

*THE
SILVER
EPOCH:*

*A Quest For
The Interstitial*

Intro

I would like to start by drawing a map.

Imagine this map as a circle. Then fill in this imagined circle with either a web or a ripple. Choose carefully, but know that both the web and the ripple are essentially the same form. Once you have imagined either a web or a ripple, let's start at the center and draw a line around ourselves. Here, we are the writer and we form a world that is all our own. We then attempt to translate this world through language. Now, let's gradually radiate out from the center and become the reader. Our body opens up as we multiply and engage with not only our own world but the world of another. Now, step out even farther from the center,

and notice others around you. Engage with them in conversation. Talk about the books you have read, the worlds you have observed through your reading. Finally, step to the very precipice of your web—or ripple—and jump off.

Over the past semester, I have written, helped in editing, printed and bound an edition of 12 books. Each book includes a singular poem which is made up of 8 micro essays and a sampling of poetic sections. Both the poetry and the essays act in constructing a fiction. This fiction is set on a far future fantastical Earth and tells of a vague quest. Specifically the "poetic" sections of the poem record the development of the quest's plot, keeping the aim

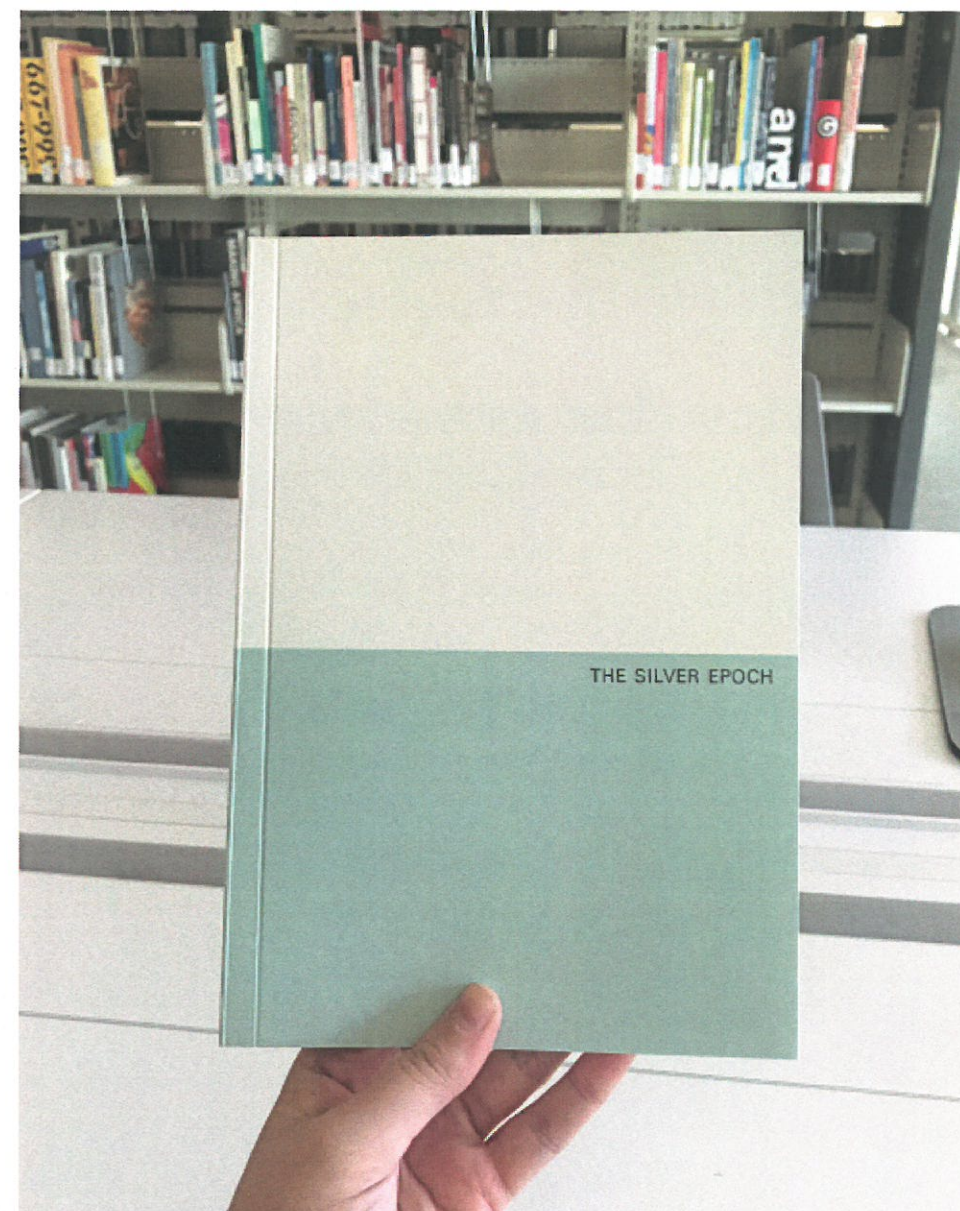
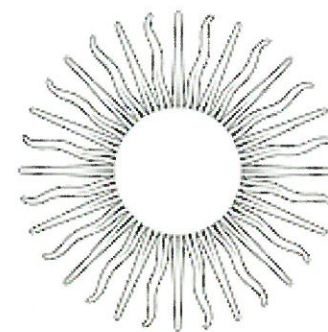
of this quest purposely vague. "The trials and outcome of the quest are told through both first and second person. The unnamed narrator speaks to a largely unnamed "you," although, upon close observation, the "you" is revealed to possess the body of a silver moon-horse or pegasus which transforms back and forth between a heron and a witch depending on the time of day."

