

Alfredo Aguilar

What Happens on Earth
BOAAT, 2018.

Lizz Huerta

“The Wall” (in-progress story cycle, 2018-present)
“Mouths,”
Lightspeed Magazine, 2018.

Manuel Paul López

These Days of Candy
Noemi Press, 2017.

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Brujas, Tech Travelers, and Genre-Breaking:
San Diego Speculative Counterepic

In *Modernity At Large*, writing of the “Here and Now,” Arjun Appadurai posits “The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape.”¹ Appadurai frames his analysis in political economy, arguing that “transforming and extending Albert Hirschman’s important terms *loyalty* and *exit*, we may speak of diasporas of terror, and diasporas of despair.” Note that Hirschman, whose argument Appadurai transforms in the context of migration, uses these terms (*loyalty* and *exit*) to describe the ways in which the experience of immigration and emigration to the U.S. by oppressed groups has presented incredibly long-lasting impacts on American ideology (Hirschman: “The United States owes its very existence and growth to millions of decisions favoring exit”).² Modifying Hirschman,

Appadurai sees a radical potential for action in displacement and the diaspora after trauma, a radical potential which I'd like to call the resilient imagination: "But in every case, these diasporas bring the force of the imagination, as both memory and desire, into the lives of many ordinary people..."³ Thinking through the echoes of the resilient imagination in border literatures, I argue that poetry, radical resistance and science fiction are connected in that each can be a space of empathetic imagination; that the forms of speculative thought inherent to each form can and do have radical potential.

The three works of contemporary speculative literature that I will analyze here—all counterepic works by San Diego Chicana/Latina authors responding to the current climate—are Manuel Paul López's poetry and hybrid-genre collection *These Days of Candy* (Noemi, 2017), Alfredo Aguilar's post-apocalyptic speculative narrative epic poem *What Happens on Earth* (BOAAT, 2018), and Lizz Huerta's in-progress near-future story cycle "The Wall" (2019). In my work on what I call counterepic, I argue that there is a long history of people writing modern and contemporary epic poems in response to ancient epics' narratives of patriarchal and teleological narratives of statecraft. These contemporary counterepics confront systems of oppression. Engaging with technologies of resistance, and tapping into the resilient imagination with empathy, I argue—writing at a time when Trump is again threatening to close the border, and in which multiple protests strike against Otay Mesa Detention Center and others in San Diego—that these works by Aguilar, Huerta, and López imagine forms of resistance, resilience, recovery and at times, revolution, within diasporic and traumatic conditions. These counterepics embrace resilient imagination, whether these conditions are brought on post-collapse of infrastructures, of economic systems, of ecologies, or by the task of surviving and fighting back within Empire and within neo-fascist rule.

In addition, I argue that Aguilar's, Huerta's, and López's counterepic writing also breaks genre conventions, using hybrid forms which inhabit the zones between prose and poetry, between speculative fiction and poetry, between post-apocalyptic fiction, fantasy and science fiction; non-binary and liminal spaces which reflect our border region's lived experience of liminal, contested and transformative spaces.

The Empathetic Imagination

In order to understand how these three speculative counterepic works of cross-genre fiction and poetry by San Diego Chicana writers reflect these liminal and contested border spaces, let's review the connections between the three forms of speculative literature, poetry, and activism. In the 2019 essay "The Word for Empathy is Sci-Fi," Jamie Green claims "All science fiction is work of imagining. *Empathetic* imagining, though, is the real gift... Empathy begets openness, after all, which includes openness to hurt. But it begets more empathy, too—a rising tide."⁴ I think that we can extend this claim of empathetic imagining not only to science fiction but also to poetry, another genre continually opening outward into numerous doors and windows; in fact, each of these genres, which intersect far more often than one might think, are uniquely positioned for this empathetic work.

