



feral feminisms

Hacking the Anthropocene:
Do-It-Together (DIT)

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Blue Light as Ineffable Sensuous Other

Daze Jefferies

Thinking with white settler storytelling traditions from the northeast coast of rural Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland), alongside speculative waters of the Black Atlantic and oceanic lifeways in eastern Mi'kma'ki, this work of research-creation is an attempt to dream, drown, and drift with poetics of blue light – the entanglement of melancholy and hope – in a time of ecological collapse and reparation.

DON'T SHOW ME WHERE IT LIVES
IN EASTERLY KNOWLEDGE

THE CABOT STRAIT WATER SPIRIT
CATCHES HER LAST BREATH

HOW SKIN-YARNS OF SELKIES LOST TO INDENTURE
PULL ACROSS A TRANS+ATLANTIC SPECULATIVE PAST

LEFT WITH ONLY SEA BEADS
AND SHATTERED LITTLE PEARLIES

THE PATTERNS OF A TREATY
PEOPLE DRIFT OUT OF TIME

FISH GIRLY UNDESERVING
NOW AND NEVER TO BE FOUND

HELD HERE BY THE INTERTIDE
I TAKE IT HARD – A WORLD AWASH



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Sensuous Other
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blue light as ineffable sensuous other turns the struggle of drowning inside out / dream penetrations to bubble wet whispers / feminist breathing a lost anarchic / there and older ethereal one, our low born screams live on in abundance / swallowing the edge of some ethnoecology / yes no longer broken fabulations for each other / of the heavenly sea queens my ancestors traded / these six generations on the northeast coast / stay torn together time again by gillnets from above / so drift cannot be disciplined / my heart into this light blue seeing / more-than-woman sinking creature / held halfway the hurt forecasts / no futures of enclosure and no deadly atmospherics / but waterworn love still waiting to turn over / soul deep convections of an airless unspace / the troubled cost of oceanleaving

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Throughout my early twenties, becoming-with oceanic ecologies of transition has been shaped by fishy figurations and felt knowledges of blue light. Foremost, following the sonic



worldmaking of alternative R&B artist Kelela (2017), blue light as ineffable sensuous other speaks to entanglements of desire, release, and recovery. It becomes a guiding force to map the body as a contact zone where futures of touch are held in the distance by way of transcorporeal slippage (see Alaimo 2012; Cixous and Clément 1986). Body to body, ocean to ocean—“Baby, keep the blue light on” (Kelela 2017). In this poetic text, sensuous potentialities of thinking-creation with blue light story watery borderlands between melancholy and hope—as one—in a time of ecological collapse and reparation (Manning 2020; Massumi 1999).

Conditioned by questions of un/livability, my work follows recent transcorporeal conceptualizations of bodies and ecologies that make transcorporeal and transcontextual thinking-creation a way to dream of solidarity-in-difference within the death-world of the Anthropocene (Colebrook 2015; Drake 2021; Hayward and Gossett 2017; Probyn 2016; Salah 2017). With North Atlantic water beings as my imagined kin, research-creation in the form of blue light helps me theorize toward embodied and ephemeral fishy becomings that are captured and released by oceanic time (Jefferies 2020; Neimanis 2017; Todd 2017). Figuring blue light as a sensuous amalgam of melancholic and hopeful oceanic longings, I offer an emotional approach to understanding ecologies, desires, and temporalities that resist and survive together-apart across multiple margins of Canada’s changing Atlantic coast.

My research-creation emerges within Newfoundland’s past-present time of environmental racism, economic crisis, and ecological collapse, as the rising warmth of North Atlantic waters continues to threaten sustainable futures for Black, Indigenous, and changing settler colonial cultures (Cole 2017; Webb-Campbell 2019). Complicit in ending Black and Indigenous worlds for centuries, Newfoundland has been a critical actor in histories of racial capitalism by way of slave ship-building and the forced movement of Beothuk and Mi’kmaq life to plantation geographies (Forbes 1993; Lawrence 2018). As Black feminist artists and scholars like Saidiya Hartman (2008), Christina Sharpe (2016), Tourmaline (2017), and Dora Silva Santana (2017) note, the Atlantic has always been an archive of slavery. Currents of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous violence live within the waters to which my life as a rural white settler trans woman Newfoundlander is bound.

In the words of Newfoundland philosopher Cyril Poole: “The sea cannot be cultivated, nor can it be enclosed and brought into one’s possession” (1978: 21). Imagining the Atlantic Ocean as both a life-giving and life-taking knowledge holder that resists the logics of white settler phantastical mastery, Poole’s writing can be read alongside literatures of the Black Atlantic that position histories of racial capitalism within sacred and sea-touched ecologies of resilience (Alexander 2006; Brand 2001). In particular, Poole’s theorizations toward a Newfoundland soul that is held between the beginning and the end of oceanic time, “with one eye fixed on history and the other on eschatology” (1978: 22) engages figurations of the sacred within the afterlife of transatlantic slavery’s capture and hold (Hartman 2008; Sharpe 2016). What Poole doesn’t acknowledge is that oceanic time has already ended and is still yet to begin for the lost and longing. An archive in crisis. Revolutionary rippling. Black and Indigenous histories and futures of the Atlantic world take us there again (Gumbs 2018; Hartman 2007; King 2019; Philip 2008).

But blue light cannot elude our different captures. Overflown bioluminescent lifeforce, even now there are no shared liminalities between us. Just an assemblage of airless spaces (Firestone 1998). Halfway people to marmayde failures (MacMillan 2018; Taylor 2009; Wallis and Wallis



1955; Whitbourne 1620). Feeling fishy an endless circle. Hurting but hopeful. A world underwater. What is lost and what survives in the transoceanic? Dreaming, drowning, drifting blue.

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