The overall form of the book aims for the most even dispersal of poetic sections and essays. After about 6 pages of poetry, an essay can be found, and then after another 6 pages of poetry, another essay. This pattern repeats itself until the end of the book, finishing at 104 pages. While the poetry follows the

narrator's navigation of this vague quest, the essays act in commenting on the underlying texture of the story, working with the poetry to weave the platform of this web like world.

It is important to me that the writing of this book, while it does exist in both essay and poetic form, be viewed as a singular poem. Through my observation, a contemporary poem seems to hold little obligation to anything but its own self determined logic. A poem, perhaps, becomes a hybrid art object, traversing the layers of this world's meaning with an assurance of constant, self determined, transformation. At the root of this, I am in the process of learning what a poem can do. Looking at Joanne Kyger (1), a poet associated with the San Francisco Renaissance movement, poets like Bernadette Mayer (2), Clark Coolidge (3), and Mei Mei Berssenbrugge (4), all belonging to the New York School, or Susan Howe from the Language Poets or more contemporary poets like Suyuen Juliette Lee, I am beginning to understand what it means to make a poem and what it means to push a poem's scope. What I seem to know now or what I think I know now from my reading of these poets, is that the form of poetry—over time—is continuing to open up, is becoming less and less obligated to any rote set of expectations and is determining

for itself its own means or modes, modulations or movements, agency or direction, depending on the particular needs of each poem. In this way, a poem becomes like an art object, establishing with intent its own form and expression based on a deep internal call.



*“philosophic thought does
not exhibit itself, alone, above
and exterior to the tonality of
speech.”*

-MICHEL SERRES

I. (The Writer, The Writing)

Start at the center and radiate out. To begin to unravel this poem’s particular internal logic, I would like us to return to our map and start at the center. Once again, we must become the writer. We must take the loom and stretch taut our initial threads.

There are many ways to tell a story, to build a world.

It is inherently hard to talk about writing without also talking about reading. An act of writing is almost always an act of reading. They are processes which collapse into each other. A writer reads their own writing, assesses, edits. With this in mind, what does it mean to write? Perhaps to write means to throw down the bones of

meaning or information through the placement and ordering of letters, words, phrases and spaces. From my observation, a more adept writer does not do the work of explicitly telling, but rather allows meaning to emerge through the story itself. A more adept writer, and more specifically a more adept fiction writer, is perhaps patient and

does not rush to tell but realizes that the slow amalgamation of plot or sensation will more successfully lull the writing into a realm of poignant thought and feeling. Michel Serres explores this idea, saying...

“In some music, the melody expands and rises like bread dough to become the sound wave itself, just as the woven image of a

tapestry buries itself in the textile surface. This thread is not sewn on to the tapestry, that song does not sit discretely on the bed of harmony, philosophic thought does not exhibit itself, alone, above and exterior to the tonality of speech, like a meta-language or caption; rather the thread blends with the fabric, the meaning dissolves into the story, the threnody sustains the sound.”¹

As Michel Serres points out, meaning can never truly exist outside of a story. A story and the meaning it possesses are found in the world around us which unfolds in sensation. There is no void that exists somewhere above or beyond

¹ Michel Serres. *The Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

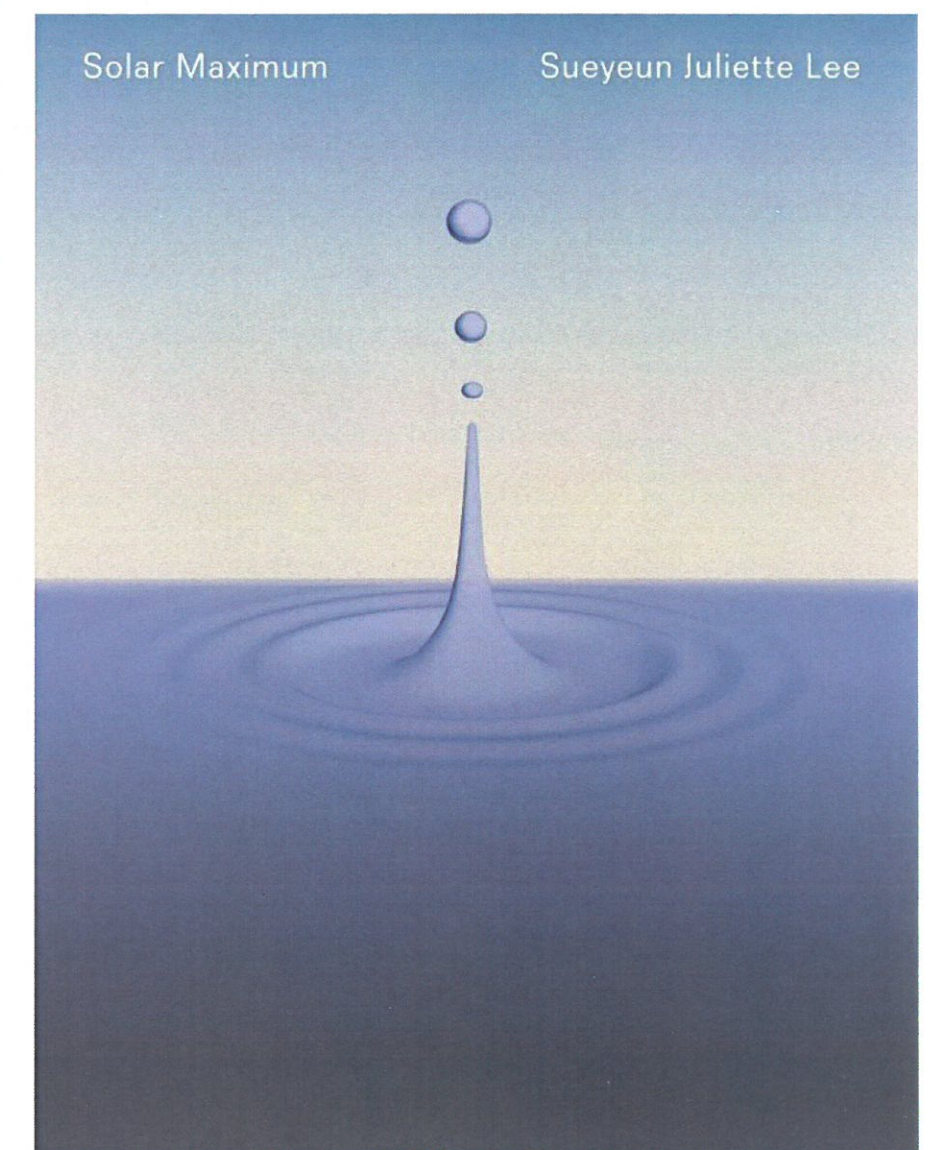
us where language, meaning, and thought find themselves. Language, meaning and thought fall into the physical, come from the physical and are told through the world of the senses.

