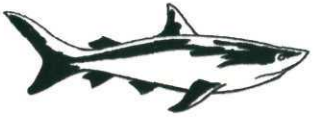
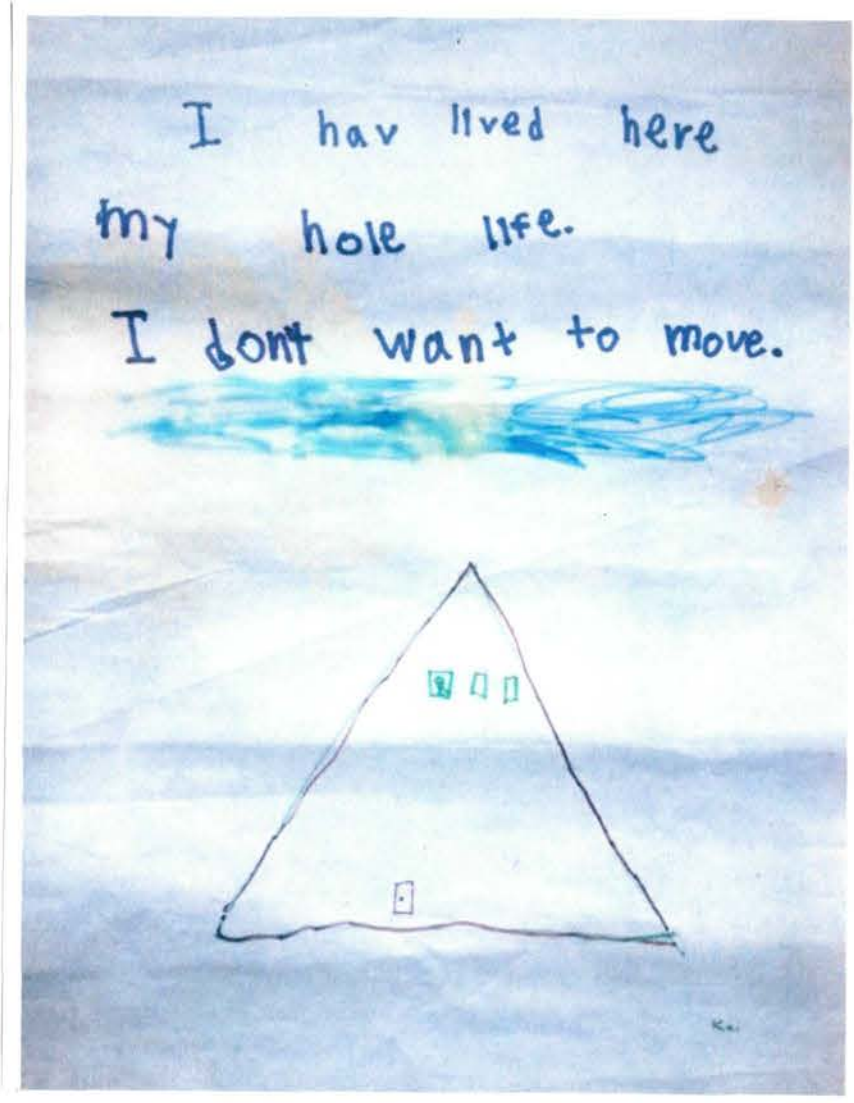
WE ARE HERE



ORAL HISTORIES
SAN FRANCISCO



Kai age 6

About This Zine

This collection of interviews, essays, poetry and images reflects a moment in San Francisco history. Among the centuries-long history of arrivals, settlements, departures and displacements that this place holds, we wanted to give voice to what is alternately dubbed, "the housing crisis," "the tech boom," "hypergentrification."

No anthology can possibly contain all the stories and experiences that meet within these city limits. Here, we simply present the narratives that we have encountered thus far. We want to let these offerings speak for themselves, but also reflect our hope for community empowerment as this city is increasingly claimed by capital - and not for the first time.

It is one thing for a story to be told to one interviewer (or for a poem to be written on the page), and another thing for it to be shared with the world - with others who may be feeling alone in their struggles. With this in mind, we can view these pages as San Franciscans in conversation with one another, speaking their truths.

CONTEXT

Today in San Francisco, cranes litter the horizon as the city gains international attention for skyrocketing rents and exponentially growing income inequality. Headlines are filled with statistics about the high cost of housing and the latest high profile eviction. This moment in San Francisco is one of rapid flux as neighborhoods quickly become more expensive, and as longtime residents are pushed out so that real estate speculators can create housing for people with more affluence. Longtime businesses are evaporating overnight, only to be replaced by the newest coffee shop or a tech start-up. Even our public spaces are disintegrating as private shuttles crowd our public bus stops and streets, and as public playgrounds become increasingly privatized through app-based reservation systems.

While dispossession is nothing new to the Bay Area from the first moments of colonization onwards, it has dramatically picked up in recent years, correlative to the influx of the Tech Boom. Landlords and speculators, eager to capitalize on new wealth moving to the city, are kicking out long-term residents to create housing for the new upper class. Evictions are on the rise at unprecedented rates, from no-faults to low-faults to cases of harassment and intimidation. Current rents in San Francisco are reaching $4000/month averages in multiple neighborhoods. Developers too are preying upon this new wealth, pushing market and luxury rate housing through the pipeline, consistently evading the actualization of real affordable housing. When people lose their homes in San Francisco, often they lose San Francisco as a home, as there is no where affordable to go within our city of 48 hills. Furthermore, many people are being squeezed out because their businesses are going under. Not only do wealthy newcomers fail to frequent small mom and pop shops, but landlords are jacking up business rents, often then renting space out to new start-ups, fancy coffee shops and the like after small business owners pack up shop. Income inequality is growing more rapidly in San Francisco than any other city in the United States right now, clearly proving the failure of trickle down economics.

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project's "Narratives of Displacement: Oral History Project" aims to document these changes in San Francisco by foregrounding the stories of people

who have been, who are being, or who were being, displaced. By collecting oral histories the project creates a living archive of people and places, documenting deep and detailed neighborhood and personal histories. In doing so the project creates a counter-narrative to more dominant archives that elide detail and attention to legacy, culture, and loss in the city. Our map lives online to be interacted with by the public, but also offline in physical spaces including our current zine project and our narrative mural in Clarion Alley. While we are interested in stories of dispossession, we are not interested in reducing people to their evictions, and thus instead focus on the intimacies of personal relationships to shifts in spatiality as processes of gentrification unevenly unfold. We recognize that displacement transpires in kaleidoscopic forms, and that loss is corporeal, cultural, haunting, and real.

- Manissa Maharawal and Erin McElroy

COLLABORATORS

In addition to those already credited, the following people offered their time, art, interviewing skills, support, and more: Marko, Carly, Manissa, Erin, Andrew, Carla, Karyn, Manon, Ilana, Samantha, Neshma, Becca, Kimalah, Kathleen Coll and her Urban Politics students at USF.

Cover art by Zeph Fish.
Scanning and printing help from Amy and the Housing Rights Committee.

And all the volunteers currently working on the Narratives of Displacement oral history project.

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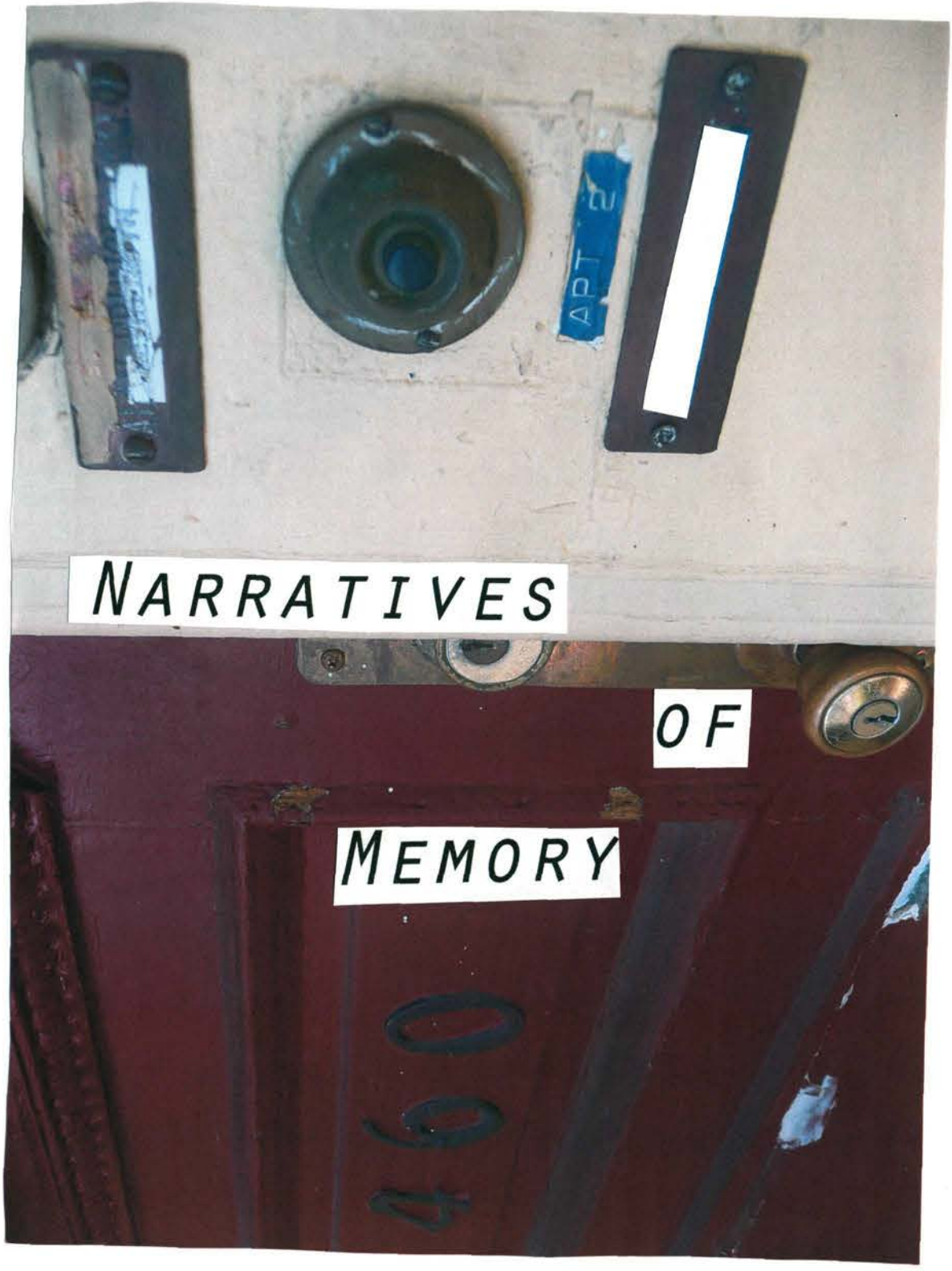

APT 2
NARRATIVES
OF
MEMORY

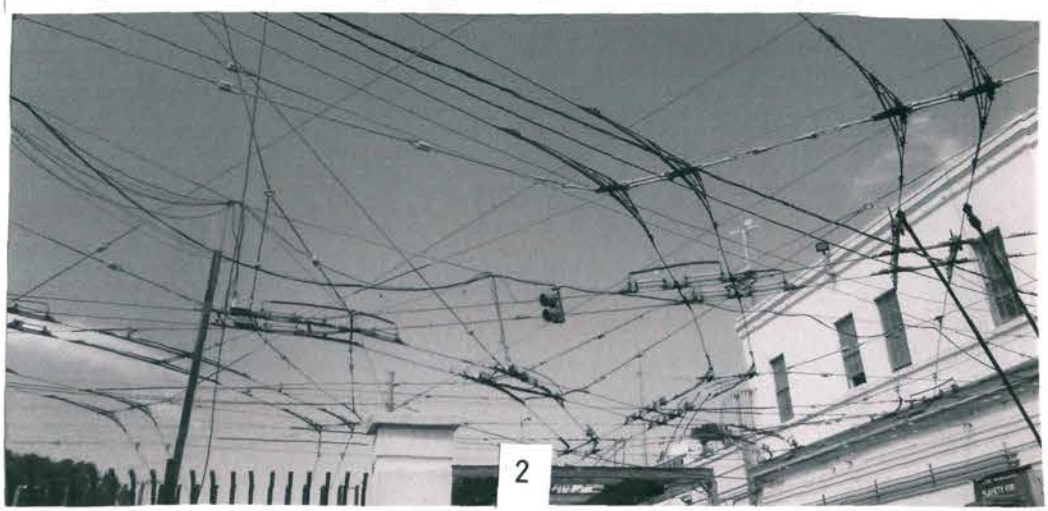
anandi

Maria Bastian Knight

My name is Marla Bastian Knight. I'm a fourth generation San Franciscan. I live in North Beach on Lombard Street. I'm a retired City College teacher, mother of two, grandmother of four. So it's my mom's family in the city. My dad is in California, but my mom is in the city. Her great grandfather was from France and her great grandmother was German. This is on her mom's side. On her dad's side, her father was born in the city and his mother was born in the city. His father had come from New York. No, it's the great, great grandfather that came from New York.

>>Your great, great grandfather?

Yeah. He had been in an orphanage and was visited by a man named Finnegan, who everyone thought was probably his father. He did take that name, so I guess that would probably do it. He came--this is the great grandfather--so he came to San Francisco and married my great grandmother, who was a San Franciscan. They produced my grandfather who was a Finnegan and married my grandmother who was a Balser. They moved into the Mission and went through the quake and fire. They were just married. She was 20, and she was pregnant with my mother's older sister. They lost the house they had in the fire, but they had just bought a new house.



We seemed to be quite lucky about stuff like that. My mom lived in the Mission until she was 11. They had lived in a flat at 22nd and Dolores, still there. Actually, my mom died about a mile from where she was born. Anyway, so then they moved to Marin, to Larkspur, because my grandmother had some sort of a lung ailment. My mom went to school there. She met my dad playing tennis in Larkspur. They married and moved back to the city and lived on Russian Hill. That's where I was conceived, on Russian Hill. Then they moved back to Marin.

Then I moved back to the city when I graduated from Cal. So it kind of came full circle. I moved in 1966. There was no rent control. At that time, it was a $125 a month, which was a good rent, but not outrageously good. When we moved in here, it was really a dreary place. They had all this heavy dark furniture and the walls were really dark. I thought, "Oh my god!" We just re-did the whole thing. It's a good place to be. It was really a good place. I am really at home in North Beach. I love being by the water, just to see the water every day. Even though I don't have a water view, we've got a magnificent view from the roof. I spend--I walk a lot, I hike, I've got a bike, I go down to Crissy Field. This whole waterfront area is just fantastic. When I was a little kid, you couldn't even access it, because of all the warehouses and piers and stuff. Now it's so open. I just love it.

Of course, there's always been change in the city. Like the Mission, where my mom grew up. That's undergone many changes. I actually think it's kind of bad to moan and groan about a lot of stuff. I mean, things that are important, like the housing--I'm not saying it's not important. There are certain changes you have to accept, but if not, do something about it. Some young guys moved into the building behind us. They were having a big party. Ian says they have big parties all the time. They invited me over to their party, and frankly, I would have gone. I mean, I'm not categorically against the techies. They're the fuel for all of this, but the speculators and the greedy people, they're the ones driving it.

Back in the eighties, though, one thing I could say about where I live here in the Mission; it was definitely full of opportunities for creativity and this was a center of many people working for ideals and creatively. And this is what immigrant, low-income neighborhoods make possible and this is why it attracts bohemians and artists that are not too worried whether they see a prostitute or a bum or a drug addict or you know or people that are low income because you are caught up in your vision and your passion so you don't want to be a slave of the neighborhood and the job and a lot of other things.

So you're not that trapped in having to live at a standard that takes up all your energy so you have time to do other things. Of course, I always had a nine-to-five. I worked for a Brazilian bank. I went to school. I had internships and I was also part of the whole creative scene and plus I supported a lot of my friends' bad habits. They were all waiting for me to invite them for a beer or whatever because they're the poets and the intellectuals and when you're in your twenties you're so impressed with that stuff, you know. You really believe it but now I don't believe anybody, anything. It's the exact opposite.

But there was one cafe only in the Mission, where we all met; it was Cafe La Boheme on 24th and Mission in front of the BART station and that's still the place where the old-timers and the old poets hang out. And that was poetry readings. That was all the solidarity movements with Latin America because that was a time when so many dictatorships were just forcing South Americans and Latin Americans to leave. It was the time of the Sandinista movement in Nicaragua so there were solidarity movements in support of the Sandinistas. There was El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, Brazil. People met in different groups and created fundraisers and art work and so the art, the politics, and the community all were intertwined. So definitely the seeds were planted for what was a true community of creating for the city what makes a city a cosmopolitan city. Cafe, art, different nationalities and only in a place that is an immigrant neighborhood can you have this mix of people coming together.

Paula Tejeda

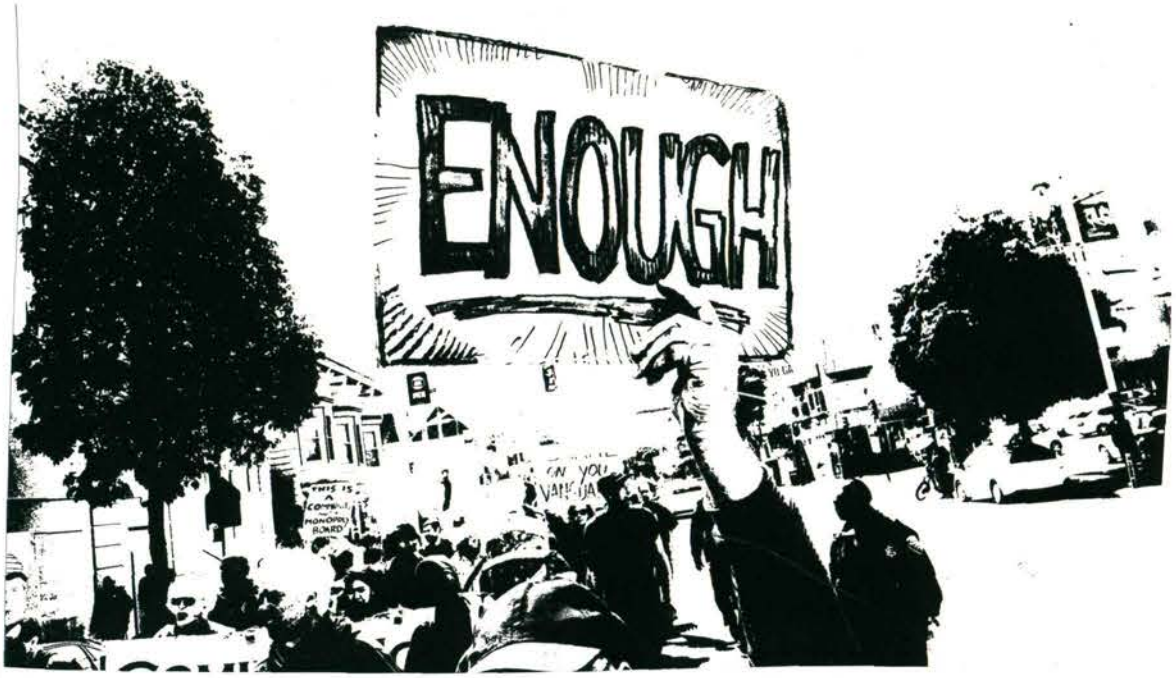
Right next to this, there was a complete parallel world. It was the world of the low riders and I could see the low riders and the girls, the cholas with their make up that was really off the hook like literally they did this completely; a lot of masquera and eye liner and they would wrap this leather around their hands and I remember seeing this scene and I would walk up the Mission and I'd be like "Wow, what the hell?". These guys are really into this, you know. With the cars going up and down and we all lived together and there were a lot of worlds that were parallel. It's not like we were all a part of the same scene. There were different scenes going on but nobody got in the way of anybody else and the police didn't even come around. Even if you called them, they didn't come to the Mission. It was just great. Nobody cared what happened in the Mission; we didn't have a police station. If you get shot, that was your tough luck. Learn to watch your back, basically.

And you could park, like for example, if I went at night to a very bad bad area in the Mission, I could just parallel park on the sidewalk, right next to the entrance and people would walk around and nobody had an issue with that and I'd have my car right next to the house. Now you'd have your car towed in a New York minute. But back then and we played music all night. Nobody ever called the cops on anybody and there were times that you would put up with it and there were other times that you were having the party and the restaurants also you were allowed to have a little more flexibility and the rigidness of a society is what makes those that have it the hardest fall through the cracks. And that's what we have lost as a society at large, not only in San Francisco.

Rick Gerharter

I moved here in 1977 from St. Paul Minnesota, well I was actually living in Minneapolis at that point. I grew up in South Dakota, Aberdeen, South Dakota, and in 1970 after I graduated from high school, I went to college in St. Paul. Immediately left. Wasn't out. I don't even really think I knew that I was gay. I never dated women or I never went through any of that dating thing, I just sort of never had, never had relationships at all. Just had a group of friends and never really came out until later, until I moved here in 77. I knew there was a lot of gay people here. In 77, it was just a little bit before Milk. I knew that there was a big gay community here. And I'd read things about, you know, left gay politics, maybe the group BAGL, that predates me just a bit. BAGL: Bay Area Gay Liberation. I had hitchhiked out here. I remember arriving October 1st and I think I hitchhiked with a guy that I had just met on the road from Sacramento and we were sitting in Civic Center plaza and a guy walked by completely dressed in leather. I hadn't see that before and the guy who I was with, he said, "Oh yes, they'll see that a *lot* here in San Francisco." I was never one, you know, that just sort of burst out and finally all the chains were free. I came out very slow and I did not spend a lot of time in bars and socialize that way. Didn't go, didn't participate in the big bathhouse scene at the time, which may have saved my life.

I like [Aberdeen] in many ways and I could never ever live there, I don't think, cause it's so small and just so small-minded. But I do like very much visiting there in the summertime or, you know, not in the winter. Cause it's just completely different in so many ways, the pace, the light, the way that people talk, what people do, what they think about, and just how really isolated and small-minded they are in many ways, and in other ways not. I've also, since I've moved out of there, I've met a gay guy there and we've become pretty good friends. So that really helps to be able to hang out with him some. Well, it's always good to leave and it's always good to come back.



When we got evicted in 2006, I wasn't able—even then, I could not afford to live on my own and uh didn't really want to go through the process of trying to find a roommate so a long-time friend of mine—well he said, Well why don't you move in with me? And he has a small two-bedroom apartment. Um, and then I had to get a separate office space. So that impact continues today because the price like almost tripled, my rent has almost tripled. We were evicted from a building with two apartments and a retail space, right on Cortland, directly next to the Wild Side West. And um, the scam was that there was going to be major repairs done onto the building so we would have to move out, just our apartment, the other two units could stay. So we moved out so they could do these major repairs, and then he came to us and told us that he did not realize that he could only raise our rent a certain percentage to pass through the renovations, which I think was a lie... He was wanting to sell the building. So there was a threat of course that the new owner would evict us. So we had that option or the buyout that he offered. And the other person who lived there, Elmer, got diagnosed with HIV during this whole process and he since died, but the stress involved couldn't have helped his health situation.

A lot of my friends do live close by. They do. Kinda within walking distance or like South of Market. I just like the density, the quantity of people, the variety, the cultural attributes that there are in a city, the diversity that there is in a city. I just like the excitement, the vitality of the city. But again, I would like to be in a situation where I can get around without a car. I have a car, and, but where I live now... When I was living in Bernal I needed my car, I used it a lot to get to my [photo] assignments, which were all over, but now I live in, more in the ghetto, so now I can either walk or take the public transportation to almost everything I need to do.

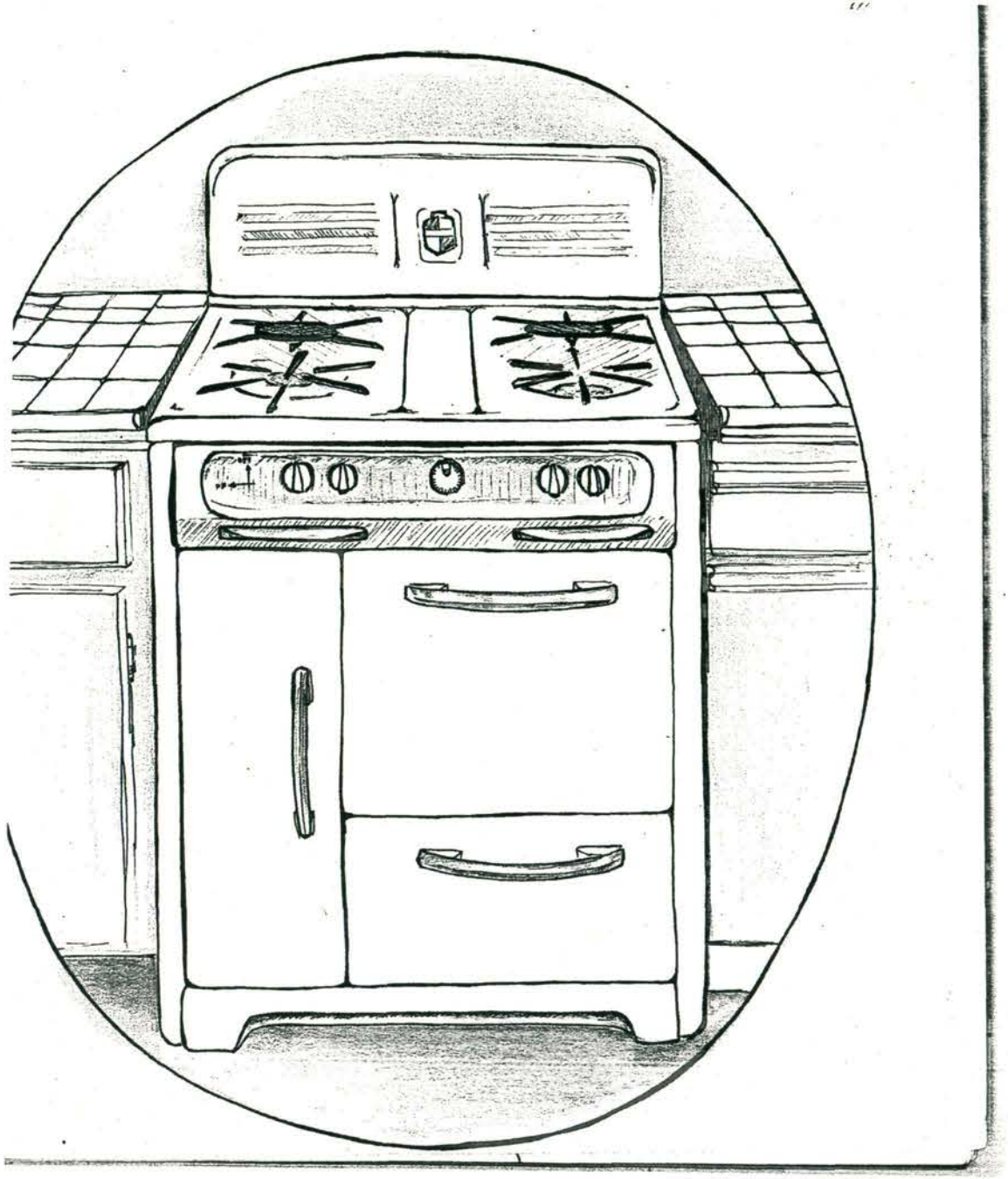
You know, a fundamental difference with this latest wave of people coming to groove in San Francisco is unlike the hippies, unlike the beatniks, unlike all the queers, who came for sort of social reasons, they didn't come because they could make a lot of money here, but they came for social reasons, and also they came because there wasn't very many hospitable places to be the way they wanted to be, in this country.

So San Francisco was you know, was a refuge, was an outpost of people being able to be you know, iconoclastic, eccentric. My personal experience was when gays moved to the city in waves, there was definitely conflict in that time too. In the Mission, in the Western Addition, there was a lot of conflict between the existing residents and people moving in. There was more homophobia at the time, so that was part of it, um, there was I think a racial element to it because the majority of people who came were white and both the Mission and the Western Addition were, I don't know about majority, but they had substantial communities of color in both of those neighborhoods, so there was that conflict.

The city is just a less interesting to place to be. It's more like everywhere else. I think there's fewer gay people, and I think there's certainly fewer gay people that move here. And, a part of that is because there's no need to move here. You know, it's really expensive, and the situation since I moved here in 77, that's like 35 years, right? I guess, um, something like that, 30-some years I've been here. You know the situation has really changed in smaller cities around the country, and so people don't have to leave to find a safe space. They can stay, if they want, in their city where they grew up or maybe a city that's closer to where they live or their family is. You know gay people have always been the other. And in this country, that's not so much anymore. It certainly is in parts of the world, most of the world. But you know we had that, a cachet of being the other. You know, there's sort of like this instant community cause we were outsiders. And we're losing that. And I guess it's a good thing on one hand but there's also I think we need to recognize that there is a loss. Just, like, the social networks of support, and the sense, the sense of solidarity that you get when you feel like you're oppressed on all sides or that you know someone's coming down on you, so the security you feel by being with your own kind. Some of that has positive aspects, I think, to building community, but I guess in the long run it's better not to have it. I don't think ghettos are a positive thing in most regards. But you know, it's important to recognize the things that are lost, too.

Well in 77 it was still pretty dicey for gay people in this city, too. It really was. You know, there wasn't much support from elected officials. There was lots of problems with the police. They were harassing people, you know, in the cruising spots.