In her indispensable genre-breaking book of scholarship and poetry, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria E. Anzaldúa writes that to live in the borderlands means that you must develop a "mestiza consciousness"—a sense of being neither one nor the other, of moving between worlds and within a matrix of mixed cultures, living between contradictions. Using poetry as a tool for scholarship and for activism, Anzaldúa describes the borderlands as a liminal space which threatens violence, in which one lives "caught in the crossfire between camps," and is "stopped by *la migra* at border checkpoints," and then rests in an uneasy "truce," in which you are simultaneously "at home" and "a stranger." Her

feminism of the borderlands also includes an intersectional consciousness of trans-gression, trans-nationalism, and trans-gender ways of thinking. She describes the unique way that living in the environment of the borderlands, especially as a Chincanx, creates a need to be neither man nor woman, but a “new gender.” One of the sharpest ironies of living this way of border mestiza consciousness is that “in order to survive ... you must live *sin fronteras*! be a crossroads”⁵: to live in the borderlands, one must live without borders, and be an intersection. San Diego/Tijuana borderlands writers inhabit these contradictions, and the three counterepics of the borderlands I will describe not only “live” on in the crux of *loyalty* and *exit* and in the intersections of the necessities of multiple cultures, but also imagine new fluid ways, *sin fronteras*, to survive, to revolt.

**“it’s so beautiful when we can suddenly look up and survive”/
“TRUCHA PORQUE NO HAY TIEMPO”**

Manuel Paul López’s poetry collection *These Days of Candy* and the long counterepic eponymous poem of the same collection break genre conventions in several ways. López uses a mashed-up hybrid-genre blend of visual poetry, screenplay, and mixtape forms to examine things like identity, artistic process, survival in a repressive era, love, music, and critique of late capitalism. The hero and heroine of this poem are two *luciérnagas*, or fireflies, named Elias the Doom Boy and Mouse Pad Becky. These two fireflies, traveling from their podunk town of Hard Bent Tube Sock (or is it a literal sock? in poetry we’re not sure), go on an epic Borgesian quest to find first an old man named Don Felipe and then to seek the guidance of a tech traveler named Mr. Signal, who is rumored to have the ability to stop time and to hold the secrets of Jorge Luis Borges’s Aleph in a portal in his basement. It’s a madcap journey of humor and earnestness, a journey for various forms of knowledge.

Let’s return to the Appadurai text I quoted earlier for a minute. He goes on to note mass media’s potential for local repertoires of resistance:

There is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and, in general, agency ... T-shirts, billboards, and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing, and slum housing all show that the images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance.⁶

López's fractured epic poem blends elements of social media pastiche, mass media and memes (hashtags, superhero merchandise, and the language of online news posts) with earnest philosophizing by a large cast of characters, which includes, besides the two fireflies, and Don Felipe and Mr. Signal, an artistic character named Gronk, Sawfish 1 and 2, Radio Mind, the riraps, Mama Flesh and Bone, and others. These many characters navigate the borderlands and their "local repertoires" of multiple cultural spaces with irony, anger, humor, and resistance. A new soundtrack emerges, one that is dialogic, multitudinous, cracklingly musical.

The entire long poem is structured cinematically around the mixtape form, and songs such as David Bowie's "Lady Stardust" (which plays from an ancient cassette when Elias the luciérnaga enters the basement rumored to hold the Aleph at the end) play key roles in the poem's ludic cinematics, as do visual poems in the form of *calligrammes*. Just one of these moments: "I don't understand" says the firefly Elias the Doom Boy, or ETDB for short. "Because we're an ineffable architecture of love!" responds his friend and fellow firefly Mouse Pad Becky, and balloon-shaped visual calligrammes made up of the repeated word VISION rise on the verso page.⁷