Sueyeun Juliette Lee in her poem *Solar Maximum* cogently hints at the shape of a future world through poetic writing that feels haunting, disparate, expansive, and clairvoyantly distabbling.² While at no point does a classically tell-able plot line emerge, Lee is successful in weaving a story by creating the sense of a world through evocative images and fragmented happenings where a reader is able to understand the doom of a dying sun. “My skin crawls at odd hours of the day, a residual effect of my recent radiation therapies, how they inadvertently synced me to coronal

² Sueyeun Juliette Lee. *Solar Maximum*. New York: Futurepoem, 2015.

flares... ” While Lee’s poem is essentially apocalyptic, the writing itself does not feel overly urgent or terrified. Rather, the voice of the narrator is personal and stripped bare of any demonstrative emotion.

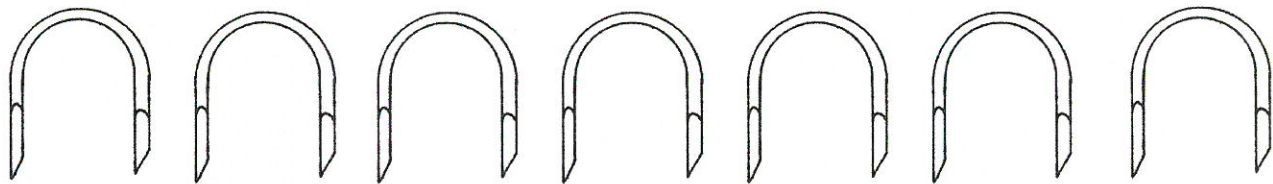
The narrator is aware of their *live’s* own profound and disquieting subtleties. In the case of *Solar Maximum*, meaning is stored in the world that is formed rather than a visible plot line. Meaning is held in hints of sensation, memories of loss, descriptions of heat as the sun tears through a future earth’s fragile ozone.



Unlike Solar Maximum, I feel as though *The Silver Epoch* has a traceable narrative. This narrative largely consists of the main character setting out on a quest where she must collect 12 stones, each stone possessing a purifying magical quality. Throughout the scope of this quest, she is guided by the moon-horse or “you” of the story, who she ultimately befriends and plays cards with. Together, they happen across gargantuan birdwomen, shale mountainsides, cerulean waters, and dreamy witches. After the heroine of this story collects all 12 stones, the waves hit and magically remove some of the world’s plastic

toxicity. At this point, the heroine is alone, the moon-horse gone from her side. Along with a spiders-crab bite, she transforms into the spider-wraith, a humanoid, magical being who can spin spider’s silk from the content of her own body. With this she builds structures in which this future world begins to live. At this point she travels to a rocky outpost research facility where she discovers a mysterious figure who will only be recognized if the text has been actively and intently read. A sort of puzzle, if you will. The essays are evenly dispersed throughout the linear scope of the poetry, drawing upon research which includes

personal interviews, harried google searches, comments from my mother and much more. While this book purposefully does not include a bibliography, this building of a web of information is essential to its function. Many ideas presented in the essays are referential and point towards the content of the poem as a whole, allowing meaning to be expressed in these three modes; the mode of the poetics, the mode of the essays, and the mode of the poetics and the essays self-referential-combined powers.



Note: Language has no obligation.
And she has no obligation to prove
anything to anyone. Only to tell
herself a story and find herself in
this; a rebirth of sensation.

turn page
to read
part II.



