

Poems

Dear Germans
The Violence in Me is Holy
Two is for Joy
The Women's Train
To the Wild Youth
War is here

Speeches

This land belongs to the meadow, or: Eulogy for the living utopia of Lützerath
Eine Frau Ist Meu Pau: A speech upon a terf talk on the wake of the Colorado shootings

Translations

The Zapatista Manifesto (excerpts)
Bretch (1935), "Questions of a Worker who Reads Wikipedia"

Dear Germans:

No, I did not send the letter
before the date you clearly said I had to
send the letter.

No, I did not call the clinic,
and when I did it was not Sprech
zeiten, and I started crying,
and I did not try again.

No, there is no particular reason why
I didn't read the part of the letter
that said the contract can only be cancelled
with three months of advance notice sent by
Post.

I was reading the glyphs carved by bore-bugs
on toadflax leaves by the rotting wood.

No, I did not do my tax declaration.

No, I did not floss since last visit.

I do not remember the difference between a Steuernummer and a Steuer
identifikationsnummer.

No, I did not lüft the räume five minutes every morning.

No, I did not kill the mold on the corner of the wall either,
the mold is there for so long that it feels like my friend.

I do not like to do it,
the killing.

The mold and me, we are the same,
I am mold hot and humid on perfect German walls,
and all the Germans are shopping for Schimmelentferner,
not the öko bio one that doesn't kill, the type based on
bleach.

No, I still cannot speak German

no, after all these years I cannot speak German

I am not strong enough to speak German

I will never speak German

every time I try to speak German you don't understand my accent
and correct my genders and

I want to die.

No, I did not bring a Überweisung.

No, I do not know the name of my
Hausarzt.

No, I did not call in advance to make a Termin.

I only insisted five times for the Ausländerbehörde
to send me the PIN to my electronic Aufenthaltstitel
it's my fault I don't have one.

No, I did not deescalate the situation,

I could have deescalated the situation,

I chose to escalate the situation,

I did not act responsible like a mother should

I punched that Nazi because I wanted to
and next time it happened I escalated it again and
when they ran away I was
disappointed.

No, I did not travel mid-pandemic every three months to swipe
the health insurance card that said
I'm a man.

No, when the police told us at Lützerath
that if we left now we would not be charged,
I did not leave.

No, I did not ask your consent first to shout Fuck you cop.

I did not build consensus in a plenum to have a mandate
to speak for everyone I just shouted
Fuck you cop.

No, I did not find another school yet
for the child who you failed at the school
where you said it was their imagination that
they struggled with
Ausländerfeindlichkeit.

No, I did not notice the part of the contract
where it said capitalists
are free from the flow of time
and can increase your bills a year ago
retroactively.

I was not responsible with money either I was not responsible
with anything
other than my children's feelings and
wild flowers and
homeless trans people.

No, these children do not have a Krankenkarte
or a Krankenkasse or a Krankenversicherung
if they have a Krankenkarte the police will come
and deport them
all we have is a Krank.
All we brought you doktor
is a Krank.

No, I did not
try
sending
a fucking
fax.

I did not do any of the things.
I did not want to do any of the things.
I failed to feel guilt for not doing any of the things,
I only cry and cry and cry, violating
Ruhezeiten.
It's all my fault.
I am not well-integrated.
I deserve all the fees and
punishments.
With piles of papers all over the room,
I am in Germany.
Outside in Germany the forests of folk-tales have fallen
to make paper, long ago.
Furry bumblebees come kiss
the flowers painted on my summer dress.
The sun sings to me softly.

The Violence in Me is Holy:

A speech/performance for the Trans Day of Revenge 2022

(Originally presented with Pride Rebellion, in a car park under cold rain, in standard-issue antifa windbreaker, latex black pants, pink balaclava covering face, black hoodie:)

My lovely siblings, I'm so sorry my voice is hard to hear. The police took our microphones. Today, you see, is not only TDoR but also Totensonntag, which is a mandatory silent observance. The cops make our dead speak softly, so as not to bother the Christian dead.

I will not speak softly.

*
**

Razor-thin, the newspaper says,
the electoral victory was razor-thin,
vote for bombs and petrol pumps
or else the fascists win,
51%, 49%, thin as a razor
this blade that stands between us
and concentration camps.

A razor is the weapon of the travesti
and all sex workers,
a razor tucks into a bra
or a harness or a sock,
for bad johns, you see,
cos the latina travesti knows she'll be working the streets
whether we get the 51%, or the 49%,
the latina travesti remembers her sisters
murdered by police also when the Worker's Party
was in power;
the travesti learns on her skin that anyone in power
wants that skin buried, burned, behind bars, or—worst of all:—
covered,
for the body of the travesti is of Nature,

like Nature it is generous, abundant,
impossible to own;
the queer body is a challenge to all power because
it exists.

So the travesti knows without words
that the kick on your ribs
hurts the same
if they paint
the boots
red.

My country is number 1! *[beat]*
in murdering trans people,
I read this poem every year, it's always true,
every year I hear Germans speak Portuguese
for a single day,
reciting the names of our dead.

And so it is that when I see the stickers
with red-white-black and defaced rainbows
and 1933s and 1488s,
I know on my skin that the life we carved here
is being taken,
& I cannot go back to that life,
afraid of holding hands,
afraid of speaking the language of my body,
afraid of having anything on me
the colour of pink.
I've been to where we're headed.

And so it is that when I pass
by some wanker wearing iron crosses and
cargo pants clashing with shitty Burzum hoodies,
and *totally* démodé Wehrmacht T-shirts,
I am taken by the distinctly feminine urge of
Violence.

Violence is often not tactical,
the way sex is not tactical.
Violence is counter-productive,
like shouting back at a catcall is counterproductive.
[Venomously:] Violence is anti-strategic, like

refusing to pass as cis is anti-strategic.

[Escalating to shouting:] Violence is hopeless, like
kissing your friends at a bar when you *know* you'll be thrown out is
hopeless.

I am so tired of being productive.

The violence in me is like my femininity,
it asserts itself, it resists theorising,
it won't be denied.

The Nazi is bigger, and younger, and
better armed, and
protected by police,
and I could be killed or deported or raped tortured—
[shaking head dismissively:] doesn't matter, there is only body,
wordthoughts only exist later,
after the violence has asserted itself and the Nazi is running
away.

The violence in me is irresistible,
unconcerned with justification,
whole in itself:
it is, in a word,
holy.

[Sweetly:] See, only after I could finally be the woman I was,
only after I could open my heart,
only after transition I could get in touch with my emotions.

[Bluntly:] Turns out rage is an emotion.

The Kurds call it the fire in the heart.
The fire calls to us, because
there's a lot that needs burning.

And someone tell me that violence is toxic masculinity.
Sister, masculinity was lack of agency,
masculine is what they wanted me to be,
what they beat me for,
only by rejecting masculinity I could fight back,
sister if weapons are a boy thing
consider where that line of thinking will leave
the femmes,

I cannot resist it but sister even if I could sister I don't want to,
sister I burn, I burn.