The balance of surreal absurdism throughout the poem with earnestness (another talent that recalls things Borgesian) makes all these collisions of characters and viewpoints more than just passing fancies of language or candyfloss flashes of color. Surely, López delights in riddles: palindromes, like "Alli trota la tortilla" and "puzzle pieces," and finding meanings in

drifting radio sounds. By making the “hero” of “These Days of Candy” a luciérnaga/firefly, the author draws our attention to one little light’s journey and effect on others. Hence the unlikely “hero” in this surreal epic is quite small. His path is one of the artist trying to find his way through the borderlands, trying to understand his art, but it is also a collective journey of friendship, as this firefly is just one among many. Confused by the visionary quest and the guides who offer him advice on his journey he also confronts the limits and power of his talents for illumination. There are also elements of the underworld journeys of epic inversion: on his quest to find Mr. Signal, Elias the luciérnaga must ascend a mountain to its summit, at the top of which is a Winchell’s donut stand; then he must descend into the basement, an overwhelming smell of dough and sugar surrounding him, and tell Mr. Signal he is ready to see the Aleph, which as in the Borges story is a sign containing all knowledge, a vision of everything, knowing he “may never return.” In the basement he finds a tape deck, and a copy of “Lady Stardust,” which he inserts into the tape deck. A portal seems to open, a portal of glowing light, which he disappears into, merges with, and the door closes, leaving only a flickering bulb in the basement. In the final scene of his epic journey, we see him reunited with Mouse Pad Becky, his firefly friend, and perhaps his parents. Has he passed into an afterlife, a death, or a birth to a new form of knowledge and awareness of life? The poem is ambiguous, the end sad yet joyful in its surreal goodbye.

The poem references not only visionary, surreal epic journeys through language such as are found in Borges’s stories like “The Aleph”⁸ but also Classical Western epics like *The Odyssey* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The chorus of Moaning Malevolents recall the Sirens or the shades of the underworld, and he must pass through the Lost River which “no matter how thirsty you are...you cannot drink from”⁹ which recalls Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in the Greek underworld and likewise in Dante’s *Inferno*, which to drink from extinguishes memory.

In addition, there are references in *These Days of Candy* to Mexican and Chicana folklore of The Day of the Dead, in which sweets such as sugar skulls are an element celebrating death as a transition of life, and honoring family members and ancestors. The journey of fireflies recalls the migration of monarch butterflies, who in Mexican and Chicana folklore represent the souls of those who have passed, and which return every year to the forests of the mountains in fall to overwinter. In addition, the image of the monarch butterfly has been adopted as a symbol of the beauty of migration, of diaspora, of people traveling under very difficult conditions looking for a better life, for solace, of people living in the metamorphoses of the borderlands. There are also echoes of this in the journey of the luciérnagas. The Winchell's Donut stand, with its overpowering smell of sugar and donuts, might recall the sweet smells of pan de muerto, or bread of the dead. The figure of Don Felipe is a kind of guide on Elias the Firefly's journey, as Vergil for Dante in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, and Mouse Pad Becky perhaps a kind of Beatrice with which he is reunited in Paradise, and perhaps also reunited with in the more mundane world. Don Felipe points the way for Elias the firefly, with a vision of continuous time: "You know the directions to both entrance and exit. In the end, they are synonymous, they are just the same."¹⁰

As in Alice Notley's counterepics, López's poem "These Days of Candy" contains a radical reimagining of time and memory and an underworld journey, connecting this to a collective heroism. "TRUCHA PORQUE NO HAY TIEMPO" proclaims Gronk, the character of the artist: watch out because there's no time—a partial translation and likely inversion of Eliot's "HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME" in Eliot's epic "The Waste Land." "Trucha" is Spanish slang for "look out" or "stay alert": what you say to your comrades when you're looking out for them, and so the tone of this part of the poem blends both a friendly regard and a ponderousness, as Gronk speaks also of the portability of memory, and the brevity of the journeys of life, like a hummingbird that flies through the studio:

TRUCHA PORQUE NO HAY TIEMPO

TAKE YOUR MEMORY WITH YOU. YOU OWN
MEMORY BY TAKING IT INSIDE YOU AT A PAR-
TICULAR MOMENT IN TIME

If in fine fettle, write.