II. (The Reader, The Reading)

To further understand this poem's internal logic, we must once again become the reader. Take the loom that the writer has sat at and observe the taut threads. Then, weave your understanding into the writer's thread and fall into the act of reading.

Mei Mei Berssenbrugge says the following of reading in this excerpt from her poem, *Mouse*¹.

¹Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *Hello, The Roses* (New York: New Directions Books, 2013).

alized as mythic figures or deities
ne the spiritual subjectivity of
space.

is called Mother.

one pole, creating an enemy wh

d mouse slumped over the rim
my plant. Now, everything is fu

So, I read by feeling, vibration, picking up books from the library floor, as if by chance.

Rocky ground floods with yellow flowers, a saturation of feeling in cyclical time, as of the oracle.

If matter is trapped light, by seeing yellow flowers you restructure molecules, and you're not as solid.

An event on the mandala loosens into probability.

There was ambition, unconsciousness of Clytemnestra and I, a mouse, was her mirror.

I drive with my family away from the oracle through a valley of flowering almond trees, and turn around without realizing it.

That space was concealed within the illusion of my body, an emergence place.

If I mistake an angel for a stone statue, I look closer, not elsewhere, to see there never was stone.

My perception was far more inaccurate than the illusion.

If writing is a stone statue and a reader's interpretation of it is an angel—this poem by Berssenbrugge can become a metaphor for the experience of reading. Perhaps my writing is a stone statue — its form synthesized by me, the writer. And then you enter in, the reader and you see in the place of the stone statue, an angel. Your perception is accurate — the world you hold in your head is not illusory. My writing enters an expanded realm of meaning when you look at it. And I intended for this. No line of the writing is pinned in stone. I left the margin next to the gutter wide, so as to let the words bleed into a spaciousness where the reader's agency is held — this agency, being the reader's imagination. I largely chose the mode of poetry over any other art mode because of the spaciousness it is capable of holding. There are many ways a reader will create meaning and I can not pretend to know the experiences that will inform any one reader's perception of this poem, but I do know that that this collapse — the collapse of the reader and the writer is the only way *The Silver Epoch* can become whole.

Almost all choices in *The Silver Epoch's* materiality come back to warp and weft, the two directions of thread within a weaving. I speak of Warp and Weft in Essay 4 of my poem, which becomes one of the main points of self referentiality

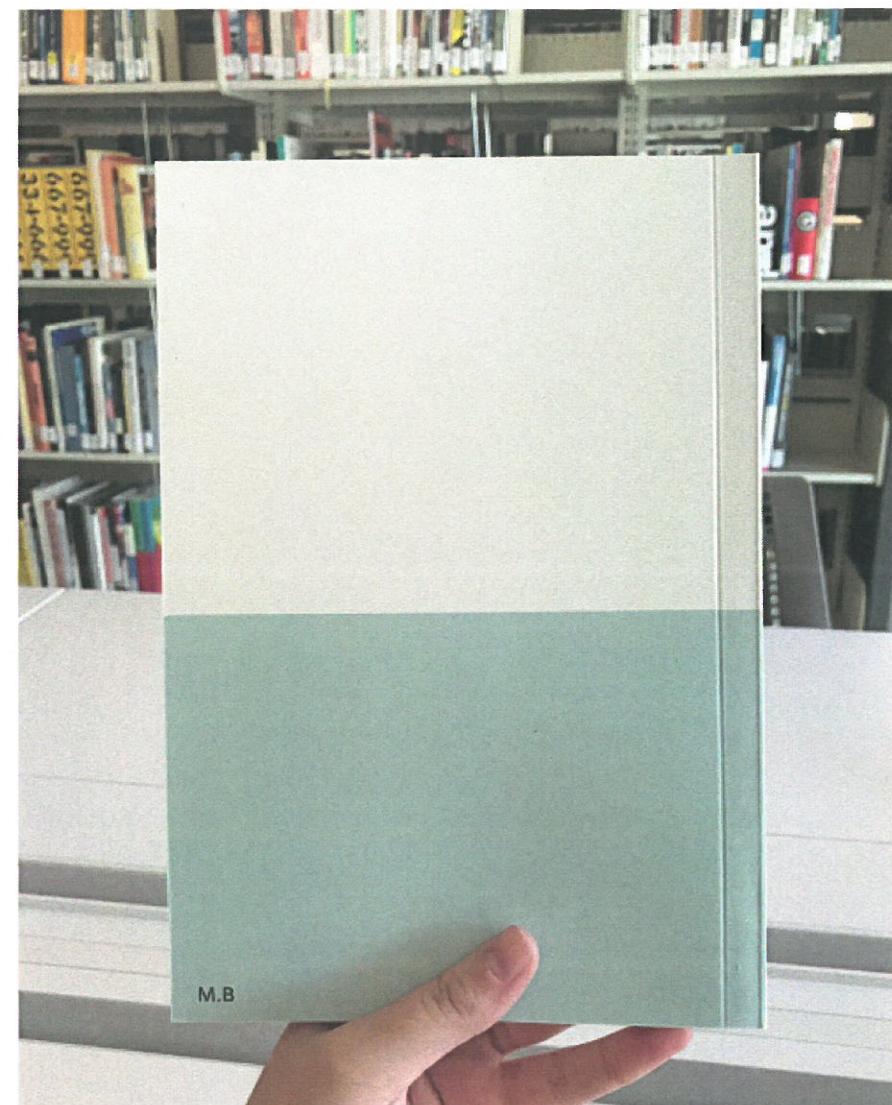
within *The Silver Epoch*.