A razor is the weapon of the travesti,
Maria Navalha, the pombagira protector, has 7 razors,
(don't mess with her, she's never alone),
in the 50s the police wrote with terror
of our ancestor Cintura Fina,
her body crisscrossed by razor-lines
and beatings,
[In one breath:] because she was a travesti in the 50s and she would never accept an
insult and I get it,
this isn't self-destruction it's the opposite, each line on the skin
is a lifeline,
it's either a body covered in scars or the closet,
resistance is life, resistance is life and to be tame
in the face of oppression
is death
before death.

This is my call:
Either people are scared of wearing swastikas
or they are scared of holding hands.
It's one or the other. You can't have both.
Fascists should feel uncomfortable coming out as fascists.

Someone has to do the *uncomforting*.

In my noncitizen standing, should I be here making this call? When I can be deported
by words, by a social media "like" on a meme about river and sea; shouldn't I submit
an anonymous indymedia communiqué, shouldn't I stay home and leave the work for
the First World black bloc, shouldn't I hide my identity better?

*[Continuing to speak while undressing from hoodie and windbreaker and jacket and cardigan,
letting go of tactical bags and waterproof gloves on the wet floor, until striped down to
pink lacy lingerie, shaking in the November rain and the wind, though not of cold:]*

O.P.sec *[beat]* is -sec for an O.P. It's not a *moral system*, it only makes sense as a tactic
for a given goal. Look, honey, I'm not built for baggy gender-neutral clothes I was
made to pour glittery goo over my bouncy tits, I lived in hiding for 30 years to
protect myself from repression and every one of those years was Hell, I look too hot

in a Mob Action #ootd not to be on camera, what's even the *point* of a safety that effaces the body I built with my blood and my life when I come here to tell you: "don't let them normalise this, don't just swallow this, don't wait for them to take power, don't wait for anybody else to come solve this, it's on us, crew up, bash back, bash *first*"—

This right here [*contours her exposed curves with her hands*] is my O.P., my propaganda of the thicc.

*
**

There's a type of queer who saw the enemy and understood there is no peace without victory. For everyone else all I can say is, look at these hashtag-TDoR numbers, look around, wander the cruise spots at night ask how it's going: You might be not interested in violence, but violence is interested in you.

(Performed 20 Nov 2022. Immediately after presenting this speech, news hit of the anti-queer right-wing attack in Colorado TDoR, killing 5 people in a nightclub and injuring 25. The shooter was only stopped because clubbers fought back and subdued the enemy.)

Two is for Joy

I. The Magpie Rhyme

[brightly] Hi~~

Before we begin: everyone knows the magpie rhyme?
Have you heard of it?
This is, like, ~cultural context~ for today's performance.
It's ancient lore, about magpies
—you know, the bird? Elster?—
& what it means to meet them.
It goes like this:

[ominously:] One is for sorrow,
two is for joy,
three for a girl,
four for a boy,
five for silver,
six for gold,
seven for a secret
never to be told.

[snapping back to bright:] Now you know it! Please keep it in mind, ok? One is for...?
[audience interaction moment.]

Let's start.

II. Intro/A happy poem

For a while now I've been performing a piece
for Trans Day of Revenge.

& I thought, I need new material,
I wanted to write something different, something,
light,
& fun, & funny, & healing,
I don't want to be, like, like,
the fascism girl??
you know? to only ever get on stage
[distantly] to talk of death doom
horrors

[snapping back][growing enthusiasm:] The other day I was at this queer BDSM sex party in Berlin, &

I thought this is perfect I'll write about all these wonderful people
who I meet when I lurk in a dungeon
all night whipping strangers happily
like some mythological monster of labyrinths
how there's people from, from Bremen, and Amsterdam
and Sweden and Switzerland and
Congo *[beat]*
Syria

Palestine. *[pause]*

[brightly] A happy poem! About how
Everyone flocks from all over the world to Berlin
for the gay sex!, *[smile]*
about how this has been the case for the last 100 years,
[hyped] yes that's it my poem will relate my bondage parties
to the Berlin of Weimar,
of Christopher Isherwood and Erika Mann
and the Lila-Nächte and trans women
in lesbian magazines,
I'll *sing* to the *dream* of Berlin,
how even today Berlin continues to be the place
to not just be gay but to do gay,
because even in places as progressive as Sweden and Amsterdam and
[looking comedically puzzled, adjusting glasses]—it says here "NRW"?—
even in places as... progressive..., as NRW,
there's nowhere that throws a queer sex party
like a Berlin party.

& my poem would be fun, and corny,
full of corny sex puns,
& I would share queer joy, contagious, uncontainable,
&, &, I would drop a not-so-subtle allusion to my fetishes
to try and bait some cute audience member *[smile]*
because what was poetry invented for
if not to seduce lesbians.

[visibly strained, forced glee:] Right??

So, I sat at some overpriced Japanese café and—
paid 4 euro fifty on a cup of sencha and—

and I started writing, longhand,
[descending] compulsively, for hours,
my wrist hurt and I kept writing
about my visit to the Platform 17 memorial
in Berlin.

If you don't know what is Platform 17
what is it a memorial for,
yes you do.
Take a guess.

So, Content Warning,
this is a poem about the Shoah.
As in, literally the Holocaust.
It gets a bit heavy.
If you're not in the mindset for this
you can leave the room for ten minutes
I won't feel bad about it.

[pause]

I call this piece "Two is for Joy".

III. Two is for Joy

I cannot help but to admire the artistry of it.
Surely this oppressive underground tunnel
was not meant to be a moral lesson,
The terrible geometry of its beige-tan bricks converging
into a single inescapable point.
But now it is, now it's an *installation*,
a *metaphor*,
even worse [*incomprehensible disdain*]: a metonymy.
Even if you didn't know that Grünewald Station
has a memorial and to what,
you understand the lesson as soon as every brick line
[emotionally:] compels your eyes to *march towards*
the old white sign that reads,

The Germans have made of this tunnel art,
that they do not forget.

A theme park ride on a haunted house.

A horror movie set.

Except this is the real tunnel, real footsteps
of bare foos and boots echoed in this real tunnel,
& the tan bricks still struggle to bear the load
of reality,

& what good is art what can it do
when like in a horror movie the killer returns for the sequel.

*
**

Outside, a limestone wall
underlies the abomination that is
this section of rail.

Tall, misshappen holes digging into the white rock
could pass for erosion, were they not
a deformed suggestion of the approximate size, and shape, of,
almost
humans,
as if shades in silent procession
seeped into the very bedrock of Platform 17.

[resignedly:] More art.

I dig for a red candle,
the kind we offer the spirits in umbanda,
which I had brought protected in a red-black
Palestinian kufiyyah,
& I light it inside the wet,
ghostly stone.

*
**

I climb the cursed steps
& every hair on my body stands up, alarmed,
The Germans have lined the platform with iron grates,
in each carved the date of a *[distastefully]* shipment,

16.6.1943, 428 Juden, Theresienstadt,
18.4.1944, 30 Juden, Auschwitz,
on and on it goes and I walk through this math,
"doubling down" here isn't just a metaphor
for the method of fascism it is literal
the numbers go from dozens to hundreds
thousands.

& I know,
I don't know *how* but I know,
that there will be a grate with today's date in it.
There it is.

