



2017

# the moon cuts like pye, but not cherry

jacqueline Avery collins

*Virginia Commonwealth University*, collinsja4@vcu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd>

© The Author

---

Downloaded from

<http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/4902>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact [libcompass@vcu.edu](mailto:libcompass@vcu.edu).

the moon cuts like pye, but not cherry

## Table of Contents

<i>pg. 1</i>	<i>title page</i>
<i>pg. 2</i>	<i>table of contents</i>
<i>pg. 3</i>	<i>abstract</i>
<i>pg. 4</i>	<i>kneading(needing)</i>
<i>pg. 7</i>	<i>how tough is this crust</i>
<i>pg. 10</i>	<i>in calling for stutters</i>
<i>pg. 12</i>	<i>o u r k i n d</i>

## Abstract

THE MOON CUTS LIKE PYE, BUT NOT CHERRY

J. Avery Theodore Daisey  
MFA Sculpture & Extended Media 2017

In our work we prefer asking questions to telling stories.

As a means to invigorate and cross-examine our current reality, our histories, and our definitions of 'self' we peer through a disparate lens cultivating *pockets*: compartments longing to be filled, gaping holes between maybes, masked, and bound to their binding. We relate these *pockets* anatomically to that of the sublingual space or *potential space*. It is here, at the tip of digestion, where transmutation ensues. This evolution manifests as a series of states of possible beings and territories through *live scenario*. Traversing the possibilities of potentiality: the intermediary that rejects binary distinctions; a space for kindling queer questing, celestial spaces, vulnerable and vital spaces where our *yes- and no-*oriented brains shake hands in corners with their opposites.

With one seed still steeping in our current reality, we wonder of this manifestation of ***could***:

How do we actualize domains with the capacity for continuous becoming?

How do we voice such tempestuous exaltation?

In our work we recognize these striving spheres as a *live scenario*: environments enacted by formidable humyns, all parts of one entity and breathing a singular breath. Performers, linked through laborious action devoted to the amalgamation of the whole, indwell para-lingual states.

Multifaceted, interconnected, inclusive, and fluid, these transmutable bodies exist within a space of alienation. Critical to its existence, these spaces are sensorially immersive, smells of yeasts, fruits, fruits of labor, of perspiration, allow visitors to take part in transference. Thus, generating an autogenous system that challenges the social and physiological structures igniting our mistrust for the noxious macrocosm we inhabit. A space terrified of becoming the sun, instead, basking under the moon. In its magical orientation, night allows for these arcane spaces to both veil and reveal; un-locatable in time, absent of gender distinction, and seizing neither a future nor past. Rather, digging within parts lost, suppressed, gaseous, and misunderstood discovering and depicting the things we cannot see.

Virginia Commonwealth University 2017

Matt King, Sculpture & Extended Media Department Chair

(Speculative Fermentation conceptualization/writing in collaboration with Enya Von Schill and Ian Gerson)

## Speculative Fermentation

organisms refuse 'birthed' state and become/unbecome to **nother**

(a result of life denied of air)

(this speculative fermentation is in question of/with what 'birthed existence' may entail/entitle)

dusk → gloam → eventide  
grounder - → penumbra - → shadow  
Kombucha → Sauerkraut → Yeast → Mold → Lily Pad  
decomposition - → 'unproductive' - → waste - → excretion - → discarded  
multiplicity → symbiotic organisms → kneading(needing)  
collective archive - → memory - → hystory  
toiling/reconciling/embodying — queer/other(ed)/**nother**

## kneading(needing)

Per second starvation---> eating their 'selves' to fill their **nother** bellies

*pulled at once from hanging bejeweled vessels,*

*pre-skins, as not yet*

*skinned to access the mobility they yearn for*

Sopping up the last bit of yellow on our plate

sun-sighed

uncooked

## Adjusting to the overactive-eating of the sun

: the culture has grown as shown on table L-S(1)

*not the crumbs of what it was, but what it is-as-us*

squeezing the rapid growth between our toes

a piling,

injection of intersections, locking the not-yet

the *could*

in the transmogrified state of **nother**

pickling the intestines so they're easier to digest

but while digesting the digestion they are dissecting an impression of the many before-wombs and

pre-verbal states in their used-to-be's and potent potentialities

:as the situational self [**nother**] establishes no ground, their yearning suffocates (2) in incomplete shadows. As dusk drips at the tip of digestion the situational self [**nother**] toils to un-earth(3) a de-universalization/de-territorialization of discharge: as result.

