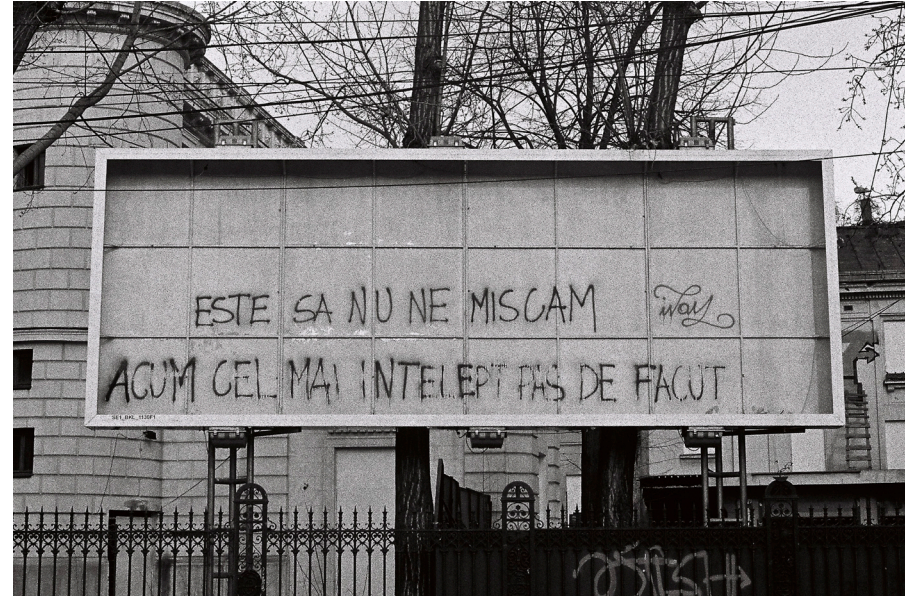


Emma Wolf-Haugh

Obsidian Butt Plug

Queer pulp sci-fi zine



















Obsidian Butt Plug

I am staring into the flat space of the computer, momentarily suspended, a tight blankness across the front of my mind. Shoulders hunched, back slumped, eyes swimming with floaters. That's from the laptop screen, I think plainly. I'm sure that there is something in there to do. Click tap, click tap scroll, click tap, re-fresh gmail, check facebook, repeat three times, nothing. I should take care of that health insurance application, upload taxes, update website, check deadlines, read that article my Mum sent, *The Paranoid Fantasy Behind Brexit*, an open tab for days now.

And still I'm staring into the laptop screen as if it's about to give me something or answer some important question which I haven't yet thought to ask.

I can feel that it sets my teeth on edge and fills my body with static energy. A bit like when you drink too much coffee but different, because coffee is a hot, tasty, caffeinated beverage, entering the body through the mouth, working via the blood stream, influencing the brain by blocking the effects of the neurotransmitter adenosine. While the internet has no temperature, substance or smell, but still

works on your body; entering through the fingertips, eyes, ears, causing grey matter shrinkage, problems with white matter's ability to communicate, cravings, and general poorer cognitive performance. All from engaging the self in that peculiar adhesive relation that we have developed with digital interfacing, completely and absently ordinary.

Click tap, click tap, click. Windows start to disintegrate peeling themselves apart from the inside out, folders bulge and pop, and all visual information disappears. I am staring at my reflection in the empty screen, a black mirror. The screen starts itself up again, swirling in some kind of data chaos, I can catch shards of recognisable images, documents and video files as they mesh together, subsumed by the whirl of colours, sounds, and overlapping two dimensional forms. It looks as if the computer is collaging it's contents in a rapid spiralling motion. I hold the power button, nothing, I try again and press on it firmly, still nothing, unsnap the power cable, the data whirls into centrifugal movement. I lift the laptop up and bang it down hard on the desk in a desperate act of nonsense.

Everything stops dead. Vwhoooooom, vwhoooooom, vwhoooooom, what the fuck?

The data spiral starts to move again, turning itself inwards, it resembles the gyrating wormholes CGI rendered for so many science fiction movies, whoooooom, whoooooom. I am horrified as the gaping aperture begins to ooze across and beyond the screen. The laptop itself is subsumed by the space hole that has now moved into my apartment having eaten my Mac book air. The inverted looping hole is hovering about two feet from my face, a seething mass of colour and light, with an opaque centre.