IT RAINS IN HARD BENT TUBE SOCK.

IT'S KIND OF LIKE OUR JOURNEYS, THOSE WE
TAKE IN LOFE, THE DIFFERENT THINGS THAT
WE BUMP INTO, OR HUMMINGBIRDS FLYING
AROUND IN THE STUDIO.

BEAUTY TO ME IS WHEN YOU SHOW SOME-
THING TO SOMEONE THAT THEY'VE NEVER
SEEN BEFORE.

from *These Days of Candy*

The character of Gronk also recalls the radical Southern California history of the East LA art collective Asco, active from 1972 to 1987 (all of its members are still active artists) and its real-life member Gronk. The muralist collective's aesthetics blend elements of Chicanx heritage with punk, glam and provocation. Asco also embraced "an aesthetics of poverty," as Gronk called it. The collective's working-class and poor members included the multimedia artists and painters Gronk, Patssi Valdez, Harry Gamboa Jr., and Willie Herrón, a painter and also the founder of the punk band Los Illegals. The art that the four engaged in was charged with the barrio, with a punk, performative edge, merging art and politics, and often spilled over into forms of direct action: spray-painting LACMA on film, blockades on streets and "walking murals" highlighting racialized violence, public anti-

Vietnam War actions, films which highlight structural inequalities in the art establishment.

So, when the character Gronk speaks of the “The hummingbirds flying around in the studio,” he recalls these gestures of transience and upwellings in art, in writing, and in politics. In the end, López’s counterepic summons the long radical visionary and provocative history of Southern California Chicana artists. The poem also highlights a contradictory vision, of beauty in the unknown, of the memories which are owned by carrying them in a state of movement, of migration. A vision of both brevity and endurance, of the beginning of sight and the end of sight, as the firefly Elias disappears into the door of light and is reunited with his fellow firefly friend, Mouse Pad Becky. We are left with a transformative vision of reimagined time, of reuniting with those we have lost, of seeing things anew in the borderlands crossroads amid contradictions. As in Bowie’s “Lady Stardust,” the song goes on forever. The band is back together. And he was out of sight.

“it was the end of the world and i needed a haircut.”

This wonderful line is from Alfredo Aguilar’s stunning 2018 debut book *What Happens on Earth*. Aguilar’s book is also a kind of counterepic. The speculative near-future narrative of the poem focuses on the inception of an apocalyptic series of events (climate change disasters, economic collapse, increasing political repression), a revolt, and then the aftermath. If counterepic writers are always in some sense “writing against” a prevailing mythos of teleology, *What Happens on Earth* is writing against a vision of the world which refuses to acknowledge urgently the shifts which need to be made in our world as massive structural problems, such as climate change, mass migrations, and political repression, loom across the globe.

In her book *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making Through Science Fiction and Activism*, Shelley Streeby describes post-2000 speculative

texts of “Cli-Fi” (or climate change science fiction and speculative fiction) as texts that

...illuminate obstacles to nation-states solving climate change problems, point to direct action as a crucial method, and imagine other possible worlds, rather than hoping that nation-states or captains of industry will save the day. This tension between broad understandings of climate justice as inseparable from decolonization, the redistribution of wealth, and the decentralization of power, insisted upon by movements led by Indigenous people and people of color, on the one hand, and narrower frameworks for imagining the future of climate change shaped by international bodies dependent on nation-states in thrall to the global fossil fuel economy, on the other, is one of the biggest obstacles we face in shaping the climate change disaster that both lies ahead of us and is happening right now.¹¹

This tension that Streeby notes is of great concern to each of these writers of the San Diego/border area, in terms of resilient imagination, decolonial solutions to climate justice problems, and decentralization of power. Aguilar’s counterepic is poetry, so perhaps “Cli-Po” would be a better name for poems in this emergent speculative or science fiction genre.

