRAPHIES

Damien Levi (Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī) is an editor, independent publisher and infrequent writer. He is the lead editor for the online queer arts and literature journal *bad apple*, the founder of Āporo Press and co-editor of the poetry anthology *Spoiled Fruit* (2023) alongside Amber Esau.

Brandon Lin is a Thai and Taiwanese queer multi-disciplinary designer born and raised in Tāmaki Makaurau. He is one half of creative duo: *HB Pencil Crafts*, which is where you can find his self published retrospective zine series *Homo*.

Micheal McCabe is a Filipino-Pākehā designer and educator based in Tāmaki Makaurau. He lectures at AUT Huri Te Ao Hoahoanga and collaborates with public arts organisations, galleries and theatre companies to create engaging, dynamic and socially engaged work.

Ruby Macomber (Rotuma/Ngāpuhi/Scotland) is a vicious poet, essayist, and community creative writing facilitator currently wrecking tiny havoc in Tāmaki Makaurau. Her stuff and things can be found in *Waka Kuaka*, *Metro*, *Awa Wāhine*, *The Spinoff*, *Pantograph Punch*, as well as anthologies *Rapture*, *Katūivei* and *Everything That Moves, Moves Through Another*.

Hannah Patterson is a Chinese and Pākehā writer based in Pōneke. She grew up in Hong Kong before moving to Aotearoa and she still hasn't gotten over how blue the sky can be. You can find more of her writing in *The Spinoff*, *Turbine*, *Spoiled Fruit: Queer Poetry from Aotearoa* (Āporo Press, 2023), and *Milly Magazine*.

Samuel Te Kani (Ngāpuhi) is a Tāmaki-based writer and filmmaker. He specialises in the erotic, the fantastic and the baroque; for example, his short fiction collection *Please, Call Me Jesus* (Dead Bird Books, 2021). His first short film—adapted from this collection—is currently in production.

A Blind Kind of Violence collects the work of five queer arts practitioners from Tāmaki Makaurau and asks them to respond broadly to the art, cinema and writing of Derek Jarman. A collaboration between Gus Fisher Gallery and *bad apple*, it features essays by Samuel Te Kani and Micheal McCabe, poetry by Ruby Macomber and Hannah Patterson, and design by Brandon Lin.