I try to pull my body away from the desk but this curling, whorling, hooping orifice has a hold on me. A magnetic, vacuous void that I can't peel myself away from. In a state of fascinated terror I think, I haven't backed up my data, and simultaneously think how absurd it is to be concerned about data as I face off with an unknown phenomena suspended and arms reach from my body.

Whoooooom, whoooooom...I can see something emerge from the void, centred in the sideways whirlpool, but at some distance. A wave of panic, I want to look away but I am rooted in place. A figure appears, head and shoulders, shadowy, warping in and out of vision, I can't locate the eyes. Oh no, oh nooo, why doesn't it

have any eyes? As the figure steadies it becomes clear that the face is covered with what looks like a t-shirt pulled up over the head. There must be eyes in there, facing me. The hands are gesturing, trying to communicate something. My ears become hot, surrounded by a vibrational orange fever...eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

At first the sound is a terrible screech but then calms into an even, composed voice;

Hello.

Hello, I can see you, can you hear me?

Don't worry, nothing bad will happen to you, all you need to do now is listen...

...your computer is being re-absorbed, dispersed and elementally recycled, I will return it to you once the transformation is settled.

We're meeting through a story-hole, a schism in the narrative. It's a necessary interference to your repetitive spells of screen based anaesthesia and obsession. Your body has too long been coiled around the shock wave emissions of the dream world of late capitalism. It's time to wake up.

This story-hole is a bit like a glory hole although not necessarily for anonymous sexual encounter. The story-hole offers a breach in narrative realities that have become diseased with blind spots. This story-hole allows me to speak to you from a different physical existence. I can poke through the opening with another version of narrative reality and see if you'll suck on it so to speak.

You are a storytelling creature, pattern spotter, metaphor maker, but the narrative has become paralysed. You increasingly rely on software, programs, processors, subroutines, encoders, decoders and buffers to fill in the gaps. This is where you are right now, at the point of teetering opportunity, but frozen, unable to mobilise yourself or reorient the story.

The future is not determined. AI is not inevitable. Your brain will never be uploaded to a computer. The world is not coming to an end.

A brief overview of your narrative circumstances to date. At the individual level unrestrained identification with the customer role has foreclosed other identities such as; active participant in

community, pleasure seeking slacker or lover of dying species. Western narrative structure has been historically concerned with stories that work towards definition of identity. How have your contemporary identities been defined and by whom? Who are you now and whose narrative repetition is this?

Algorithmic data whirlpools enter your body sucking in bits and bites, half formed facts, headlines, opinions, bouncing flashing images, knowledge of other peoples holidays, selfies, hook ups, upcoming events, special offers, altogether spurt forcefully through the cracks in your body where they circulate and congeal.

You have become an inert body of information.

Your customised filter bubble will contract as it expands, restraining you in its automated, looping, tentaculous work. Profiting on your networked identity.

An identity that no longer belongs to you.

Shopping centres, business improvement districts and over priced property development, fill in public squares and parks.

Environment, productivity, innovation,
Intentional design, warm hospitality, and
flexible solutions, are all for rent.

Schools and hospitals designed not for
general social welfare but towards individual
consumer choice and what each can afford.

All the while you live up to eleven
hours per day in front of screens
abstractedly aware that the social space of
your physical world is being cannibalised.

Disrupt the echo chamber effect...
disconnect...disconnect...disconnect...

Disrupt the echo chamber effect...
disconnect...disconnect...disconnect...

Now, cover your face, just pull your
shirt up over your head, then stretch
your hand out into the hole.

I find myself doing exactly as I'm told.
There is something dominant and
seductive about the voice. The whole
weirdness is kind of a turn on. I pull
my t-shirt up over my head, expos-
ing my belly. I lift my hand and it's
drawn forward into the opening, the
unfocused limb leans in from over there,
my breath quickens as I imagine my body

being pulled through. Something hard and
cold is set in my hand, my fingers folded
inwards to hold it. I retract my arm bring-
ing my closed fist up under my t-shirt. There
is a smooth polished stone about two thirds
the length of my palm carved into a pointed
cone that curves out to a bulbous middle,
ending along a straight shaft, bottomed with
a flat circular base, it's very shiny and has
some weight to it. The voice continues but
now resonates from the thing in my hand.