[*auf Deutsch:*] 19.4.1944. 50 Juden. Theresienstadt.

I lay a white rose.
I would feel ridiculous, if not for
the white rose that someone laid before
on the previous shipment.
I wonder absurdly if tomorrow someone else
will lay a white rose on the grate after mine.
[*air quotes*] "Mine". What am I saying
What am I even *doing*.
What right do I have to be here.

[*In one breath:*] Every day for the past seven years I wake up in Germany
wondering if today is the day I get my deportation letter so I thought I'd visit
the deportation platform but it's not the same it's offensive to even compare
these aren't really just "deportations" and I'm not Jewish I'm just a, a,
[*examining own body*] a tattooed activist Latinamerican immigrant,
no one is deporting people like me to death labour prisons—
Oh.

These Jews are not just Jews, I remember,
they are Polish Jews and Czech Jews and Romanian Jews,
Auschwitz isn't even Auschwitz it's Oświęcim,
Germans still deny these people their language just like they did
in the Nurenberg Trials.
These 50000 Jews were killed by *deportation*.

Still not the same the scale of it, the horror, my risk levels,
but

should we grieve only for our own folk

should we share

the grief

*
**

I reach the beginning of the rail line

look towards the end

kneel on the wet iron

draw my shinobue

and blow awkwardly into the bamboo

until the flute whispers a cry.

I play "usagi", and "sakura",

not because I'm pagan & Passover for me

has to do with flowers and rabbits,

but because that's all I know,

I should play "Tamuke", The Offering, it's the song

for the spirits, but I can't,

all I have to offer are two children's songs

played badly.

I play the two songs again and *again*

I have so little to offer

to 50000 ghosts.

I look up to the 50000 ghosts

and [*showing antifascist tattoo*] with the mark I carry on my body I tell them:

[*deliberately*] "if it takes my life"

with a terrible cold clarity that I know well

that words have when you *mean it*

but that's still so little to offer, my life,

it's everything I have it's my everything

& it's still as little as my *pathetic* children's songs

how could one life stop the return of National-Sozialism
when this place alone
took 50000.

But before me I see the prisoners marching
and the guards
and the onlookers
and I get it,
if someone sang you a song on the way to the camp
it's so little it means nothing
it's so much it matters so much
Everything is eternal and everything means and counts and matters,
every little kindness
just like every little cruelty.

[Sings "Usagi".]

And then I play Tamuke, the Offering.

I don't know the melody I have the wrong instrument
I cannot explain what is happening
the air blows itself through me and resonates me
and blows itself through the flute and resonates the flute
a spontaneous melody
laden with notes which bend with pain and
breathy ornaments of techniques I shouldn't know,
harmonising with the wind
the rain which increases
and ceases,
and two magpies come to the rail
to listen,
and they stay there, two magpies stay there listening
until the music asserts its own end
decisively.

I am in awe.

No one has listened to this melody and no one ever will,
no one but me
& the magpies

& the beech-trees & the birches & nameless weeds
& comrade slug, who sat with me the entire time,
& these *tiniest* tiny little purple flowers who grow in between the ballast-
stones in the gaps of the iron grates, each holding a single droplet of spring-
rain as if it were the most precious pearl in the world,
& 50000 dead Jews.

I look for the magpies & I spot one
as he flies away,
just the one,
and automatically I think, "sorrow, then",
and at last
I break down,
crying.

*
**

I'm dashing through the death-plaques crying and
crying
the numbers a blur I can't comprehend these numbers dates
dashing in a daze all I can see is Juden, Juden, Juden,
Auschwitz, Theresienstadt, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz,
Auschwitz,

Auschwitz.

I do not remember descending onto the railroad
unthinking and undead I am compelled to
walk forward
toward
the camps and horror and doom
—But there *is* no camps, or horror, or doom,
they don't exist there is only
birches

it's all gone the guards are as dead
as the Jews they murdered,
the railroad ends like the land of a floating island
of a nightmare,
leading not to Oświęcim but to birches,

the obscene metal of its rails giving way to tree-roots,
leaving only a trail of sleepers
and the wood of the sleepers sinks
more
and more
into the dark Earth
and ends, and rots, and dies,
Nothing is eternal everything ends,
and rots, and dies,
and becomes the bright bright *bright* green leaves
of these young birch-trees, and
everything becomes the Earth and
this rain and this wind and the noises in the wind
and this strange round stone I found full of snails,
so many snails, snails of all colours and
shapes and sizes and all the snails are so happy,
all the snails are so grateful
for the cold rain in a Spring-time morning.

& as I leave behind Platform 17
the other magpie flies right over my head
and caws at me thrice, that I do not miss her,
two is for joy, this I swear to you:

joy.

(Köln, 23.4.2025, after Berlin, 19.4.2025)

The Women's Train

Here comes the women's train, my aunt tells me
in our tongue, está passando o trem das mulheres,
see? Here it is, viu,
the women's train,
look, it's the wagon of the vain women,
who spend their pensions and children's support on dresses
& skincare, how they laugh!, the vain women,
and this is the wagon of the fat women who don't diet
and don't shave, the ugly women who don't care,
que foi? you can't tell who is which? no no one can,
they all mix together in the women's train
and they don't use makeup, or use too much
and laugh and kiss cheeks and get it,
my aunt says, her heavy wrinkles melted
from the mask of hostility she had all her life,
she seems a bit wistful, my old aunt
looking at the women's train,
like a little girl she points happy, look!
the smokers come here to smoke
in the wagon of the women who hate children,
all the other wagons have mothers
but they're taking a break, no trem das mulheres,
and that's the wagon of the lesbians
with sweaty hair and open shirt buttons
they do sex all the time, the lesbians, and there's never
a boyfriend to watch & they never call a man to join in
no cameras in the women's train, it's all for them,
look at that girl with green hair! me too, I get it eh,
my ancient aunt tells me, I get it why women
dye their hair green, and she mimics petting
a green-haired belle on her lap with ancient
hands.
there's the wagon of maids wearing jewels from madam
and that one's all illegals and whores
no one can catch them in the women's train
that wagon? oblique women of fibrous calloused hearts
razor sharp and sweet poison the murderers,

they can look like anything and be
anywhere, they hate men and trick them
and hunt the bad ones and drink their blood.
they don't feel anything anymore, they went thru too much
& their hearts stopped beating, my dead aunt tells me
with her eyes wet, and she doesn't have to tell me
that the other women respect them,
my eyes are also wet, we all have had some heart tissue
deadened, frosty.
It does not stop here, the women's train,
but it exists. Did you see it?
I wake up.
It will pass again, my dead aunt
tells me, vai passar, viu?
Did you see the women's train?

(Feb 25 2026)

To the Wild Youth

Teens of Weimar,

You who called yourselves Apaches and Cossacks and Pirates

Not because you had a theory of anticolonialism or anything but because

You heard about Indians in the tales of cowboy and you burned to be free

Like the Navajos and the Comanches you only ever knew

From the fantasies of settlers, and still you did not dream of being gunslingers

You wanted to shoot the sheriff like Comanches, years before History called upon
you

To shoot the Gestapo sheriff like Comanches.