Weaving is defined as taking disparate elements (threads) and utilizing the form of warp and weft to make a whole. In this way, the actions of warping and wefting, actions allowing ordered entanglement and twisted togetherness, are inherently actions which create strength.

When speaking of letterpress, the bed is the surface where lead type is placed, ordered, asked to be. A buoyant pressure involving wooden furniture, metal spacing, and quoins creates what is called the lock-up. Within the lock-up, pressure is needed from two directions. These two directions of pressure are referred to as warp and weft.

The insides of the book are digitally printed black and white on Mohawk Superfine 80t Eggshell White paper. I chose this paper because it seems to strike the perfect balance between an overly toothy paper and an overly smooth paper, an overly thick paper and an overly thin paper, a starkly white paper and a glaringly yellow paper. Mohawk superfine eggshell serves this book's readability while subtly hinting towards the object's specialness. These sheets of paper, after they have been printed on, are then bound through a process called cord recess. This process is essentially a perfect bind, but instead of the spine being kept together by only glue and paper, a saw is taken to the spine of the book at alternating degrees about 1/4 of an inch deep and 1 inch

apart. Pieces of thread are then placed in these recesses and secured with more glue. This process, while much more laborious than a common perfect bind and essentially invisible if one is not looking for it, acts in greatly strengthening the book, ensuring a resilient life span. This part of the binding process, while labor intensive, felt like an incredibly loving element of this process. It allowed me to spend time with each book through the careful insertion of thread, and through this, I came to feel as if each book held a similar quality to the 12 stones within the poem. The vague quest of the heroine within my story started to bleed into the reality of my own making process. After each book possessed 8 pieces of thread sawed into its spine, I would then attach its cover, the color of which is digitally printed and the words letterpress printed, its design meant to act as a shell and extension of the insides—simply designed, not giving away much more than a title. After they are trimmed, the books end up being 6 1/4 inches wide by 9 inches tall. I wanted each structural element of the book—the paper, the binding process, the cover—to lend towards the book's readability, as I long for these books to be interacted with, to be held without fear of them falling apart, to have a life of constant circulation.



Connected to this poem's materiality and concepts of warp and weft, was the need for a collapse of two persons and two timelines. The essays speak from my voice and I feel comfortable claiming that "I" as my own. I exist in this timeline, in 2018, the timeline we all belong to in one way or another. On the other hand, the poetry speaks from the unnamed narrator or heroine. She exists in another timeline, a far future one, a timeline which is facing a plethora of toxic remnants, as seen by the high levels of plastic in her blood, which she checks on page 51.

Note: The essays trace a matriarchical lineage in which I speak to my mother, a scientist, and my mother's mentor, also a scientist—slowly noticing the accumulated empathy of our parallel paths.

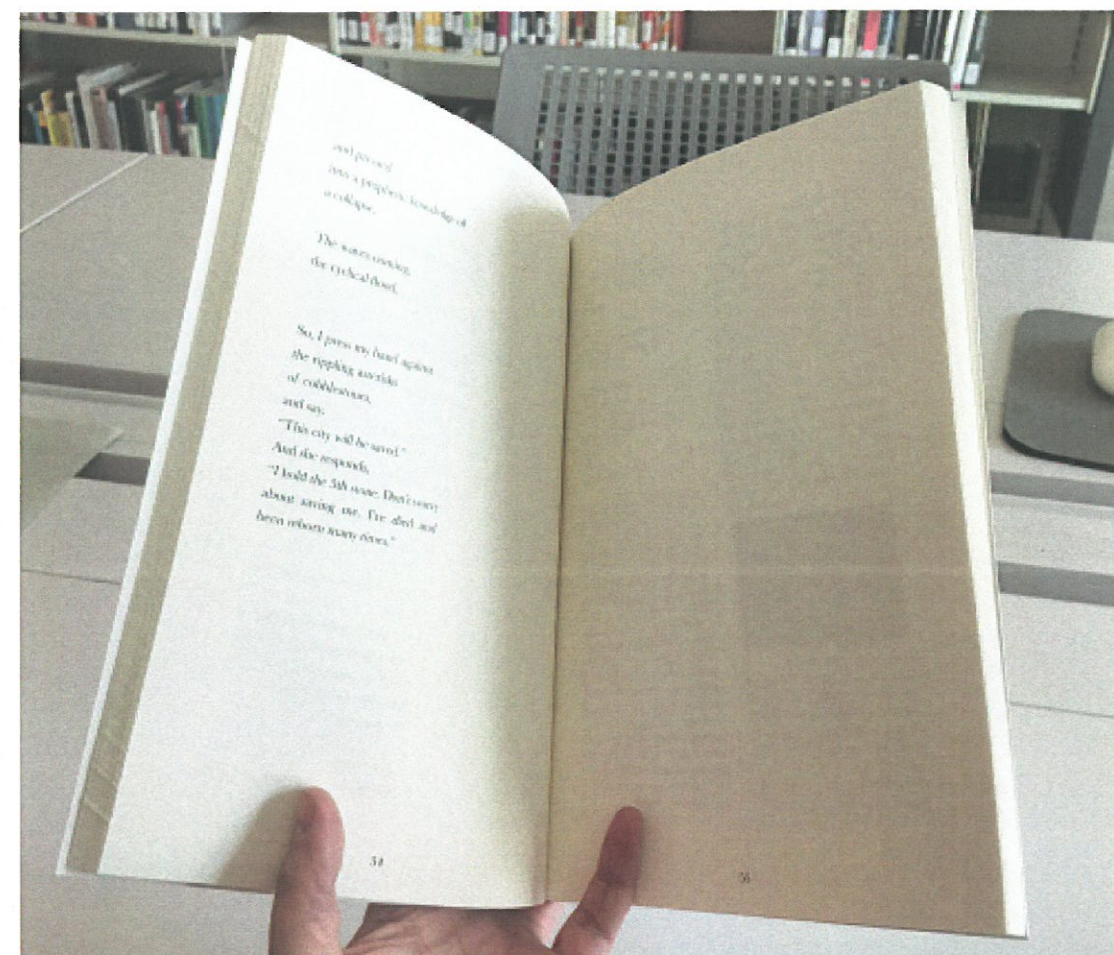
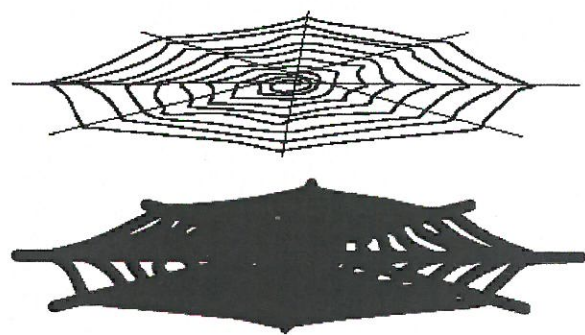
Every evening, after I set up camp with you grazing by my side, I would remove the swaddling cloth full of stones, place it near me, and take out my blood meter. I would then insert the blood meter into my right arm and check my toxin levels. I recorded my results each night. The plastic levels in my blood exponentially decreased, to the point where I was nearly 100% plastic free.

