

PRECOC

GET IN THE CAR

joyful about having been
deeply grateful to be a part of
by magic the garden's
being shaped. My responsibility
and time, working in the garden
to witness a special harvest may
not on committing plants to memory.

including my parents' North Carolina
really deep cut is my preschool's garden
the rosemary leaves, bushes. In high
science, especially with respect to
more than happy to be back. I still
responsibility is to our environment
at (Grows) this summer as a grounds
given freely, or quarter-acre or not.

I've had a responsibility to make
feels both new Southern (a. Dan's
plant right now is that silly tall
that it has lots of character). I'm
very and light, but I am a misadventurer
imagining that the yellow flowers taste
saw a bag (can anyone help ID?)
taster like.

and took a couple pictures of the
my plants, and am slowly writing
red? Rosemary mentioned she
dumped the dump of water
of leaves (I thought the kind of fruit
if next time I'll see more of the
of fruit. Super! Off!



The students are listening to the teacher.

The students are listening to the teacher.
They are listening to the teacher.
They are listening to the teacher.
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The students are listening to the teacher.

BAD

INTER

VOLUME EIGHT

This concept was inspired by an anecdote: last year, as we were preparing for Issue 7, we edited an interview that had been transcribed by digital software. In the transcription, the artist referred to her love of “abstract panties,” which we immediately knew was a mistranslation of “abstract paintings.” After we laughed about it, we knew this kind of error would be a good starting point for our next issue, as it encapsulates the humor and problematics of trying to communicate with software that knows what words are, but perhaps not what the meaning is.

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INTERFACE AS MEMBRANE:
ON TISSUE, AURA, AND THE HAND

MAGGIE
BARRETT

I

My eyes stop at the black smudges in the horizon that are the lamb’s splayed forepaws. Its fur passes through the sky—both the same shade of white—and below, in the dense grays that are the rest of the image, the human figure with raised arms holds the animal by its hind legs. I’m here in this book for another reason, but unexpectedly I’m brought back to the breath. The caption reads, “Swinging a slow-to-go newborn lamb like this will start it breathing almost every time.” At the moment the shutter opened, had air yet passed through the lamb’s body?



FOUND IN THE SHEEP BOOK
BY RON PARKER 1984,
2023
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH

While writing this essay, I’ve come to think of an interface as a site of exchange, a membrane, a lens through which to read something, or, in material terms, through which something passes. The swinging of the lamb allows for inhalation by moving the weight of the gut away from and then into the diaphragm, but what I imagine is a plug of phlegm being dislodged, or a skein being shaken loose.

Someone outside
the window coughs twice.
There is an event space there,
across the street,
and they often play the
same soundtrack.

II

The summer after my dad died of pulmonary fibrosis—a gradual inefficiency of the lungs—I saw a Felix González-Torres show and took three copies of the takeaway, “Untitled” (*Girlfriend in a Coma*). One for me, one for my mom, one for my brother.

It is a white sheet of paper. Centered on the page, you are as likely to see as you are to miss the embossed pair of lungs; no ink there, only a slight shadow creates the image. The lungs and the paper visually merge, and in this gesture, I realize the similarity of the roles they play.

Like paper, like lungs, these are things that are only noticeable when they’ve gone bad, when newsprint dissolves, or tissue stiffens. It is in poor conditions that they come into focus.

III

Kathleen has been working on paper recently, making drawings with oil pastels. A symbol, a short poem, vibrating color sitting on top of the toothed page. Her half-blindness makes it so that she can only see part of the 20 by 20 inch sheet as she works. I tell her, now you are *in* these sheets of paper.