Just because you have a lot of money, specifically the tech workers, you know there's really this influx of people who are making a lot of money comparatively, and speculating slum scam, *scum*, that's the word—not slum—scum landlords that facilitated, you know, doesn't mean that you can just come in and break up this community that's been formed partially because of the need for security. You know, you can buy a house, a new house, anywhere else, closer to where you work for example and not destroy this network and this community that people... and particularly with gay people so many times don't have contact with their family, have been ostracized from their family. [People] can move somewhere cheaper, but you can't move your network that you've built over how many decades, you know, for the three and a half decades that I've lived here, and with my work in particular, which depends a lot on word of mouth and just my connections in the community and the trust that people have in me: they know me, they know where the photos are going, and that's invaluable. And that's not something that you can just sort of pick up and move, like you can with a house. It's what community is. And I think the physical closeness of a place like San Francisco makes that community tighter. I do.



My name is Zeph Fishlyn and I've lived in the Bay since 1988 with some comings and goings, but this has been my home for over 20 years in the last quarter century. And I grew up in Montreal, Canada. I moved here when I was a very fresh faced 21 year old young queer. I had met some people from here at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, actually. I really appreciated all the politics and the energy and the sort of style and the brashness of the people from here. I really wanted to visit and then I came to visit and never left. So a year later, I was like I'm paying rent and I have a job and I'm still here a year later, so I guess I moved here. But yeah, I pretty much abandoned my life in Montreal and have lived here, like I said, with some starts and stops ever since. Mostly in the Mission District. So I've lived here over 20 years in the Mission and watched a crazy amount of change in that time.

Zeph Fish

>>Do you want to explain what kind of art you do?

I'm primarily a visual artist and I do a lot of work with activist groups. Most recently, what I had been doing before I moved back to San Francisco was working with a group called the Bee Hive Design Collective that creates giant poster graphics that are based on a lot of grassroots interviews and things like that in collaboration with communities of folks that are engaged in social justice struggles. So, for instance, the project that I worked on the last few years was about coal and climate change. We did it in collaboration with communities in the coal fields of Southern Appalachia, who are fighting mountain top removal coal mining. So I did a lot of drawing, organizing and research to put that project together. Then, coming back to San Francisco, a lot of that kind of energy I've been putting into issues around housing and displacement. So, making a lot of graphics and art props and things like that for activist work. In addition to that, I do tattooing and a lot drawing and making things on my own.

>>In your time in San Francisco, I think you mentioned when you were introducing yourself that you moved here for a year and then decided that this was your place. What was it that attracted you to San Francisco and to the Mission as a young queer person? What did you see? What were the possibilities? What were you excited about?

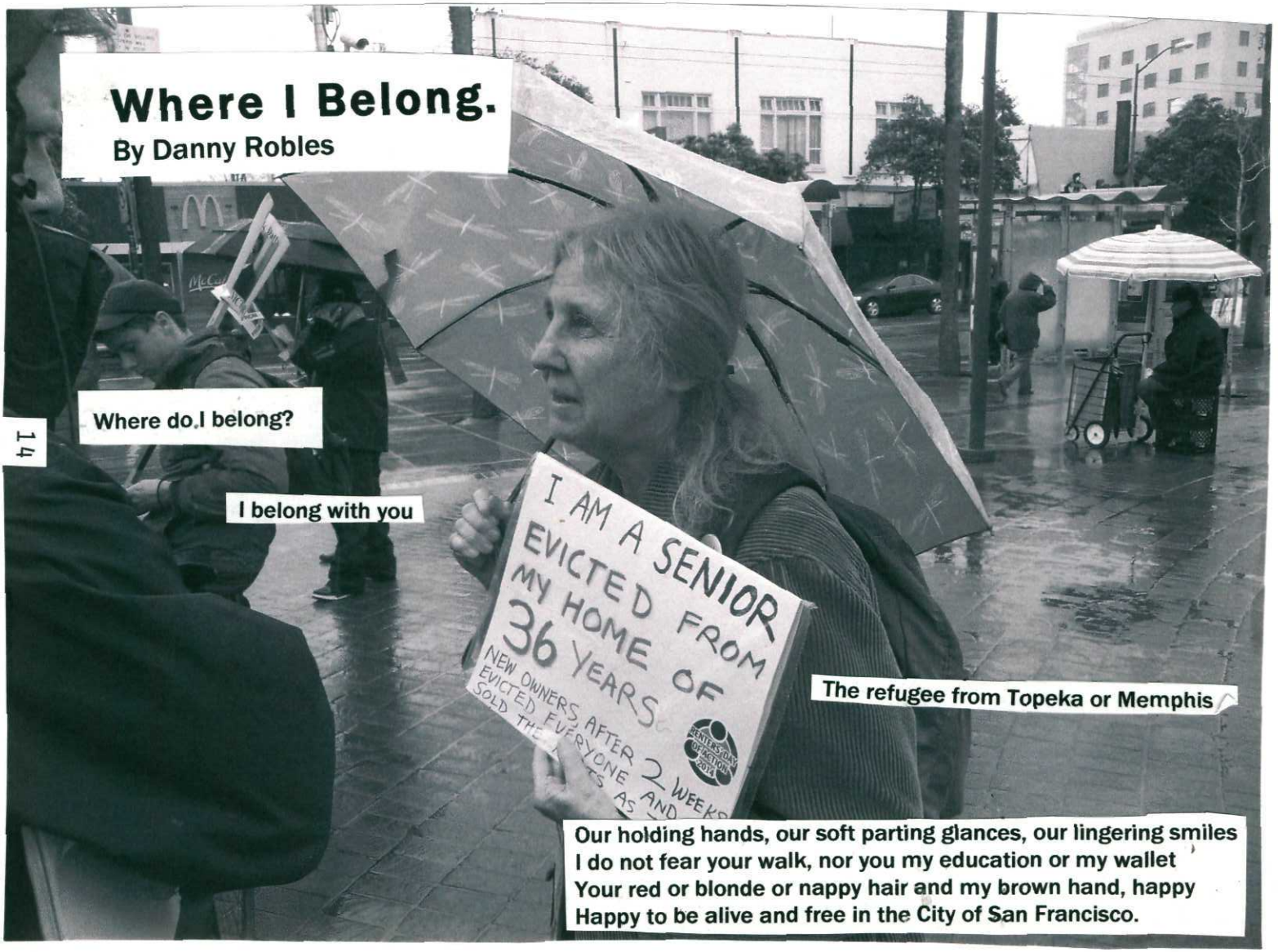
I think this was the first place I ever had been at that time in my life where I actually felt, like I met people who were like me. There was just a really active and energized community of young queerdos who were doing not only, you know, being in your face queer and creating a lot of queer culture, but also very politically active in other lefty stuff as well. My memory of being here in the late 80's, early 90's was sort of a non-stop parade of protests, vigils, people doing tons of safe sex education, a lot of clinic protection work, a lot of anti-war organizing.

It was people who were, you know, where being out as a queer person at that time in a culture that was really repressing sexuality. That was the time of this guy, Senator Jessie Helms, was a big a power in the senate at that time and was trying to defund the National Endowment for the Arts. Specifically, to shut down any artists that were talking about sexuality or about politics. Those things were pretty intertwined. I think at that time it felt like those were the same politics. At that time, I was very new to the city so most the people that I had in my friend network were other young queers who were also just arriving, a lot of times from little towns where they were the only weirdo, the only queer person or one of very few. Coming to San Francisco, really seeking that community out and then really creating it themselves. I just feel like it was this very vibrant time. There was also an older community that was already here, that was like a role model for me. Even if I was rebelling against aspects of it, I feel like just having the older queers here gave me role models for how to move forward.

anandi

Where I Belong.

By Danny Robles

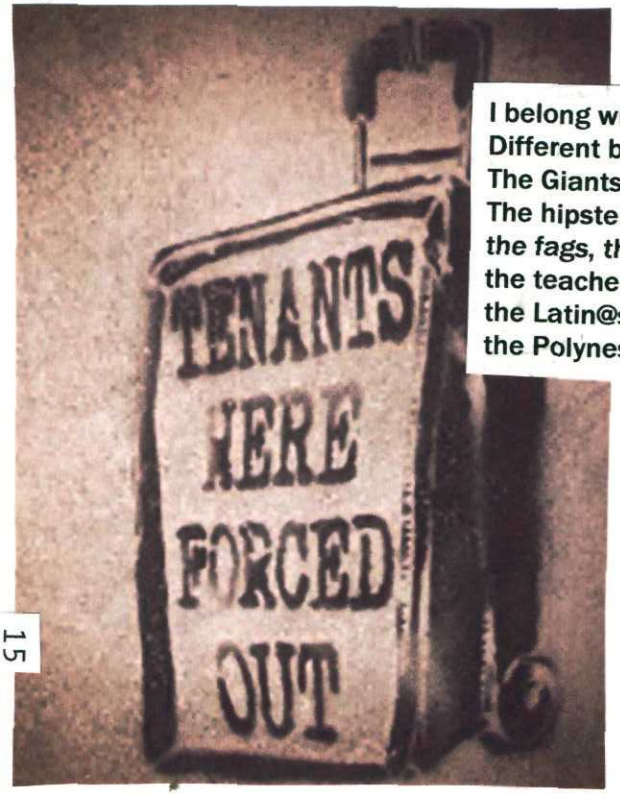


Where do I belong?

I belong with you

The refugee from Topeka or Memphis

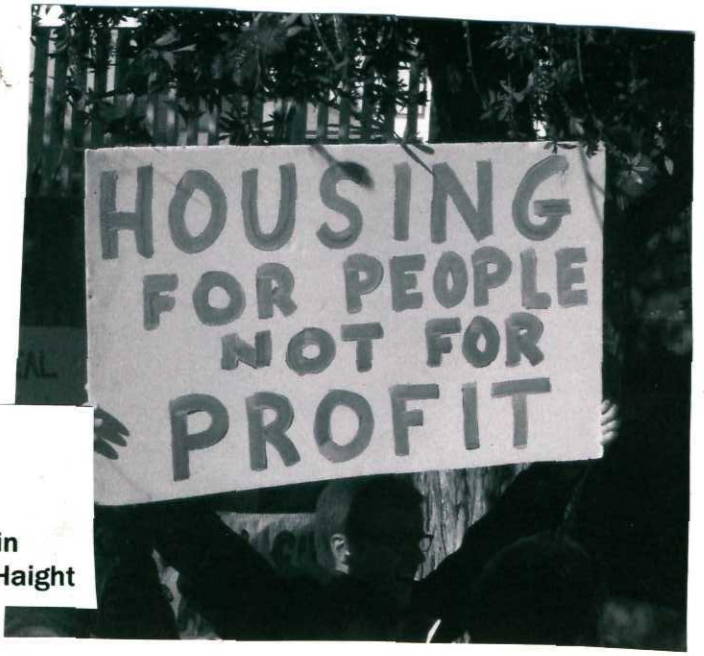
Our holding hands, our soft parting glances, our lingering smiles
I do not fear your walk, nor you my education or my wallet
Your red or blonde or nappy hair and my brown hand, happy
Happy to be alive and free in the City of San Francisco.



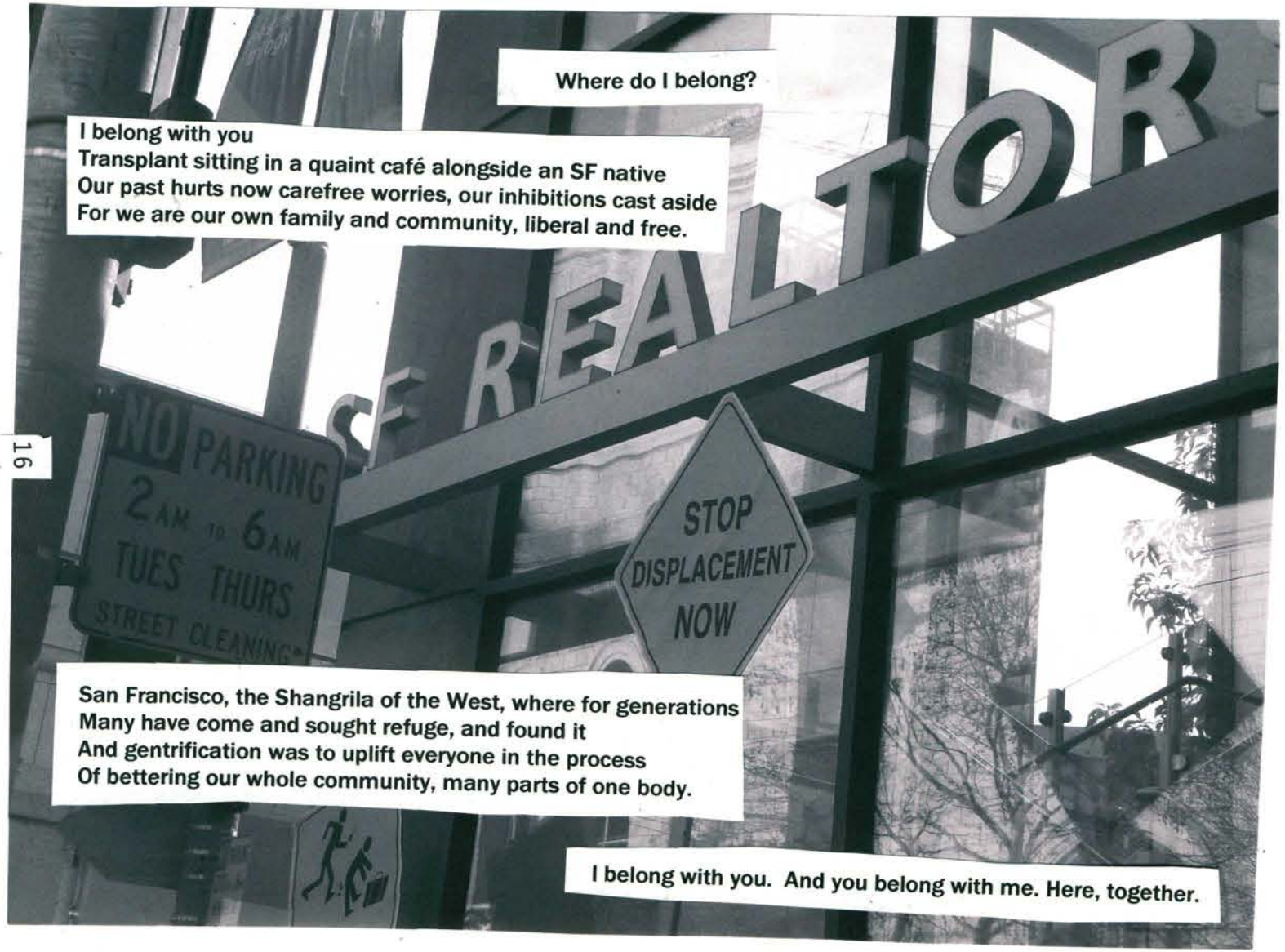
Where do I belong?

I belong with you
Different but yet familiar, sharing our common love for The City
The Giants, the 49ers, Golden Gate Park, the Bay Bridge,
The hipsters, the hippies, the techies, the queers the dykes, the freaks,
the fags, the literatis, the banksters, the activists, the bums
the teachers, the preachers, the hookers, the skaters, the ravers, the thugs,
the Latin@s, the Asians, the Arabs, the Europeans, the African Americans and,
the Polynesians.

Where do I belong?



I belong with you
You and I both, as different as the Mission or Pacific Heights
Both as different as the Bay View or the Marina,
As Chinatown or South of Market; as the Sunset or the Tenderloin
The Castro, the Embarcadero, the Ingleside, the Richmond, the Haight


Where do I belong?
I belong with you
Transplant sitting in a quaint café alongside an SF native
Our past hurts now carefree worries, our inhibitions cast aside
For we are our own family and community, liberal and free.
SF REALTOR
NO PARKING
2AM TO 6AM
TUES THURS
STREET CLEANING
STOP
DISPLACEMENT
NOW
San Francisco, the Shangrila of the West, where for generations
Many have come and sought refuge, and found it
And gentrification was to uplift everyone in the process
Of bettering our whole community, many parts of one body.
I belong with you. And you belong with me. Here, together.

My mother still lives [in Montana]. I do think of Montana as home, definitely, and I think of Eugene as home. I was in Eugene for 5 years. Even though I was in school there I was very much a part of the off-the-grid community, so living in buses and communes. And that still is home to me as well, and even though I haven't spent time there, at all really, in the last 20 years. But, San Francisco too. So, I do feel 3 places of home. [Montana is] cowboys. Cowboys, Indians. Most of my friends were from the Crow community or the Sioux community. Outdoors, the beauty of Montana. So, that's what I mostly think of.

Home has always been really important to me. I was forced out of my home in Montana when I was 16. My mother's boyfriend beat me up, and I ended up with a concussion, and ended up moving out into a basement apartment and working at Burger King 30 hours a week in high school. So, the space I had at that point, first of all being forced out of your home that you've had and then moving into a space that was a raw basement, concrete floor. I had a space that was maybe 10 by 10, literally big enough for a bed and a dresser. I really needed to create that space into a home. Make it into as much of a home as I could. So, that's what I did. Whatever I had to work with, I worked with. After that, going forward, it was about creating home as this sanctuary as this space that was a place for respite. A part of who you are, who I was. That always continued, and I always spent a lot of time creating and nesting in my home environments. Including Leavenworth. I'm somebody who does, if I have a home, and have a space, I don't tend to move unless there's some underlying reason that I need to.

As far as the space itself, [wherever I] do end up, for me, I create that as my home. If it was on the street, I would do the same. I think, having gone through that experience when I was 16, I know that that's a possibility. That's always in the back of my head regardless of how secure my situation might be. It's still in the back of my head that I could be on the street at any minute, and what would I do in that moment, in that time?

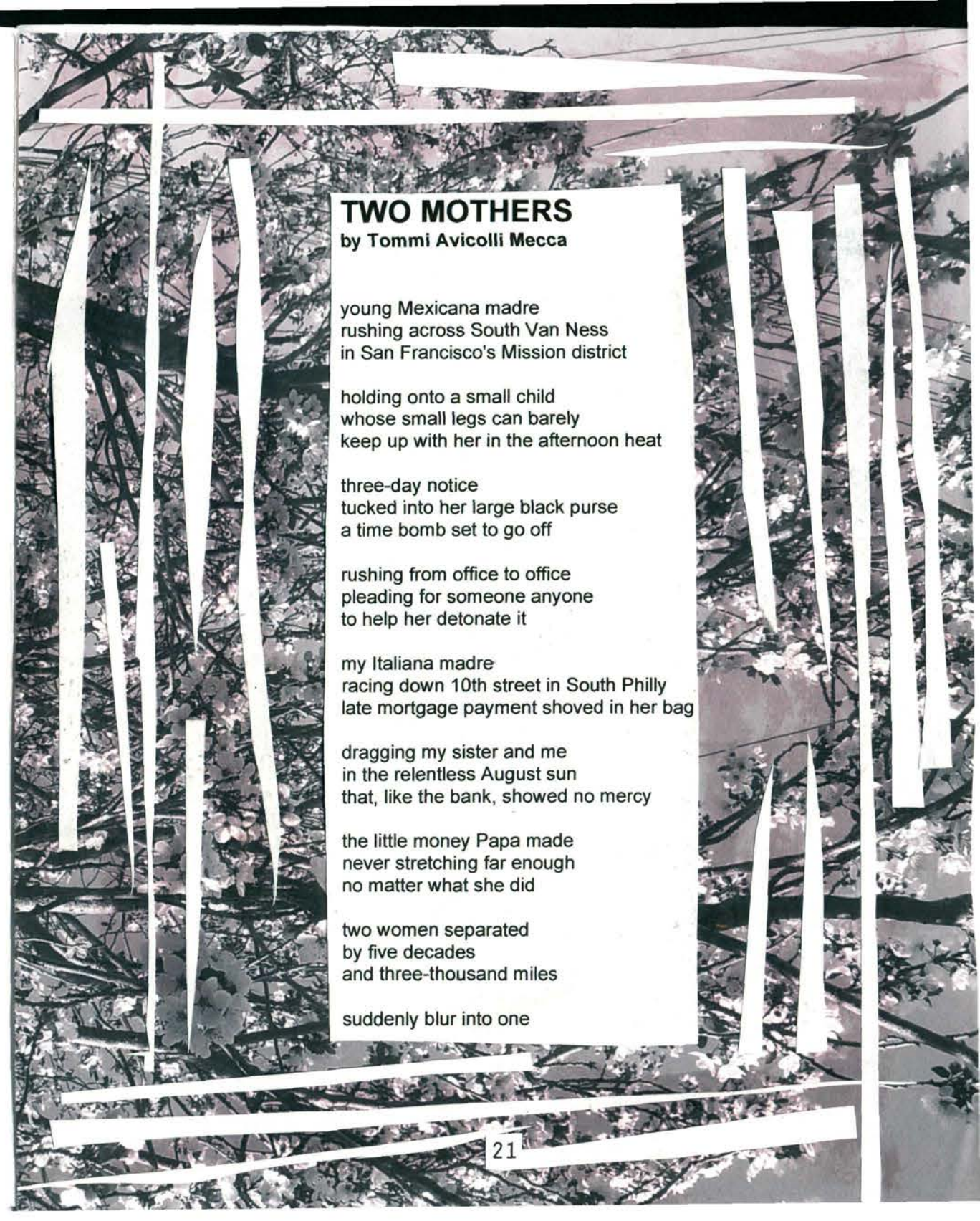
What drew me [to the Bay Area] and what kept me here originally was that it did feel like a very close-knit, open community and there was a lot of connection and sharing and folks wanting to help each other out, resource-wise. A lot of risk taking, people wanting to push the boundaries in ways that were socially, politically conscious. I loved that. I loved that energy. I loved that people were interested in community-building in a way that felt very healthy. Things were affordable, very affordable. So, you could live here fairly affordably and have a job that paid the rent, paid the bills but then had time to do your artwork, and it felt like the communities weren't so fragmented as I feel like they are now. It did feel like a much stronger, more united, larger arts community at that time.

I was in one place for most of time here. I initially moved to Berkeley and living in that space for a year and a half, and ended up moving into my residence at Clay and Leavenworth in 1996, and was there until the end of 2008. So, I was very rooted. It wasn't just rooted in the space as a home, it was also my art practice. I turned that space into an installation over five years, so that also had a deeper attachment for me as well.

For me anyway, it takes several years to start to feel connected to a place and start to build the community. Even though it was the very top of Nob Hill and that the impression of that was that's not very community oriented, the market across the street from where I lived, Le Beau Market, was a really great community space and the folks

who owned that market, I became very close to. I ended up doing the murals inside the market, and that space really did feel like a community, and I did get to know the folks in the neighborhood and built those roots over the years. Then, in the last 5 years, I decided to turn my home into an installation, and this was before the eviction, was not the reason for the eviction. I had built this for 5 years with the intention of at one point I would open it up to the public and do this whole series of events. [I knew I would have to move out in December of 2008]. In October, I still hadn't done anything because I was so devastated. It was also during a period when my father was dying and died. My partner at the time was not my wife yet, but she had medical issues that we had to go through, so there was that, then this upcoming eviction. So, I was really, really depressed over many of these components, and had not made plans to do anything. But, enough people said, you have put so much into this, you really should do it. So, I, within a couple of weeks, ended up organizing this whole event schedule and opening it up to the public and I did it. So, for the month of November, I did a series of dinner salons, I did a series of projections with my partner, curated that. Also, opened curated events, and had open hours to the public. It was nuts. It was a great experience, but pretty nuts. Then, I had two weeks after that to pack everything up that I had accumulated over 13 years and leave. It was awful. It was so awful. It was so painful. I would just cry. The entire time, I would just be packing these boxes and breaking down crying.

[I was recently evicted from my art studio at] 340 Bryant Street. Great, industrial artist space. Over 150 artists in the building. The developer Joy Ou who is the CEO for Group i, she is the proprietor. She ended up purchasing the building and throwing, kicking all the artists out, and now is turning it into tech spaces... She [also] bought the Warfield Building, and they're turning it into, I think, 330 luxury condos, luxury shopping center, and an art center is moving into this space. She's been involved with Intersection For The Arts, is part of their host committee for their auction. I did meet with her to discuss the eviction and she was not amenable to having the artists stay. She wanted everybody out. She thought we could all just buy spaces in the Bayview. Which makes sense because that's the next trajectory for gentrification. She was talking about how she felt that all of the SROs in the Tenderloin should just be torn down and they should be cleared out. I said, "Well, I think it would be really great if they were brought up to code and upgraded for the existing tenants." She just cringed at that.



TWO MOTHERS

by Tommi Avicolli Mecca

young Mexicana madre
rushing across South Van Ness
in San Francisco's Mission district

holding onto a small child
whose small legs can barely
keep up with her in the afternoon heat

three-day notice
tucked into her large black purse
a time bomb set to go off

rushing from office to office
pleading for someone anyone
to help her detonate it

my Italiana madre
racing down 10th street in South Philly
late mortgage payment shoved in her bag

dragging my sister and me
in the relentless August sun
that, like the bank, showed no mercy

the little money Papa made
never stretching far enough
no matter what she did

two women separated
by five decades
and three-thousand miles

suddenly blur into one

We interrupt your regularly scheduled program to bring you this Ellis Act Alert

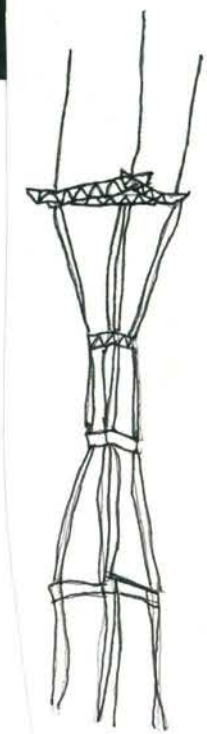
By Tony Robles

We interrupt your regularly
Scheduled program to bring
You this Ellis act alert

Mom and pop are missing,
Pry open your eyes
Let your ears hear

Mom is 79 and pop
Is 82 and have lived
In San Francisco all their lives

Mom and pop–unplugged,
Displaced in a city of wireless wires
Where friends that never were are
Flung into heaps of the unfriended,
Replaced by holograms that begat
Other holograms who slither behind
Tinted glass bus windows



In kitchen pot silence
In floorboard splinters
In the skin of torn rugs
We search for stains like
Maps for clues, traces

This is an Ellis alert
And mom and pop are gone
And with them the smell of
Adobo
Gumbo
Black eyed peas
Malunggay
Bitter melon

We looked for mom and pop
In the book of landlords
And that book, whose edges
Were a knife, whose pages were
Not stained by a single memory,
Read only one name: Ellis

Ellis cover to cover
Ellis front to back
Ellis open and shut
Case closed

And we searched for
The book of the evicted
Whose pages and spines multiplied
And were strewn on street corners and
Garbage bins and the names of the
Evicted were written in the streets by
The shrill talon of the raven to be
Paved over by the machinery of
No memory

This is an Ellis alert
And mom and pop
Are out there somewhere

Pry open your eyes
Let your ears hear

With the click of the
Tongue, and not the mouse,
Pop made the birds come and bring
Together philosophies from every
Corner of the world

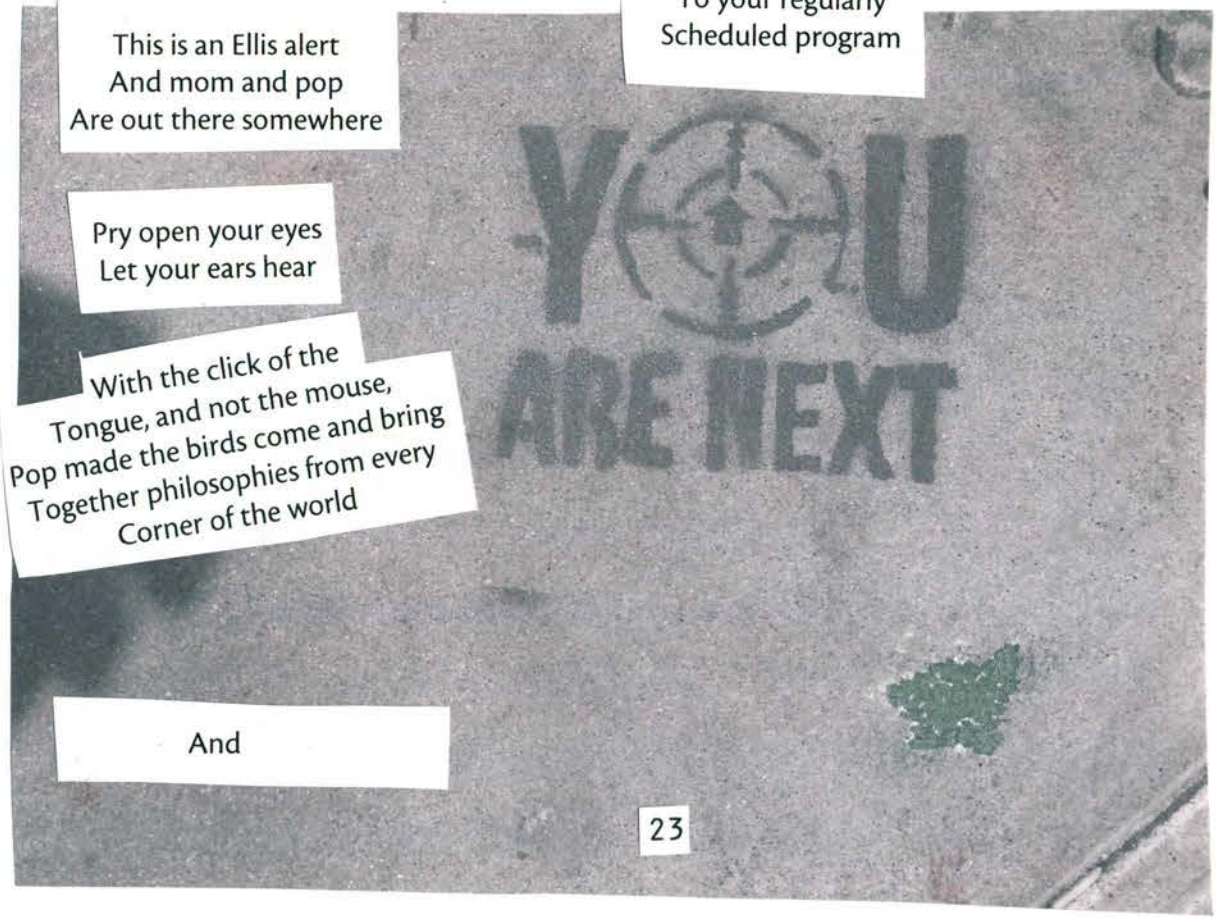
And

Mom is your mom,
Is my mom, is your skin,
Is my skin, is my memory
Is our memory

Pry open your eyes
Let your ears hear

Mom and pop
Are missing

We now return
To your regularly
Scheduled program



It was the summer of 1977, and I was fourteen. My parents had split up when I was three. My mother and stepfather lived in the hills of Sausalito, But my less affluent father lived in the houseboat community on the bay. And that's where I preferred to be, either with him or with friends. It was a place of many possibilities. The hills had very few.