Aguilar’s work is full of the poignant juxtaposition of the everyday with lyricism describing situations on the brink, on the edge of ecological collapse and regime changes. When the poem’s speaker goes for his haircut, he encounters telenovelas at the barbershop. Parts Four and Five of the counterepic poem contain more Cli-Po: climate change speculative poems. In Part Four, his speaker recounts disappearing glaciers—“we cannot imagine a sky without gaping punctures”¹² and imagines “glaciers melting [and fossil] fishes given back their ancient scales.” Part 5 is an erasure poem of Obama’s speech at the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris: “the sea is faster/than our efforts/submerged.”¹³

Like the glaciers of the poem's previous segments, language is "growing smaller every year." Part 9 centers on censorship, referencing Orwell and Ray Bradbury: "thought is a crime"; "the state deemed which books were contraband,/then incinerated them." In this fascist state, the only books left are the Bible and "the history of our glorious nation." However, a smuggling trade of resistance arises:

soldiers came for the artist in my building./when they knocked on her door, she threw/all her papers out the window—a hundred thin/surrenders. she disappeared with them. i stitched letters/under the lining of my coat. i climbed over/the wall. i smuggled entire poems out of the country.¹⁴

Meanwhile fresh water is contested and skirmishes spark over wells. Aguilar's speaker at times glories in the revolution that ensues, and its seemingly brief but electric period of equality. "we tore down the bronze statue of a tyrant" a poem's speaker recalls. With longing for the electricity of that period and its liberation, he says, "*it's true, we said, once we had masters—*"¹⁵ Other times *What Happens on Earth* casts a weary eye on the endgame of the revolt, which turns out to have instituted yet another "new regime" of repression. This is not how Aguilar's book ends, but let's go now from these moments of collapse and climbing over walls, to the final genre-breaking work of resilient imagination I want to examine.

"A certain magic of blood"/"Cartilage, beginnings, songs."

Lizz Huerta's poetic science fiction story cycle "The Wall" extrapolates into the future of a completed border wall. The tunnels once created by cartels become, even more than previously, a means to smuggle people and supplies:

When the wall went up, it was said it was to keep people out Ridiculous, considering the vast network of tunnels the cartels had burrowed under the political border with the earth diligence of dwarves. The propaganda. Wall to keep the empire safe: strrrrrong empire, empire with mightiest military in the world, empire made of blood and theft, human and land. Before the wall was even finished the empire began to strip rights, silence certain people, keep others sparking in their skins of distrust. But most of the inhabitants paid attention to other things, shiny things, scandals. It would pass, hadn't it always? White folks had short memories.¹⁶

However, the Wall lasts, and spawns food crises, and chemical warfare, yet a complex network of resistances also emerges, including guerilla fighters against ICE troops, those who facilitate crossings, and healers. The story's narrator, Ivette, describes herself as part of a "sisterhood of equality," made up of "gifted brujas," or witches.¹⁷ She combines "western" medical training with the traditional and indigenous knowledge taught by her Mamita and the collectivizing of the other women. The basis of their practice as brujas is resilience; planning for times of scarcity for survival, they also embrace a measure of strangeness:

We supply the markets with plant medicine we cultivate and gather from the land in seasons of abundance, specializing in those that thrive in seasons of scarcity ... I live there with a crew of the strangest and strongest among the brujas from the North and a water witch from Gullah territory. She came as a trader and decided to stay. Her people moved in and took over what used to be the Southern United States.¹⁸

In addition, to echo Appadurai's claim, in diasporic conditions such as these memory and desire are confronted by the force of the imagination. In a remarkable passage, the narrator Ivette in "The Wall" muses on something akin to epigenetics' relation to inherited trauma, and a resilient response

that includes the "gifts" and "teachings" conferred on the survivors of the collapse:

We arrived at the point in humanity when we were born because the ancestors of these bodies did some fucked up shit. All of us are the descendants of darkness. Humanity, this hard training ground, has been used to teach us the boundaries of what we can endure, and it has given us a sound for laughter. Time allows us certain gifts unavailable elsewhere: we can cook and grow things, bleed and heal. Age. Create and die.¹⁹