## exo-terra-established tyme

(de-universalizing//de-territorializing terra-established time)

the **nothers** delineate in **embody(ed) labor archives:**

witnessing their 'selves' alongside self, shelved in decomposing becoming (4)

Slow-draw slippage

cuts rock,

yeasty pockets, sweat-wet skins, milked mothers  
labored skins merge teas, yeasts, kraut, ferments, molds  
passed(past)  
To the lefts left in pulley handshakes

78-82 °F  
in heat

**quddital waves** --> *ground in yeast*  
*thirsting last drops of sun*

troph of less-deep sours  
H.Lou nutrient source

**sowering cabal** ---> *ground in kraut*  
*kombucha-milking*

means of mid  
tyme wall

**kemmer well** ---> *ground in soil*  
*clover care*

well below well  
holder

**Uninterested in the suspension of disbelief**

“Pertaining to theatricality + ‘reality’ = how a space that is tailored for specific bodies/identities can oftentimes be conceived as **unrealistic---uncomfortable** to that who is not included.

This creates a kind of exclusionary experience for this particular viewer.

Is theatricality created by this viewer in response to their lived conditioning/experience and what they believe certain people and/or bodies SHOULD be doing”

collaboration as survival  
decomposition as backwards walking in opposite direction in spirals  
yearning  
unbecoming what it means to be human/organism  
challenging the hierarchical taxonomy used to classify and quantify organisms  
**(usually by means of productive or use-value)**

- (1) troph of less-deep sours
- (2) result of life denied of air
- (3) divorcing of terra-established time/space orientation
- (4) unbecoming

*a stumbling sore, (prior to rain showers) as if symphonic rays could stop such a stutter.  
we revel in the techniques of maybe and we aren't so likely to say aloud we are indeed relevant.  
our joined parts siphoned—like gas; by mouth, through tubes; like veins.  
the infiltration only begins here...  
a scatter,  
like wild cockroaches on cat food*

## **embody(ed) archive:**

what does it mean to archive unbecoming?

decomposition?  
death?  
failure?  
the 'unproductive'?

**embodied archive—archive of feeling—archive of trauma—body AS archive  
QUEERING ARCHIVE\*\***

**a collective archive of feeling—→ memory → hystory  
collective yearning**

how can we concoct a space which flourishes in the 'unproductive,' the waste, excretion, the forgotten or never had a chance, the discarded?

THIS SPACE YEARNS:

YEARNS FOR THE "use/utility/validity" IN THE UNCOOKED, THE RAW, THE INEDIBLE, THE REGURGITATED, THE CAST OFF, THE FORGOTTEN, THE MISTAKEN, AND STUMBLER, THE JELLIED, THE JAMMED.  
not 'one' nor 'i'

how can power in itself 'unbecome?'

can this happen by concocting a space that is interested not in 'future,' future-tellings, or utopia, but a space or spaces toiling in the possibility of possible?

one which isn't constructed with a humyn standing on a hill, peering down with a furrowed brow and confused tinge,

one asking why 'we' can't just get out of the mud as they did:  
stepping left then right, left then right  
reminding their self: "i" can do it  
language wrapped in promises of life and *continuing on*

"on to what?" we ask?

for the 'we' standing in the mud

for the we neck deep and still locking fingers

for the we using the mud to draw up plans on bare backs

for the we locking arms because getting out aint an option.

## HOW TOUGH IS THIS CRUST?

I learned to make my biscuits in the deep south cuttin' cold butter in with knives, up at 4 am, and I always struggled to choose whether to go fishin' or make biscuits with Nana.

*and at this moment that didn't make me a dyke or queer.*

*at this moment i hadn't quite learned the southern art of keepin' secrets.*

*at this moment i hadn't been trained on the brand of logic that condemns particular spaces to uninhabitable islands.*

*at this moment I hadn't yet tasted the sweet-salty cunt of a southerner at this moment i didn't apologize in mouthfuls*

**yet**

salt is in my blood.

In a way, it was so easy to hide in Carolina, no one ever questioned the difference between a corn-fed Ravenel 'girl' or a 'girl' who stuffed fingers and tongues in slits. We all have the same crust. One that can't be shaken off no matter how tough the soap or long the shower. Ours is made from that salt in our blood that excretes from our pores, merging with that sweat-wet southern air.