Anti-gentrification seventies style

A couple of old steam boat ferry's had been docked there. People had converted them into living and working spaces. More houseboats were constructed out of anything at hand, wood on time of Styrofoam floats. They were not sailing ships, mostly. They were floating shacks, and we were squatters. The most daring did not live on the shore at all, but on anchors out in the middle of the bay. It was an eclectic community of artists, musicians, hippies, and low income addicts and alcoholics. Some fit more than one category.

I had missed the first round of houseboat wars, having been ten. But a local filmmaker had recreated them in a film called "The last free ride." This was shown more than once, projected on the wall of the communal shower. Yes, many of us had no showers, and the toilets were but holes over the the bay. It prepared me to later live in the third world.

The 74in film depicted the sheriffs office condemning houseboats and hauling them away, only to be stopped by residents in row boats, fighting them with oars. The locals won. But not for long. In 1977 the second wave of the houseboat wars began.

This was the summer I became an activist, and my first form of activism was housing activism. The community formed a group called the WPS, which stood for "waterfront protection society." We were determined to start by saving a local creek, which we called "The ditch." We could have marketed it better.

But it soon emerged that some residents wanted the upcoming development. We quickly became divided. Those who opposed the development flew flags with suns on them. Those who favored it flew flags with pink hearts.

Undeterred, we pressed on. Local artists made a small crowd of cardboard people and posted them on the field that stood in front of the ditch. This got publicity from the local press and soon the TV reporters showed up to. Then tourists, much to the annoyance of some of the residents, who could not lose the habit of disliking outsiders.

Five days a week the bulldozers showed up, and we showed up to block them. On weekends I rested. And for a time, it worked. But not for long.

Then some housing activists from San Francisco showed up to talk to us. One was from the Goodman building, and one was from the International Hotel, whose own struggle was reaching a peak at the same time.

It turned out that the houseboat struggle happened only on weekends, because the bulldozer drivers rested on the weekend. Meanwhile, the I-hotel protests happened mostly on weekends, when protesters didn't have to work. Perfect. I went to both.

I scoped out the scene at the I-Hotel. A group of elderly Filipino men were threatened with eviction. A large number of activists showed up to help them. We not only protested, we put barricades in the form of mattresses in front of every possible entrance, and we guarded them around the clock. I spent a night happily manning the barricade.

I learned the ups and downs of activism. On one occasion, a man hung a banner on the window, but the police arrested him. I shouted (clearly in reference to the police officer), "Arrest him. Arrest that man." Suddenly, the whole crowd was chanting "Arrest that man! Arrest that man." I realized that when I was in a crowd, I had a sort of power. I, a 14 year old, could never have made a group of people repeat what I said. But in this case, they were. Of course, anybody else could do the same.

On another occasion, The (Maoist) Revolutionary Communist Party tried to control a demonstration, but could not. So instead, they split it in two. There were two separate picket lines, and it looked silly. I have distrusted this group ever since, and I have always been right.

Back in Sausalito, I showed up as usual, but this time they did not stop. I had made the mistake of smoking a joint, which intensified my emotions. It was the wrong day to do so. The Caterpillar did not stop. It crushed the cardboard people, which itself felt like an act of violence. It was up to real people to protect "The Ditch." So in we went. As soon as I saw what people were doing, I jumped in too. My father, in his fifties and in poor health, went in after I did, probably because I did.

I was astonished by the number of police. Five of them took out one man. And then I, because I was smaller, required a mere four policemen, one on each limb, to remove me. The ditch was finally filled. No evidence of it remained. I was the only juvenile, so I was taken off on my own.

In juvenile hall for the second time (the first for being a runaway) I was not scared, nor did I have reason to be. It was not a hard place. I sat through a day of class, and the teacher objectively discussed my situation with the class. They seemed to be on my side. My arrest made TV, too, and I wrote about it for a local paper.

But the adults were annoyed when I got out, because it had taken so long for them to track me. They did not, of course, scold me. But the next time I tried to jump in and be arrested, I was held back and yelled out. So I stopped.

The International hotel had an effective method of calling out activists in emergencies, They had a phone tree, where a person who is called calls several others before going out themselves. It was low tech by today's standards, but quite effective. The arrest came down in the middle of the night, and five hundred people surrounded the place before the police arrived. But I had no phone, and the buses did not run all night, so all my information on that night is second hand. The sheriff, who had held off on the evictions and even spent a night in jail himself over it, finally did evict. The police, aided by police riding on horseback backwards, made it through the crowd. The windows were broken, and the tenants taken out and moved by force, split up and put in more expensive places. Still unbelievably cheap by today's standards.

I was bummed out by the events. When I had the chance to go to Central America for a year, I did.

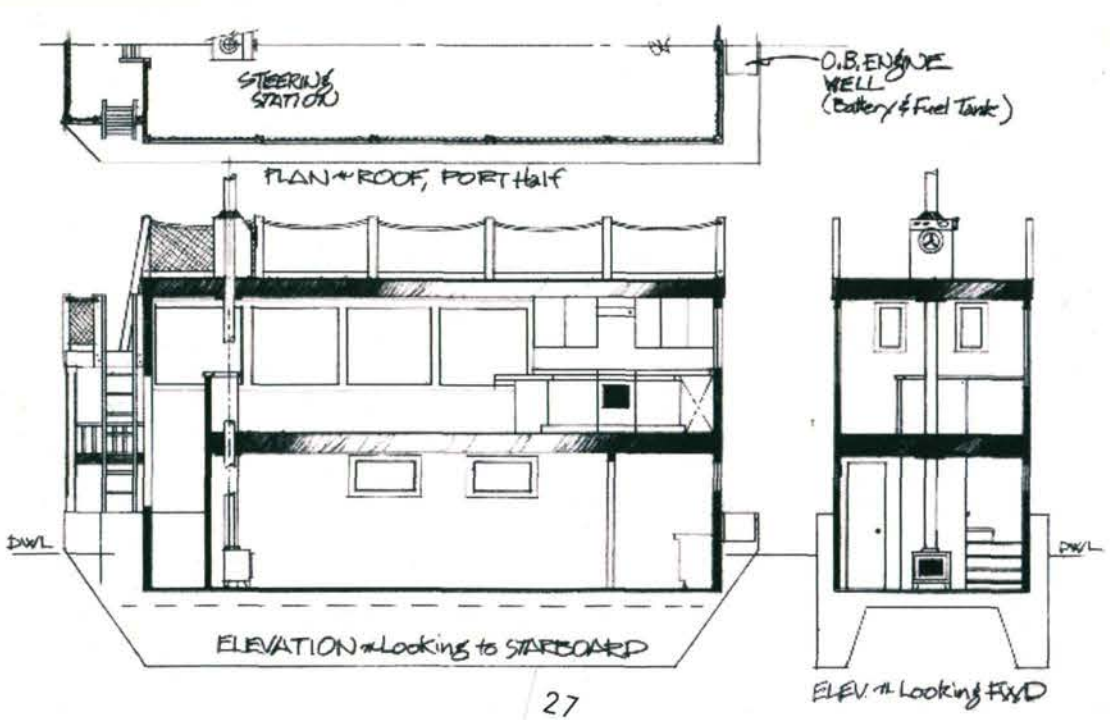
Epilogue: While quite a lot of the houseboat community members did leave, many stayed. The struggle went on, until finally they formed a collective, which seemed to enable those remaining to stay on. The most precarious were and remain the "anchor outs." People in the hills complain that they interfere with the "view corridor."

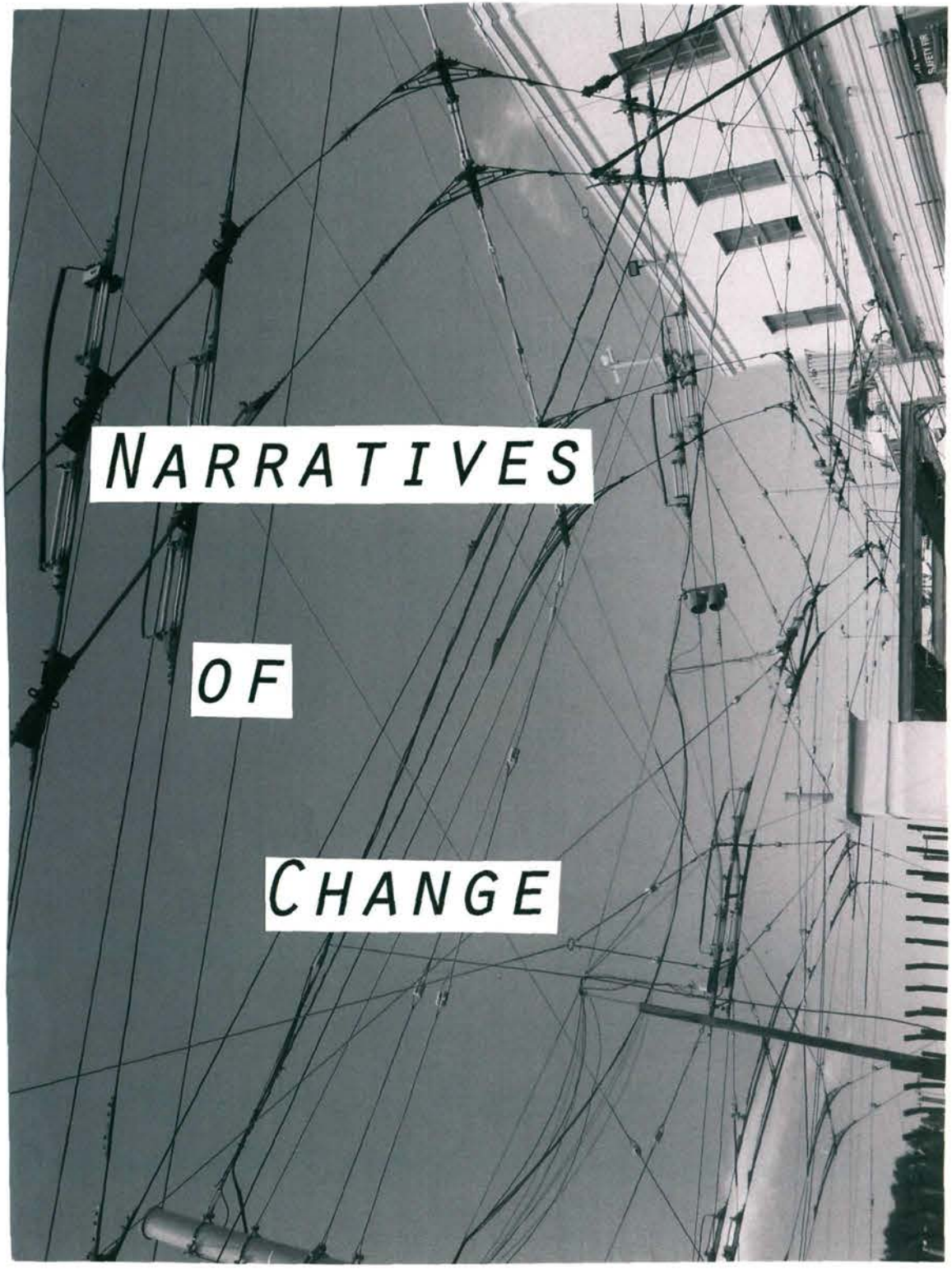
The I-Hotel was torn down and remained a hole in the ground for decades, making me wonder what the point of the eviction was. Finally, some senior housing was put there to replace the senior housing that was gone. While the immediate struggle was lost, lots of pro-tenant regulations were put in place, without them, the remaining poor folks like myself would have no protection at all.

I have gone in and out of activism. It is not something I can do without taking breaks. The issues closest to me are the closely related areas of homeless activism and tenants activism. In the seventies, I remarked that at the rate low income housing was being destroyed, soon people would have to sleep on the streets, I was told, in a tone suggesting that I was being very very silly that "Noooo. They're not going to sleep on the streets!"

In 1981, I started to see large crowds of people living on the streets.

Ethan Davidson
2014




NARRATIVES
OF
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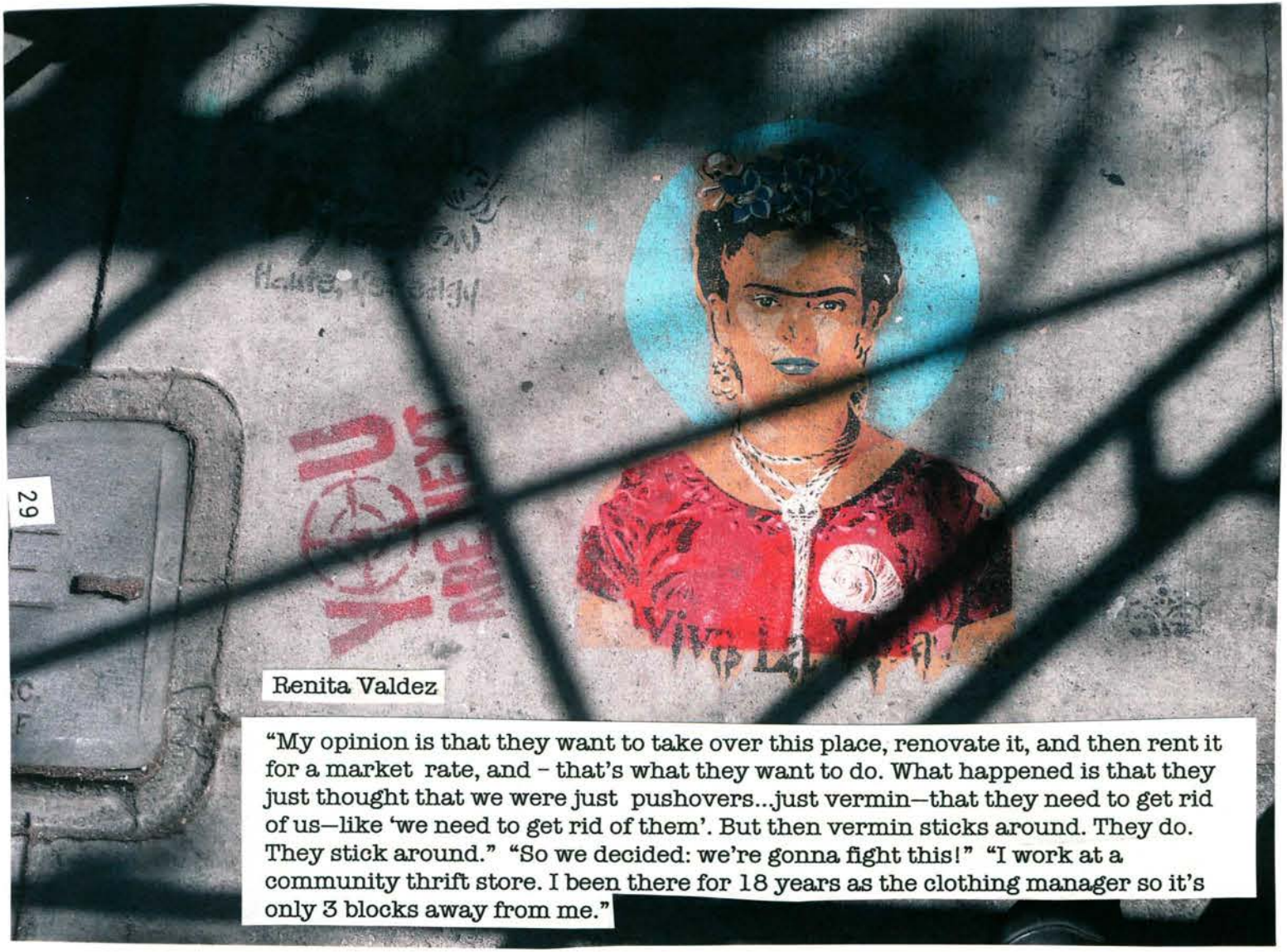


Renita Valdez

"My opinion is that they want to take over this place, renovate it, and then rent it for a market rate, and – that's what they want to do. What happened is that they just thought that we were just pushovers...just vermin—that they need to get rid of us—like 'we need to get rid of them'. But then vermin sticks around. They do. They stick around." "So we decided: we're gonna fight this!" "I work at a community thrift store. I been there for 18 years as the clothing manager so it's only 3 blocks away from me."

... "In this particular block, the only thing that we have seen was that at one time, there was a gas station on the corner and they put condos there. And then when they moved and shut down, a bunch of guardians? ... That changed. They tore that down. They renovated it." "What happened is that they moved these people—some of the families—out and put them elsewhere—relocated them." "They promised these families that they'll move 'em back in..." "Right now, they're semi-projects, but they're also condos—for poor-, medium- income people. It's huge. It takes up at least a block, two blocks."

"Is there a change in the neighborhood?

Yes. Yes. Yes—new restaurants opening, new clubs opening...When you're in this neighborhood... especially at nighttime on Friday nights or Saturday nights: the streets are packed. They're packed because they have nice restaurants around here. The clubs are opening up. They're building new, more restaurants." "All of Valencia—starting from Market, going down as far as you can— everything's being all— new restaurants along the way." ... "They renovated a lot of the flea-bag hotels into residential housing for low-income, but still—"

"There's been a lot of changes in the neighborhood." "I've been doing drag for thirty years. My stage name is Renita Valdez. I've been involved in the gay community for thirty years..." ... "Where am I to go? These people are buying these houses and they're chasing the people away; they're putting them out on the streets. They've been living in their homes for 20+ years and they have rent control and they have affordable housing, but then they're out on the streets, then they're leaving San Francisco. All these people who were raised in this neighborhood—they're being moved, while all these people who have big huge jobs or landlords who are greedy, that want to make profit—" "We have profit here because our landlords here have 4, 5 properties. I know they have one property somewhere on Harriot street, and another one here, and they have property down

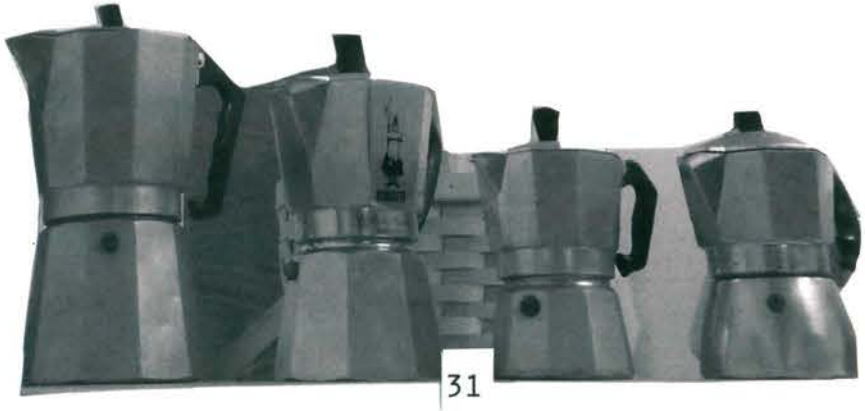
in Southern California. And from what Cal has told me, they also buy these two-bedroom, two-bath condos, and they picks them up, and then they sell 'em."

"It's hard; it's very stressful; I have diabetes. At the time—when I went to the first owner to move in— I didn't know that my diabetes is a disability. Well, I told my doctor, and he said, "well technically, it's not a disability. It's a manageable disability. It only becomes a disability when you lose your eyesight or you have your legs cut off." "They were taking pictures of me everywhere...to the store, to the Laundromat, to my work, on the Muni bus..."

"I love my house. This is my house. I have been here. When I first moved in, my mom stayed in this room until she died. My mom passed away in 2006. So from 2001-, she was getting out of hospitals..." "My niece and I have been here the longest. And over time, we've had some friends who have been our roommates." "All of us here—we're family here. We're not blood-related, except for me and my niece, but my two other roommates and I—we've been— One roommate has been with me since 2007 and the other has been with me since 2010. So we're all family." "And if they move us out, we know that we can't move in together, because the rent in San Francisco is too expensive."

"We lived over there by San Francisco General [Hospital]." ... "I was born and raised here. I was born and raised here. The Mission area was the area—...I was conceived in the Haight-Ashbury area— Belvedere...and when I came home from the hospital, I was in the Mission area."

"We've been here since. Like gypsies—we've lived [on] all— 24th Shotwell—oh god, all these streets—New Hampshire. Everywhere." "So we have seen the changes that have been made here. Places that were once our local hangouts—" ... "Castro has gone completely family-oriented now." ... "In the Tenderloin and Polk St. area, there was a gay bar on every block—or there was two or three on every block." "But the neighborhood has just changed." "[The gay bars in the Tenderloin & Polk] just died."



Martina Ayala

One of the things that attracted me to the city was the fact that it was small, that it was very community oriented and that people would get to know each other in the streets because people would take buses together, ride BART, you'd see familiar faces in cafes... very activist community, progressive. Always some sort of protest or rally and people were very open about voicing their concerns and their needs and there was always a lot of openness and friendliness for the most part in the community. And it had a beautiful charm, a small town feel. Coming from a large city, I really welcome that, I welcome the fact that I could walk just about anywhere and that if I drove, it really wasn't that bad no matter how much native San Franciscans complain, try living in Los Angeles and have to take an hour to two hours minimum driving. I love the public transportation in the city but all of that has been disappearing.

I've been here since 2007 consecutively and it was already staring to change in 2007; it was different than when I had left it but it was still okay from me. And I think I started to notice major changes starting in 2009 / 2010 but the rapid changes started occurring this past year. One of the areas I spend a lot of time in is the Mission District. And I have a lot of friends and do a lot of work with businesses and organizations on Valencia and the Mission and they are no longer there. New College is gone, Modern Times, Encantada Gallery, all those shops that contributed to history and community building are no longer there. And it's happened very recently. Every day that I go by there, there's a new place that's closed and another place that's opening and I used to be able to walk up and down that street and recognize the faces and know most of the people. That's changed. That's gone.

Coincidence / On the day Alejandro Nieto was killed

Fernando Marti

Coincidence:

On the day Alejandro Nieto was killed, someone saw a large brown-skinned man at the top of Bernal Hill raise his arms to the setting sun, and called 9-1-1.

Coincidence:

On the day Alejandro Nieto was killed, 10 families down on Florida Street received 30-day eviction notices in the mail, and in the afternoon, 10 hand-delivered checks for $10,000 each, to get out quiet and without making trouble.

On that same day, the realtors named Bernal Hill the hottest neighborhood in San Francisco.

Coincidence:

On the day Alejandro Nieto was killed, a man walked slowly down 24th Street with a clipboard in hand, making note of the language on the stores signs, and at noon made calls to the building owners: how long were those leases, how much did they pay, and were they interested in a better offer?

That afternoon, an architect walked into a city office with plans for new condos on Folsom and 24th, with soft computer-drawn sketches and pale photo-shopped people walking dogs and casually chatting with their lattes.

Coincidence:

On the day Alejandro Nieto was killed, the earth stood perfectly still on its axis, balanced between winter and summer in that moment when anything could happen, and

just that day, AirBnB reported profits of $10 billion, Uber netted $3.5 billion, and Twitter claimed $30 billion in cash to back up the fact it had no profit, just speculation.

Conspiracies no longer have much sway over me. It doesn't change much in my life to know whether George Bush Jr. knew all about 9-1-1, or whether George Daddy looked on as JFK's head snapped back on that sunny November morning, or whether Ronald Wilson Reagan spells out the number of the beast.

Coincidence and synchronicity are what we must pay attention to now:

the invisible hand that maximizes the efficiencies of the marketplace for those who can play the game,

the same invisible hand that bends the slow ballistic arc of a metal-tipped bullet back to earth.

Coincidence:

Seven minutes before Alejandro Nieto was killed, just down the hill, where the freeway ramp touches down on Cesar Chavez, a line of white buses with black tinted windows pulled off and disgorged oblivious passengers on the sidewalk in front of Precita Park.

When the police arrived, they couldn't see his face, just a man sitting with his back to them, meditating on a bench, silhouetted against the setting sun.

I think about that bench a lot, I've sat there with my five-year-old son taking in the expanse of this city we love sparkling in the dying sunlight before we too are forced to leave.

The lawyers and police investigators and journalists will obfuscate the coincidence, will try to get you to focus on the quotidian details: the scared voice that called 9-1-1, that Alex was on his way to his night job as bouncer at El Toro on San Bruno, that he had his stun gun for work, that he talked back to the cops when they shouted to him to show his hands, that that he had a history of dealing with mental health.

Maybe I get the details wrong, the dates and times don't always make sense.

What matters is this: another kid from the Mission is dead, and in that moment, when 16 SFPD-issued bullets entered his skin and bones and vital organs, the entire history of this neighborhood, from a wailing Ohlone mother atop this hill crying for her children's genocide, to the slow burning of hotel fires and evictions taking our culture our people, was all gathered up and played out in this young man's body.

Coincidence.

Cheryl SV

I lived in San Francisco for like thirty years. And lived in the same apartment, from which I was recently evicted, for almost 22 years. In the Mission, which I loved. I still feel like I have my life in San Francisco, even though I don't live there anymore. I had been there a long time, loved all the other people that lived in the building until it was sold two years ago. The people who lived in the flat upstairs and the person who lived in the apartment behind mine, we'd all been there, that set of people, more than ten years and it felt really great, it felt really safe. We really took care of each other. Everybody took care of everyone else's pets when people were away, and we'd watch out for each other's apartments when folks were gone, and we took care of the yard. We had our own little kind of community in the building and I loved living in the neighborhood. Lived in the same place for, like I said, 22 years.

I grew up in Colorado, which is an amazing place to grow up...um... but I grew up in a small town and I could not get out fast enough. And I was on my way to New York, when a friend of mine said "Come to the Bay Area for a few months and do some work with us and hang out. And she was producing music concerts at the time, womyn's music, and so I came to stay for 3 months and never left. Uh, so I never made it, never made it to New York [laughs]... I have a really specific memory, of being in San Francisco and walking down the street and there was a telephone pole covered with flyers about poetry readings and theatre performances and art galleries and poetry on the street and a magazine being started and I was just, I was blown away. I remember the street pole. I remember the exact flyer about the poetry reading and I thought there was so much, the city felt alive and it was completely exciting and um, I loved where I grew up but it was not like that. It was small and very quiet and not much happened. I think in my 22 year old brain I just, I just had to have a bigger life

somewhere. Thinking about it now an an older adult, I was out of my mind showing up with a back pack and a duffle bag and I think I had, like 275 dollars. And that was it. And I didn't know anybody, and I don't know what the heck I was thinking, but any way, so, you know, lived on oranges and bagels for a couple of weeks and just went to the beach every day and walked around and found Old Wives' Tales, which was a woman's bookstore and the Artemis Café, and kind of just started finding little landmarks, little touchstones for myself of kind of how to, how to, make a little life... It was great.

It kind of was relatively easy (to find housing). The first week was sketchy, I remember the first night thinking I was going to, uh, it's frightening to even say it now, I was going to sleep outside in the little park that's outside of city hall. Some guy, who—now I get it—was gay, came up to me and said "Are you okay?" I obviously looked like I had been here for 6 hours, which I had, and I didn't know what I was doing, which I didn't. And he kind of said, you know, "look you don't wanna be sitting on this street when it's dark." I was on the edge of the Tenderloin, and he said, "You know you can go get a room over there, the YMCA's on the corner and you really don't wanna be sitting here." And I thought, "how nice." You know, that he saw this 22 year old kid who needed a little guidance at the moment... Um, and I stayed in the Y for maybe a week but I went to the Women's Building, I think, and there were bulletin boards back in the day, and people had flyers up saying that they had rooms to rent or were looking for roommates. And I pulled a flyer off the wall and called this woman and I think probably I had a place to live in like 2 weeks or maybe 3 weeks. And it was great, she was great to know and she had this huge flat and that's kind of what she did, she kind of just rented out rooms and took people in and I met people there that I'm still friends with these years later... Some people were just traveling around the world. There was a woman there from Australia, and, so, yeah, it was a whole different thing, completely. I wouldn't, I have no idea what it's like now to show up and do that but, and hopefully people aren't showing up with, you know, a back pack and a couple hundred dollars, although I'm sure that's still what happens.