"The Wall" is the title story of a collection of intertwined stories on the theme of resistance to colonial past and present, wherein, according to its author, "Latinx people come into powers their ancestors hid in their blood during conquest. The collection features working-class protagonists, usually in the border region, who are on the precipice of their power."²⁰ Another post-wall story by Huerta from the same cycle, "Mouths," is set in El Oasis, a seaside waystation in which a few healers and hustlers eke out a living. Like López, Huerta references the mixtape in connection with survival: "Times were strange, and those that survived the collapse had a jarring mixtape of skills." This also recalls Anzaldúa's description of living in the borderlands as living without borders, as a crossroads, an intersection. In the post-apocalypse of Huerta's "Mouths," practical working-class skills and trades, some previously maligned or undervalued, have become valued on a whole new level, reversing previous class structures: "Plumbers were holy men...sex workers commanded respect and were offered it gladly."²¹

Huerta also extrapolates the current border-region phenomenon of crossing to Mexico from the U.S. for affordable, quality dental care, speculating that post-collapse this trade would continue, incorporating indigenous healing technology, vulture culture and improvised know-how. The two main characters, El Buitre, or the Vulture, and Fai, another bruja and healer figure who has a knack for producing tinctures and adaptogenic teas, are

exemplary of this. El Buitre repairs Fai's mouth when she knocks out teeth in an injury while fishing. He tries many different fishes' bones to shape the replacement teeth before finally making a successful transplant by rooting or grafting reshaped whale bone into her body with sea lion placenta that Fai sources herself. Of course he finds himself falling in love with her; Fai in her resilient imagination, surpassing him, sees potential for life everywhere, even amid the waters rising as the result of climate changes: "There are more bones in the sea than you could imagine,' Fai told him, 'Cartilage, beginnings, songs' ... Fai thought to herself ...Life kept going, no matter the destruction."²²

Huerta's story cycle also extrapolates current conditions of economic inequality and inequalities in access to health care and dental care in the U.S. and California in particular. Currently, "78% of U.S. workers," (even many academics!) "live paycheck to paycheck."²³ According to a 2017 study by the California Health Care Foundation, "In California, 39 percent of the population has no dental coverage; 13 percent is without health insurance."²⁴ In addition, according to the California Health Care Foundation (2019), approximately 13 million, or one third of Californians, currently receive Medi-Cal, in low household incomes of \$17,500 or less per year (single person household) or \$25,000 per year (family of four household).²⁵ Huerta's speculation imagines innovations and healing practices following the collapse of unsustainable medical structures and the development of forms of survival during diasporic conditions.

Folklorist Kay Turner, in her 2018 talk on "The Witch In Flight" and figures of the witch or *bruja* in worldwide folklore with special attention to key originary tales of the *bruja* in Mexico, notes, "Witches revel in their contrary aspirations... Unnatural and abnormal, she dwells on the other side of the binary slash; also anomalous, ambivalent, liminal, magical, and shapeshifting. Sitting at the crossroads on a throne of decaying garbage she makes a claim for life beyond dualistic restrictions. Witches bitch the binary."²⁶ Huerta's *bruja* figures are figures of resilience and resistance,

embracing deep decolonized forms of knowledge, collectivity, and discovering their own powers in a post-apocalypse, powers that go beyond conventional patriarchal and state structures and border restrictions, liminal powers that straddle boundaries.

Two of the three writers uses the mixtape as a metaphor— Huerta to describe the ragtag spirit of the skills of survival, López as filmic soundtrack for a vision quest of his *luciérnaga*, the artist figure on a quest through the Borgesian labyrinths of cultural and digital meaning and the mind itself as a kind of radio. And Aguilar's counterepic is punctuated by other sonic echoes, of post-apocalyptic radio announcements and barbershop telenovelas and harpstrings (in a kind of invocation of the first part of the poem, referencing the ancient epic tradition, like the plectrum of Calliope).