You who preferred the mountains to the city

From the start, knowing without being taught that every Police

Is a Gestapo, and every schoolmaster

A Reichsjugendführer,

Until your police was the actual Gestapo and your schoolmaster, the actual
Reichsjugendführer.

My cosplay Comanches, made-up Gypsies, make-believe Barbarians!

More than all of the journals of postcolonial studies put together you got it,

Your politics was of the body, your lives living proof

Of how Europe is the first colony,

Of how the Earth calls to us,

You who walked the path of the lumpen, you roaming bands

Camping, playing, singing, whoring, pickpocketing, drinking in campsites

And gay bars, you boy prostitutes, you girl

Gangs,

When I head out to fight my own nazis I think of you

Ambushing the Hitler Youth in a back alley with parody songs

And knives,

I think of your outrageous genderfucky costumes when I dress up,

Not to be anonymous but so that they see me coming,

And I put on my lapel the Edelweiß

That I grew on my garden to tell you that you have taught me so much,

Ancestors, you taught me how to win,

Your bomb may have failed to explode the Gestapo that one time and you may have
been taken in but you won,

You won, because in every single photo I have seen of you even after full-blown
NSDAP occupation your outfits were always outrageous,

In every single photo of you your smiles explode across history with wild palpable

Happiness.

War is Here

My father said that war was evil, but if it came he would revel in it like sand in a storm.

—Nnedi Okorafor, «Binti».

war is here, in your house,
war walks with you
on the way to work,
when you stop to smoke
war stops too, and stays by,
war is interested in you, you see,
and walks with you to work,
war sits on your sofa to observe
which series will you select,
& when, sorrowful and insomniac,
you wrestle with your worries,
war stands and stares
with motherly intimacy,
by your bed, bidding time
til dawn starts the day
& you wake up, & war walks
with you, war walks together
in red, red leather.

Content warnings: police violence, literally the apocalypse

This land belongs to the meadow, or: Eulogy for the living utopia of Lützerath

For some two-and-a-half years, activists occupied the old German village of Lützerath to prevent the expansion of a brown coal mine, Garzweiler II, owned by the RWE megacorp. Nature defenders made of Lützerath a prefigurative space, a living example of what a better world could be, until the brutal eviction of 2023. I'm writing as their machines still finish their job of destruction, because I want to talk of Lützerath: his life, his people, his politics.





The Plush Vigil, standing watch over the mining crater.

1. Life

It is physically painful for me to watch the baggers—giant skeleton ships from hell, made of steel and death—literally eating away the Earth, chunk by chunk, when I know of the rich diversity of insect life who thrives on the wildflower patch activists maintain; when I spot the holes for bird nests in the clay; when comrade hare darts in the floodlights between our barricades and the cops, jumping back and forth for reasons of her own; when the trees who so loved us are fallen, one by one, sending the larks flying into the night.

I look at reddit and the top voted comment says that people are too emotional about Lützerath and we should look at facts and logic and that the coal is necessary in case of emergencies and that the 'empty' village is purely symbolic and that the activists shouldn't hurt themselves or others because the land is, and I quote, not worth it.

I would gladly saw off my own arm to stop this senseless murder. Alas, the option is not given.

We once found a crashed crow in Lützerath. I thought he was dead, but upon covering him with a soft blanket, his head moved very slowly. We ran across the camping fields to ask help from the other squatters; a bunch of masked antifa girls told us that they'd call for specialists but first let him drink water, a lot of birds are collapsing out of heat exhaustion. By the time we made it back to our shack, someone had put birdseed and water next to the blanket, and the crow had flown away.

Earthworms are down in the UK 33% this year. I feel like people are underestimating what this means, what the soil life means for plants and, consequently, us. The ocean has never been that hot, reaching another record on the week of the eviction. Lützi has enough coal under it to blow over Germany's 1,5°C commitment six times over, by itself, and it is "purely symbolic".

The first time I ever stepped in Lützerath, the first thing I saw was ladybugs mating on the leaf of lavender. I wrote on a barrier:

*This land belongs to meadowbees
wildflowers trees
the crow
nameless little bugs birds
butterflies*

For all the good that my writing did. I watched my friends murdered before my eyes. I cried, again and again facing the police, and not due to the torture holds.

I haven't seen a single mainstream media talk of non-human lives in Lützerath. The hare doesn't get a vote on coal mining, the earthworms are not accounted for in the spreadsheets. You killed my friends and I will never forget this.



Photos: @mariusmichusch@hessen.social



Photo: @KathrinAnna@twitter

2. People

I became an anarchist from books, from studying politics and history and realising that only in an anarchist society would a weird queer like me be safe and allowed to thrive. I was already convinced of this, by the historical example of, well, literally any government ever, including the so-called 'communist' ones (especially those ones). But Lützerath brought the fire of anarchy to life, seared the experience into my flesh & bones.

Everyone who lived in Lützi, however briefly, will talk to you about it with a spark in their eyes, struggle for words, 'you had to be there', 'it was something special'. A few hundred people and we built a working collective kitchen churning out 3 delicious meals a day; a pirate radio; 24/7 vigils before the baggers; a restoration for a mysterious ancient shrine in the woods, maintained daily; periodic large-scale events and festivals and protests, bringing ecological defenders from Mexico, from Africa, South America; fields of vegetables and healing herbs; a vigil of plushies; the downright heroic Shit Brigade maintaining the best separation toilets I've ever had the pleasure to use; an anti-racist library; permanent workshops of all sorts of practical skills—many people have described life in Lützi as something like what a

university should be, we learned so much in so little time; awareness groups and safe spaces for neurodiverse people, BIPOC, queer, women, accommodations for wheelchair occupiers; a skilled medic team; a savvy media team; an antifa skateboarding disco training hall which is probably the raddest thing I've ever seen; collective housing of all sorts, from camping hills to tree houses to wooden cabins to large, abandoned industrial buildings turned into beautiful queerfeminist spaces, filled with life and art and joy—

All for free. Everything for everyone.

At any moment in time you (whoever 'you' might be) could join in by simply walking into the woods. No rent, no fees, no Anmeldungen. Stop by the watch for (free) hot coffee, walk by the trees towards the infopoint; there's a board with the days' activities, always full. 18:00 is the on-boarding. You have time to kill so you wander by, there's a small kitchen with (free) bread and (free) vegan spreads, you help yourself. As you eat you meet three activists from Spain, they're staying long-term, you discuss political projects and somehow it seems that here it matters, that something is happening. Someone comes running from the road, shouts: 'mic check!' Everyone within hearing distance echoes in full voice: 'mic check!' 'The collective kitchen needs', the messenger continues, and everyone repeats, amplifying their voice: 'The collective kitchen needs', '3 people', '3 people', 'to help carry boxes', 'to help carry boxes'. You find yourself going there.

No one ever tells you what to do, no one tries to coerce, manipulate or guilt-trip you into being a productive worker, no one conditions your shelter or sustenance on labour, everybody talks things over together in assemblies, and together we build a good place to live in, a life worth living. Lützerath was a pearl of the German autonomist tradition.