It just really makes a difference, even if you don't know your neighbors in depth and go to their house and hang out, you know who lives down the street and you watch their kids grow up. I volunteered at the elementary school a

couple blocks away and had done work with third graders around reading and I planted trees on our block and I was on the mailing list for the neighborhood association and you just have a community. It makes a difference to me that I planted trees on my block. Just being aware of all of that stuff, and what's going on on the corner, cause it was, you know, it's kind of a dicey neighborhood sometimes being in the Mission. So everybody knew, "oh, this is going on" or "be careful of that, the gangs are kind of on the edge"... And now I don't have that.

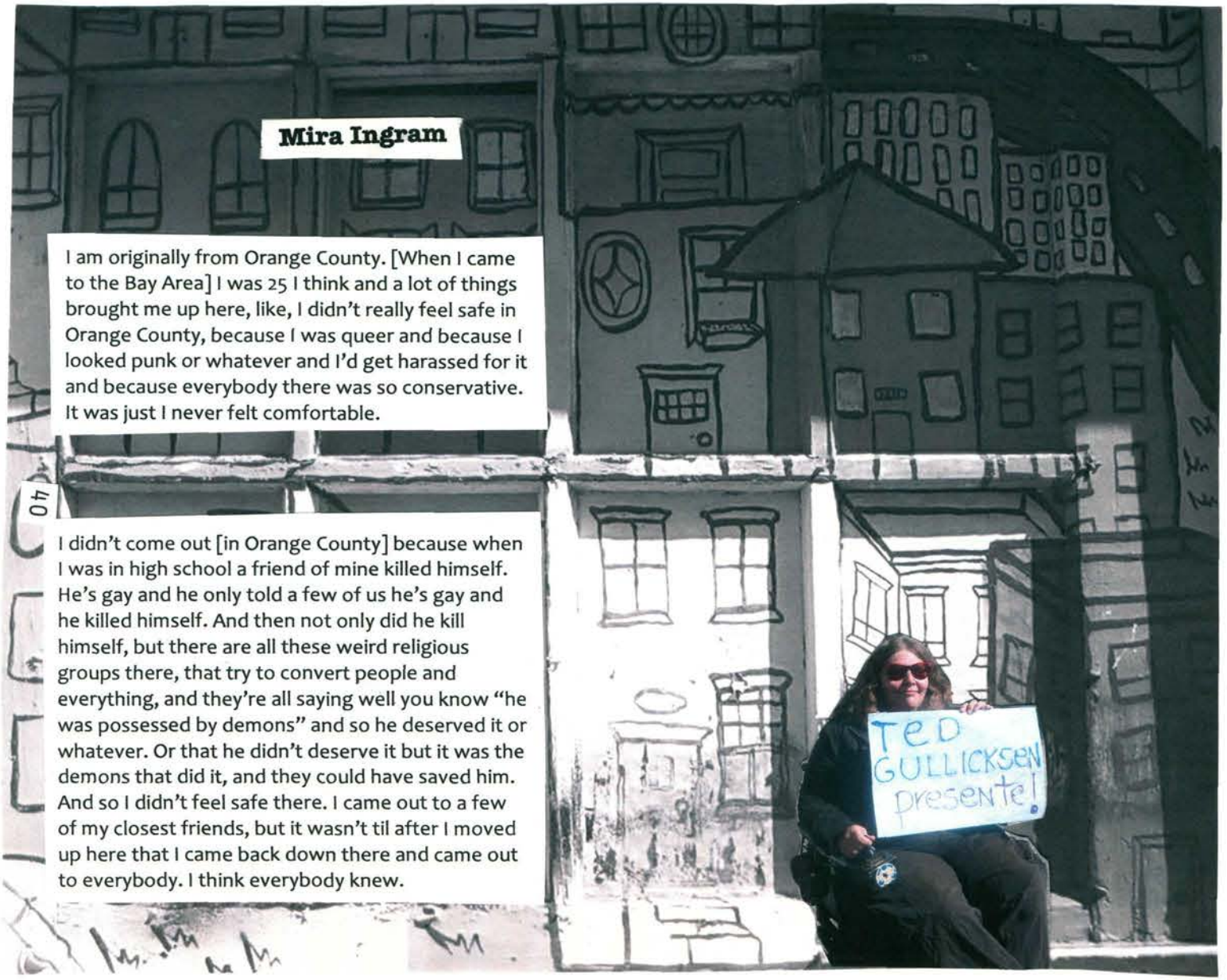
Definitely I feel like my social life and my cultural life are still in San Francisco. I loved living in the Mission. I was aware of that definitely when I first moved there but I just got used to it. I didn't think, "oh, I live in this place that's got a cultural mix and a real Mexican identity," cause that's my heritage, and it was always in my head even if I wasn't speaking Spanish—kind of practicing it, just going to the store, going to the market or going to a restaurant, being able to just even use it a little bit because I haven't used it that much since my grandmother died and so I had this constant connection, and I'm missing that too.

Nothing like really appreciating something when you have to leave it, but I really appreciated how, for that 10, 12 years when our little building was together, with the peeling paint... we took care of the yard, and we invested in being there, even when the landlord didn't. The landlord wasn't doing anything to upkeep the building, wasn't taking care of anything. We couldn't get basic stuff covered. But it was my upstairs neighbors, you know, if it wasn't for them we wouldn't have had a decent yard and the neighbor who lived behind me, bless his heart, he swept the sidewalk in front of the house. I gotta tell ya, I wouldn't have done it because, the minute you sweep it, some idiot litters, but he swept in front of the house and I'm like, "oh my god, this is how you make a neighborhood." Somebody says, "yeah, I'm going to sweep in front of my house and in front of the guy's house next to me. I'm going to do my stuff, and a little extra." That's how you do it.

I don't have a sense of the history of my [new] neighborhood yet. I've just been feeling like, "ech" and really disheartened. In talking with friends they've said, "well, you know, you can plant trees in your new neighborhood and you can volunteer at your new local school." And I just think, "ech, god, I did all that investing only to be evicted. Why would I wanna put my heart into a neighborhood again? Didn't I just spend 20 years and create that? Oh, I have to start over. Damn." But, you know, you have to, I guess, get past that, or you just climb under a rock, so... I've said hello to people just cause I

do when I see them walking down the street, but it's really funny, after being right off of 24th Street where you could see 20 people in the space of 2 minutes, I go for a walk here and I see, like, 2 or 3 people, a couple of kids with a skateboard. I have to learn to appreciate the low density [laughs] and the quiet.

I feel isolated. It really kind of just impacts your emotional state all of the time. It's hard to spontaneously do something with friends cause that's scattered. Being someplace, obviously, you find a place to be and, the place that you're comfortable, you start to have this continuity with it. So, uh, I feel isolated personally. I feel disconnected, from a queer perspective. It's funny, I was just in the city the other day and there's this little rush of, "oh, it's pride month and stuff's happening." I feel so disconnected from that, just physical distance makes this disconnection. I miss my little neighborhood and, you know, hearing Spanish every day. Being down the street from a taqueria and having that, seeing, seeing people of color, um not that there aren't some people of color here, but I definitely feel like it's less, less mixed and, and less people of color where I'm living now. I could easily see all kinds of different people within a block of my house before and I don't have that now.


Mira Ingram
I am originally from Orange County. [When I came to the Bay Area] I was 25 I think and a lot of things brought me up here, like, I didn't really feel safe in Orange County, because I was queer and because I looked punk or whatever and I'd get harassed for it and because everybody there was so conservative. It was just I never felt comfortable.
40
I didn't come out [in Orange County] because when I was in high school a friend of mine killed himself. He's gay and he only told a few of us he's gay and he killed himself. And then not only did he kill himself, but there are all these weird religious groups there, that try to convert people and everything, and they're all saying well you know "he was possessed by demons" and so he deserved it or whatever. Or that he didn't deserve it but it was the demons that did it, and they could have saved him. And so I didn't feel safe there. I came out to a few of my closest friends, but it wasn't til after I moved up here that I came back down there and came out to everybody. I think everybody knew.
TED GULLICKSEN presente!

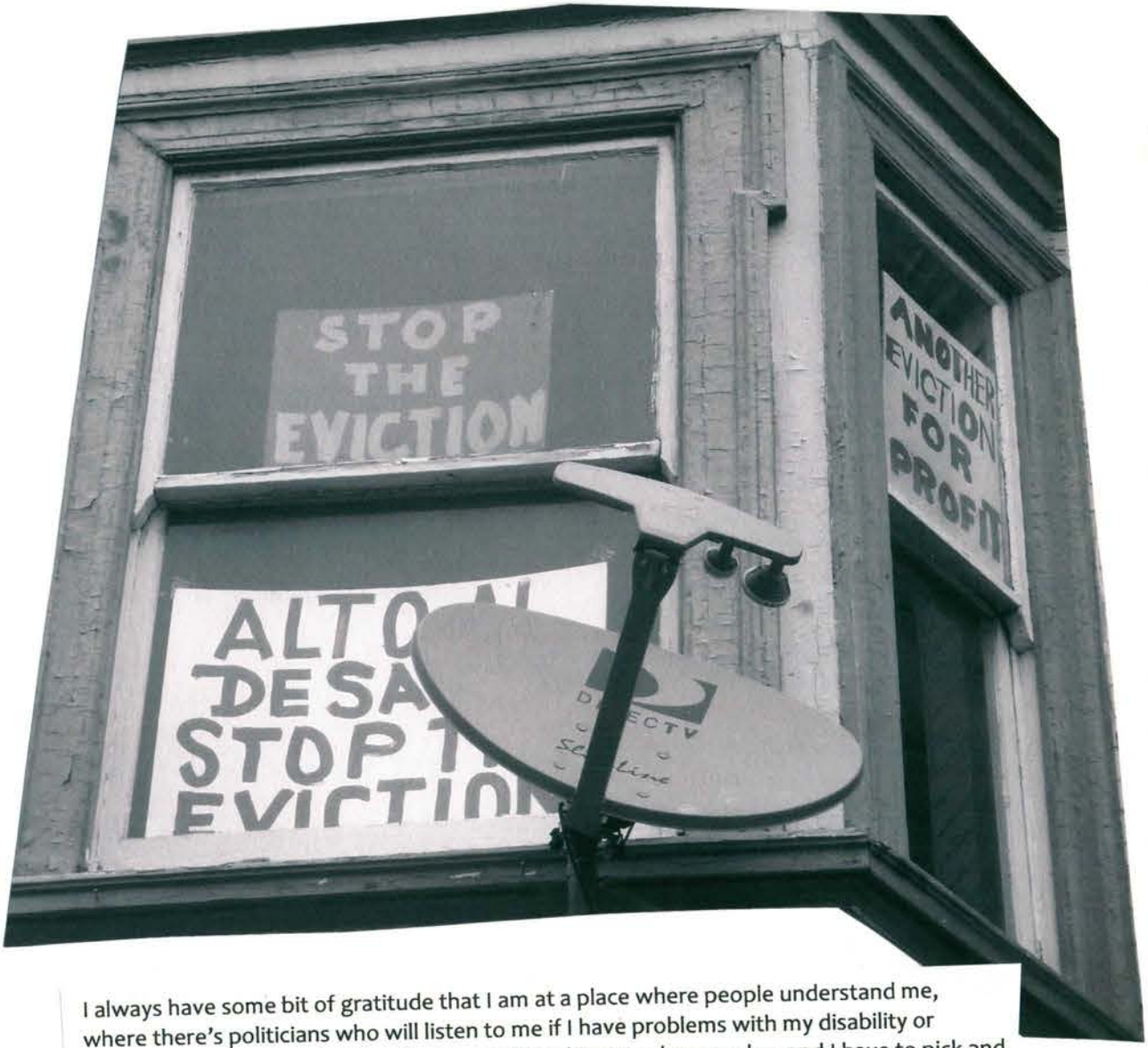
[In 97 I was evicted from] 22nd and Guerrero in the Mission. I moved there I think in '94 or '95. I had 3 other roommates. We were all queer. For a while we had a gay guy there too. We were all people who were. One of my roommates is a writer. She writes for a living. She writes children's books and does poetry. So she would be doing a lot of writing there and I would be doing stuff like that or political organizing. I had another friend there who was in college, and studying to become a paramedic. It was really cool cuz we all got along well, learned from each other, and had a lot of fun.

The whole neighborhood, our whole block literally was all these queer people. We had this party right before we left and then the eviction and it was like just people on the block filled up our house. At that time that's right when I became disabled. In the end of '96 I broke my ankle and I couldn't work anymore and I started using crutches. And so I was applying for disability, but I kept getting denied... So I was in a really screwed position. *

Everybody else found an apartment locally mostly in the East Bay, but for me at the time I was losing my income. I actually looked for other places to live with a friend of mine. A couple of the places that we went to, there would be people there coming in with actually like a year's worth of rent in cash, you know, and we didn't even have a chance. I had this long distance girlfriend who lived in Orange County, we were in this poly relationship. I wasn't going to be able to afford to rent a space. I thought about getting an SRO in the Tenderloin but that was way too expensive for me.

So I ended up talking to my girlfriend and moving back down with her in Southern California because I had family down there too and they'd be in a position to help me out. So that's how I ended up back down there, cuz I thought that was the only place where I could be where I would have a roof over my head. Depressing, very depressing. I didn't feel safe. I felt unwanted. And I started doing activism there.

Then I became a target for all these white-supremacist groups and Nazi groups and everything. I helped organize the first dyke march down there and they flew an airplane overhead with a picture of an aborted fetus on it, which didn't make sense. And then they followed us around on the march and they had all these people videotaping me, and they would come around town and take pictures of me if they saw me in the stores. The police chief was affiliated with the Nazi people, and they had this police helicopter. My girlfriend and I had a garden in our yard and they kept coming and shining the light on our garden at night, the helicopter shining into our bedroom window all the time. Every time we'd be sitting out on the patio here comes the helicopter. When I would, like, leave my house and go to the bus stop, the helicopter would just fly in circles the whole time until I got on the bus. It was really scary. And there was this guy on the Human Relations committee in the city who lived down the block from me who was Native American, and he told me that it was dangerous to be out alone because of those Nazi people, so that's when I got back up here as fast as I could.

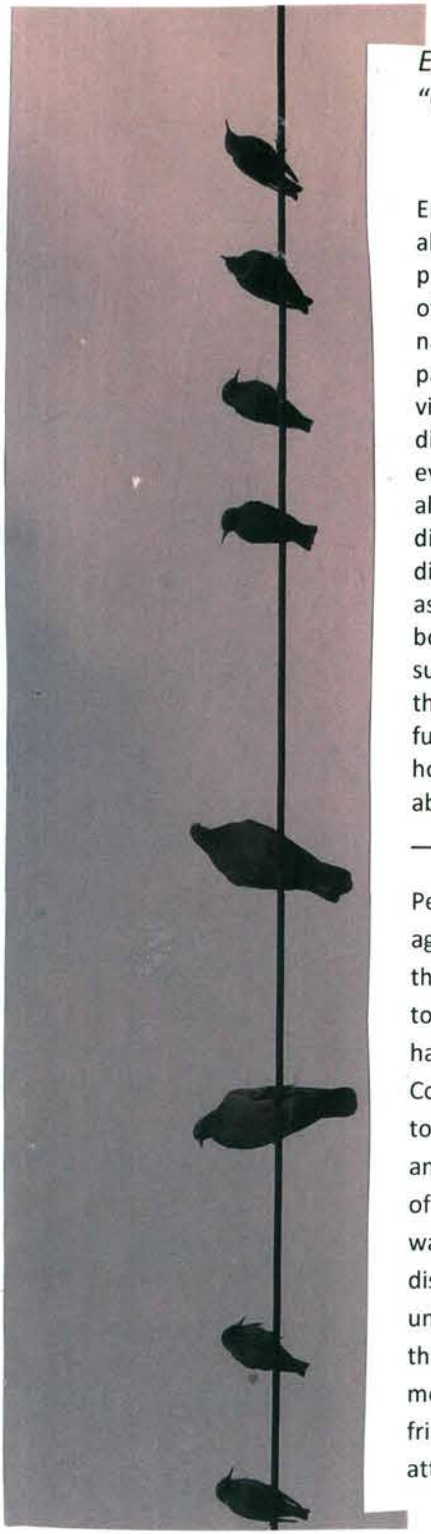


I always have some bit of gratitude that I am at a place where people understand me, where there's politicians who will listen to me if I have problems with my disability or whatever, where there's things to do, a million things to do everyday, and I have to pick and choose between things and where I can actually get around. In Orange County I had to depend on people to drive me around because the bus system was really bad and so there were only a few places I could get to on the bus. Like, here I can get everywhere. It's totally accessible if you're disabled. The city is so small I don't even have to use public transit, I can just ride my wheelchair around most places. In Berkeley when I was there, everything was spread out more than the city so it was really a little bit harder there. So that's why I ended back here in the city [SF] again. When I was living in Berkeley, I signed up for the public housing email list. I was paying over half of my income for rent, so I got on that list. After 7 years, I got into that public housing.

Probably half or more of my close friends have been Ellis Act-ed out of the city so lately I have been feeling like San Francisco reminds me more of Orange County... All the people I knew that I was safe with, that I was friends with, they are all being displaced. Some people are in the Bay Area, but a lot of people are gone, in other states, or a lot of people are moving up to Oregon and I had a lot of friends move to LA recently and some people become homeless. I always thought of San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley as home to me but now that it's changing, like, my whole concept of home is changing. I'm noticing that really my concept of home is, it's where the people are that I can relate to and associate with and hang out with and do things with, and be me, and not have to deal with their stereotypes like that. So I feel almost like home is slowly trickling away and there isn't really a home... I thought about leaving but there's no real home to leave to.

I'm not really that close with my family. They used to live in Southern California but everybody moved and most of them are concentrated in Alaska and so I visited up there a lot but I couldn't see myself living up there and moving in with them. And I don't think anyone would really [want that] or like they're in a position to say "oh yeah, come live with us. We have space." It's just my grandma's there, and that's it, and once she's gone you know I'm probably never gonna go up there again in my life.

Before I was in the public housing I was partly living here like couch-surfing with people, and partly living in the place in Berkeley, but I wasn't living there full time because I couldn't afford the rent. I was about to get into public housing here. Now I think about, like, if I became homeless, this is really the only place to go. I don't have any family I could live with or whatever. This is, this IS my family and my home and everything. Like, I've got tons of medical problems. This is where I have got like all my medical stuff set up. It's very complex and complicated, it wouldn't be easy for me to move somewhere else. There all kinds of specialists that I see and I don't think I would have another place to go. I would be here and homeless before going someplace else.



Excerpts from

"QUEERING THE STAGE OF SAN FRANCISCO'S EVICTION EPIDEMIC"

Erin McElroy

Engaging with ethnographies of those facing and of those who have already endured eviction in the wake of San Francisco's tech boom, this paper attempts to push the borderlines ensconcing and delimiting realms of anti-eviction activism, as well as terrains of queer theory. The narratives evoked are those collaboratively collected through participatory research with the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, a data visualization and digital storytelling collective documenting the dispossession of Bay Area residents. This paper jostles the framing of eviction as epidemic, studying the queer histories that inform but that are also reduced in such formulation. It implores that we not diminish queer discourse of displacement to identity politics, but rather that the discourse itself becomes queered in ways attentive to intersections and assemblages of race, gender, class, and the variegated effects of the tech boom, such as increased mechanisms of surveillance. While critiquing sublations into heteronormative family life that privilege certain queers in the Bay Area, particularly since the battle for gay marriage, this paper further contends that the logics that constellate queer exegesis of homonormalism be pushed further, into terrains in which formulating the abject around notions of sexual deviancy is not enough.

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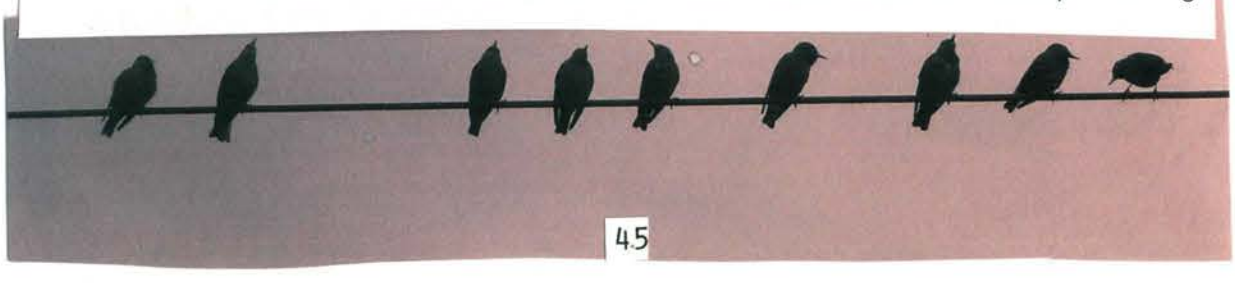
Peering out upon a small crowd largely embodied by queers under the age of forty in a San Francisco political bookstore facing a rent increase that may leads to its own dispossession, a feeling of claustrophobia began to haunt me with increased persistency. It was the summer of 2014, and I had been asked to speak on a panel called "Queering the Eviction Conversation." While I had arrived with ideas and questions I had hoped to raise about the limits and possibilities of queering a post-identity analytic to think the rampant imperatives of dis-location plaguing an array of San Francisco Bay Area residents, it quickly became evident that what was being asked of me was not to decenter identity by queering discourse, nor even to deconstruct the mechanisms that lead to the unraveling of people, queer and not alike, from the city of Saint Francis in the wake of what is now being called the Tech Boom 2.0, but rather to mourn the loss of "the queer community" from the city. I had some friends in the crowd who sensed my frustration. One of them, in an attempt to offer a lifesaver at my intended attempt to materialize

intersections of gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized dynamics that engender the jettisoning and dematerializing of complex fabrics of community and sociality, asked a leading question to me about the homonormalization of the queer in late capitalism. I sighed. The boundaries of even queer discourse on the sublation of the queer into heteronormative assemblages felt impinging. Something new was need. But where was it located? Where did it begin? What other stories need to be unfurled?

Engaging with narratives of those facing and of those who have already endured ejection from the materiality of home and all that home entails in San Francisco, this paper attempts to push the borderlines ensconcing and delimiting realms of anti-eviction activism, as well as terrains of queer theory. The narratives evoked here are ones collaboratively collected through participatory research with the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (A(E)MP) – a data visualization, data analysis, and digital storytelling collective documenting the dispossession of Bay Area residents. In conjuring the stories of those dispossessed, in no way do I attempt to reduce lives to, in Derrida's terms, "the eventness of the event" of eviction (Derrida 1994, 63). In other words, one's history of dispossession is always possessed by more than simply one's endurance of loss. As the irreducibility of a life and all that it is entwined with always surpasses the discursive periphery of eviction, eviction as an act always surpasses the margins of mapping loss. An ethics is required in engaging in narratives of mourning, as well as in gifting of hospitality to that which is not said so that it can continue to speak, in and beyond the marginalia. An ethics is required to refrain from collapsing into the ease in weaving narratives together in ways that force them to say something together other than they are saying. In refrain, here, I invite different voices to materialize in their differences and particularities, yet also in colloquy with the limits of existing discourse of displacement and of queer theory as contouring mechanisms, effects, and subjectivities constellated around what some are calling the "eviction epidemic" endemic to San Francisco's tech boom.

Since 2011, the phrase "eviction epidemic" has been tossed around in utterance amongst San Francisco housing activists, queer and not alike, describing the surge of evictions correlative to the Tech Boom 2.0 in which real estate speculators prey upon the capital that the tech industry can allocate for housing, often at the expense of less affluent tenants. Like the framing of crisis, the framing of epidemic conveys a sense of urgency following an episode of disaster, in which different contingents struggle to delineate the causes and solutions of the state of emergency. As Miriam Greenberg and Ken Gotham write in Crisis Cities (2014), "We can view crisis cities as contested spaces in which opposing groups and interests battle to control the framing of crisis as a social reality, and so to prescribe and justify particular political interventions and visions of an ideal, post-crisis future" (2014, 9). While we hear developers, real estate advocates, technology CEOs, and numerous politicians recite the rhetoric of increased development being



the only remedy to the eviction crisis, in many ways mimicking the post-World War II discursive strategy of salvation through development, we increasingly hear housing advocates and tenants describe the crisis as epidemic that can only be cured by keeping people in their homes, and by keeping existing rents affordable.

While the framing of epidemic speaks to the affective and corporeal intensity of dispossession, an intensity that can lead to death, it also harkens the embodied memory still alive amongst the queer populations that endured the AIDS crisis of the late twentieth century. As a thirty-foot banner leading the housing rights contingent in the 2014 San Francisco Pride Parade performatively exhibited, "Eviction = Death," yoking the dispossession by death of HIV-positive queers of the 1980s to the contemporary expulsion of queers from what has long been considered a city of queer refuge. While this conjuration invokes lived realities and respect for past and current struggles, and pays homage both to those lost in the AIDS epidemic amidst a sea of homophobia, as well as to queer political practice of reappropriating and hyperbolizing death in protest spaces through die-ins, I do have anxiety reifying past and current battles against dispossession so simply. I worry that the framing of eviction as epidemic consolidates specters of past abjection into a theatre that presupposes the specific targeting of a monolithic queer, and that in doing so, obfuscates more nuanced contemporary mechanisms of abjection. While former materializations of dispossession do surface in framing the ascriptions of bodies that matter to the mutating city and those that don't, reliance upon this older discourse of consolidated subjectivation, it seems, forecloses real possibilities of battling economies of material, cultural, and sociopolitical abandonment. Furthermore, engendering simulacra of a homogenizing discourse of queer dis-placement obscures the ways in which the discourse itself perpetuates gender and sexual normativities and in doing so, abandons deviant genders and sexualities. It also blurs out of focus the thousands of people who don't identify as queer who are being evicted, affected by other imbrications of the productive powers of class,

race, ability, and gender. Such blurring, I find, is entangled within a late capitalist order, one seemingly at apotheosis in San Francisco's political economy driven by tech and real estate speculative markets.

Grace Kyungwon Hong writes in "Existentially Surplus" (2011) that speculation is endemic to late capitalism. While United States capitalism prior to the Second World War was organized around the production of difference through surplus labor, relying on deploying racism and sexism to denote who could and could not be exploited, capitalism has since dematerialized in ways in which market speculation and global finance predominate, and it ways in which racialized, sexualized, and gendered difference are differently organized. While propertylessness was an economic category in early capitalism, it also "became a form of illegible and despised subjectivity (the inability to own) mapped onto race and gender" (2011, 89). To be gendered and racialized as deviant was to be alienated from normative white supremacist subjectivity and from fixation to land and property. Jodi Melamed sees postwar epistemology and politics shift towards a moralistic liberalism, one in which "antiracism becomes a nationally recognized social value, and for the first time, gets absorbed into U.S. governmentality" (Melamed 2006, 1). Tolerance towards racial, gender, and sexual difference morphed under white liberalism, absorbing alterity while at the same time levying "death and destruction to poor, racialized, sexually 'deviant' populations" (Hong 2011, 91). Part of the absorption of difference and the simultaneous rejection and ejection of deviance can be seen in the homonormalization of the queer. Within this theatre of biopolitical regulation, subjects must articulate themselves as embodying a moral subjectivity to maintain recognizability (ibid., 93). As long as one's morality is articulable as normative, often as made evident through adherence to ideas such as heteronormative "family values," then one can own land and take advantage of other forms of surplus labor. Under speculative market capitalism, Hong proffer that homonormativity is utilized by the state as it deploys "family rights" and the family as a category of "normativization for the citizen-as-capitalist, but only insofar as it simultaneously a category of exploitation for the noncitizen immigrant and racialized citizen poor" (ibid., 94). In this context the racialized immigrant or poor citizen is ascribed lack of moral values, and is thus legitimized as surplus. In other words, homonormality becomes part of an assemblage in which speculative capitalism dislodges someone not necessarily because she is lesbian, gay, and/or a person of color, but because she is embedded in an entanglement of deviancy, one that often also includes formations of racialization, sexism, and homophobia. To be caught in this entanglement is often to result in propertylessness and dispossession.

My critiques of the reification of the queer as contained within and as containing displacement discourse in no way intends to elide the disproportionate number of evictions of queer people in the wake of the Tech Boom, some of which are lethal. Instead I hope to show how simply relying on an older discourse that homogenizes queer invisibilizes different relationships of privilege and oppression within it enmeshed in race, class, gender, and deviancy. In disinterring San Francisco rent board data, the A(E)MP discovered that the Castro, a neighborhood with a high percentage of HIV-positive gay men, contained the highest percentage of Ellis Act evictions from 1997 to 2013. Ellis Act evictions are one of three types of

no-fault evictions enacted in San Francisco due to no fault of the tenant. Of the three types (which also include Demolition and Owner-Move-In), the Ellis Act, a state law, is most abused by real estate speculators who prey upon and invest in the San Francisco housing market by buying up rent-controlled buildings, evicting the tenants through the state law which enables them to exit the rental market, and then selling the individual units as tenancy-in-commons (TICs), which are essentially condominiums. Speculative real estate flipping. In fact, we found that seventy-nine percent of Ellis Act evictions in 2013 occurred within the first five years of landlord ownership, revealing that the predominant evictors are indeed speculators.