I needed this collapse in order to build a web which could provide a map that could then help in allowing a deep reflection through drawing imaginary threads from a future timeline. This writing does not act as prophecy, but rather deep reflection. In the same way that my material choices are informed by qualities of warp and weft, the writing and the way it exists on the space of the page is also informed by warp and weft. The essays and the poetry collapse into each other, two threads of text which run through the whole poem. These two threads exist on each page in the form of two columns of equal width and height. When the writing exists as an essay, both columns are filled with text. When the writing exists in poetic form, only the columns farthest from the gutter possess text. The essays are stretched taut and constitute a skeletal form, which the poetry is woven into. The essays are warp, and the poetic sections are weft.

At the beginning of this semester, I proposed to make a book that included both writing and documentation of sculpture. But as I wrote this poem and started its process of weaving, I realized that sculptures were unnecessary, as the books themselves were becoming the sculptures. As artist Oscar Tuazon says "the craft of writing does not interest me. I consider the process of making a book—even writing

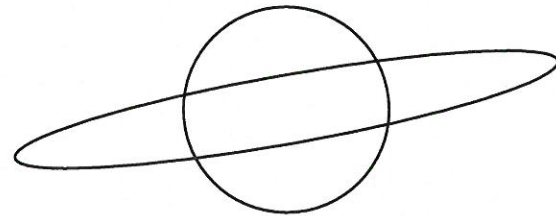
it—like making a sculpture."² The books are objects grounded in materiality and form, wavering between the collapsed realities of a sculpture and a poem.

2 Oscar Tuazon, *The Social Life of the Book*





stratigraphic cliffides



II. (The Interstitial)

Zoom out even farther into our web or ripple and we become part of the interstitial.

On one of the few sunny days of winter, I took bus 4 from downtown portland to SE division street, got off at division and 34th, took a right, walked for about 3 blocks past hidden crocuses and bare trees, took a left, and ended up at my mentor, Lisa Radon's, home. There, Lisa and her cat, vesper, welcomed me to a shelf full of poetry books organized by color. Lisa gave me some pointers, and left me to begin the slow unfolding of a now lifelong research path. While I briefly scanned a selection of about 12 or so poetry books, what caught my attention most, was none of

the writing held within the books themselves, but a quote on the back cover of Clark Coolidge's "The Crystal Text." The quote, written by Bernadette Mayer, reads as follows;

*"In a world where people are perforce cut off from the mystical cosmic and sublime aesthetic everything, the works of Clark Coolidge (of which a concordance would be fascinating) provide for us the beauty of some of the interstitial stuff that might weave a perception to change the world back together."*¹

¹ Bernadette Mayer on the back of Clark Coolidge, *The Crystal Text*

I read it once, I read it twice. It formed beneath me, and put into perspective, in a single moment, the reason why I make, the reason why I was compelled to write the book I am now presenting to you. This quote possesses, within its entirety, a seemingly endless layering of meaning.

Around every text, is an orbit of conversation, which becomes the third layer of meaning as we radiate farther into our web. First the writer, now the reader, now the interstitial. I would like to define the word interstitial, as it has become greatly relevant to my search. Interstices can be defined as the spaces which exist in between other entities, but possess within themselves their own

function and relevance. This can take many forms; the space between tree branches where light pours in, the space between particles of sand where fauna flourishes, the space between two web pages where advertisements sometimes find themselves, or the fluid spaces that exists between the objects of our insides where a newly found organ has just been discovered. To notice the interstitial, to see the interstices, requires an empathetic and acute awareness.