IV

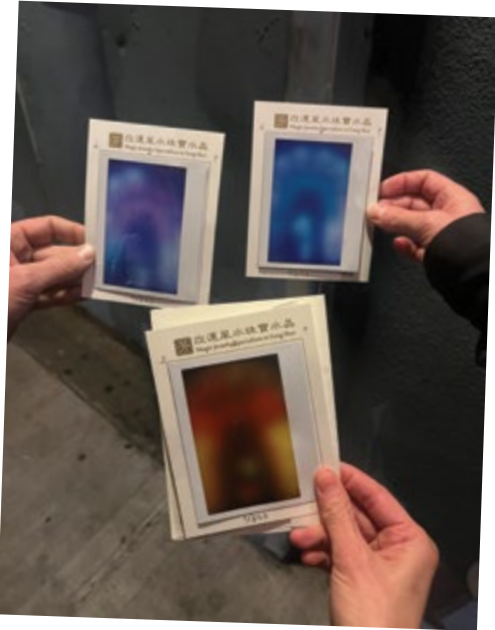
Handwriting contains even more information, a window not to the soul, but to the body behind it. In Jesse Ball’s *Autoportrait*, he recalls the first person he kissed, and aside from a detail about her breast size, the only thing I learn about her is that her

That’s what aura is, according to Benjamin, an artwork’s unique presence in space and time.

But other things contain aura too. I read Dodie Bellamy’s essay *Digging Through Kathy Acker’s Stuff*: “Kathy’s unwashed Gaultier dress sits on my dresser, exuding flakes of energy.”

Even the first page of a Virginia Woolf book in the special collection reads, “The type has been set by the author.” I imagine the tiny boxes of letters, and VW herself sorting through them. Then, I didn’t read the book for errors, but now I’m curious to find her mistakes, proof of her concentration lapsing. That’s where the interface becomes visible, in the mistake, where I can see the human that set the type.

My neighbor
talks to himself,
and I put on my headphones
and find a new mix
of brown noise.



handwriting was “very good.” The greeting card from my dad functions this way. The handwriting says more than the words do. I only saved it because he started it on the front, where you’re not supposed to write. On the plasticky paper, below the green daisy, I squint to read Dear—or is it Deer?—Maggie. In the following sentence, the stem in the lowercase f squiggles.

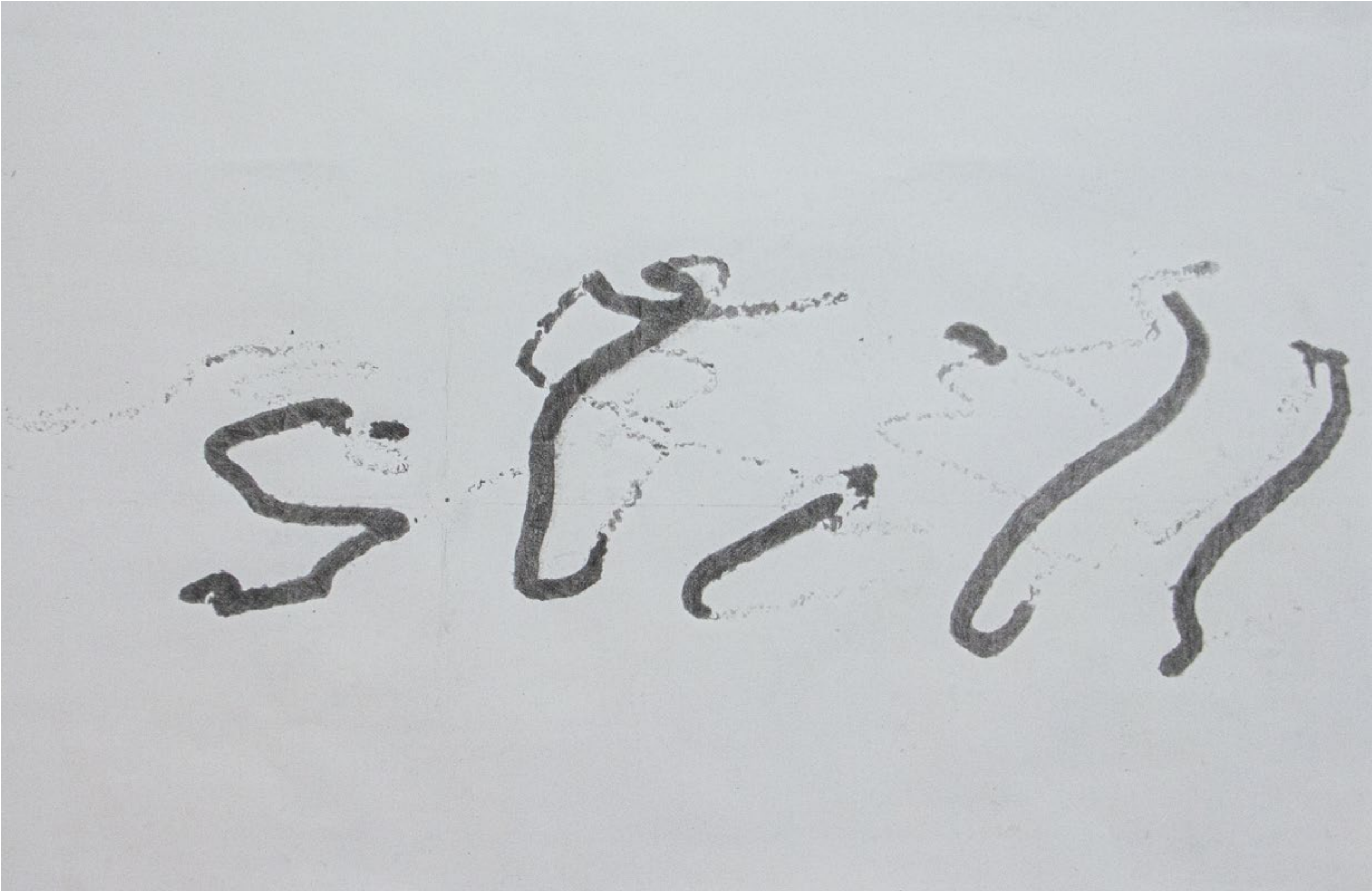
Reading for the handwriting rather than the words, I recall your skin that bruised easily at the time, your blue robe with the red yellow green detail, the flat Cleveland sky out the hospital window. My handwriting analysis book instructs me to look at the angles of the stems and the consistency of the pressure. I learn about inconsistent spacing and ink splotches and, in the Danger Signs section, that tremors indicate dependency. Indeed, you were dependent then, on stiffening membranes, on a machine to fill your blood with oxygen.