What you hold is an alchemical
object, a reproduction obsidian butt plug.
The matter of your laptop transfigured;

aluminium
antimony - *lustrous gray metalloid*
arsenic
barium - soft, silvery alkaline earth metal
beryllium
cadmium
chromium - *high specular reflection*
cobalt - *metallic-lustered ores*
copper
gallium
gold
iron
lead
manganese - *silvery-gray metal*
synthesized in large stars shortly
before a supernova explosion

mercury
palladium
platinum - *precious, silverish transition metal*
selenium
silver
zinc...

...all have been decompressed from your computer. Rare earth metals have been reintegrated with regenerative soil samples and returned to the earth's crust. The rest we have transmogrified forming 'obsidian butt plug'. What used to be your laptop is now a future casting device, an inverted info portal, a highly perceptive sex toy. It can assist you in deciphering imminent potentialities. You can move beyond the inertia of your current state. All you have to do is stick it up your arse.

I gaze along the reflective surface of the butt plug that was recently my computer, my face reflected back, tiny and warped out of shape, I bring it to my lips and glide it along, licking the tip and then taking it into my mouth, I want to taste it, it's slightly metallic and cool but somehow not as hard inside my mouth as outside. I rotate it around my tongue and a sequence of words emerge across the interior of my forehead;

Transfiguration

noun

a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state: in this light the junk undergoes a transfiguration; it shines.

Obsidian

Volcanic glass

Silica mineraloid

Used to make mirrors for entering the dream world

To identify your shadow self

Taking you deep into the subconscious mind

I pull it out and my hand carries it away from my mouth, glistening with saliva, and down, along my chest, pausing at my bellybutton, connecting there for a moment, down, down, down to my ass, where it slides inside without any resistance.

I am plugged in.

An abundance of images, words, sensations flood my system, it's all too rapid to make sense of and the impression is somewhere on the line between pleasurable and nauseating. The voice vibrates in my mind, but now it seems to come from somewhere between the base of my spine and my asshole, 'obsidian butt plug'.

Imagine how it will feel to masturbate after money has lost all its value. No bank account, no incomings, outgoings, no savings, no debt. Your personality is in dialog with cash, all of the time, it will be surprisingly difficult to end that conversation, but the sex that you have with yourself, after the end of money, will be infinitely better.

Or something more simple, imagine no advertising, blank spaces void of content, screens, empty billboards, LED's, rotating, scrolling displays, kiosks, vacant and unused. Your eyes slide around the city freely enjoying movement through a public space absent of any prescribed semiotics. There is nothing actively seeking your attention as a consumer. This is very very relaxing. You collage forms loosely and absent mindedly as you move slowly through a city where there is nothing to buy.

Imagine the rent strikes and how you will get to know your neighbours very well when the police start acting on behalf of banks. Now consider the holes between peoples apartments, walls opened with mallets, hammers, whatever comes to hand in radical acts of solidarity with all neighbours facing eviction. These holes will be kept long after the police have stopped turning up. There is something

forever changed in how we will live together. There will be some discomfort to not continuing as a fully private person. Apartment blocks become hive like and interconnected. The house holes will eventually be covered with soft materials and makeshift doors, but they will never be locked. The negotiations necessary to live this way and the resolution of disputes will go on and on. When asked most people will say that they wouldn't return to the old model of domestic containment, they feel generally better, and really, who could ever go back to paying rent again?

Imagine how much improved the world will be after the super rich retreat to their bunkers and the banks are burnt.

Imagine fields of hemp growing in every public park, on top of dumping sites, in former industrial fields and old military bases, cleaning the soil and the water, providing for food, clothing, fuel, pain relief and pleasure.

Now visualise the butt plug, see yourself reflected back, gaze deep into that glassy, volcanic shine and proceed to tell the story of your filter bubble universe again and again until you don't recognise it anymore,

until you begin to imagine...something else.

Now squeeze!

I do as instructed tightening the muscles of my ass around the butt plug former laptop. It feels surprisingly warm, vibrating gently for a moment. Images, words and sensations begin to form a series of patterns. The moving shapes locate themselves around my bellybutton, I can't tell if they are inside or outside of my body, I'm not sure if my eyes are open or closed.

The nausea subsides as the patterns find their place. I discover that I can draw particular images forwards to see them. Holes, clouds, buildings, fields, a body with the face covered. What appears is imaged inwards along my abdomen, expanding through arteries and muscle tissue until the picture is absorbed and felt rather than seen.

Now you're becoming an energetic body, a dreaming body, dis-identifying and changing your form. The dream creates reality. This is the dream of the dream. If the story is to continue in another direction then you must first change the dream. You sleep badly because you have lost contact with the shadow that tethers you

to the material world. That crosses your relation between the cosmos and the earth.