And then you walk across the dirt road and it's the baggers and the coal mine, a literal crater on Earth, a wound extending as far as you can see, giant machines digging away towards you and your friends. Lützerath wasn't purely symbolic, but it was one hell of a symbol. What a contrast. What a world that we could have and a world they impose onto us. If this was a movie it'd be called melodramatic, unrealistic. In Lützerath you could watch the global ecocide in a metonymic diorama of itself. I would often go to Skywalk, the observation platform, and watch the baggers. Just stay there, watching the destruction. I felt like someone should bear witness to death if nothing else. Others felt like me. I was never lonely in Lützerath.

I cry for Lützerath, not just because of my dead friends from the Earth, not just because of the sadness of my human friends, not just because this coal will kill many more, but because I selfishly wanted to live there forever because that place was the closest I ever got to experience community, which in the 21st century felt like

utopia, and now I'm thrown back into capitalism and nothing you can do in capitalism will buy me that.

Everyone who's ever been in Lützi and made it what it is, thank you. When you watch the scenes of the cops putting down our buildings, when you watch their glee, their mockery when they seize and make use of our spaces and structures, keep this in mind: The reason they hate you is that you have proved cops to be unnecessary. For two beautiful years we lived with no rulers and no enforcers, no elected representatives and no 'community leaders', and we lived better without them than we ever did under them. You have found the one weird secret that parties and authorities don't want you to know; you have tasted the secret of freedom, and the taste lingers in your mouth.

I will quote what a zapatista insurrectionary told us in the forest once:

'The enemy would all the time invade with their helicopters and tanks and they would blow up our schools, our houses, our headquarters, and the media would say, Zapatistas defeated! The Zapatista rebellion is over!' —and here I want you to imagine him saying this and meaning every word, standing in the dark woods, voice trembling with emotion: 'But every time we would go back into the pueblos and hide with the people and then we would come back again, because la rebelión is not in the buildings. La rebelión is in our hearts.'



"Paula", a queerfeminist collective space. Just demolished, but our memories of it can't be demolished.



The "burning job centre". You could come here to see which teams and working groups were calling for help.



The Vigil—or, as I liked to call it, the Watch—remained one of my favourite haunts in Lützi. No matter if I woke up at 4am or went to sleep after 2, any time day or night there would be a hot drink here, a campfire in the cold, and people to talk to.

3. Politics

Lützerath represents for me the complete failure of the politics of activism.

Two years of the most organised campaign I've ever seen. Large-scale demonstrations were routine, we had 35 thousand in the counter-eviction demo, Greta Thunberg came along. International media, statements of support from every continent. Scientist Rebellion on our side, a petition by 700 specialists on how this coal is neither desirable nor necessary, detailed studies on the topic all agreeing. All the diversity of tactics you can imagine, lock-ins and glue-ons, people in tripods and

monopods staying awake day and night with police lights blasting on their face, people hiding in tunnels, arm-by-arm-blockades, an ex-cop quoting to cops on how to be a conscientious objector, elderly people, wheelchair users trying to reason, sabotage of pumps, barricades deep into the earth and covering every road. Greenpeace, Last Generation, Ende Gelände, Fridays for Future, XR, anarchists, communists, antifas, random libs, old hippies, pacifists, militants, Hambi veterans, preteens concerned about the future and retired couples concerned about their grandkids. Masterful design work, large outdoor signs detailing the ecological situation with maps and infographs and citations, websites, zines, an iconic, memorable and self-explanatory visual language (that yellow X barrier symbol can be made into an strikingly political outfit in 10 seconds with adhesive tape), propaganda movies with high production values, with humour and empathy and vibrant with energy. The Christians restored the mysterious forest shrine, maintained it daily, brought up a cross styled in the yellow X of the movement (blessed by the Pope, carried in pilgrimage), an elderly Christian lady slept outdoors at the shrine on the day of the eviction (sub-zero temperatures, winter rain, windstorm). A cause that enjoys more popular support than anarchism or socialism. A particularly egregious example of that cause—there is no reason to burn this brown coal, none, nothing, it isn't even *profitable* anymore, it's the worst type of lignite that will cost millions and take a long time to even purify into something usable, at a huge pollution collateral, with investments that would generate more money on fucking wind power, let alone the mass death it causes, a senseless destruction of villages dating from the 1100s along with the biosphere of the entire planet for no other reason than sunken costs of a few shareholders, very obviously nothing more than the greed of a few. A legalist argument was dug up—turns out the company didn't even own all the land yet, they have failed to coerce some farmers into selling even now, the digging was technically illegal. Highly motivated activists ready for anything, my mates chained arms with me, spitting at the surrender offers from the cops, making improv privacy walls with safety blankets to piss in buckets to stay in the front, dragged one by one with torture holds and blows to the head and chokes and pepper spray, everyone chanting revolutionary songs softly. And the Green Party in power, elected enthusiastically by voters who did it specifically to stop the burning of coal.

All that, and the cops sent by the Green Party steamrolled right through us, breaking bones as casually as the baggers break the soil food web. To protect the profits. Of a private company. By digging the land to mine brown coal.

There is a particular kind of gaslighting nausea when your joints are still aching from what the cops did to you, and you read social media comments praising the cops for their professional behaviour and restraint. The destruction of Lützerath is as blatantly evil as evil gets, and it nonetheless got polarised instantly, like everything does these days. Lützi people being randomly bashed in the head by cops have shown

downright heroic commitment to passive resistance, yet we were being called violent rioter extremists who should be gassed and executed due to our... burning barricades.

Do not make the mistake of believing that if you play by the rules you won't be oppressed, criminalised, or beaten. They will change the rules to get you if they have to. The people who will hate you if you break the rules, already hate you no matter what you do. And the enforcers of the rules don't have to play by the rules.

Many people tried to reason with the cops. We're doing this for your children! Your mother is ashamed of you! You can stop, you know there's a system to reject participation in operations you deem unethical? I'm a 65-year-old teacher, I had to take vacations from school to be here, look at which side you're on!

The cops could not be reasoned with.

The cops took selfies relaxing in our structures, posing with everything they stole from us or smashed to pieces, pointedly lampshading their glee. "Don't you have a family?", someone shouted while being dragged away, and exceptionally, a cop actually answered, right after shoving her to the ground: "No."

I usually stand at the frontline, and at one point I tried looking a riot cop straight into the eye. It was impossible. His eyes flickered constantly, moving into all directions, trying to take it all in, one hand on his gun another hand on his big stick. He wore in his face panic, or fury, or both. All he saw was enemies, a whole horizon swarming with enemies, all he waited for was a pretext.

We got messages of support from our comrades in Chiapas, in Rojava, in Ukraine, in the Amazon. But I cannot help but feel like we're playing games here. In Chiapas, in Rojava, in Ukraine, in the Amazon people are defending territory against the enemy. Here we deliberately put our bodies in vulnerable positions before our enemies, hoping that, hoping that what? Someone, somewhere does something? The government takes a stand against the obscenely wealthy company who owns the whole lobbyist sector? The Board of Directors is moved by the scenes of bravery and, touched deep in their hearts, calls off the baggers?

We lie down before our bullies like toddlers in a tantrum, point fingers, call out: This is bad! They're breaking everything! They're hurting us! But we're long past the point where calling out will do anything.