Even in our humid humility,

we were never apple pie, but a salty soured-sweet morsel stuffed with **swollen** peaches and **bloody** strawberries.

and we never needed extra sugar.

a concoction of *darlin'* charm, *pickin'* our own switches, switch hittin' on our softball teams, *teamin'* with the same barriers bred into the walls we were always *gnawin'* and *clawin'* on never interested in the collapse, more *leavin'* some mark, markin' our bodies, punished for having a slit splittin' us in half *shoutin'* no, but there was always a stutter in the hearin'

*it couldn't happen to 'a girl like you'*

Mama always said "don't you be the fool who swings second."

And we know because we bruise just like peaches and have never minded the blood that trickles down our scarred legs because we are also scab-pickers, puddle-jumpers, and tadpole-watchers. we never stood for that talk of being made of sugar and spice and everything nice, *mimickin'* our southern aunts, standin' hard, toes feeling the mud, hip-popped to one side with an arm around the waste(waist) and the other nestled in our hip bone.

*"aint yer mama purty"*

we were never the kind for crisp consonants.

That d r a w that makes us take longer to say what we mean

and when we mean it we stand even harder with hard points hard stares with hard crusts that can only be broken by the same butter that cut them.

flesh-born, our knees might be wobbly, but those legs are hard to break

that secret southern ferocity, ample as the supple breast we suck,



## but for how long can we gain nutrients?

*do we allow the backward to seep in and hope that a digestible substance surfaces?*

*do we reject this fantasy in hopes that a more palatable exchange turns up our fire?*

*can we rebel and simultaneously still yearn for the mamas and the papas that convinced us of our illegitimacies?*

*keeping this name tag, an assignment ruled by ruled paper, palms and oak, pulped milked and rung dry*

## how tough is this crust?

sons are told "be a man" and daughters to find happiness in a husband.

tastin' whiskey before talkin' in the living room of the trailer those teeth were pushin' through and you know daddy didn't want a 'girl' who would talk back.

that silence stark, bitch and slut 'nicknames,' these secrets we keep in the south fester to boils boilin' over mama burned the gravy, savory, and I'm still learning how to say no.

Has this crust been kneaded(needed) too long?

*An indigestible peel the thickness of gator skin, hidin' for protection, but hidin' none the less. the side-to-side, the crooked, the jellied and jammed, the trampoline that both digs and ignites flying*

how do we instead, carousel as not the wavering majestics, but as the interior column in which they orbit?

Takin' root in our roots and Hoverin' over the puddles which gleamed that same rain-shine we once giggled in. Pouncin' like palmetto bugs that sleep in the corners and cracks,

Ramblin' and Yellin' shoeless in the front yard, Waggin' fingers,

Needin' the bottle and not the mixer

and all this to say it is an injustice to not make a true lattice.

***we're not the kind that lie atop one another, but crossed and w e a v e d together***

tryin' to decipher which hystories to define as his-story and not mine.

and mama knew I was queer before I did.

those things livin' in that back wood, backward back when? and i wonder of backward

lookin' there for answers as if that is where the past(passed) lives.

i wonder of the disconnect in such grounding.

The dissatisfaction in such labeling.

The suffocation in such a tunneled agenda.

do we knead(need) the backdrop of that backwood in the backward?

is it an accident that we still got mud stuck between our toes?

backward reachin' in and snatchin' out those things that make us swell up like a peach

i don't wanna be meerly survivin'

survivin' is somethin' we learned by the sewin' shut of our mouths and learnin' each vein on the back of daddys hand.... that 100 percent humidity suffocatin' the most fluent of words

mishapin' even the un-maliable

i hope this is how i ended up so crooked

i know that southern air chewed me right up like a stick of big red

swallowed me whole after that spicy flavor ran dry

largely indigestible at its base so I've been stickin' to the pit of the belly of this place ever since

sweatin' as my legs turn up

red state bred in a red state as blood red as my cheeks after runnin' home red

as the blood we wanted so badly to fill our panties after that strawberry moon

red as the stain on daddies floor and i never knew if it was mamas blood or the kool-aid i puked

when glancin' backward in this musky air

i hope there is strength in our irreverence

calm in this pasture

pluff in that mud

floatin' in those mosquito infested waters lettin' them eatcha right up because we were always lookin' for somethin' to scratch