The A(E)MP also found, in a 2012-2013 survey of 171 current or former San Franciscans who have experienced eviction or threat there of, 43 percent of survey respondents identified as LGBTQ as compared to the 15.4 percent city average (Gates 2006). Of people who had found new housing in San Francisco post-eviction, we found, the average per-bedroom rent prices increased by eighty-three percent, soaring from $882 to $1612. When the average one-bedroom is going for over $3000 in many neighborhoods, we can understand how often people cannot secure affordable housing post-ejection. Speculation – the act of speculating on the futurity of the market – is haunted by the promise of capitalistic return. As an act, speculation precipitates an economy of the dispossessed – dispossessed who are, in a sense, haunted by the capitalistic imperative that mutates them into spectres of the past, and their rent-controlled homes into spectral memories haunting the condos that abdicate them, that undo them. That make the city unlivable.

Bordering the housing rights contingent during the corporate-sponsored 2014 Pride Parade was Google's own float, which it processed down Market Street, invoking its acceptance of "the gay" into its corporate agenda. And it was not alone. As per the year before, numerous tech corporations performed their Bay Area liberalism during Pride. As headlines lauded of the June 2013 Pride Parade, heterosexual Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg led 700 Facebook employees in an epic contingent galvanized about gay marriage. Largely the tech industry has been a strong gay marriage advocate. In fact, when it came to overturning the Proposition 8, Google saw ninety-seven percent of related donations support gay-marriage, with 341 employees cumulatively donating over $350,000 (Seattlepi 2014). Companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Cisco Systems, Apple, Google, Sun Microsystems, eBay, Oracle, Yahoo, Advanced Micro Devices, and Symantec cumulatively sheltered eighty-three percent of employee donations opposing Proposition 8. Upon this terrain Apple CEO Tim Cooke "came out" in 2014, despite that he has already been out in other landscapes.

Perhaps it appears ironic that in a city so run by pro-gay-marriage tech there exists a disproportionate expulsion of the queer community. Perhaps it strikes as odd that in a city previously known to embrace a Derridean hospitality towards difference – one that does not only welcome those who it invites, but rather welcomes anyone and everyone escaping social, cultural, and/or political oppression from elsewhere – hospitality is now only directed towards invitees: those willing to acculturate into what is valorized in economies of late liberalism, queer or not. As Elizabeth Povinelli writes in Economies of Abandonment, "The subjects of recognition are called to present difference in a form that feels like

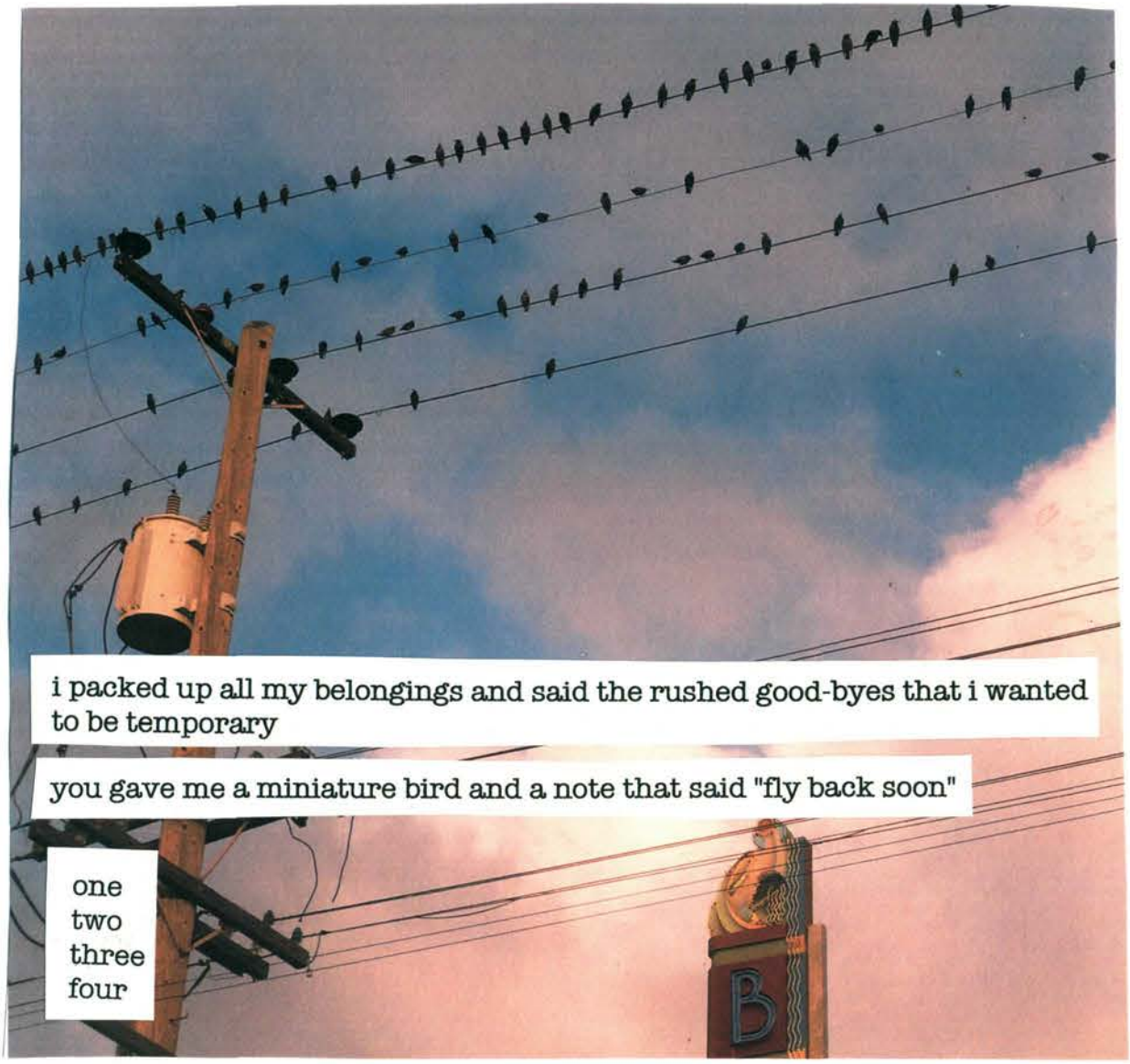
difference but does not permit any real difference to confront a normative world" (2011, 31). While I am interested in the ways in which marginalized queers are being evicted and displaced more than queers en route to assimilate into homonormative lifestyles of gay marriage and corporate employment, I am even more interested in the ways in which Bay Area liberalism itself utilizes homonormativity to obfuscate the jettisoning of queer bodies from spaces of capital accumulation, and to queer non-queer identified bodies that it jettisons.

As we return and refocus over the stage of the 2014 Pride housing rights contingent, we begin to see that not only was it neighbored by Google's gay marriage contingent; it was also adjoined by the leather float – a contingent boasting freedom to engage in BDSM and what might be considered deviant sexuality from a heterosexual lens. Ironically, in the leather contingent itself was Jack Halprin, Google's head of e-Discovery, who, in 2013, issued Ellis Act eviction notices to four units at 812 Guerrero Street, a building that he purchased in 2012 with the aim of evicting the tenants to create his own private mansion. Currently fighting their evictions are two teachers, a taxi cab driver, a woman with disabilities, a two-year-old, and an artist. Several people have already been displaced from the building via an illegal Owner-Move-In eviction that he conducted in 2012. As Claudia Tirado, a Latina teacher with the Unified School District and recent mother describes, "Jack has destroyed our lives." I have witnessed Claudia shed tears numerous times, lamenting how she no longer feels safe in her home.

I bring up the story of 812 Guerrero not only because of its affective weight and political salience. I bring it up because it clearly exemplifies the effects of homonationalism and settler sexuality. Here we have Jack, director of a high profile unit of Google, graduate of Yale and University of California, Los Angeles, with public profiles on Linked In and Google+, and who owns an expensive building in San Francisco. He is currently evicting a working class family, teachers, a musician, and a woman with disabilities to turn the building into a private estate. Not only is Jack is openly gay, but he is also part of the BDSM community. None of the people that Jack is evicting identify as queer. Nevertheless, one could venture, while utilizing homonational and settler colonial frameworks, that Jack is in fact queering his dispossessed tenants, while securely remaining fixed in his own homonormative stability.

Wendy Brown writes, "Capitalism neither loves nor hates social differences. Rather, it exploits them in the short run and erodes them in the long run" (2005, 106). Such erosions contour the city of Saint Francis in repetitive strokes. Eventually, they become full erasures. One could venture that the 812 Guerrero tenants' failure to assimilate into the neoliberal imago of productivity queers them for erosion, and eventually erasure. Contemporary mechanisms of displacement in San Francisco are manifested not only through neoliberalism and its current need to disavow that not adjudicated as economically valuable, to accumulate by dispossession if you will, but also through homonational traces constellated throughout centuries of settler culture sexuality. To be working class, poor, a person of color, indigenous, disabled, or otherwise Other in San Francisco is to be queered, and thus more susceptible to mechanisms of expulsion.



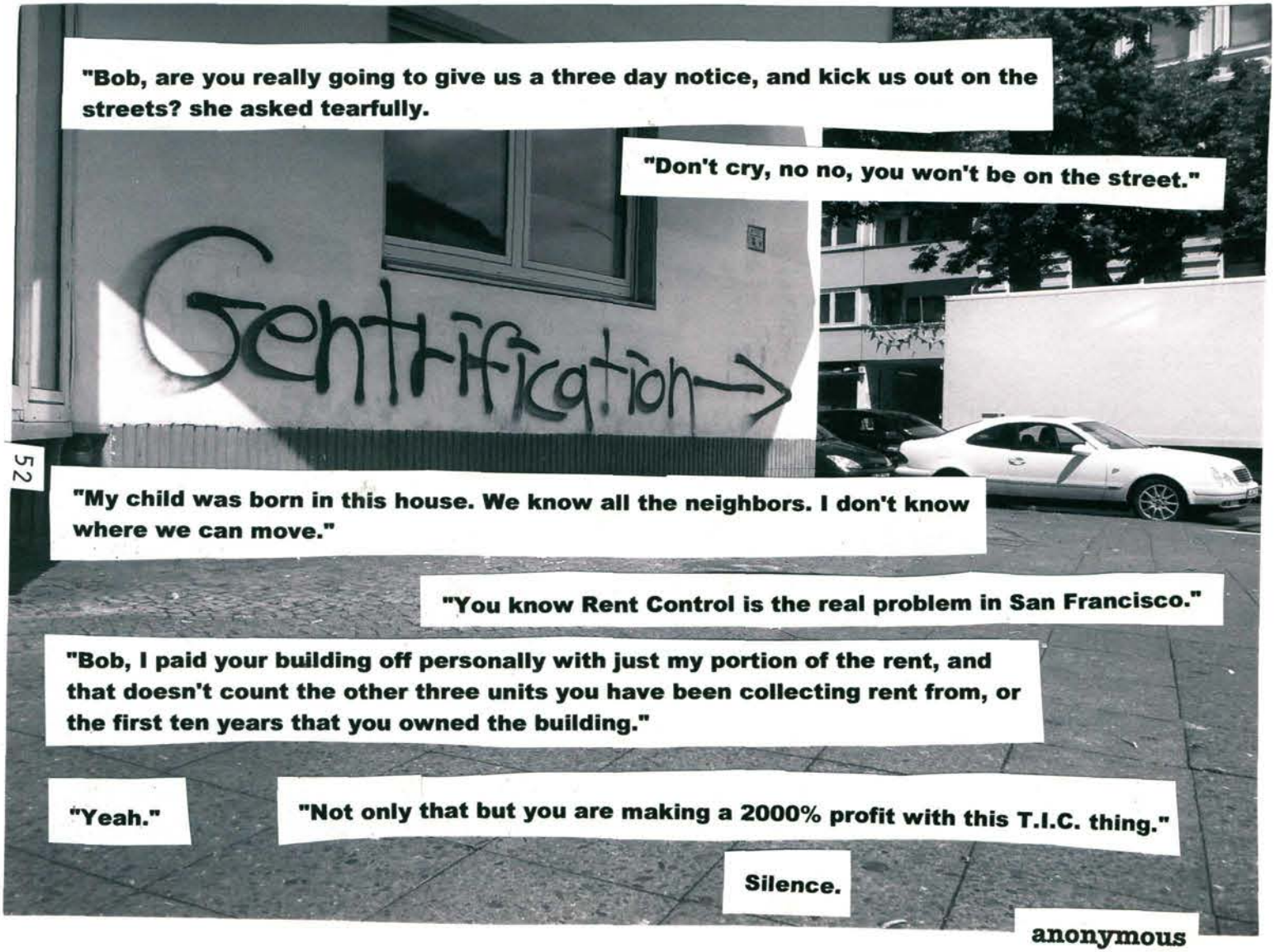


seven changes of address

the bird sits in a box with the lid taped shut.

by Victoria Welle

Heart of the City action. G-MUNI Day. Blockade of Google bus with acrobats and surveillance monster.


"Bob, are you really going to give us a three day notice, and kick us out on the streets? she asked tearfully.
"Don't cry, no no, you won't be on the street."
Gentrification→
"My child was born in this house. We know all the neighbors. I don't know where we can move."
"You know Rent Control is the real problem in San Francisco."
"Bob, I paid your building off personally with just my portion of the rent, and that doesn't count the other three units you have been collecting rent from, or the first ten years that you owned the building."
"Yeah."
"Not only that but you are making a 2000% profit with this T.I.C. thing."
Silence.
anonymous

The neighborhood feel

anonymous

I've lived in this neighborhood for about 8 years now. It definitely is my home. It's changed an enormous amount in the last 8 years. So, sometimes that's a little difficult. Um, it feels a little alien to me now. But Ii like this neighborhood a lot.... There are a lot of trees; people have big backyards. You know, it feels like living in sort of a more sleepy suburban kind of area but you're in the middle of everything.

So it has a nice feeling. There's a lot of families in this neighborhood. A lot of really well established people who have lived here for a really long time. Um, and it feels very neighborhoody. And I like that about it. There hasn't historically been a lot of turnover in this neighborhood. A lot of people are homeowners; a lot of people are multi-generational homeowners. You'll have entire blocks of people that are, you know, every house is owned by people in the same family, where, you know, gradually, every generation would move into another house on the same block and they'll have a block party where it's all just their family. And I think that's really amazing and wonderful, and it's really sad that it's changing a lot. Um, but yeah, this neighborhood is great.

Emotional investment

You know, I don't wanna seem like I have sort of this like nativist approach to people coming to Oakland. Like, you know, some of my best friends are people who recently moved to the Bay Area. I uh, I just think that people have to be conscientious about their effect on communities. And um, I think one of the sad things about gentrification is it tends to create transient communities. Where people live in a place for a few years and then they leave. And it's true that also a lot of people are, you know, buying a house to raise their family in and whatever it is, but also it attracts investors and people who just wanna come in and buy up a bunch of buildings and then rent them out. And so homeowners get displaced by investors. Um, and I see that happening really actively in Oakland. And, obviously Oakland is changing a lot and there's not much that can be done to stop or reverse that and not much that, you know we don't wanna say that it should be stopped or reversed, but um, but I just hope that people are conscientious about what they contribute to their neighborhoods and how they interact with their neighborhoods. And that people have some emotional investment as well as financial investment in the area.

On Leaving

After maybe 5 or 6 months of this, I, uh, decided I wanted to move anyway. Because the house also obviously wasn't being taken care of and we had a leak in the bathroom. And so the leak in the bathroom was going straight into my bedroom and the carpet was getting soggy, and would just stay wet. All the time. And i have a pretty bad mold allergy, so the situation became untenable. Which was really unfortunate. Um, another roommate had already decided to leave. He had another opportunity; he was tired of dealing with it, so he moved out. And when my bathroom started to leak, um, I decided it was time for me to move. So I had to find a place pretty quickly. Um, and friend was moving out of the house on 58th St and I ended up moving there. And it was stressful. It was really stressful. It was hard....

For me, I think having a stable home, I'm sure for anybody, but I think for me in particular, having a really stable home is really important to my physical health. Having some physical disabilities, and uh, so my anxiety levels obviously just shot through the roof during that time. And then, um, kind of since then, wherever I've lived, I've had a lot of anxiety about my home space. And um, the house that I moved into immediately after

that, I never fully unpacked. I had stacks of boxes in my bedroom until the say that I left. And, um, I was always stressed about the possibility of having to move and the possibility of things destabilizing. Because it is, that's what it is.

It's destabilizing.

Literally.

So, um. I think it's sad that in a city that does have a lot of protections for tenants, to still feel like there is this precarity. You can still be intimidated and badgered out of your living situation even though legally you were protected and the law was on your side. Because at a certain point, it's hard to fight. You know, you have to, if you have to fight a legal battle, you need to have the resources. And I don't mean necessarily financial, you need to have the emotional resources and the physical resources to be able to do that. There are organizations that will help you fight an illegal eviction, but you have to do a lot of advocating for yourself. And, in the end it comes down to how much emotional labor and physical labor are you able to give, and I think that's what happened to my upstairs neighbors, was, um, I mean they could've really, really, you know, come at them pretty hard. Especially since my upstairs neighbor was physically disabled, and you can't serve a 30 day eviction notice to a disabled person. Um, yeah, pretty much anywhere. And, but, you know, she just, she couldn't, she didn't have the energy to fight it. And you can't not respect that, you know. People need to do what they need to do to take care of themselves. And in the end that's what it came down to for me was, you know, I could try to move my things around. I could try to do something to stay in this place and fight them really hard, but with the leak and with my health deteriorating, at a certain point it was just, I just needed to be out of there. So, I think that my, my threshold for what I can handle and deal with in home stability situations has slowly gotten a lot lower. I've always lived in places for long periods of time. I've never been a very, um, transient person. A lot of people I know like to move around a lot. And I'm a nester. I'm the other way. I stay in apartments for years and years and so that was really hard....

Shit new people say

Well so people will complain about blight in the neighborhood. People will complain about trash in the street or people who collect recycling. Um, just a lot of comments about that and how they're bothered by it, or, um, comments about how the neighborhood, you know, needs improvement or needs to be different then it is. Um, but also, commenting on like oh, isn't it nice that something is different or sometimes it's almost, like, infantilizing the neighborhood in this way where people talk about how quaint or cute something is, that, like oh there are kids playing in the street, isn't that cute? Like no, that's actually normal. Most places, kids play in the street. And, um, yeah, it feels, it feels like tourists' commentary instead of people who are really invested in the neighborhood. I guess, is part of the difference. Or they're just treating it like something new and fascinating, like a zoo animal, or something. I don't know. Um, this is also a very, very multi-ethnic neighborhood and always has been and people will, I overhear very odd comments about that where they say like *oh isn't it weird that there's a Korean restaurant here?* Like, no it's not weird; this is North Oakland. Like, there is a long established Korean community here and there are Korean restaurants every 6 blocks. So, just kinda stuff like that, where you hear these comments that seem sort of, I don't wanna say ignorant, but like, you know, it's, they - they don't know where they are. And it's really too bad.

The changes

I think, obviously, this neighborhood is rapidly gentrifying. Um, and, that doesn't just mean that the people who are working down the street look different. There are a lot more people, tons more people. And they are wearing nicer clothes and they are driving nicer cars and all of those things. But, it's also a difference in, you know, the things that you overhear when you're walking down the street. The way that people talk about the street or the neighborhood. Or, what's interesting to them about living here. Um, a lot more dogs. Just people walkin dogs, all over the place. Um, which is a weird thing. I don't know why I notice it so much, but there's a lot more people walking dogs down the street....

But, I think that part of it is that in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood, there's this sense of competition between the people who are gentrifying the neighborhood where everyone wants to be seen as having been here first, and been here longer, and therefore, having some sort of justification for being in the neighborhood.... "Oh, I've lived in Brooklyn for 5 seconds longer than you so I'm more authentically Brooklyn than you, or whatever it is. And there's a lot of that in Oakland.... And I think that one of the things that changes, is people size each other up a lot more. I find that when I'm walking to and from Bart, or wherever it is that I'm going, the people that I've been seeing around the neighborhood for a long time and even people who I haven't seen around a lot but I can tell are, you know, kinda like the older school neighborhood folks are really friendly and smiley, and people will complement each other's outfits and just chat each other up and stuff. And I feel like a lot of the people who've moved in recently, it's, they - they look you up and down and then they avert their eyes. It's like, you know, who are you? Do I have to pay attention to you? I'm a little bit scared of the people around me and they, they're - they dodge a little more, I feel like. And that's... sad. Naturally. This neighborhood has always had a really friendly and open feeling to it, and I feel like that's changing and it's really too bad.

Fieldnotes on the Death of Alejandro Nieto

Geographies of belonging:

Valencia Street. Is not on fire but it should be.
Instead wet hair, damp paper, a thousand bodies, cops lining the sidewalk, caged in.
Roberto Hernandez says: "the problem is they like our culture but they don't like us"
it rains harder. Line of drummers, we start to move, we are a mass.

Infrastructures of loss:

24th Street. Still, shuttered, shameless.
The dancers, crimson headdresses, bells clasped around ankles, step slowly,
space, pace, passage. One holds a baby, shouts: "we are on Ohlone land,
we are on Ohlone land, this land is not ours." The air is tattered, terminal.

Productions of grief:

Bernal Hill. The police report reads: "March 21st at around 7:18 and 49 seconds shots were fired. Latin male adult in a red jacket. Two hundred pounds. Alejandro Nieto went to the ground, he assumed a prone position, the officers went to him, rendered aid, he did not survive his injuries. The shots that were fired were fired by the police department. His back was to the west. He was eating chips or sunflowers."

Alejandro Nieto:

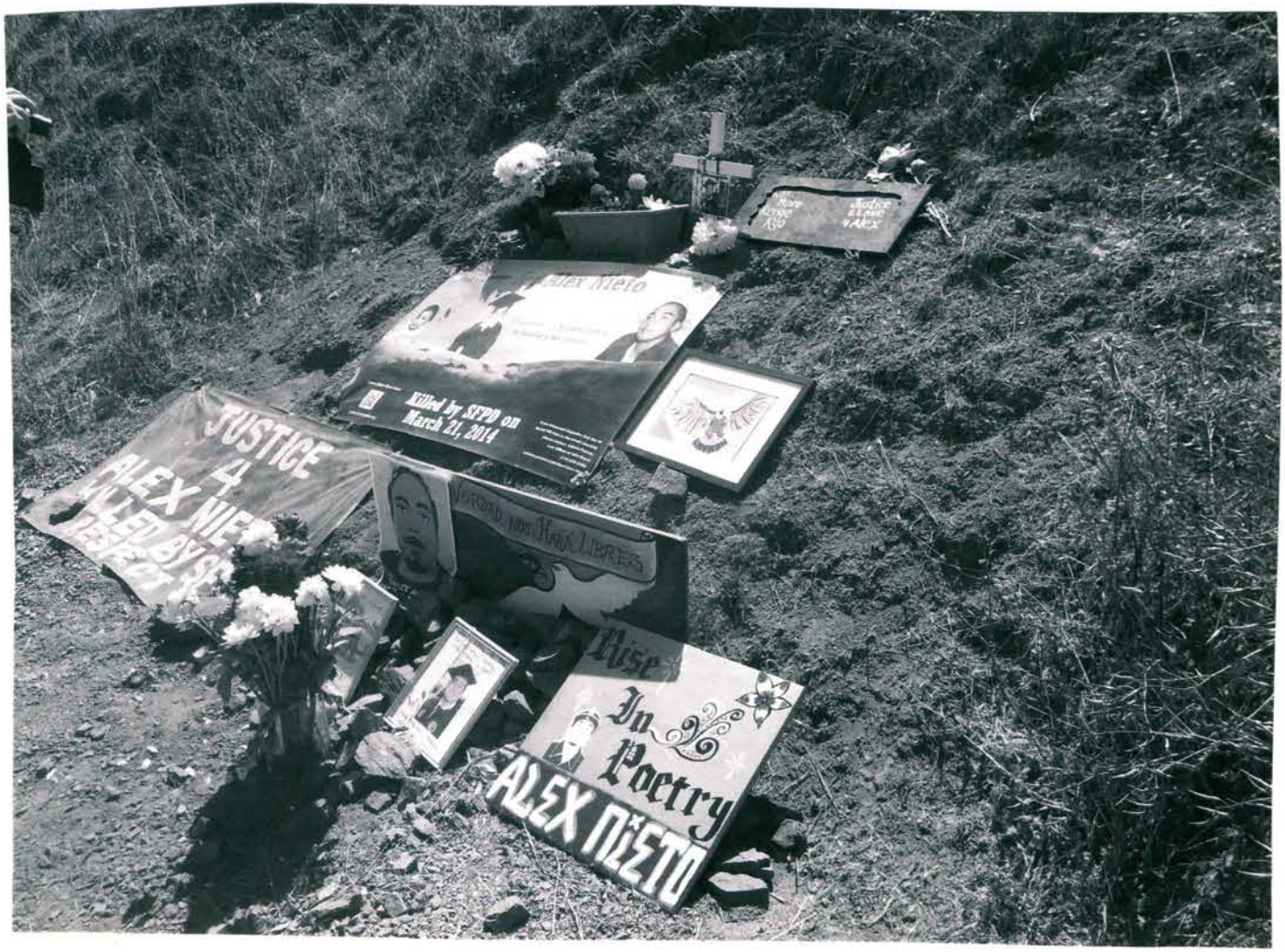
These are the things I learn about you: son, brother, cousin, student, security guard.
Your father is wearing wrap-around sunglasses, blue jeans, cowboy boots,
a matching hat, his face is wet. Yes, Alejandro, we are watching out for you,
for the dead, we are expansive, we are a threshold.

Together, we pray, facing the east, the west, the north, the south.
Someone speaks: "they see us as brown people, they think we have no manners,
we aren't civilized, show them that we are different, leave here in peace.

Another voice: "we live together but apart, they don't know us, they are scared,
they call the cops on us, we need to let them know about this neighborhood,
our neighborhood, about La Mission."

Below us the Bay is elusive, silent.
Above us a woman in hot pink jogging clothes,
a golden retriever by her side, takes pictures.