But as we think toward the future of these sonic echoes, in the mixtapes of López's, Huerta's and Aguilar's speculative poetics, and think about contrasting frameworks for climate change justice and imagining possible worlds, let's return to the last poem of Alfredo Aguilar's *What Happens on Earth*:

Lightyears From Now

past spheres that are nothing but ice or vapor,
we will find a home that harbors the small life
of bacteria & plants. nothing else will be there. having spent
our lives inside a spacecraft, we will be unable to hold
our wonder at the clear bodies of water, the vegetation,
the large cold sun. the children will hold up a plant & ask
what is this called? everything on that world will lack a name.
will will have old images that resemble life there. we will christen
everything after a previous life—give ghosts a new skin
to grow into far away, the violence that happened on
the old planet will stay there. no one will have died
here yet & no blood will be spilt. children will point

to the night sky, ask *did we come from there?* & stars will reflect
the distance we put between ourselves & our burning.²⁷

In this poem there is a vital tension and double meaning of the end line—"the distance we put between ourselves & our burning"—which can be read in at least two ways, heightened by the line break on "reflect" and the lack of other punctuation in the final line. The first of these readings of the line has the meaning "reflect the distance we put between ourselves and also reflect our burning," recalling the memories of lost and grieved past and the distance we created between ourselves. However, this line can also be read as "and stars will reflect the distance that we have put between ourselves and our burning," which contains within it a sense of migration beyond the apocalyptic violence of the past. There is hope for resilient imagination, but only if we choose, in the present, to see what is before us, if we prevent this possible future of a lost planet, and a lost world—if we resist here and now.

¹ Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity At Large*, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 7

² *Ibid.*, p. 272

³ Hirschman, quoted in Cathryn Costello and Mark Freedland, *Migrants at Work: Immigration and Vulnerability in Labour Law*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198714101.003.0016

⁴ Green, Jamie. "The Word for Empathy is Sci-Fi," *Unbound Worlds*, 2019. Digital.

⁵ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: aunt lute books, 1987, p. 194.

⁶ Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity At Large*, p. 7

⁷ López, Manuel Paul. *These Days of Candy*. Noemi Press, 2017, p.50-52.

⁸ Borges, Jorge Luis. *Labyrinths: selected stories & other writings*. New Directions, 1964.

⁹ López, Manuel Paul. *These Days of Candy*. Noemi Press, 2017, p. 76.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Streeby, Shelley. *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism*. University of California Press, 2018, p. 105.

¹² Aguilar, Alfredo. *What Happens on Earth*. BOAAT Press, 2018, p. 5

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 12.

¹⁶ Huerta, Lizz. *The Wall*. Manuscript copy used by permission of the author, p. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

²⁰ Text interview by Jeanine Webb, with Lizz Huerta, March 2019. Used by permission of author.

²¹ Huerta, Lizz. "Mouths." *Lightspeed Magazine*, Issue 103, December 2018. Digital. <http://www.lightspeedmagazine.com/fiction/mouths/>, unpaginated.

²² Ibid.

²³ Martin, Emma. Paul Light, Professor of Public Service at New York University, quoted in "The government shutdown spotlights a bigger issue: 78% of US workers live paycheck to paycheck." *CNBC*, January 9th, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/09/shutdown-highlights-that-4-in-5-us-workers-live-paycheck-to-paycheck.html>

²⁴ California Healthcare Foundation Study, 2017. "Dental Insurance In California: Scope, Structure, and Availability."

²⁵ California Healthcare Foundation publication, "2019 Edition: Medi-Cal Facts and Figures," February 25, 2019. <https://www.chcf.org/publication/2019-medi-cal-facts-figures-crucial-coverage/>

²⁶ Turner, Kay. "The Witch In Flight." Keynote Speech at the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, 2017. My transcription.

²⁷ Aguilar, Alfredo. *What Happens on Earth*. BOAAT Press, 2018, p. 17.