*and we dig into the bounds which leap*

*as a breath, teetering on the edge of that totter.*

*not a rock, not solid, not gaseous, not quite liquid,*

*but ooze of an unknown concoction, that drips, seeps,*

*becomes self and other*

*not a mold of bundt but a pie in a land of cake.*

## In calling for stutters

"e,  
a stumbling sore, (prior to rain showers) as if symphonic rays could stop such a **stutter**.  
we revel in the techniques of maybe and we aren't so likely to say aloud we are indeed relevant.  
our joined parts siphoned—like gas; by mouth, through tubes; like veins...the infiltration only  
begins here...  
a scatter,  
like wild cockroaches on cat food

xo  
a"

it's in the skippin' - the stutterin' - the sweatin' over the left overs  
"i don't wanna be merely survivin'  
survivin' is somethin' we learned by the sewin' shut of our mouths and learnin' each vein on the  
back of daddy's hand"

we aren't looking for the crumbs of what it was, but what it *is-as-us*  
seeping and asking, polling, and tallying results in the parched and unwounded sharpness.  
*is-as-us*

as crumbs-as corners-as knots and not-so-nots  
as unbound binding still bound in the unbound  
as knots that are not one knot  
but

an encyclopedia of nots and knots and knots in not  
and knowing?  
our mamas never spoke of such toxicity  
*ain't no mud ever been this dirty*

— —  
when yer mama hasn't taught you how to cry in the un-natural state of South Carolina,  
un-natural as man couldn't man-make,  
an utterance of muted tones crawl from the rusts of pockets and turn left in distracted harmonies.  
*"just keep going straight" she says*

and when yer mama hasn't taught you how to cry  
you think of the salted tears and salted blood  
the parts of us they've bedazzled into unrecognition  
the parts of us they've got in a constant state of beautification  
convincing to the taste, energetic and energizing the tongue buds at the tip of digestion,  
**yet we are indigestible.**

and in *silence*, we stare at the vanity.  
our costumes have the scent of potential proliferation, not of *natural* conception.  
as we ask "which self?"  
which allows for the state of inhibition?  
which door shall i knock and plead at to feel what my feelings feel when they feel lack in their *natural*  
state?  
which state has been the *natural*?  
who forgot to stuff this cage?  
is it overflowing?

aint this what fighting is?

when  
the guttural reaction of a “yelp” or “shout” is no longer automated  
when  
we allow our selfs to feel that sting-  
when  
we allow the vibration of it up through our bones darkening spots that could have been light before.

but before what?  
what was before this?

before the souring of the beneath got mended by the souring/sowering of the sour/sower?

why we *still* weep at the sign of perfusions and stillness  
why our rationed secrets gorge on buffets of survival contracts  
and she?  
the she tangled in the I’m unsure  
the she trapped in the daughter of the *supposed* to be  
and the not so knot?  
what of the unbound binding?

--  
in our own ignorance, we flop like any other invertebrate  
and the damage being taken on by the body, the blows which mark  
open cracks for those things beneath,  
our spilling guts won’t linger on the surface to be archived by ones whom sort  
they murmur,  
softly tip-toeing between the bowels squishing the soft in their own pleasure

--  
no,  
pain is not an entry point  
calling 411 has its **stutters**, its comforts in otherness

*our kind*

I think the kinda stories *we* write the kinda questions *we* ask   haunt folks

*our kind* won't bat an eye much less raise a hand to the questioning of stories.

*we* believe with every pocket, every pore-**every pour**

to drink the milk that *we* once suckled

to know

those breasts leak as tears and as swallows

**cataclysmic revelations**

the ones both moon and bible

as stuffed truths that no longer render factual

*we* hear with ears stuffed like the bird mama shoved her fist through

*we* ate the unrecognizable

*we* stuttered over the prayer granddaddy was always embarrassed to speak

but as his job he clinched through as *we*

*clinch with jaws and thighs muscles and anecdotes*

nana apologized on behalf of *our kind*

our channels and veins always seeking a way out

the way out is in

and *we* stuff our mouths with the hystories of mamas

the hystories of pain and births of joy and lacking

*we* clinched our jaws in order to say "okay"

because that "okay" saved our kin   our kind   our possibles

*we* saved our skins

*though skinned*

*we* didn't weep in being cold

*we* wept in the skins *we* could no longer give

*we* wept in the know and of **the could**

*we* wept in Deep-South **deeply-churned** hope of the maybe

that hope kept our skins reproducing more kind

more breeding for bread

more slobber breakin down the bread

bread in our mouths *we* were so thankful to be eatin'

*we* started here

*we* didn't skip steps, but stones

not to shoot out windows but to build houses, kitchen tables, and basements