Manissa Maharawal

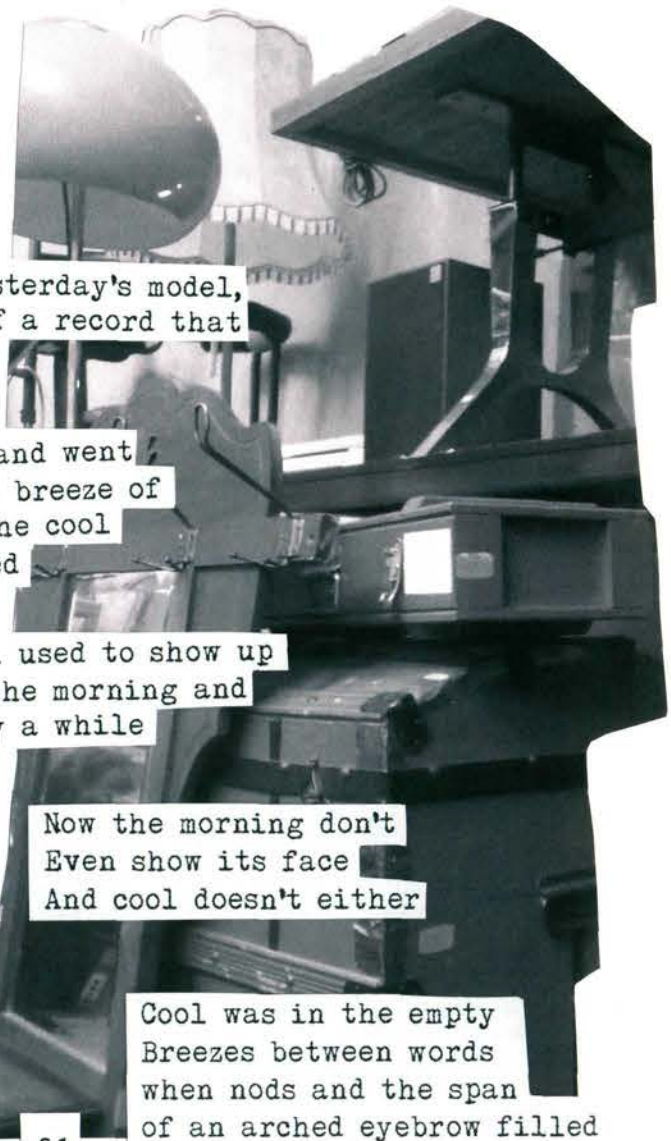

Killed by STPD on
March 21, 2014
JUSTICE
4
ALEX NIE
Rise
In
Poetry
ALEX NIETO

Death of the Cool

By Tony Robles

Cool don't live here
No more

Cool left like
Yesterday's
Headline



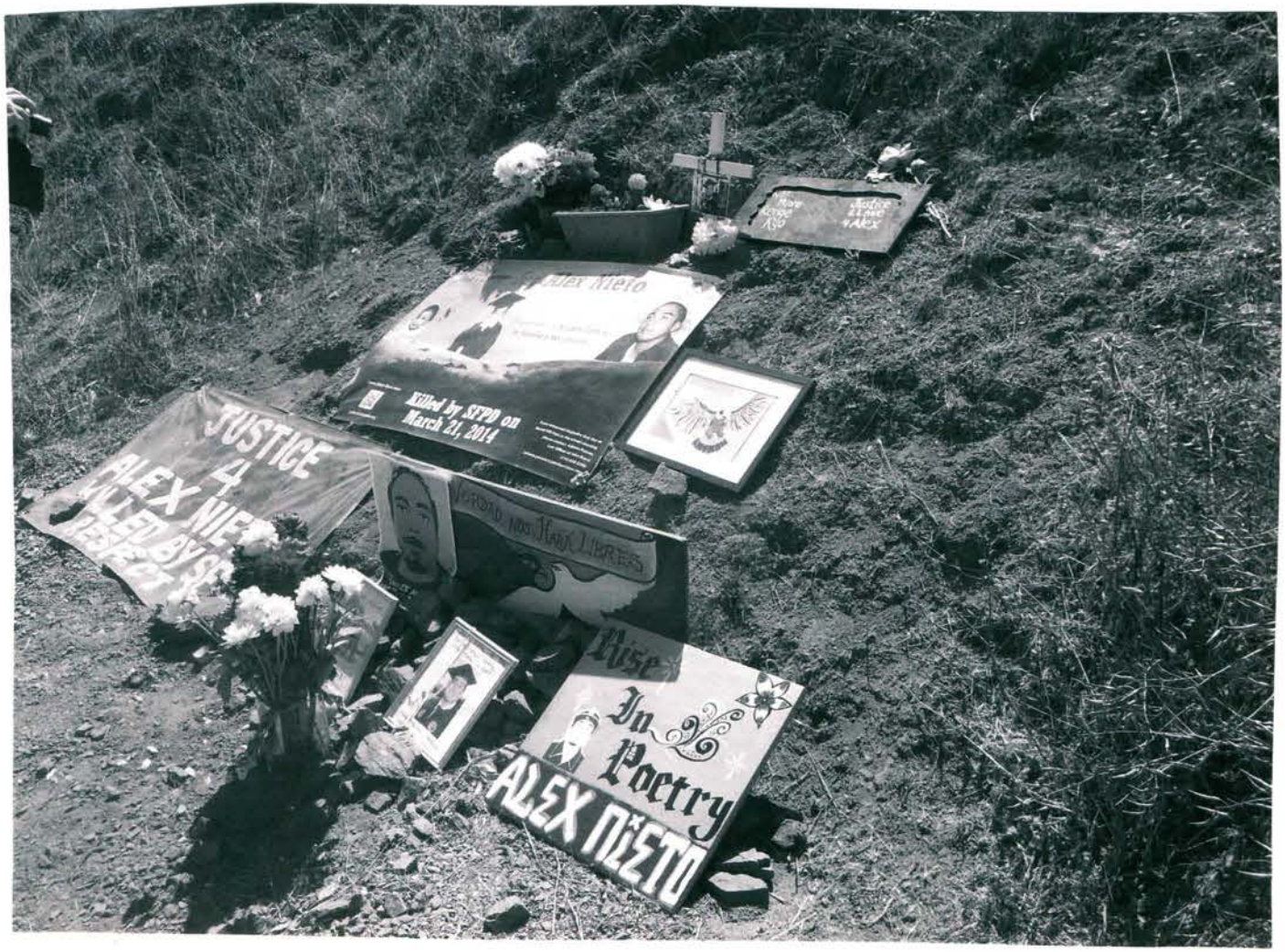
Cool left like yesterday's model,
Like the B-side of a record that
Never got played

Cool came and went
And in the breeze of
Coolness the cool
Disappeared

Cool used to show up
In the morning and
Stay a while

Now the morning don't
Even show its face
And cool doesn't either

Cool was in the empty
Breezes between words
when nods and the span
of an arched eyebrow filled
in what connected us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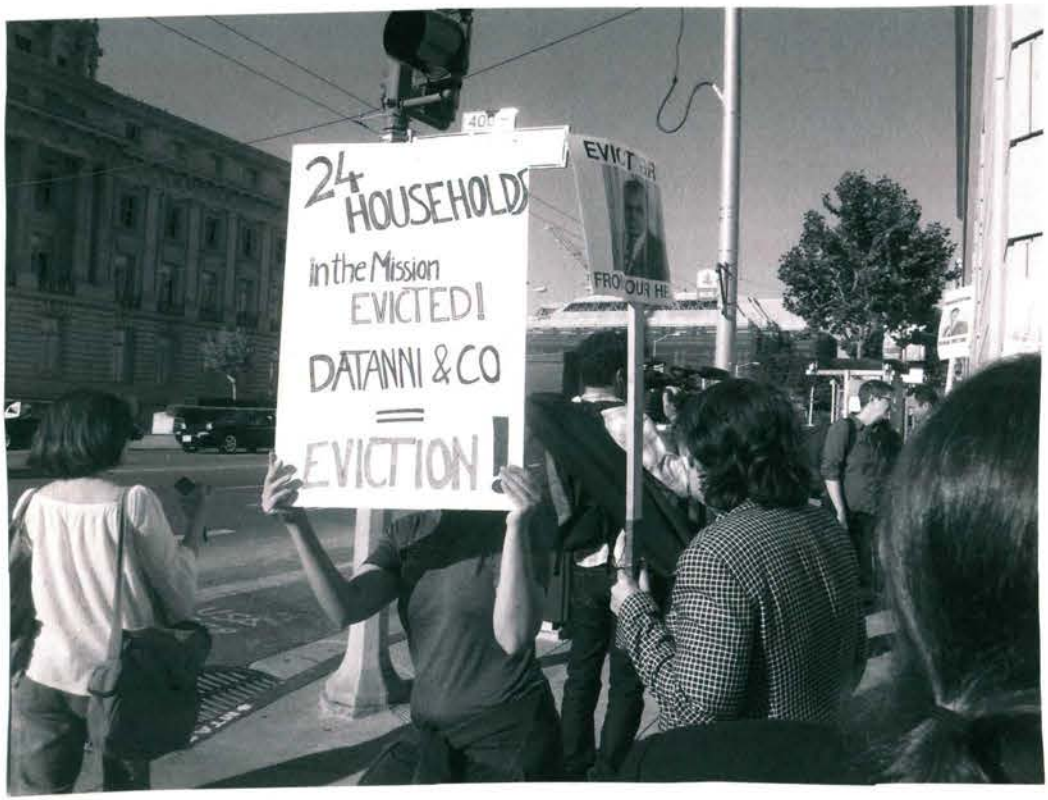


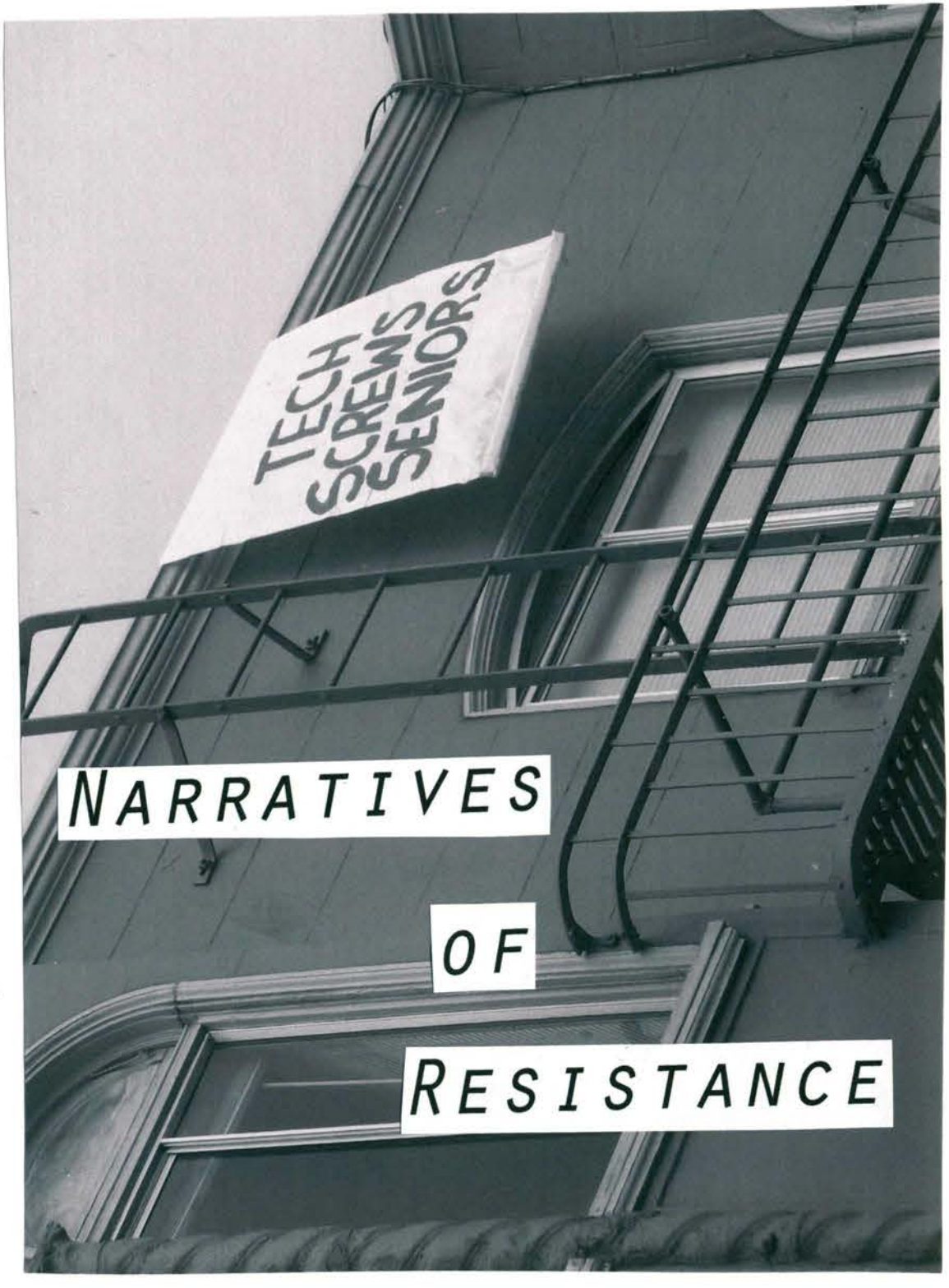
I came to San Francisco for the first time in 1995 and I fell in love with the city.

I remember how diverse it was. I remember the thriving artistic culture. I remember how weird the people were, and I mean that in the best way possible.

I loved how welcoming the people of the Bay Area were. I met many who were generous with their time and help when I was working to start my life here -- when I eventually moved to the Bay four years after my first visit.

This past weekend I walked around San Francisco and thought to myself that the city is no longer the one that I fell in love with. Granted, fragments of the soul it used to have are still haunting certain corners of the East Bay. But I wonder how much longer it will be before even those last vestiges are pushed out by the rolling banks of smog drifting across the waters of the Bay.

by Joseph East Bay



NARRATIVES OF RESISTANCE

Benito Santiago

I was born Ben Marcel Santiago and after 1971 I pretty much went by my root name, got blessed by my father to use my grandfather's name, Benito... 'the long short of it is Benito Senator Marcello Santiago. Benito is my father's father, my grandfather, my father's side name.

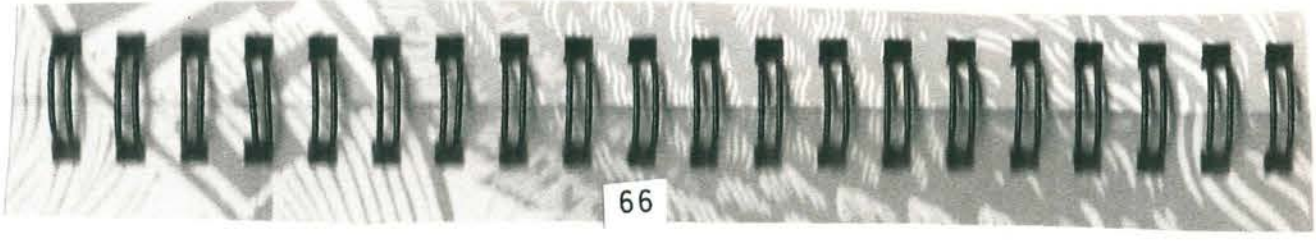
I was born August 2nd 1950. I'm a first generation born, American born, Filipino. And the early stages of my life was in the South of Market on Folsom, I guess like between 6th or 7th something like that, well I was too young. We moved from there, as a toddler to early elementary school, to the Fillmore district. 1051 Divisadero between.. Turk and Oak Turk and Golden Gate. The early childhood that I recall would be from the Fillmore District.

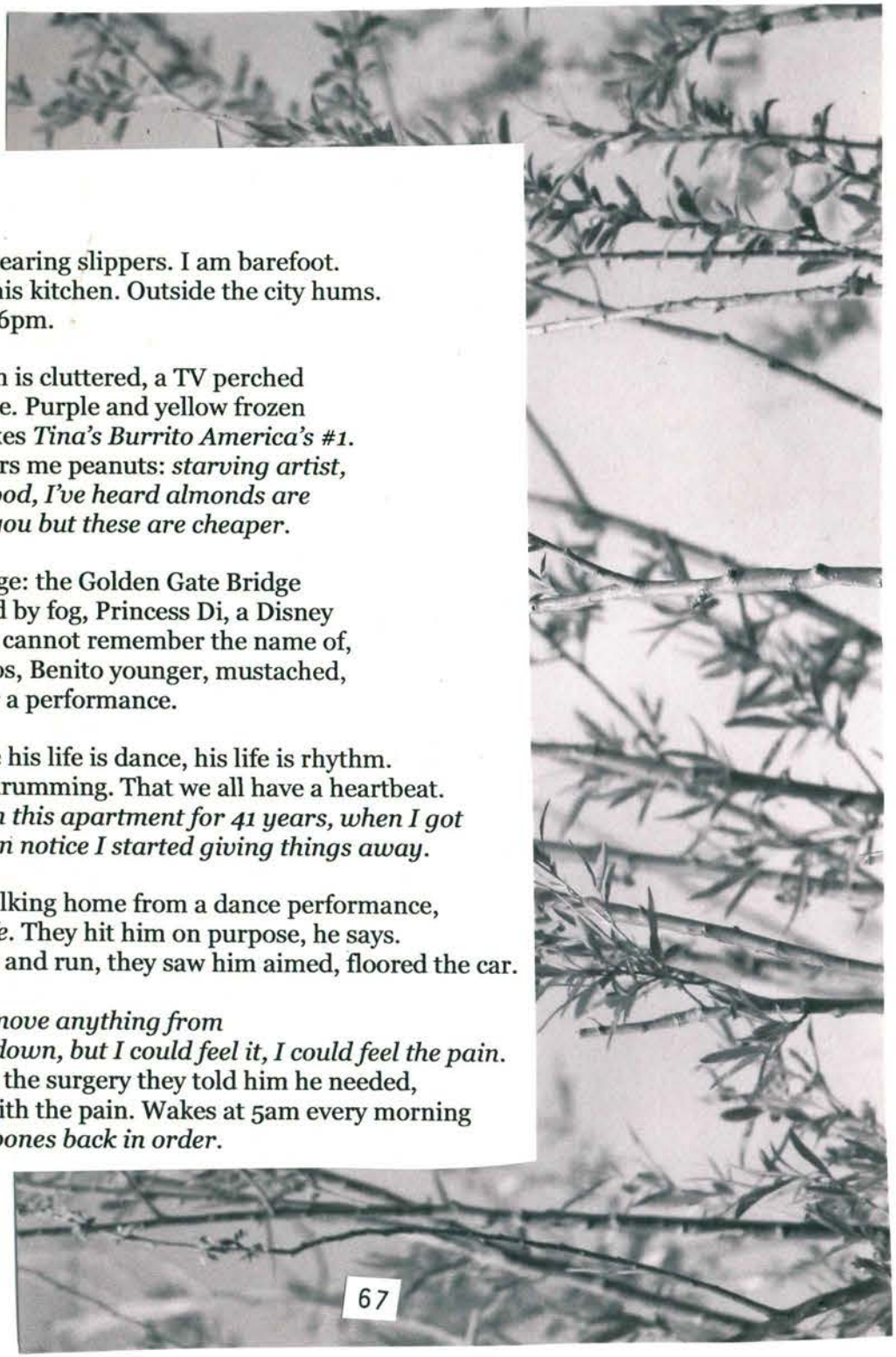
Teenage years..
...And I've been drumming for churches by this time, I got my first conga drums... because my first conga drum was 1964 and I was playing when I was living in Cortland district at San Francisco farmer's market on Alemany off of San Bruno Ave and Bayshore. We lived right there on the corner, 1025 Tompkins and I'm drummin' and this gentleman on the fruit stand, [imitating gentleman] 'Listen to me, say, Hey Boy! Come over here!' So I started playing drums and I started literally drumming up business for him. *I had an apple beat, a pear beat, an orange beat, a prune beat* and people started comin'. So I got my first gig, that's my first gig where I got three dollars and twenty five cents plus different kinds of fruit and then with that also I got to work with him out in Sebastopol picking apples and different melons.

Eliis act reform in Sacremento...
...Had I known that we were to lobby these two swing votes and this is me, coming from Benito Santiago woulda gone ahead of time and offered them a dance lesson *Waltz! FoxTrot! Tango! Rumba! Salsa! Merengue!* I would have, I would have proposed that and let them feel where a person is coming from on the ground level, on the front lines. A sample of an artist in motion. And by them sensing me I can sense where they're coming from, I can immediately sense where a person's coming when I make contact in partner dancing. Whether they're either with me or against me, I can tell immediately by the sense of kinesthetic touch. But by the way they sounded, I can also tell when they talk 'Oooh I think we got a problem here with this Ellis Act' mean that's just... that's blunt. 'Well, I'm gonna echo the Republicans.' that's pretty clear.

Interviewer: Do you think dancing at the protests has some importance then?

Dancing to me, and music equals life. Now, if I mentioned this before, I've said this to other persons, 'What, do you believe in Benito? What is you? What is it, what is it about you?' Well, this is how I feel and I start off with
"I live my life to dance and I dance my life to live.' as well as my path is, 'I drum my life to live and I live my life to drum.'





Benito

Benito is wearing slippers. I am barefoot.
We are in his kitchen. Outside the city hums.
Duboce at 6pm.

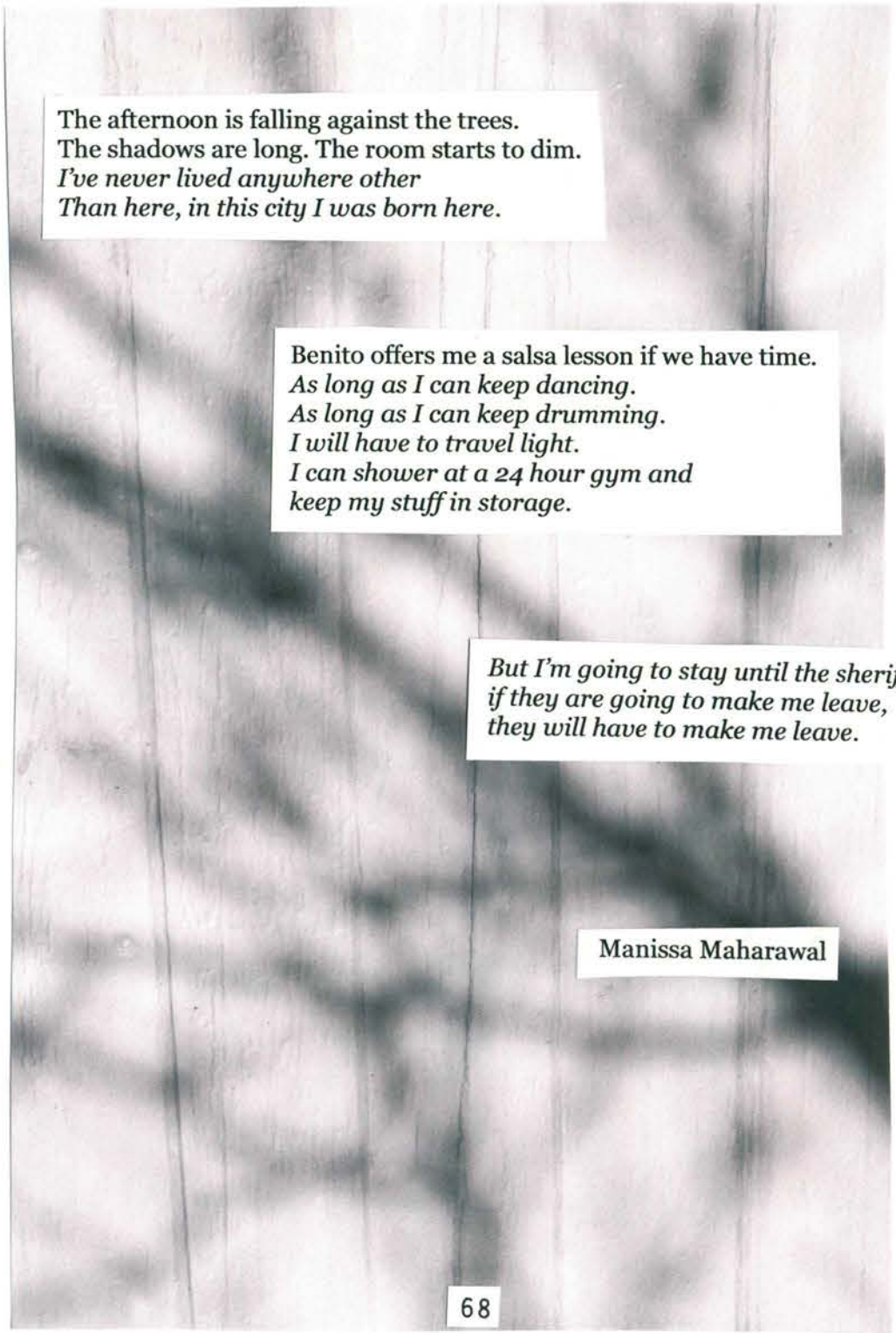
The kitchen is cluttered, a TV perched
on the stove. Purple and yellow frozen
burrito boxes *Tina's Burrito America's #1.*
Benito offers me peanuts: *starving artist,*
bachelor food, I've heard almonds are
better for you but these are cheaper.

On his fridge: the Golden Gate Bridge
surrounded by fog, Princess Di, a Disney
character I cannot remember the name of,
stage photos, Benito younger, mustached,
dressed for a performance.

He tells me his life is dance, his life is rhythm.
His life is drumming. That we all have a heartbeat.
I've lived in this apartment for 41 years, when I got
The eviction notice I started giving things away.

In 1980 walking home from a dance performance,
High on life. They hit him on purpose, he says.
It was a hit and run, they saw him aimed, floored the car.

I couldn't move anything from
The waist down, but I could feel it, I could feel the pain.
He refused the surgery they told him he needed,
still lives with the pain. Wakes at 5am every morning
to put my bones back in order.



The afternoon is falling against the trees.
The shadows are long. The room starts to dim.
I've never lived anywhere other
Than here, in this city I was born here.

Benito offers me a salsa lesson if we have time.
As long as I can keep dancing.
As long as I can keep drumming.
I will have to travel light.
I can shower at a 24 hour gym and
keep my stuff in storage.

But I'm going to stay until the sheriff comes,
if they are going to make me leave,
they will have to make me leave.

Manissa Maharawal

Claudia Tirado

I'm hanging, trying to hang on to this place - my dream in San Francisco - but my fingers are bleeding... instead of me just picking the fruits and doing the labor to fight for it. It's become more of like, I'm losing myself into the fight. I'm bleeding into it, to the point where I'm like, "God Claudia, do I really want to do this?" to myself?... or do I have a choice, do I ?... I'm kind of in the zone, in this weird zone. I've read a lot of literature at Berkeley and every one of them has nothing to do with the actual situation, but I always think of the Heart of Darkness book. It's a tiny little book and its became a part of so many movies, and you know, so that's how I feel, like I'm "lost in the cause!" Like "Ahhh!" I'm at the point where I can't return anymore to what would be my normal life anymore, you know, where I'd be like, "Oh... I'm just baking cookies!"

That's why I feel like Eviction Free SF is so awesome, because I feel like, "Ah, someone understands me." You know if I talk to Patricia, or I talk to Benito, I talk to people who have been evicted before who are there, to fight evictions - they understand. They understand what it feels like. They understand what it's... about. And that's how I feel a little more at home there, I guess.

I grew up in Tijuana until I was age eleven. At age eleven I, moved to the United States with my family. I was, born - well, I was born half, I would say half Mexican, half Chinese. My father was Chinese and he owned a grocery store in Tijuana, and he had a lot of pigs and animals in the back of the grocery store. And in the back of the grocery store was our house. And across the street was another house, a blue one. And then, the one behind the grocery store was yellow - I remember the colors. And my parents were separated. They were together, but there was a lot of tension between them and I'm not sure why, but I know it wasn't easy to be, to be a mixed couple. It wasn't easy, it wasn't easy for us to be... mixed. Even though it helped me a lot, that I looked more Latina than Chinese, my older sisters looked more Chinese than Latina, so there's a lot of discrimination. And they were always separated, so - I always remember, like, eating breakfast and lunch with my mom and always eating dinner with my dad. And the dinners were always very traditionally Chinese - noodles, rice, and fish, and things that he would cook for us and then my mom was like, the Mexican type meals - sopa de fideo, you know, tortilla soup, and so I just always remember that street crossing the street over to see her and crossing the street to see my father. And the street was made out of mud, so when it rained, the trucks would make like these great, you know, tire marks, and my sister and I would just jump up and down these tire marks all the time. And I also remember my father's animals - he had a lot of animals. He would barter with people that he would buy fruits and vegetables from - and if they couldn't pay him for whatever, they would barter a bunch of chickens and there would be like, a hundred chickens, like a hundred chicks at one time... and I was like "Wow, this is like a child's heaven opening (a box) with a hundred little baby chicks, so I would just stare at them all day...

Interviewer: And tell me if this is wrong, I hear you saying the people who live in San Francisco, working class people have a right to live in this city?

Yes, we have a right to live here and and work here. There's nothing wrong with being a janitor, there's nothing wrong with being a teacher, there's nothing wrong with being a bus driver, there's nothing wrong with being a taxi driver or a maid. What's wrong is the lack of, of humanity and respect that we get. Like this idea of the minimum wage - oh my God, how can you want a dollar more?

What's wrong with you? It's like, um, because I need to survive, too? My standard of living needs to be... okay? You don't want it to be any better, how can you live like that?

And there are *kind* people here in San Francisco. There are *kind* people - I mean, I just ran into my old nanny - not my old nanny, but this other childcare place that I took my son to, and she worked there, and now she works for a family - she tells me, "Oh, the family that I work for is helping me bring my daughter from Guatemala.


GBUS TO MTV
812 GUERRERO
Dolores Park
CAFE
LIBRARIAN AGAINST DISPLACEMENT
Families Evicted for 1 Google LAWYER
Google
STOP JACK
FROM Evicting
Google STOP
Evil Lawyer
Jack Halprin
Evicting Teachers
71

Rio Yanez

I grew up in the Mission district in an old Victorian building on 26th and San Jose. Growing up in the mission was both amazing and very dangerous to be a young Latino male in the 80s and 90s, but it was always beautiful.

My family has lived in the same apartment building since 1978; I was born in 1980. My father was one of the founding members of Galeria de la Raza. The mission was our home. We all worked there in different ways and went to school. One of the only reasons we've and they've lasted so long in San Francisco is because of rent control, without that I don't know where my family would be right now.

After 36 years in San Francisco my family is being evicted. We received our eviction notice in July of 2013 because my parents are in their 70s that gives them a year to vacate, under the Ellis act eviction laws.

It's been a kind of a terrifying experience. The relator company that owns the Victorian where we live has to force us out by trying to get parts of the building condemned, like the basement. They've tired to force by doing extensive repairs that have forced my parents to turn their lives upside down and move 30 years worth of belonging throughout their apartment so they can tear down walls.

It's just been a surreal year living under the threat of this eviction and there's been a lot of great community support. There was a fundraiser for my parents and it's been great. I think one of the things that has come out of this and one of the things we should definitely remember is that has mobilized so many people. It has inspired so much resistance and we need to keep that fight going. Because it's so public we've talked to city supervisors, politicians, we've appeared at rallies and events to talk about what out experiences have been. Whatever we can do as individuals and public figures that represent exactly what's going on in the city right now.