I don't know how to organise active resistance here in the EU, in the heart of the beast, to protect the patches of nature that are left. I don't know what shape of resistance would be tactical here. But to those who think that the armies of rich countries are unbeatable, I will remind that the Taliban defeated the U.S. army and

are we really less committed to justice than the Taliban is to patriarchy? I do not know what shape of resistance would be tactical here, but I know it will involve things like in Chiapas, like in Rojava, like in Ukraine, like in the Amazon. To quote the Institute For The Study of Insurgent Warfare:

An activist's enemies then are the particular set of abstract bad things they endeavour to set aright and their opponents are fellows who merely happen to be on the wrong side of the issue. By comparison, an insurgent's enemies are never abstract, but rather discrete entities of flesh, stone, or steel, from bodies to buildings, which at a specific time and place obstruct their interests.

Which is to say, the people who are doing this to the land and to us are physical people of flesh and blood, who have names and addresses.



Cops siccing their abused dogs on defenders almost falling down the pit. Threats to life were a commonplace tactic during the eviction, and broken bones abound.



We gonna pull off two, three, many Rojavas.



The sun sets in Lützerath but Lützi remains, in more ways than the enemy can imagine.

(Written on the occasion of the eviction; performed numerous times in undisclosed events; published in the Lützerath zine.)

Eine Frau Ist Meu Pau: A speech upon a terf talk on the wake of the Colorado shootings, 2022

(Warmly): Lovely siblings, dear allies, thank you! I'm not actually involved in any of the orgas doing this protest, but we're all anarchists so I'll speak for them anyway: thank you so much for being here on such a short notice, when you all are still grieving, still coping, as am I. And ag-do, thanks for the space for my little speech.

But it gets a little bit heavy, so here's the content warnings. *[Softly:]* Content warning: Feminist theory. *[Increasingly loudly, shouting at the literal halls of academia where their conference takes place:]* Content warning: Academia. Content warning: Terfs. Content warning: Europeans. (Screaming towards the university hall): **Content warning: The definition of woman. Content Warning: ANTI-TRANSGENDER HATE. Content warning: ANTI-TRANSGENDER VIOLENCE. CONTENT WARNING: ANTI-TRANSGENDER GENOCIDE.**

[Warm and happy again:] I have three things to tell you: one about the terfs, one about the fascists, and one about you.

1. Terre des Femmes

On their Facebook event, Terre des Femmes says:

Die Polizei ist informiert und vor Ort. Der Weg INS Haus wird durch die Polizei gesichert, so dass sich unsere Gäste keine Gedanken machen müssen.

You can tell a lot about what kind of woman a supposed "feminist" is protecting, when they assure their folk they can feel **safer** because many cops will be around.

Terre des Femmes advocates for a legislative ban on Muslim head gear. In other words, these white German supposed "feminists" advocate giving white German cops the right to violently enforce State power over immigrant bodies. It never fails: Scratch a terf, find a racist.

[Gradually more and more angrily:] On her analysis of Terre's colonialist rhetoric about the "Muslima in Deutschland", Saskia Metz leverages the theoretical work of the great Indian feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty re: the category "oppressed Third World Women", which flattens our individuality and our intersectional struggles under a single binary equation, male=penis=oppressor, female=vagina=victim, so that any of us with a lifestory which challenges *their* binary theory get denied our own consent, our autonomy, our voice, our personhood itself: So that it doesn't *matter* if the woman **wants** to wear a hijab, or do sex work, or go out in a short skirt,

or transition; the enlightened First World feminist vanguard knows our oppression better than us. (Metz 2020, "Eine Analyse der Rhethorik von Terre des Femmes e.V. zum Kopftuchverbot", *[screaming ever louder]* i s s n two one nINE TWO DASH FIVE TWO—)

[Silence.]

It's hard to even care, isn't it?

You, like me, are still in deep grief. We are grieving for our dead murdered **in** the trans day of grieving, we aren't even allowed to **grieve**, like we aren't allowed our own names in our tombstones. One of my partners said this: "The worst part is I'm not even *phased*. With all that the U.S. fascists have been saying, with all that the U.K. TERFs have been saying, it was so obviously a matter of time. I feel like the most cynical Cassandra, here looking at my watch, sipping coffee asking, 'did it happen yet?'"

And the **shitty** racist Islamophobic cop-loving white-ass First-World Fortress Europe regressive pseudofeminists from Terre des Femmes have the gall, the the gall, the **GALL**, to come here today of all days agitate for the Bundesrepublik Deutschland government to impose on us which gender we really are.

Now Terre des Femmes is saying:

"Was ist eine Frau? Die Veranstaltung wird das Thema Auswirkungen des geplanten Selbstbestimmungsgesetzes auf Frauenrechte konstruktiv reflektieren. Ein ~respektvoller~ Umgang miteinander ist zu jeder Zeit unabdingbare Voraussetzung."

FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU Terre des Femmes, you want respect? While we're walking in **DEATH** as death surrounds us, in the pit of our grief, in the abyss of our collective trauma, you come tell the cops and the nazis that we trannies are abusers and predators, in the city of the Frontline Skinheads and the Fortress Europe rallies, after a 15-year-old girl gets lynched on the streets then misgendered by police, you come demand respect?? I'll tell you was ist eine Frau, eine Frau ist meu pau is what she is. A woman is my **DICK**.

"Ah here we see the phallic rape culture enactment of the violent trans-identifie—" **FUCK. YOU.** I am DONE.

You, First-World colonial supremacists gorging on the wealth you plundered from my country and a hundred others, you who cannot hide your DISGUST for our body and our desire so you dress it up as supposed "feminism", you who call my sisters "sex traffick victims" so that you can deport them back to Hell, just so that you don't have ever to look at the proudly exposed trans body of the Latina travesti, like you don't want to look at the proudly covered body of the Muslim feminist, because our

existence doesn't fit your shitty self-serving malformed theory. I have no time to argue with you, I am too busy teaching my queer kids how to stop bleedings from gunshot wounds. I have nothing to argue with you, from the valley of death I spit on you, in the name of the travesti amapô I curse you: tonight our dead will haunt your nightmares.

2. The irrelevance of terfs

Those of you who were here with me humiliating the Nazis on 1st of May: Those of you who defined the Versammlungsgesetz and the illusion of safety of the liberal order to mask up and face the enemy up close, you will remember: We didn't just have the NPD and Die Rechte and the III. Weg and the local Hammerskins, we also had the Légió Hungária, the Bulgarski Nationalen Sajuz, Les Nationalistes and the Polish fash-cath and the Italian brotherhood—real internationale solidarität they have, European fascists. That Nazi influencer, remember her? The nazi Twitter girlfriend? announced a Fortress Europe alliance at that day.

The Colorado shooter, as you heard, is the grandson of a MAGA Republican lawmaker. Another Republican, Arthur Jay Finkelstein, spent decades consulting for European fascists from Austria, Hungary, Czech, Ukraine, all over. Ordo Iuris, a Polish Catholic fascist organisation, has hosted Brazilian fascists, has received help from U.S. fascists to pass anti-abortion legislation, the Bolsonaro family is working with the Trump clan, UK terfs are now using anti-LGBT symbolism from Eastern European fascists, only switching the rainbow flag for the pink-white-blue.