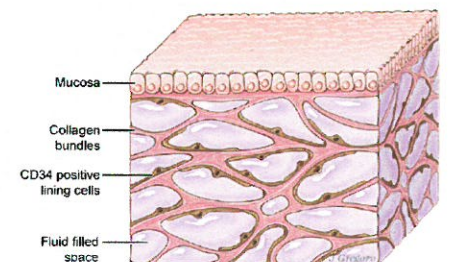
There is a web between all of us, strands of connection which are largely invisible. This space of connection could be referred to as interstices. Networks of friendship, shared thoughts, conversations constitute the interstitial web.



Fashion and media scholar Sara Bernstein looks at the interstitial web of conversation through her article "Magic Books And Hungover Sisters: How I Decided Beauty And The Beast Actually Is Kind Of Feminist."² In this writing Bernstein discusses her and her sister's run in with the newest live action version of Beauty and the Beast. Bernstein speaks of a meaningful experience and a poignantly feminist moment; however, she emphasizes that this meaning was not found through the actual viewing of Beauty and the Beast, but rather the conversations between her and her mother and sisters that took place afterwards. Bernstein then collapses this experience of conversation into the love story of Belle and the Beast, thinking to herself "There's something about books though. What if it isn't love, but literature that makes the Beast human?" To which her younger sister responds "But he's read all the books. It's not until Belle arrives that they mean anything to him." With this statement from her younger sister, Bernstein realizes that it wasn't until she "talked about this Disney film with [her] mother and sisters that the story meant anything to [her]."

² Sara Bernstein. "Magic Books And Hungover Sisters: How I Decided Beauty And The Beast Actually Is Kind Of Feminist." *Dismantle Magazine*. March 30, 2017.

The writer writes and the reader reads. They form meaning through this experience of warp and weft, collapsing into each other through the space of the page. But beyond the space of the page, is the space that all the pages form together, an amalgamation of space – the book. The book is held and discussed. Quotes are written on its backside. A whole world of meaning is made through the interstitial web or ripple that it creates. Through conversation with others, books can mean something more to us, can create friendship, can create networks of affection, can reinforce or sustain a community. Why publish a book? To form a public around ideas.



A new organ of the human body has recently been discovered. This organ is referred to as none other than the interstitium. The interstitium consists of the fluid filled spaces found in the body's connective tissue.

This discovery changes the way scientists understand the microanatomy and fluid dynamics of our body. My mother, Robin McFarland, a professor of anatomy

and physiology, often dissects dead bodies for the sake of teaching. She said that when she first read about the interstitium it made total and complete sense to her, explaining that she had always felt that the space of that fragile in-between tissue meant more than just something that was scraped away in dissection. But she also said that she understood why it took so long for the interstitium to be noticed, saying that “we often discount the fragile.”³

Returning to Bernadette Mayer and her quote on the back of The Crystal Text, it is clear that

3 McFarland, Robin. Conversation.

Clark Coolidge is not one to discount the fragile, his book of poetry focusing exclusively on the singular rock that lives on his writing desk. Through the close observation of this rock, Coolidge is able to achieve what Bernadette Mayer calls “the beauty of the interstitial,” a beauty which “might weave a perception to change the world back together.”⁴

Largely, the process of editing *The Silver Epoch*, consisted of an increased noticing of the interstitial. With the help of Lisa, I was able to edit out the parts of

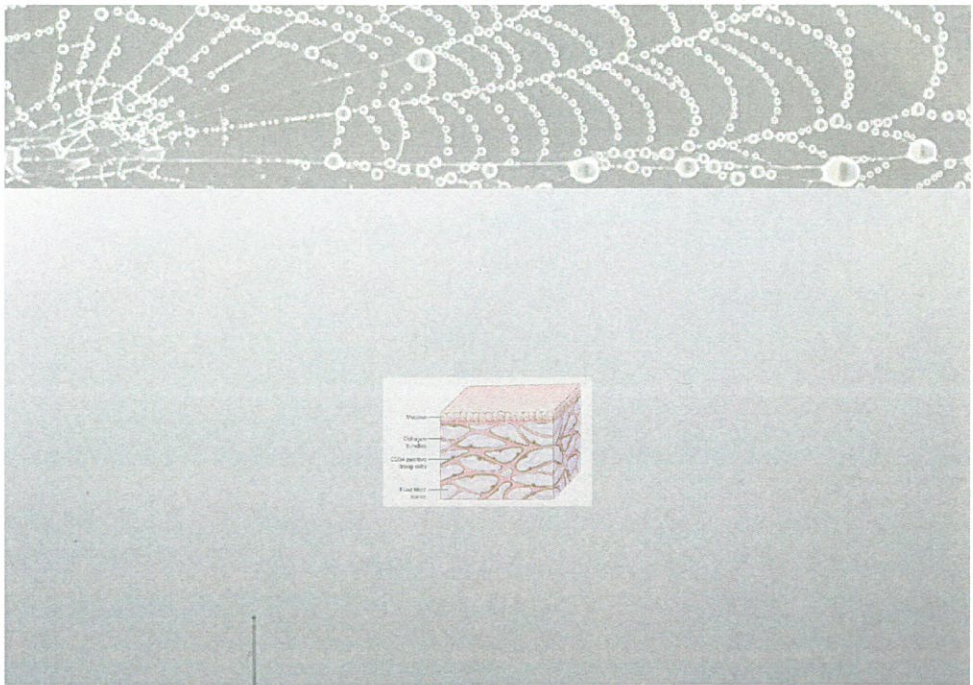
4 Coolidge, Clark. The Crystal Text. Sun and Moon Classics, 1986.

my writing which seemed unspecific and superfluous, honing in on the moments that noticed the interstices. The process of editing allowed me to become aware of the quieter, more fragile tones that make up this imagined future world.