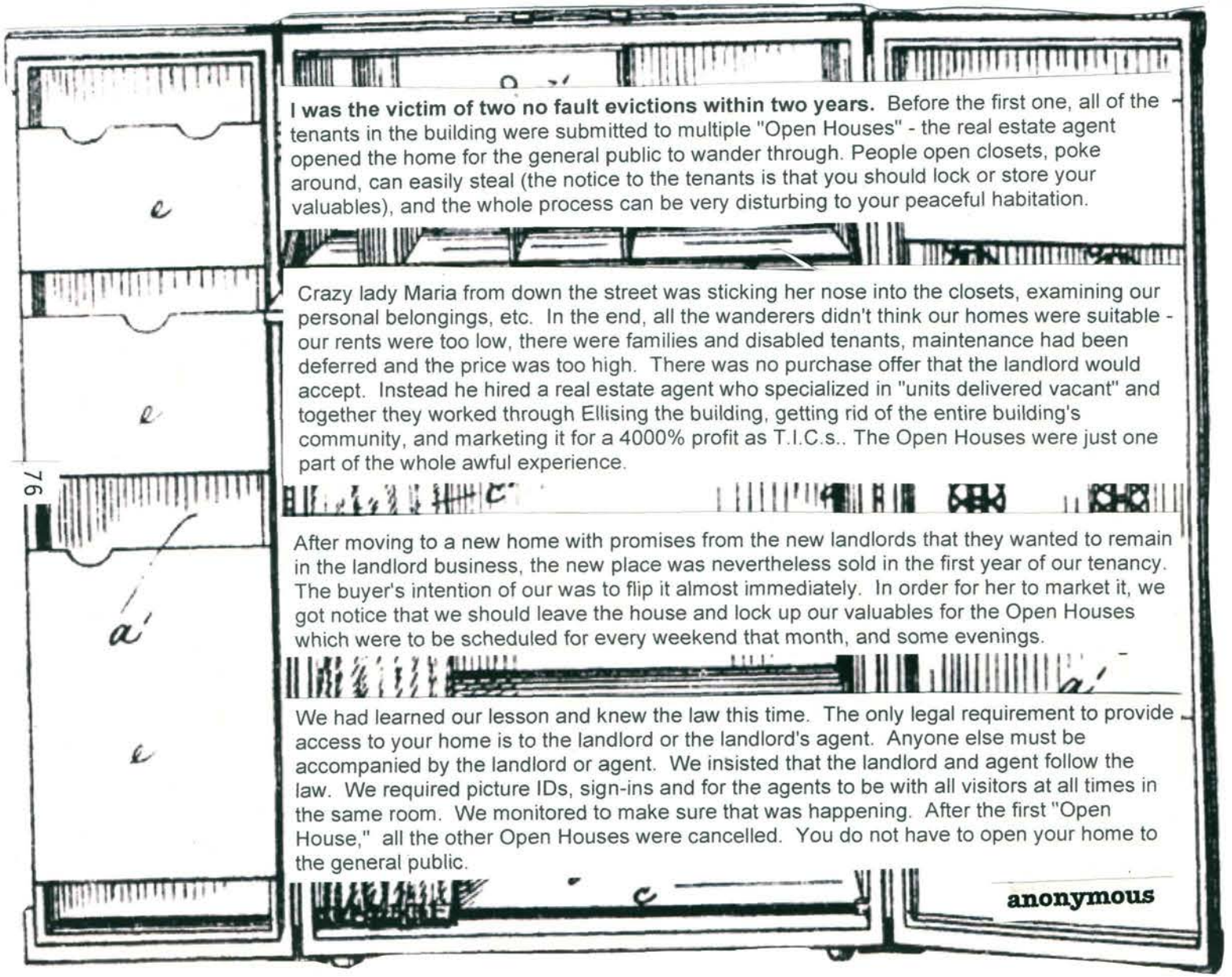
Ariel Lopez

My name is Ariel Lopez, and I'm from Chile, from South America, and I came to the country in 1994. And I've been living here in the Bay area since then, and in San Francisco specific since 1996. Always in the Mission district. So i left my family there, my parents and my sisters. And I stayed here doing what I told you for 7 years, without going back because I didn't have the papers to go, so it was illegal for the time. And then I met my wife, and I got my papers through her. I have 2 kids, and there is the little one goes to preschool and the other is too little to go to school. I'm a teacher, I'm a filmmaker, and I work in the community. I've been working a lot of community projects with another nonprofit and also traveling a lot too for that reason. Now, I'm multimedia director at the Boys and Girls club in the Mission club, so I work with kids. So, me and my wife we work in the nonprofit sector and we been very long time here, so we feel here our second home. And so, we were struggling but happy because life is not easy here too in terms of when you have a family, it's hard to get everything to satisfy your needs. So we're fine, until last September when we got this eviction notice.

I live in Florida and 23rd, we live in a 10 units building. We have families there, most of us are immigrant families. We have people living there for, I don't know, for 10, 20, 30 years. We have one 45 years living there, so he's like a 3rd generation living there. So, we have a community there, we have a long history. We start talking to each other, and we contacted Tenderloin Housing Clinic and they decided to support us legally. So that's what the lawyer said. At least you fight, at least you start organizing. So we start doing that, and we find out who was one of the big real estate speculators in the city. His name is Ash Gujral. He has a history of evicting all people already, so we're pace around this guy having too much money, why he's come to take, to mess with the life of a lot of people, with 10 families and who cannot afford to live here, so we're very mad.

In December 2013 we went to the Ash Gujral restaurant in northern valley and we send like a Christmas card, saying that the only gift we want for Christmas is to stay home. Kind of respond and he also realized that we are together and we have also the support of this organization who he knew that he fought against. So we tried to show him that we have some power.We start talking, we have some meetings, social meetings, barbeques in the backyard, and start getting together and we decide we wanna, we knew that together is our, being together was our power. We got together with also with another organization called the San Francisco community land trust, who is, they help tenants to stay in the buildings and buy the buildings and make cooperatives. So, we were very excited about the idea, and they were too, so we started getting together and meeting and we made an offer to this owner, because this man Ash Gujral was, he had the opportunity to do good, and sell the building. He has so much money and keep these families, 10 families there, and let us to be, to own our place. and in a good way is making a cooperative, which keep the cooperative, keeps the, you keep the low income families, low-medium income families in the buildings forever.

But, we cannot speculate with the building, we cannot resell for something like that. It's for whats going to be for families to live there forever. We still want to promote this model, in the city, in the communities of San Francisco and the Bay Area because it makes sense to keep the families in the city and also keep the diversity of the city. You know, people come to the city because of the diversity and cultural activities going on and the history. So, if we don't keep that and, then no one in the city is gonna lose the soul of the city, so we also have that social responsibility we think.



I was the victim of two no fault evictions within two years. Before the first one, all of the tenants in the building were submitted to multiple "Open Houses" - the real estate agent opened the home for the general public to wander through. People open closets, poke around, can easily steal (the notice to the tenants is that you should lock or store your valuables), and the whole process can be very disturbing to your peaceful habitation.

Crazy lady Maria from down the street was sticking her nose into the closets, examining our personal belongings, etc. In the end, all the wanderers didn't think our homes were suitable - our rents were too low, there were families and disabled tenants, maintenance had been deferred and the price was too high. There was no purchase offer that the landlord would accept. Instead he hired a real estate agent who specialized in "units delivered vacant" and together they worked through Ellising the building, getting rid of the entire building's community, and marketing it for a 4000% profit as T.I.C.s.. The Open Houses were just one part of the whole awful experience.

After moving to a new home with promises from the new landlords that they wanted to remain in the landlord business, the new place was nevertheless sold in the first year of our tenancy. The buyer's intention of our was to flip it almost immediately. In order for her to market it, we got notice that we should leave the house and lock up our valuables for the Open Houses which were to be scheduled for every weekend that month, and some evenings.

We had learned our lesson and knew the law this time. The only legal requirement to provide access to your home is to the landlord or the landlord's agent. Anyone else must be accompanied by the landlord or agent. We insisted that the landlord and agent follow the law. We required picture IDs, sign-ins and for the agents to be with all visitors at all times in the same room. We monitored to make sure that was happening. After the first "Open House," all the other Open Houses were cancelled. You do not have to open your home to the general public.

anonymous

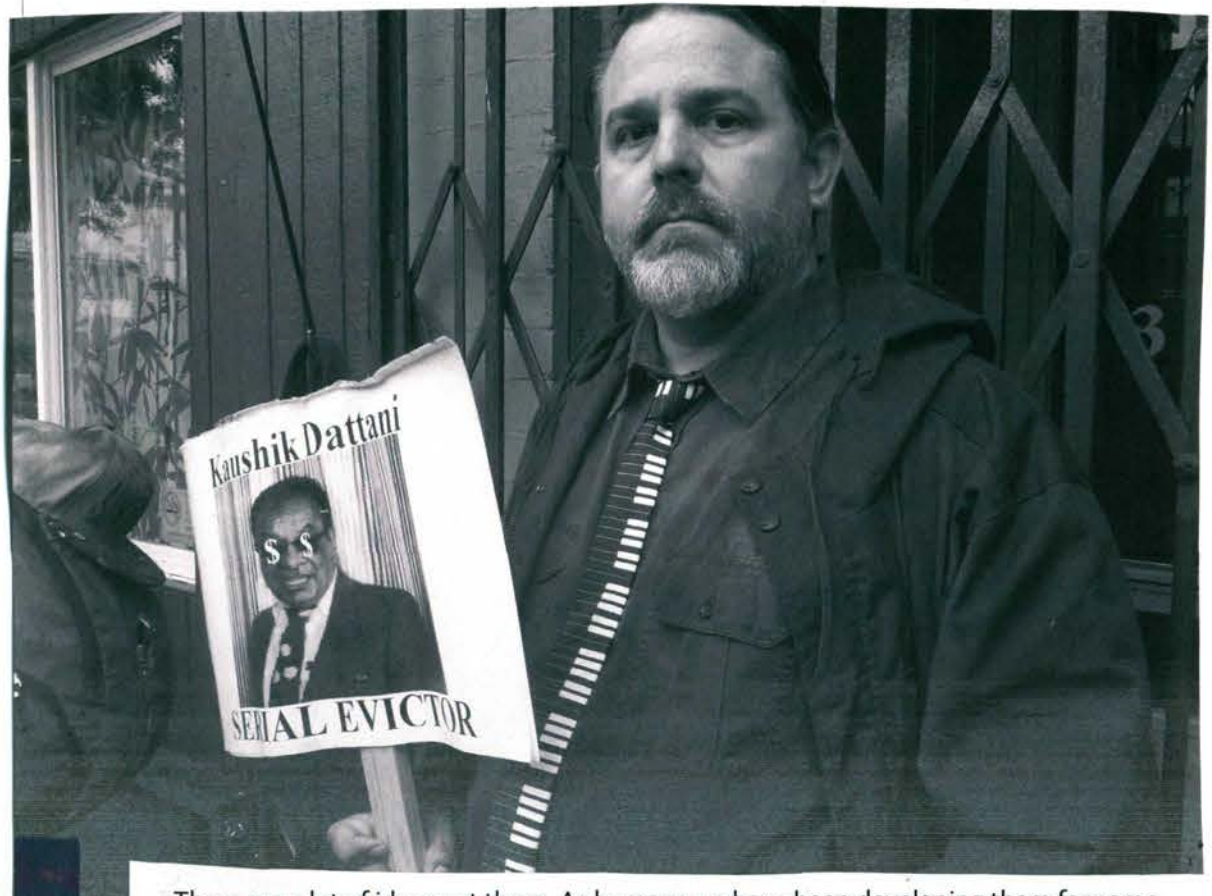
Contemporary Solutions to End Neo-feudalism

written by Sara Jean Yaste

Fall 2012 ø San Francisco, CA

"I have nothing to say, and I am saying it...and that is poetry as I need it."

-John Cage



There are a lot of ideas out there. As humans we have been developing them for some odd 10,000 years, continuously building on a shared foundation of knowledge. Considering this collective (un)conscience and history, It is sometimes ironic to ponder the words people use to convey the complexities of human society.

When referencing the entities or individuals who "own" the spaces we call home, the term "property owner" is a more accurate description and does not reinforce a power dynamic.

The current system of renting property undermines the autonomy of the actual residents of said property. This is, in effect, exploitative, as one or few people are profiting off of the resources of many. It is exploitative because the residents are usually the ones paying all of the expenses of the property, in addition to making money for the PO's, and yet have little to no decision-making power about their home and their future there (i.e. how long they would like to live there, how much they think is fair to pay, if they can have a dog or move their elderly mother in, etc.).

For example, the word "landlord," still ubiquitous in contemporary society, references feudalistic ideology. The term's origins predate the year 1000, when the average citizen was referred to as a peasant and was beholden to work land for a lord, land that the average citizen would never be able to own. The irony is that this is the same system contemporary average citizens have to endure when living in densely populated urban areas, and increasingly so in sub-urban and rural areas.

The words we use hold a lot of power. The construct of language is an incredibly sophisticated and diverse set of symbols. The words and ideas that we create using these symbols can also hold power over us.

It is my intention, in documenting ways of activating and maintaining collective space, to explore the ways people are rising up against this construct and creating their own temporary autonomous zones in a developed world; exercising their power to not be used by another for his or her individual gain.

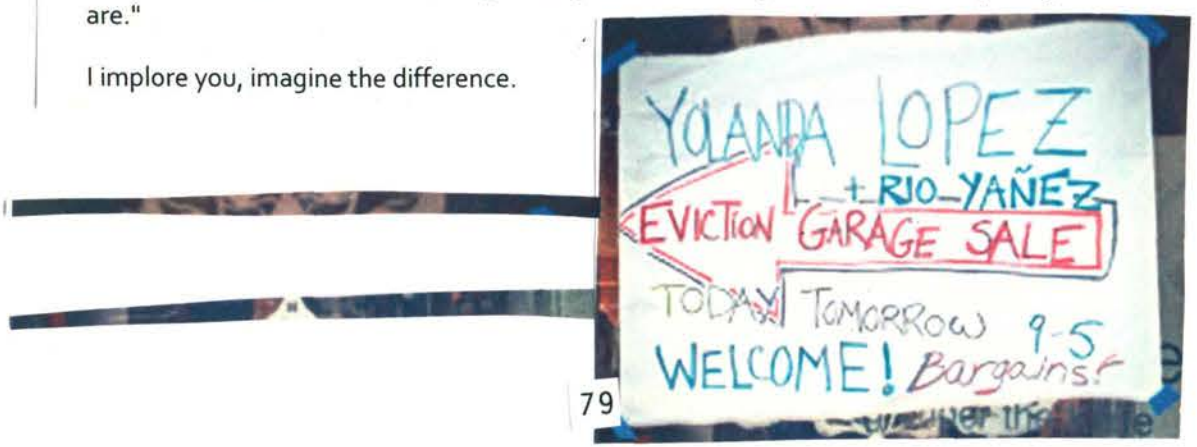
I personally believe that the idea of a human being "owning" land—land that existed long before people did and will exist long after them—is a modern human's delusion, almost like a sickness. It smacks of attachment to permanence, which is usually a dead end. It is a social construct existing in idea only, meaning it doesn't actually exist outside of the human mind. It's also completely ridiculous that we live in a society where people can hoard space and are tolerated so much so that they continue profiting off of others, without doing equitable work for the value they are receiving. Is this really just "the way things are?"

In the same way, a lot of people used to accept the fact that women couldn't own property, and were themselves considered property, as "the way things are," until women and others collectively rose up against that power structure to dismantle it. This is just one example where oppressed people rose up against human indignities to effect lasting change.

So how much longer will the average citizen continue to accept his exploitation through an unfair rental system? Perhaps he would stop if he knew just how skewed the stakes were. Imagine if, the next time you were looking to rent an apartment, the property owner was required to disclose what the actual house payments are, so you could make an informed decision about how much you are willing to be profited off of? Or imagine if the property owner had to consider collective rent paid over time, as a portion of ownership or "right" to a space? What if a property owner was not allowed to own/privatize more property than what he or she could reasonably use? Imagine how much public or collective space would be available if some of these measures were taken.

Adverse conditions will never change or improve if we accept them as "the way things are."

I implore you, imagine the difference.



-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Anti-Eviction Art Submission
Date: 2014-08-25 01:51
From: Kiaro Cho <[redacted]
To: ampzine@riseup.net

Hello.

I'm Kiaro Cho and I'm an artist.

I was not usually interested in political artworks. I was more interested in imaginations and fantasies.. However, my current house situation inspired me to make this piece.. The attached image is my piece. It is a cut through pleather. and I would like to tell you about my story briefly below...

I live with 6 other roommates (who are all also artists as well) at 20 Apollo st. in San Francisco. Our house was foreclosed in January and has been owned by 'One West Bank' which is originally located in long beach LA.

Before the foreclosure, we believed our house to be the last sanctified place for low-income artists and workers because the rent kept being pretty low and affordable.

We seven of us all together are very much like family and the best friends. As artists, we have all different practices- painting, performance, music, writing, gardening, animation, cooking, sculpture- we learn from each other, exchange new ideas, create art and community events, so on.. Our house is not just a place for living. It is a place for creation, happening, events and education. So, we have been trying to keep our house and purchase it a group with the help from ACCE and 29th Street Capital.

However, there was a buyer recently. His name is John Tran and his intention was to move in. We have been fighting against him with many different types of strategies such as sending facebook messages and hanging up the huge banner on the house. We have not got the eviction notice yet, but he has not given our house back either. It is still in escrow.

We really want to keep our house as an affordable place where artists and musicians can concentrate on creating beautiful works without worrying about expensive rent in San Francisco. We just need more time to get the financial support from other sources. We cannot give up. We are fighting right now and will fight till end.

Thank you.

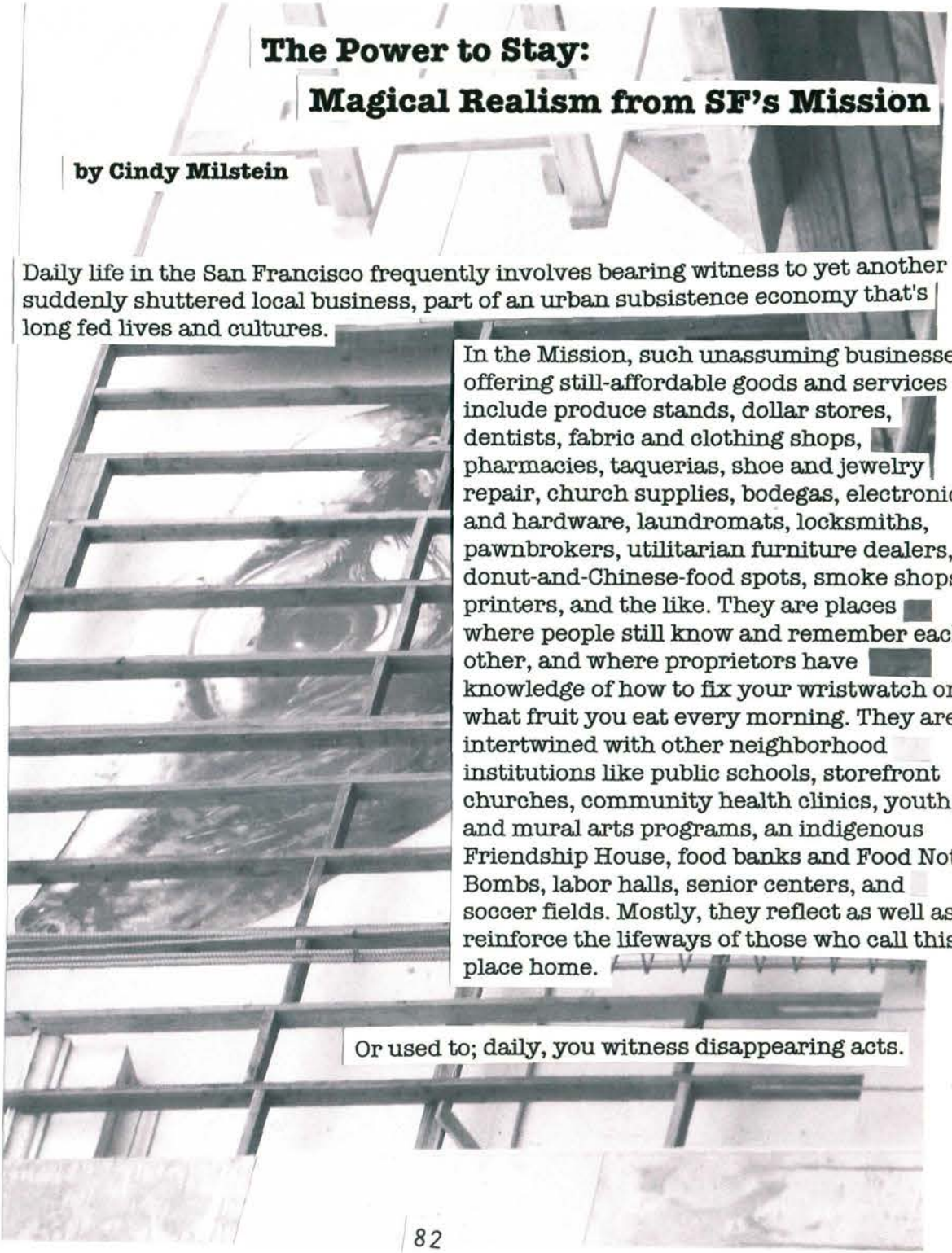
Kiaro Cho

Welcome to the Apollo House, located at 20 Apollo Street in Bayview Hunter's Point. More than just a house, this place has been a home, a sanctuary, a gathering space, and an inspiration for a number of low-income artists and activists in San Francisco. Now owned by One West Bank, the residents of the Apollo House have come together to resist capitalist concepts of "ownership". Though we face eviction, our message is clear: We Are Unevictable.

The Power to Stay:
Magical Realism from SF's Mission

by Cindy Milstein

Daily life in the San Francisco frequently involves bearing witness to yet another suddenly shuttered local business, part of an urban subsistence economy that's long fed lives and cultures.

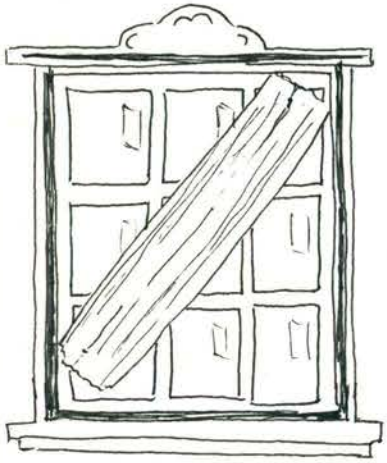


In the Mission, such unassuming businesses offering still-affordable goods and services include produce stands, dollar stores, dentists, fabric and clothing shops, pharmacies, taquerias, shoe and jewelry repair, church supplies, bodegas, electronics and hardware, laundromats, locksmiths, pawnbrokers, utilitarian furniture dealers, donut-and-Chinese-food spots, smoke shops, printers, and the like. They are places where people still know and remember each other, and where proprietors have knowledge of how to fix your wristwatch or what fruit you eat every morning. They are intertwined with other neighborhood institutions like public schools, storefront churches, community health clinics, youth and mural arts programs, an indigenous Friendship House, food banks and Food Not Bombs, labor halls, senior centers, and soccer fields. Mostly, they reflect as well as reinforce the lifeways of those who call this place home.

Or used to; daily, you witness disappearing acts.

You walk by the bedraggled but sweet California Poppy Flower Shop ("the nicest owners ever!") on 16th Street with its affordable plants spilling out the door on flimsy shelves and milk crates. The next day its windows are covered in opaque plastic, haphazardly taped in place. All is gone, save for the bright-orange hand-painted sign -- offering floral arrangements for everything from "funeral" to "party" to "first communion" -- still hanging over a mom-and-pop space that is no more. A few months later, this space will be remodeled as an office with a sign reading, too appropriately, "e-waste."

There are many such windows. Overnight they get covered in brown paper. Soon a crisp white-paper building permit will be added, supplying dates and fine print and foreboding.



Overnight, daily, you wake to witness a building whose front is now masked in raw plywood. The next day the now-painted plywood, in smooth-dull blue or gray, boasts a stenciled "Post no bills," as if trying hard to pass itself off as street art. Actual street art is increasingly buffed over, even those expansive murals that have long been the Mission's signature.

Whole new businesses and entire new apartment buildings pop up like unnatural mushrooms from one day to the next, all of them confidently scaling a higher and higher economic ladder in terms of their price tags. Nearly every city block seems vulnerable to a 5-story, 115-unit here or a 10-story, 350-unit glass, steel, and smug redevelopment plan there.

The Mission more than ever is home to an indistinguishable flatness, prefabricated for a too-heterogeneous group of resettlers: young white males who make over a hundred thousand or far more, and who line up for the private white buses with darkened windows that roam the streets and patronize bright-white stores selling individual pieces of manicured dark chocolate, or the new bars and restaurants with tiny flickering candles and "barn wood" decor that seem to form a seamless line of near-private spaces. It is as if all these people desire is a $10,500-a-month, two-bedroom apartment situated atop growing numbers of look-alike hot spots within which to wine and dine after their fancily paid workday many miles south.

The joke, it appears, is even on the hipsters who came here in earlier dot-com times. The ironic sensibility that they pioneered has now been enclosed today into things like a sales gallery for the art of selling the "New Mission" in the form of luxury developments such as Vida, Spanish for "life," but spelling "death" in any language for most residents of what's left of their community.

For daily life, too, entails being witness to the "clean up" that is going on in the Mission, where police concentrate their work on picking off poor and brown people. The cops, in near 24/7 presence now at places like the 16th Street BART station, can always find some infraction -- things that if done by someone else would be ignored. Suddenly, certain faces and bodies get stopped, ticketed, and/or arrested far more frequently for walking, biking, parking, sleeping, sitting, peeing, eating, and socializing in the wrong spots. A fifty-five-year-old lifelong San Franciscan who now "lives" on 24th Street BART plaza, when hassled by police, asks, "Where am I supposed to go? This city is my home."



Daily, before each and every unique place and person is gone, you try to imprint their images on your mind. You start to notice that others are doing this too. A figure painted into an old mural on a school's exterior now has a "stop the evictions" placard in their hand. A new mural on the side of another building portrays buses being blocked by strong hands, like the real-life Google and Apple buses that are increasingly getting hindered.

Increasingly, daily, you notice and engage in organizing. There's a coalition standing firm against a proposed luxury housing and in favor of neighborhood self-determination. Renters join in solidarity-not-charity actions toward an eviction-free SF. Folks share Coffee Not Cops along with tenant rights and "defend the bay" info. Demos demand housing for all, starting with the least housed. There are even some small victories; a few homes are saved, and a few people can stay put.

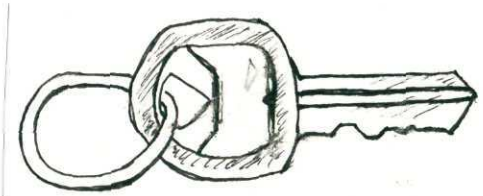
Many have already been displaced and erased from these lands in earlier upheavals. Beneath the chain drugstore and fast-food spot, Chinese grocery, Latino bar, and public transit hub across the street from you - slated for demo and replacement with million-plus-dollar condos - lies fragments of the first indigenous village and its dead, killed off long before this was even San Francisco.


HOMES
NOT FOR
PROFIT,
BUT
AS
A
GARDEN
FOR ALL.


GROWTH
FOR
COMMUNITY
NOT
PROFIT

Bob Thawley


RESISTANCE = HOM
TENANTS HERE FORCED OUT



For those who were able to remain through it all, however, and those who came later and have become part of the social fabric, the potential death of your neighborhood can't go unchallenged. With others, you draw a sharp line in the sand: "We don't want to go. This is our home."

The power to stay is, in essence, the power to retain one's humanity, one's agency, autonomously and collectively. It is to remain caring and empathetic toward others, against forces that would beat the neighborliness out of us, take all we have, including our spirits, our souls. So for now, you join with others to find a key to unlock the mystery that none of you know the answer to. You spin stories of future and rebirth: eminent domain, community- and worker-controlled cooperatives, squatting, neighborhood assemblies, land trusts, commons. . . .

* * *

Note: A far longer version of this piece originally appeared on my blog, where you'll find numerous other tales of life and politics; see http://cbmilstein.wordpress.com/2014/06/10/the-power-to-stay-magical-realism-from-sfs-mission/.