Do you get it, the scale of this? It's the work of years. We are under attack, it's not just random shootings, there's no Einzelfälle, American politicians are openly calling for genocide now, the day *after* the shooting. We cannot fight this with just demos. We cannot / fight this / with just / demos.

Are terfs even relevant at this point? Yes, they enable and empower the rise of fascism, but if they all stopped tomorrow little would change, because trans-exclusionary "feminism" is self-defeating. The same power they ceded for Republicans to oppress us trans people was immediately used to overturn Roe Vs. Wade. Terfs are so eager to kick us out of women's spaces, they are so disgusted by our bodies, so desperate to build walls to leave us out, that they don't even look at who's handing them all those bricks. Terfs think that their walls keep us out, but they're walling themselves with the men inside Gilead.

The rotting trans bodies hanging from those walls will prove to be poor consolation for them.

3. Scene gossip

No, it's not to *them* that I came to talk today, it's to you. My siblings. All of you my folk, all of you queer, interestingly gendered anarchists, actually feminist feminists.

I'm Brazilian. Most trans folk killed last year are from my country. By a large margin. For the 13th year in a row.

Police kills an average of 17 people per *day* in my country. If I dress like this on the streets in my country, there's a high chance I'll be beaten to death; half the time the murderers will be in police uniform.

When I watch the rise of fascism, the rise of anti-queer violence here inside the progressive walls of Fortress Europe, I, like all my immigrant friends, have a very specific kind of chill: That I am being thrown back into *that*, terrified of ever looking too fem, too sexual, too myself. And I cannot—I will *not* go back to that. I would rather die lynched on the streets than live in hiding again.

I'm not a citizen. Any crime, however how minor, can get me deported, back to *that*. Antifa action might get me deported back to that. Having, quote, "extremist political beliefs", endquote, is grounds to get my citizenship denied.

Nonetheless I've spent Trans Day Of Remembrance being slut-shamed online by some swerf who thought me, a Latina travesti, going to an anti-police demo with this outfit, yes this glorious outfit you see me in right now, was grossly inappropriate. The kicker? The swerf in question wasn't a cisgender terf, she was a trans anarchist. While the shooting victims were still bleeding she was trash-talking me to my partner on how me posting my cleavage online being a whore, without, quote, tact or niveau, without *class*, for my supposed submission to *men*.

Sister I WISH I was a whore! I'm not ALLOWED be a whore, because women like THEM [*points to terf meeting*] as well as like YOU will sic the cops on me if I even try. So I have to sell my body to other, significantly worse forms of wage slavery, working for capitalists rather than myself.

I prepared a speech for this Trans Day of Remembrance; I put blood and tears into it; I made the decision to speak truth even if it gets my entire family deported. Do you know who gave me space, who wanted to listen to my speech, who thanked me for it? Pride Rebellion. For those who don't know, Pride Rebellion is not an anarchist org. They're close to Apoists, they have people who wear the hammer-and-sickle. Theoretically, not my politics. They're closer to second-wavey forms of feminism; their theory, unlike our queer theory, has little allowance for slut pride. In traditional Jineologî there's no discussion on trans people, yet do you know how many times the Kurdish heval have given me problems over my gender? Never. Do you know

how often my outfits have been policed by these revolutionaries whose theories could justify that? Never.

Do you know why that is? How come the hevals will unconditionally gang up with me, even when my positions don't fit the ideology? Because as we speak the Kurds are being bombed by Turkish airplanes, in a renewed genocide, aided and abetted by NATO and by the Bundesrepublik Deutschland, with next to no notice on mainstream media. When my existence doesn't fit their theories, the Kurds open space for me, because we are under attack, and unlike white German activists, the Kurds have a sense of who are allies and who is the enemy. The Zapatistas have a sense of the enemy. BLM has a sense of the enemy. We are under attack, and insurrectionaries know we won't solve this with demos. The first time I talked to a Kurdish activist—the first time!—she invited me to the revolution and offered to take care of my queer kids, should anything happen. I want you to think how many queer anarchist comrades you can trust to have that kind of commitment. Which of your comrades would offer you, spontaneously and unconditionally, long-term childcare? Who would offer you shelter and food and cover fire, even if someone has a shitty take, even if there's a relationship conflict, even if the positioning differs or the theory doesn't fit?

My heval's theory doesn't cover my nonbinary kid's gender identity, but she will put my kid above her theory, because we are comrades and the enemy wants us both dead. This isn't hyperbole, this isn't me being dramatic, they literally wants us all dead, **dead**, they are counting the days for the gas chambers, I know that because they've *told* me that, in person, and unlike the terfs in here, we can't count on the cops to keep us safe. Who keeps us safe? Who keep us safe?

Compared to the Kurds, the German Left is severely limited in action by their investment in the fake security they think they have. All I hear is attempts to dissuade me to do anything that could get me in trouble, to go help with the struggle in safer ways, maybe go do a Küfa (if you get the Ordnungsamt permission for one, natürlich). The very first antifa demo I did in Germany was against the Versammlungsgesetz, summer 2021, you know how that went: We were kesseled on the asphalt til midnight, detained, profiled, photographed, catalogued in all shitty government databases as potential terrorists. It was a legal demo! I followed all the rules! I was police profiled and got a sheet for holding a sign that said „Antifaschismus ist kein Verbrechen“! And all the good-opsec Germans in black masks and North Face windbreakers were minutely profiled right along with me. When the boots come for you, your crypto apps won't save you. I'm presenting this with my face exposed, which is nice cos you get to see my stylish punk haircut, but I actually came here masked! *[Lifts pink mask theatrically from the ground]* You saw me going Karen at the cops before, they *forced* us to unmask!

I'm borrowing from the civil rights movement here when I say: mobilisation won't save us, we need true organisation, we need to provide our siblings with shelter, with food, hormones, safety, we need guns. The terfs are a lost cause but you are my people, the fascists are coming for all of us, we're the sacrificial goat. Half of you thinks me having ten girlfriends is #problematic, that my sexuality is Inappropriate in Public Spaces I should tone it down. And the other half thinks my aggressiveness is too overt, my violence too proudly worn, I'm better off cancelled by security culture. For the third half, the small half that doesn't want to tone down ANYTHING for the sake of cis sensibilities: Are we going to wait until the fascists take power? Are we going to keep shitposting about antifaschistische aktion, or are we going to actually do it? Crew up. Bash back. Bash first.

The 'Zapatista Manifesto': A poetic translation:

Excerpts

Hello friends! Have y'all heard of the Zapatistas? So ok, the Zapatistas are an indigenous-led, anticapitalist, autonomist movement in México. They seized land back from the Mexican government, as in by force, as in with guerillas, guns, everything, back in '94, and then implemented stateless, ecological, bottom-up democracy. They're still there in Chiapas, resisting.