V

Mashed in an envelope alongside the greeting card I find the aura photograph I got that same summer of the FGT show, wondering if something would appear in the otherwise invisible experience of loss. My aura on that occasion appeared all purples; but recently when I went with Anna and Sara it appeared all blues. In her book, *Radiant Human*, Christina Lonsdale writes that hue shifts occur on

the occasion of great life changes. I compare my hue shift with SC's, whose aura changed precisely the way mine did, purple to blue. But rather than think of our varying life circumstances, I think of the technology. I also think of Rachel Harrison's project, *5 × 7's* (A & R Quality Photo, Aurora, Duggal, Emulsion, Foto Print, Image Studio, Pro Photo, R&B Color Labs, US Color, Victoria Photo) in which she developed the same negative at 10 different photo labs. Every print has a different color cast, according to the conditions of the lab. I can't help but wonder if it was just the film stock, and we are actually still purples, or if one of us was always blue.

I rub the carbon paper,
transferring the weather
systems that formed between
and around your letters.
Through this friction,
contact.



STILL, 2023
CARBON AND PENCIL ON PAPER. 25 × 38 IN

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We have a similar lack of knowledge
of the computer's language—we
I N T E R F A C E
with digital media as a user, but,
(except for coders) the back end
remains mysterious. We are left with
interfaces that at once look and
feel familiar, but which obscure the
actual languages and systems of
communication at work.

BAD TRANSLATIONS
MISTRANSLATIONS,
AND
INTENTIONAL MISDIRECTION.

INTER
F
A
C
E is also a kind of fabric that repairs
seams and tears, and also provides struc-
ture in garments. This reconnects us to
materials, as well as to patches, and foreign
substances that can help stabilize or mend.

Sonically, there is a pun with

"IN BAD FAITH"

//
INTERFAITH
—

perhaps there is something to be
said about (mis) translations
or communications across belief systems
and values.

INTERFACE
AS A CURTAIN—
thinking about the Wizard of Oz and
realizing that the back end is just a
regular old dude with special effects
amplifications. A BAD
INTERFACE

could refer to an
INTERFACE
which does its job poorly, or to an
INTERFACE that fails to
obscure the "back end",
making operations of power more

v i s i b l e .