BENCH
by Tommi Avicolli Mecca

(dedicated to the AIDS memorial bench, which one day disappeared from its spot in front of the old AIDS Quilt office near Castro and Market)

this is a bench made of wood
wood made of trees
trees made of earth and sun
bench that cries
bench that sings
bench that breathes with the spirit of those
who have sat on it
leaned against it
smoked, eaten or cruised on it
bench that fears the cold
that has an empty stomach sometimes
that longs for love
bench that can't forget the snap chatter of loud queens
the tired aching of old women
the impatience of children

vomit and spit have stained its slats
weather written the seasons on its finish
still all have been welcomed
give me your poor, your tired
your huddled masses yearning to be warm
under a worn old blanket

bench with torch always lit
arm raised
a tireless lady's vigil

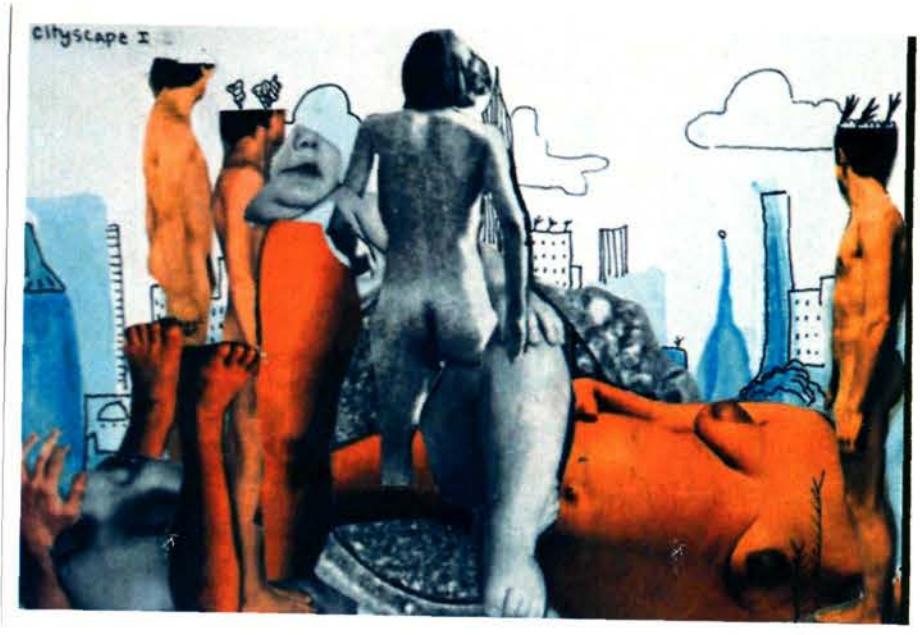
suddenly stolen from its spot
uprooted from its earth
tossed alone into a businessman's yard
held hostage
businessman says he's tired
of the homeless sleeping on it

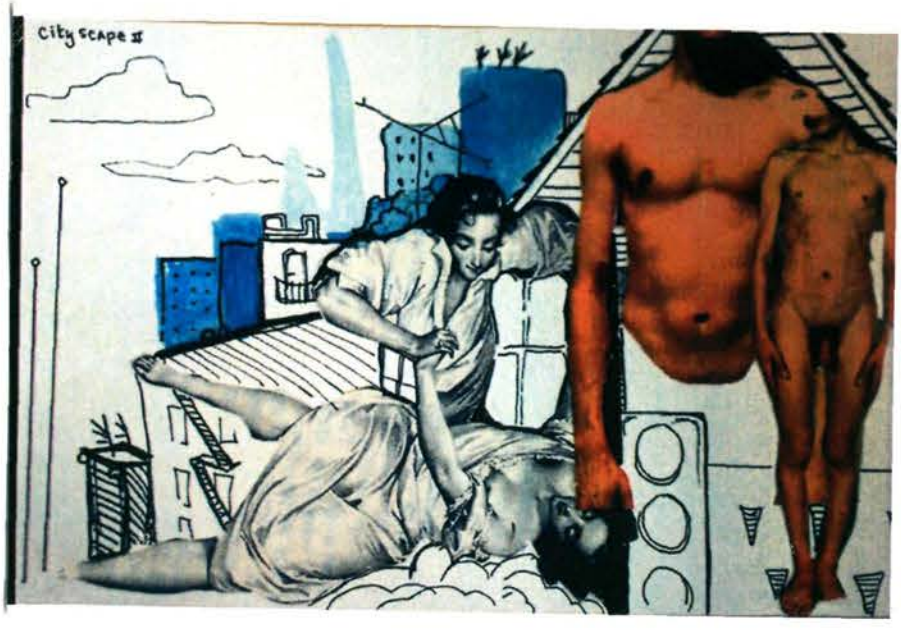
bench made of flesh and blood
bones of those who wander the night
of those who seek a pillow
of those who once found refuge in churches
but churches have locked their doors
god has hours now like doctors and lawyers
marble altars and gold chalices
protected more than lives
blown through the streets like old newspapers
discarded on pavements
stepped over
yelled at
cursed

without even a bench
to rest their heads on

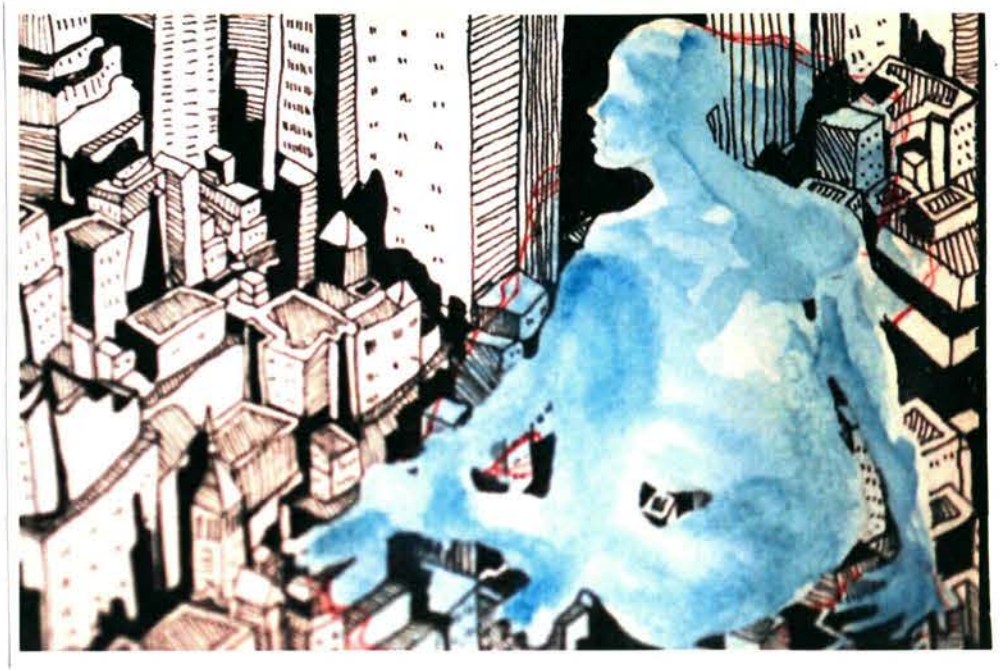
such a simple concept a bench
a few boards
some nails
yet like so many other things

it's only for those we deem worthy





Madeleine Gendreau **CityScapes I, II**



CityScapes III, IV

12 Wins of 2014 San Francisco

Upon a background of no-fault evictions in San Francisco, these next pages reveal twelve of the wins that we have had in 2014 thanks to a growing anti-eviction movement made of an array of tenants, community groups, collectives, and organizations across the city. Although we have endured tremendous losses this past year, we have also witnessed direct action, radical legal maneuvers, and movement building culminate in triumphs. As we move on to 2015, we have to remember that when we fight, we win. Onwards!
A map of these wins can be seen here:
http://www.antievictionmappingproject.net/wins2014.html

Ana Gutierrez

Lucky Street

Ana Gutierrez, a senior Latina resident of the Mission, was being Ellis Act evicted along with 87-year old Roberto Edmundo Alfaro 87, wife Ana Maria, and their son Roberto Eligio Alfaro by by an out of town speculator who lives in China, Xiuguha Lian.

As her son Polo Gonzalez described at our eviction ghost story night, if the eviction had gone through, it might have killed his mother, as the stress of having to leave her home was causing immense health problems. Ana had lived in her Mission district flat for 35 years and raised all her children there.

In 2011, Xiuguha Lian bought the property, and gave her brother authority to Ellis Act Ana and the other tenants. Ana decided to fight back with help from Causa Justa Just Cause and the Tenderloin Housing Clinic. Raquel Fox represented her, and won in court. As Ana says, "Keep fighting. No one can help you if you don't help yourself. CJJC held me up and didn't let me buckle.

Now with the new agreement I'm more peaceful and can finally sleep through the night instead of waking up every 2-3 hours wondering what's going to happen." Maria Zamudio of CJJC explained, "We know legal battles are hard and long which is why it's so important for folks to stay organized and connect with other tenants going through the same thing. We're inspired by Ana's victory and hope it inspires other tenants as well."

1049 Market Street

1049 is definitely a win of 2014. There are 80 units in the building, largely for under $1000 each, that were slated to be evicted for demolition this year. Since Twitter moved in to the Mid-Market area, we've seen evictions and rents enormously spike in the region. New condos are being erected left and right to house wealthy tech employed workers.

If the demolition went through at 1049 Market, most likely to create new live or work space within the Twitter Tax break region, it would have been the largest eviction since the 1970s. However, with the Housing Rights Committee, the tenants organized and fought back. After many protests, including to the landlord John Gall's out-of-town home, the different eviction notices received by the tenants were revoked, allowing over forty tenants who weathered the storm to remain in the building.

As the Examiner reported, the Department of Building Inspection came to the conclusion that John Gall "had no grounds whatsoever to go to the tenants." As Tommi Avicolli Mecca explained, “The tenants are not moving. This is proof that when you stick together and fight, you can win.”

55 Dolores Street

Mary Elizabeth Philips

At the age of 97, Mary Elizabeth Philips received an Ellis Act eviction notice by the speculative investment company Urban Green Urban Green is also attempting to evict tenants in North Beach. David McCloskey of Urban Green wanted her out of her home on her 98-year-old birthday.

Mary has been a San Franciscan since 1937 and in her current flat for 50 years. She was at the center of the S.F anti displacement fight last year when she and her building fought their Ellis Act eviction. The company evicting them was Urban Green Development, a serial evictor in S.F.
Through a public pressure and direct action campaign along with Eviction Free San Francisco, Senior and Disability Action and so many others, Mary won her right to stay in her home.

Mary was quoted by a reporter in a Tech Crunch article from July of last year..
"Young lady, I'm 98 years old, "I'm in fair shape for an old lady of my vintage, but I'm not going anywhere. They'll have to take me out of here feet first."

After numerous direct actions, beginning in 2013 outside of 55 Dolores Street, and culminating in a 2014 visit to Urban Green headquarters in the Marina, international attention was generated. Fearing bad press, Urban Green rescinded the eviction notice for Mary.

Mary turned 99, with a birthday celebration in her S.F home this year.

Renita Valdez

15th and Valencia

Renita Valdez, aka Bombshell Burrito, was being Owner-Move-In evicted from her home, along with her roommates, on 15th Street between Valencia and Guerrero. Born and raised in San Francisco, this would have been Renita second OMI eviction.

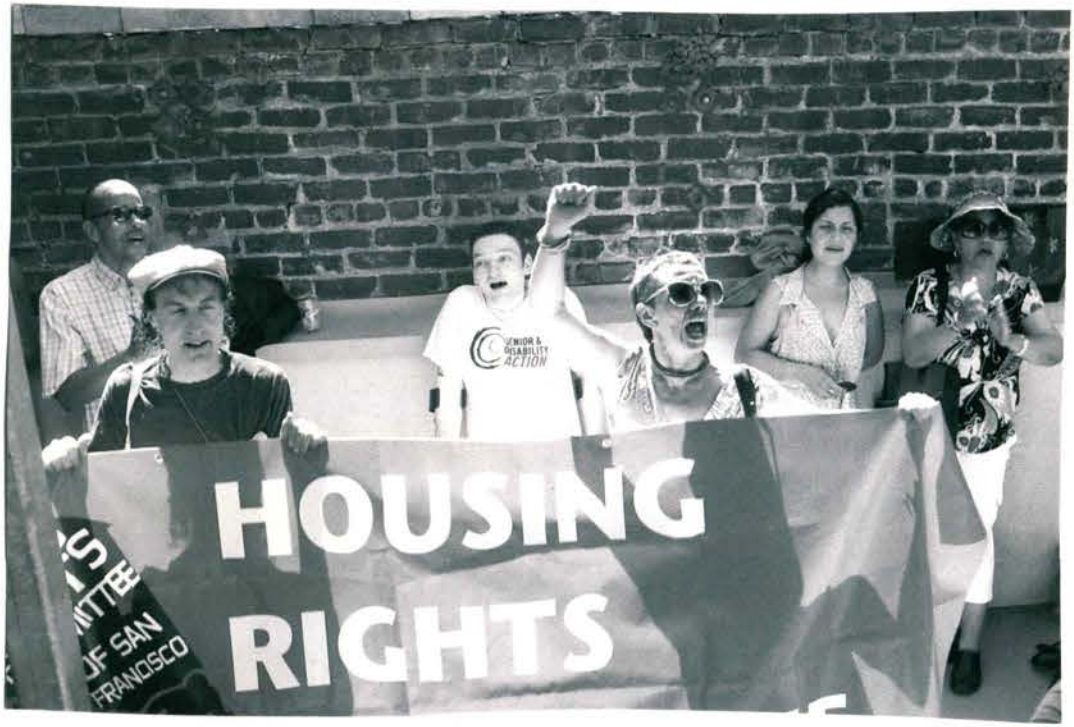
As a drag queen immersed in drag culture in the city, Renita has already witnessed the gentrification of Polk Street, the Castro, and now the Mission. Determined to remain in her home, Renita fought this speculative OMI eviction with the legal help of Raquel Fox from the Tenderloin Housing Clinic and won.

Lisa Gonzales

251 14th Street

Lisa Gonzales, along with her daughter, mother, and grandmother, were being threaten with eviction by Jason and Julie Chan of Barbagelata Real Estate. Lisa had been conceived in their home on 14th Street, and was alarmed when after condo-converting the building, Jason Chan had refused to offer her the lifetime lease that he was supposed to. Instead, the unit was put on the market and subjected to invasive open houses in which she overheard Julie Chan telling prospective buyers that they could simply evict Lisa and her family after buying the unit.

Instead of succumbing to pressure to vacate, Lisa launched a direct action campaign with POOR Magazine, the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, and the Tenants Union. After a direct action at Barbagelata Real Estate, Lisa and her family won their fight.



741 Ellis Street

Nine units of mostly Cantonese- and Vietnamese-speaking tenants in Section 8 Housing were issued a 90-day notice of eviction by landlord Ty Durekas in February, three months after he had purchased the property.
Because the building was constructed after 1979, it was not protected under rent-control. In April, the tenants held a rally with the Housing Rights Committee, the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, and Senior and Disability Action, where tenants demanded the eviction rescinded.

Lan Lam, 54, explained in Cantonese, "We have been applying for many different housing options and it's all wait list and lottery, so there's not much hope in finding a place to move".

Shortly after, Durekas did decide to rescind the eviction. He explained that he would hire Vietnamese- and Cantonese-speaking Realtors to approach other landlords to help the tenants find alternative housing. He would also pay for tenants' security deposits and first month of rent as many landlords are reticent to take Section 8 applicants due to potential wait times associated with the housing authority. As he explained, "I probably didn't fully understand all of the stress that this would generate for everybody, so I'm actually happy that I figured out a reasonable solution".

Patricia Kerman and Tom Rapp

3305 20th Street

Kaushik "Ken" Mulji Dattani, serial evictor, issued an Ellis Act eviction notice to Patricia Kerman and Tom Rapp from their home at 20th and Folsom. Patricia is a disabled senior and has lived at her home for 27 years, the last 15 with her roommate Tom.

With no where to go, and with a determination to fight for their home and the heart of the city, they launched a direct action campaign with Eviction Free San Francisco and with representation from the Tenderloin Housing Clinic. As Tom said, "I don't think it's right to displace long term tenants so new people can move in. I don't think it's right to displace the very culture that makes SF attractive to move to. We are fighting for the sole of the city."

Numerous protests transpired outside of Dattani's office at 22nd and Bartlett, and at one of his homes in Mill Valley. Dattani is notorious for illegal evictions and cases of harassment against undocumented Latino residents of the Mission, but he uses the Ellis Act too, as he was doing to Tom and Patricia. However, with representation from Steve Collier, they were able to defeat the Ellis Act in court, much to Dattani's dismay.

NORTH BEACH TENANTS

566 Lombard Street

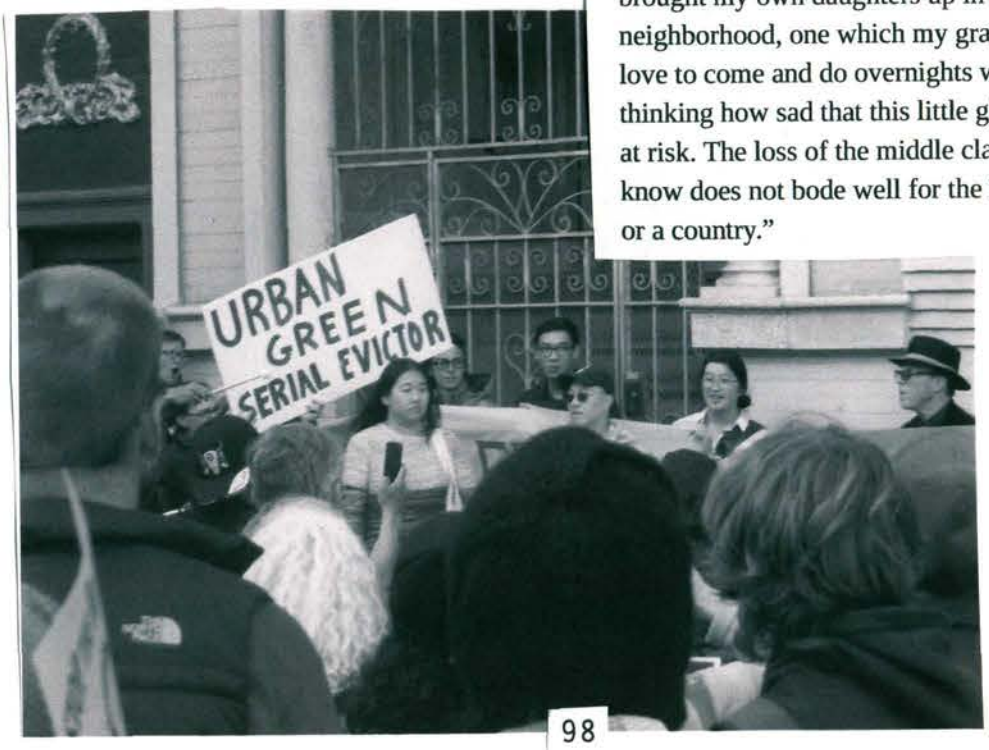
Tenants at 566 Lombard Street received their Ellis Act eviction notice from the largest investor evicting tenants throughout San Francisco - Urban Green Investments. Urban Green, led by David McCloskey, CEO of the company, is the son of Tom McCloskey, who runs Cornerstone Holding out of Colorado. Urban Green is a subsidiary of Cornerstone Holding, and is connected to dozens of LLCs, most of which are linked to properties throughout the Bay Area.

McCloskey, along with his father, and the president of the company, Ellis Act evictor Peter Lynch, use the LLCs to buy up rent-controlled buildings, and then evicted the tenants through buyouts and the Ellis Act. Grandfather Matt McCloskey established the oligarchic family wealth in property development during the Kennedy era with cost over-runs on government building contracts while serving as the Democratic Party treasurer and fund-raiser.

566 Lombard has been the only building in which all of the tenants in an Urban Green owned building refused buyout offers, all remaining in their homes and organizing together. It is easier to have an Ellis Act eviction rescinded when the tenants of a building are all still in their homes.

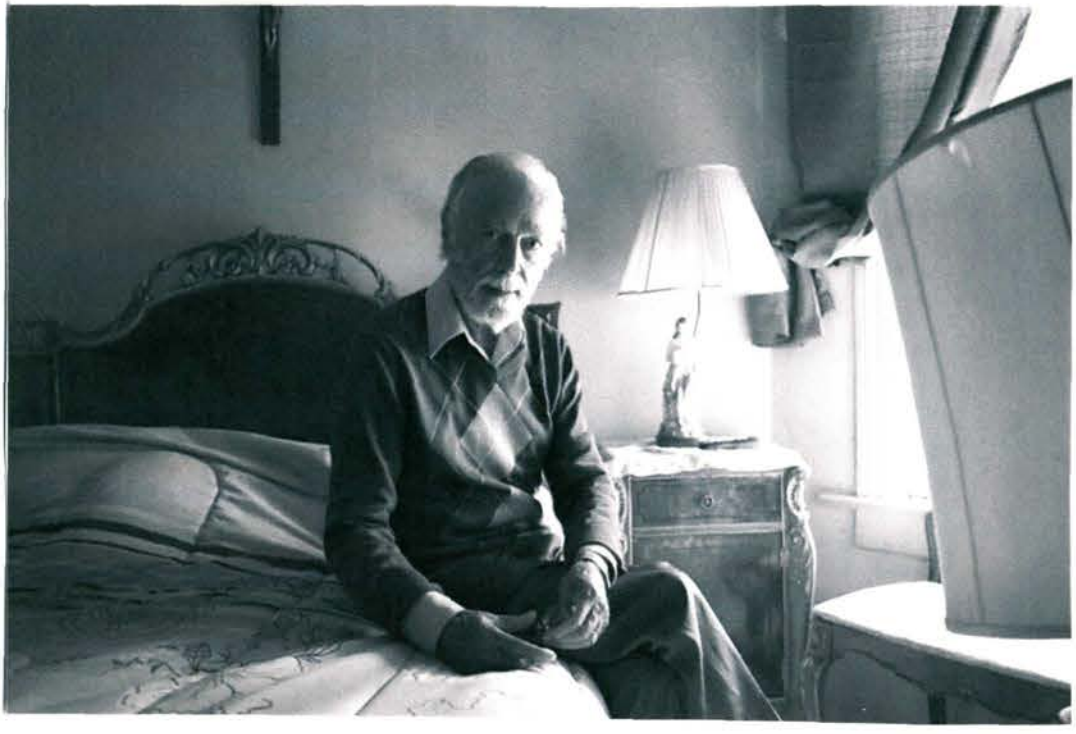
After immense tenant-led organizing with support from the Chinatown Community Development Center, many of the tenants have since initiated the North Beach Tenants Committee to organize against evictions in North Beach.

Marla Night, one of the tenants in the building, explained of the current eviction crisis, "I like to use the term 'demographic cleansing' since that is what these evictions of moderate to low income people amount to. Though I guess the senior issue does get sympathy, and, of course, I am a senior, I think that there should be equal emphasis on families and artists. I tutor at Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center and was talking with a ten year old who lives with her mom and dad and brother in a rental unit a few blocks from me in North Beach. Having brought my own daughters up in this lively neighborhood, one which my grandchildren love to come and do overnights with me, I was thinking how sad that this little girl's family is at risk. The loss of the middle class as you know does not bode well for the future of a city or a country."



DIEGO DELEO

566 Chestnut Street



Diego Deleo, a 79-year-old poet, immigrated to San Francisco from Italy at the age of 17. For many years he worked as a laborer, helping build homes in San Francisco. In 2013, Diego received an Ellis Act eviction notice from Zacks Freedman, the law firm representing his landlord, Martin Coyne. Zacks Freedman is one of the City's most notorious Ellis Act evictors, and has been used by many serial evictors such as Urban Green.

Diego decided that he would fight back, and with the help of Eviction Free San Francisco and Senior and Disability Action, a protest was organized that lodged pressure on Coyne. With representation from the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, the eviction was defeated in Superior Court. Commenting on DeLeo's victory, his attorney Steve Collier contextualized, "tenants should realize that they can defeat Ellis evictions. The more tenants challenge these evictions, the more speculators will realize that they cannot make a quick profit off San Francisco's red hot real estate market.".

2880-2898 1/2 23rd Street

In September 2013, ten units at 2880-2898 1/2 23rd Street recieved an Ellis Act eviction notice from a notorious landlord, Ash Gujral, a speculator more infamous for foreclosure evictions than Ellis Act Evictions. For instance, in December 2010 his True Compass LLC attempted to remove Josephine Tolbert, a 75-year-old great-grandmother and cancer survivor who makes her living offering child-care for low-income families.

Upon receiving their eviction notices, tenants at 2880-2898 1/2 23rd Street began to organize with the Alliance of California for Community Empowerment, and sought legal support from the Tenderloin Housing Clinic. There was a Christmas action at the end of 2013, which landed so much pressure on Gujral that in March 2014, he announced that he had sold the building. The new owner immediately rescinded the eviction, resulting in victory.

Steve Collier of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, who represented the tenants, explained, "This goes to show that tenants who stick together and fight Ellis Act evictions can force real estate speculators to back down. This is a great victory for not only the residents, but our city as a whole. It's a sign that Ellis Act evictions are not inevitable and change is possible."

Theresa Flandrich

513 Lombard Street

Theresa Flandrich is more known for her activism in the anti-eviction movement, but, for the past year, she has been fighting an Ellis Act eviction herself in North Beach. With Marla Knight and other tenants who fought their Urban Green eviction on Lombard Street, Theresa is an active part of the North Beach Tenants Association. She also organizes with Senior and Disability Action to help seniors fight for their homes and right to the city.

With representation from Steve Collier from the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, the eviction that was to displace three residents at 513-519 Lombard was quashed in the SF Superior Court in August. Now she is back to fighting against illegal Airbnb and short term rental conversions in North Beach and throughout the city.

BENITO SANTIAGO AND THE TENANTS OF 151 DUBOCE

Benito Santiago, along with co-tenants at 151 Duboce in Duboce Triangle, received their Ellis Act eviction notice in 2013 from Pineapple Boy LLC. With the help of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, Benito learned that Pineapple Boy LLC was actually Michael Harrison, serial Ellis Act evictor and co-founder of Vanguard Properties, the largest real estate company in the Mission.

Benito, a Filipino educator, musician, and dancer born and raised in San Francisco, refused buyout offers and instead launched a direct action campaign with Eviction Free San Francisco, and with support from Senior and Disability Action, the Manilatown Heritage Foundation, Matt McFarland of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, and other community groups. After numerous direct actions targeting Michael Harrison, a significant demonstration took place inside of Vanguard Realty, in which protestors were physically harassed by employees of Vanguard.

Immediately after, we discovered that Harrison was withdrawing the eviction, all due to the effects of direct action! Subsequently, after finding out that Harrison was putting the unit back on the market as he had never intended to be a landlord in the first place, Eviction Free San Francisco and the Tenants Union worked with the SF Community Land Trust to help take the building off the market and keep it within the hands of the tenants and the community land trust.

Benito and the tenants at 151 Duboce are part of history in the making; not only was the eviction rescinded through direct action and with support from multiple community groups, but the building is now being taken off the market altogether. Let us see more of this in 2015!

How to Fight your Eviction an introduction Eviction Free San Francisco

1. Get the Info:
Are you really being evicted? Landlords try to trick people into moving out. Landlords try to harass people into moving out. It happens all the time. You don't have to move because your building is being sold, the landlord says you have to move, or they offer you money to move.
You have rights!

Get everything in writing and document what your landlord or property manager says.
Talk to tenants rights groups. A good place to start in S.F is the San Francisco Tenants Union and The Housing Rights Committee of S.F. In the East Bay start with Causa Justa Just Cause.

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2. Get Support:
Its helpful to have a lawyer, if you have been served an "unlawful detainer" (eviction notice) you will need one. The resource page has some links to low cost legal help. The resource pages of many of the housing rights groups listed also have contact info for lawyers. Start making calls and try not to be discouraged. Learn to tell your story clearly and succinctly.

Talk to the others in your building and gather information, resources and support. Buildings that stay together and fight evictions are more likely to win. Talk to your neighbors, knock on doors/flyer. Solidarity!

The emotional impact of the possibility of being displaced from your home and community is enormous. Get the support you need from family, friends and others who are fighting their evictions. One of things thats great about EFSF is, because tenants are working together to fight their evictions there is a lot of support and understanding. Mutual aid in action is a beautiful thing.

3. Research your Landlord :
What other properties do they own? What other businesses do they own?
Have they evicted folks before? What did those evictions look like? What kind of evictions were they?
There is a lot of info you can gather from public records and the internets. The Accessors office, County Court, Corporation Wiki and simple web searches. We've done an entire workshop on this alone and its more we can go into here.

4. Pressure Them to Drop the Eviction:
Whats your goal? What do you want? (some goals are more collective and some more personal)
Know your timeline: do you have a year to fight? 60 days?

Make your eviction visible on your own building with a banner or signs in windows. Make it clear to anyone buying the building you are going to fight.
Look for their public face and places to do actions that will have an impact on them.
Where do they live?
Do they have a business you can target with a direct action or picket? How bout their partner? Family?
Bars they frequent, clubs they belong to, hobbies, dating sites, yelp, social media, the lawyer they use, the real estate company they use.
Organize a call in/ email campaign to their home or business.
If they are going to threaten our homes and loved with eviction, we are going to disrupt them where ever they are.

Size and frequency of actions: some actions you want to be big with lots of press and supporters and some you want to be secret with a tight affinity group and no publicity.
Being persistent, courageous and also flexible, if something isn't working, try something else.

Make connections with other groups. If there are seniors or disabled folks in your building SDA (Senior and Disability Action) is a great ally. If you live in an SRO, the SRO collaborative. If your a nurse or teacher, how bout the unions?

Press wrangling for your actions! Again this an entire workshop on its own. Writing a press release, when to send it out, who to send it to and following up with them.

Making Art (signs, banners, costumes, chalking the sidewalk etc) and messaging for your action! Using the moment to talk about your building and also drawing the larger connections in the anti displacement fight: Other folks who've been evicted, market rate developments everywhere, tech boom, police brutality and "broken windows policing", city hall/planning dept. policy, income inequality, austerity...

Be creative and dont stop till they drop the eviction!

5. Get involved in the bigger fight: Until we change the system that not only allows but encourages throwing people out of their homes, the wave of evictions wont stop. See if there is a place for you to get involved in the larger fight against evictions and displacement. Build the movement!

Some Important Resources:

San Francisco Tenants Union www.sftu.org Languages spoken English and Spanish

Housing Rights Committee of S.F hrcsf.org English and Spanish

Tenderloin Housing Clinic www.thclinic.org Spanish and English

Eviction Defense Collaborative evictiondefense.org English, Cantonese and Spanish
(will find translation for other languages)

Eviction Free San Francisco evictionfreesf.org English and Spanish

Anti Eviction Mapping Project www.antievictionmappingproject.net

Coalition on Homelessness www.cohsf.org

Senior and Disability Action sdaction.org

Chinatown Community Development Center chinatowncdc.org Cantonese and Mandarin

South of Market Community Action Network hwww.somcan.org Tagalog and English

Central City SRO Collaborative www.ccsro.org English and Spanish

Dolores Street Community Services www.dscs.org English and Spanish

Our Mission No Eviction Spanish and English

ACCE www.calorganize.org S.F and East Bay Spanish and English

The East Bay Solidarity Network eastbaysol.wordpress.com East Bay

Poor Magazine poormagazine.org East Bay and S.F

Causa Justa Just Cause http: cjjc.org S.F and East Bay Spanish and English

ANTI-EVICTION MAPPING PROJECT
2015

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