Places where your shadow doesn't exist: the supermarket, airports, shopping malls, hospitals, offices, public transport, the gym, the internet.

Bodies dance with their shadows to exorcise years of financial, environmental, social decline. Processes of shaming, fear, individuated economic responsibility, and consumer debt are all driven out through the sweat glands.

It's time to liquidate your bureaucratic body.

The feeling of a bank account lodged in your pituitary gland.
The sensation of taxes in your solar plexus.
The tension of precarity twitching in your muscles, along the left side, moving from shoulder blades to finger tips, down to your left knee which loses its strength, you buckle.

Repeat into oblivion all passwords, pin numbers, personal identification materials, again and again until it becomes unintelligible sounds, humming, sending vibrations through the bands of fibrous tissue in your limbs that

have become inflexible.

The butt plug hums with a 4/4 beat, vibrating up my spine. I can sense the movement of the shadow under my skin. A pulling sensation in the feet, sucking through the calves, a tension in the stomach, arms loosening their form in fast movement, my contours are losing their focus. I am dry shadow liquid. Swallowed by my own internal twilight. I am turning inside out. For a moment I lose all sense of dimension. I squeeze on the butt plug and everything slows. I am still, arm stretched above my head, looking directly into the facelessness of my other self.

I lean in as close as I can to this shadow that leaks my proportions. My body twists in movement. I bend down. Stretch apart my legs, back exposed, muscles tense. My cosmic companion bends and angles across the wall to the floor in comparative gesture. I can't be sure who is leading the dance and who is following. I stretch and push through a series of quick jumps stopping to shake my fists wildly in front of my belly. I do a disordered jig. My bureaucratic body is resistant, clinging to the sides of my lungs, trying to hide inside the optic nerve of my left eyeball. All bodily fluids circulate wildly as the residue of financial responsibility and data tics

begin to loosen their hold. I am sweating one's and zero's. Binary data drips from my armpits. I am overcome with fierce frustration. Startled by all the life I've relinquished to that fucking laptop. I run and jump against the wall, right foot hits first, then left, then what? I fall hard against the ground, I am bruises and scrapes. The pain is a relief. My breathing comes in violent sobs. Lying on my back in a bare room stripped of any information I feel something deep velvet soft curl out from underneath my body.

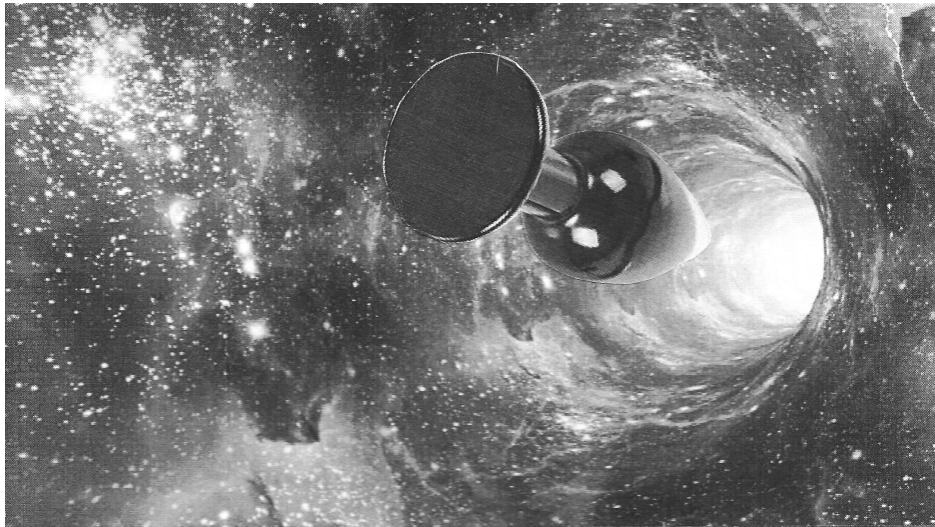
My shadow rolls along my shoulder and licks my neck - I feel rain. Shadow hands snake long fingers across my thighs - I smell fire. Curving across my torso it presses along my crotch - everything is moonlight. My shadow is straddling my hips the face coming closer. The hands seize the sides of my head and I am looking into my own faceless depth.

I squeeze.

Nothing.

I'm not sure who I am.

It feels really really good.



Commissioned by Joerg Franzbecker /
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Dancer: Thomas Butler

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