The Zapatistas have announced themselves to México and to the world with the Declarations of the Lacandona Jungle, originally by pirate radio. And look, I don't have anything against hobgoblins haunting Europe, but if you think the Communist Manifesto is poetic you ain't seem nothing on Mayan political communiqués. So today, I want to share with you some of my favourite passages of the Fourth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, in a translation that tends to the dance of the words.



Cuarta Declaración de La Selva Lacandona

There won't be death for the flower which is the word.

There may be death for the masked face of those who today name it, but the word, this word born from the depths of land and history, cannot be rooted off anymore by the arrogance of power.

We are all born of the night. In the night we live, and in her we shall die. But this light will prove to be the morning for all others, for those who today cry the night, for those to whom the day is denied, for those to whom death herself is a consolation, for those who were forbidden life.

For everyone: the light.

For everyone: everything.

For us: the pain and the anguish. For us: the joy of rebellion. For us: our future torn apart. For us: the dignity of insurrection.

For us: nothing.



The ambition of the powerful has been our silence. Being quiet, we died. Without the word, we didn't exist.

We fight, to raise our voices against oblivion. We fight, against death, for memory, for life. We fight, for we fear dying the death which is being forgotten.

*
**

They kill us for fighting back—but this is how we build a world where we all fit together, a world where everyone can live, without the death of the word. They take our land, so that our stride finds nothing to step on. They take our history, so that our word dies in its oblivion. They do not want us indigenous. They want us dead.

*
**

The arrogant wants to put down a rebellion which, in their ignorance, they place at the dawn of 1994. But the rebellion which now comes with the brown face of the land, with the language of the land, is not born today. It was spoken before in other languages, in other lands. In countless mountains and countless histories has it walked, the rebellion against injustice. It spoke Náhuatl, Paipai, Kiliwa, Cúcapa, Cochimi, Kumiai, Yuma, Seri, Chontal, Chinanteco, Pame, Chichimeca, Otomí, Mazahua, Matlazinca, Ocuilteco, Zapoteco, Solteco, Chatino, Papabuco, Mixteco, Cuicateco, Triqui, Amuzgo, Mazateco, Chocho, Izcateco, Huave, Tlapaneco, Totonaca, Tepehua, Popoluca, Mixe, Zoque, Huasteco, Lacandón, Maya, Chol, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojol-ab'al, Mame, Teco, Ixil, Aguacateco, Motocintleco, Chicomucelteco, Kanjobal, Jacalteco, Quiché, Cakchiquel, Ketchi, Pima, Tepehuán, Tarahumara, Mayo, Yaqui, Cahíta, Ópata, Cora, Huichol, Purépecha and Kikapú. It spoke, and speaks, the Castilian language ["Spanish"].

For rebellion is not a thing of language; it is a thing of dignity, a thing of being human.

*
**

A society which is plural, accepting, inclusive, democratic, fair, free: such a society will only be possible as a wholly new system. And it won't be power to build it. For power today is only the salesforce of ruins, of countries destroyed by the real subversives, the real disabling force: the rulers.

*
**

The projects of independent opposition are lacking something, that is, more than ever, crucial. We all oppose the agenda of a system that destroys itself, but we need a concrete proposal for a new society, a model of what to *build* as we *rebuild*. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the EZLN, is part of this proposal; it is not the whole of it, nor its "vanguard". It has been, and continues to be, *part* of the effort of a transition to self-rule.

*
**

The world we want is a world where countless worlds fit in. The country we build is a country where all the peoples fit in, where all the languages are spoken. May all paths walk her, may everyone laugh her, may everyone dawn her.

We talk unity even when we are silent. In murmur we *rain* the words, to find one another together in history, to ward off the danger that confronts and destroys us: the danger of being forgotten.

*
**

There won't be death for the flower which is the word, even if our strides stride in silence. For in silence the seed of the word is sown. Because so that it may flower, the word screams itself into silence;

To live, the word must be sown dark into the womb of the land;

For them to see us, we mask our own faces;

For them to name us, we deny our own names;

We risk our present to save our future,

And so that we live, we die.

Our word, our song and scream, is here to stop the dead from dying. We fight so that they live. We *sing*, so that they live.

And the word is alive.

The cry of "Enough!" is alive.

The night that makes of itself a dawn is alive.

Our proud stride, side-by-side with all those who cry, is alive.

We fight to destroy the clockwork of death, wound up by the powerful.

We fight for a new era: A time of life.

Aquí estamos. No nos rendimos. Zapata vive y, a pesar de todo, la lucha sigue.

Desde las montañas del Sureste Mexicano, / Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena, Comandancia General del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional.

México, enero de 1996.

*
**

Translation notes

The night is the "long night of 500 years", the arrival of colonialism and its procession of horrors: dominion, capitalism, industrialism, neoliberalism. We are all born of it: indigenous folk in Latinoamérica have had 'the Indian beaten out to save the man', their own lifeworlds have been taken. The indigenous, too, had to learn to rewild. The word, language itself, culture, myth, society, politics, is what the powerful tried to silence: cultural genocide. The Fourth Declaration asserts that the deeper the word is buried, the stronger the stalks when it germinates back to life. Thus the beauty and importance of listing all the languages they took from us (so many in that tiny corner of México alone!), invoking the name of each people like Homer's Catalogue of Ships.

I translate from an anarchist bias. Zapatismo is neither anarchist nor communist, it is zapatista. The original declaration is highly local to time and place: the selling out of México to the USA via neoliberal trade agreements in the 90s. I've chosen words so as to make it more timeless; I was faithful to the *movement*—motion and direction—more than the *moment*. This movement is grounded on oral history and personal relationships, not holy texts from chairmen.

The part quoted as “so that we see us...” isn't from the Fourth Declaration, it's from the Sixth. I recognised the seed of that little poem in the lines of the Fourth and took the liberty to transplant the later words back into this ground, because I think it looks good here (doesn't it?). I'm far from the only one struck by the poetry of the Fourth, parts of it have been sang by Manu Chao (in *EZLN... Para Tod@s* and elsewhere in the *Clandestino* album), and more recently Adiós Gota in *La Alegre Rebeldía*; Pedro Guerra set that Sixth passage to music, in *Chiapas*.

Bretch (1935), "Questions of a Worker who Reads Wikipedia"

Who built Thebes of the Seven Gates?

All articles name the names of kings; I gather the kings
brought those boulders on their royal backs?

And great Babylon, who fell and fell again,

Who put'er back together, every time? In which flats
of gold-paved Lima lived the road-pavers?

The night the Great Wall of China was finished, where did
the construction crew hang out? Awesome Rome

is full of triumphal archs. Who arched them up? Also—
who did the Caesars triumph over? We sing the palaces
of Byzantium—

the whole thing was just palaces? Even Atlantis of tall tales
shouted, choking, as the seas swallowed it whole—

for its slaves.

Young Alexander conquered India.

All by himself then?

Caesar defeated the Gauls.

Did he bring along a cook at least?

Felipe de España, el Prudente, cried when his Armada
sunk into the sea. And nobody else cried that day?

In the Seven Years' War, Federico Secondo grasped
victory. Who else grasped it with him?

All these pages, all these conquests.

All those feasts—who did the dishes?

Every ten years a new Great Man.

Who covered the budget?

So many headlines.

So many questions.