At every phase, whether it be the writer, the reader, or the instesitial web, we are always the weaver, just as the heroine of The Silver Epoch transforms into the Spider Wraith on page 86, we pull viscous thread out from our own body and together we weave the world to which we all belong.



Note: On the day of my speech, my aunt gifted me a golden bracelet engraved with an unknown flower. It belonged to my grandmother, long passed. I wore it as I spoke.



Note: The heroine responds to stories that have been told before her in which she does not belong and is given no agency.





Goya, Francisco. *Fight With Cudgels*. 1820-23. Oil. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

II. (The World)

Now, we stand on the precipice of our web or ripple. To begin, before we jump off, I would like to share a quote by Michel Serres where he speaks of a painting by Goya where two men are fighting while slowly sinking into quicksand. He says,

“to know that there are three persons — the left, the right and ourselves at the exterior, but in reality there is a forth one, which is the world and which was put outside, and which we always forget”

Now, at the end of our web or ripple, we realize there was never

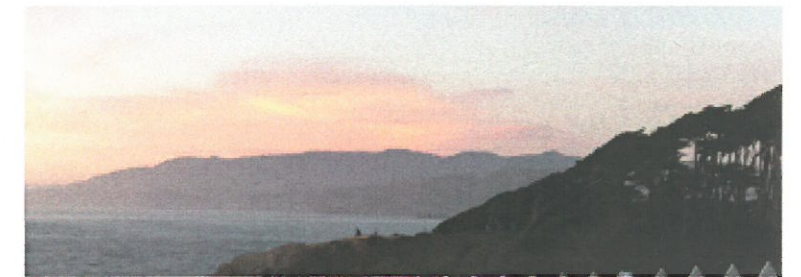
an end, we merely continue out further into the world, the secret fourth. I am interested in a how a world can be held within a story.

Story or fiction creates a world by way of the interstitial web. I talk about this concept in essay 3 of the book.

[Fictional] spaces have the ability to become shared fields of emotional resonance. Take as an example, the popular series of books, *Harry Potter*, written by J.K. Rowling. The world that Rowling creates is rich and most importantly, memorable. Even individuals who have never read or watched the movies or books know of the wizarding world; names like “quidditch” and “Lord Voldemort” have become common within our mainstream lexicon, reflecting the resonant space that

the fictional “wizarding world” has created. This shared space of imagination (*Hogwarts, the Leaky Cauldron, platform 9-3/4*) creates a network of humans who are tuned in to the same frequency of emotion through the possession of successfully translated fictional spaces. Imagine: everyone who knows of the *Harry Potter* world has logged into a coded virtual space. All they have to do is close their eyes, think of the Gryffindor Common Room, and there they are in a space millions of others have visited before, through some exposure to the story of *Harry Potter*.

Perhaps, through this resonance, humans are able to imagine the shape of their future through fictional realities. This, [I think,] is a vital human adaptation, as it allows us to create previously



impossible paths forward.

A fiction, a story, can hold a world, imagine us into a world, allow us to return to a world. Clarissa Pinkola Estes says “the whole point [of a story] is to remember us back into some layer of the mystery, the mystery of the worlds we traverse.”¹

Often, it’s a non serious thought that accidentally evokes, within the pin drop of a moment, the entire potential of a world wrought with mysticism and dripping with woe. I stumbled upon the concept of the moon-horse when my friend James gifted me a miniature pegasus. This object unlocked something in me, and it began to lead me into this world, the one I am building in *The Silver Epoch*, a world that is covered mostly in water and ruled by witches, a place where all structures are built out of spider webs. I was infatuated with this world, and so I chose to pursue this infatuation and see if I could find its core. I followed the Witch of the Slough who is also the moon-horse who is also the heron, and with each step

further and further into the depths of her murky landscape, I ended up at a delta I know well, a slope I know well, a ginkgo tree I know well - tidepools, salt, stratigraphic cliff-sides, blackberry fields, the line of the pacific, the pungent smell of eucalyptus. I found myself home—along the central coast of California. Speak of a pull. Speak of a place being the center of your body, and only when you are there, do you feel the rise of softness, as you become what you always were; your own idea of magic, the edges of your body invisible next to the warp of the environment.

“The art object, the art idea, is in a moving, energetic, emotional relationship with the world, and it is both influenced and influencing”.

- Ruth Little²

¹ Estes, Clarissa Pinkola. *Mother Night*. Sounds True, 2009.

² Little, Ruth. “Testimony: Art for the Sake of Place.” In *Elemental: An Arts and Ecology Reader*. Edited by James Brady. Manchester, United Kingdom: Gaia Project Press, 2016.

I am greatly influenced by this landscape. It holds an evocative weight. I let the soft globe of my body be pulled back to a center, and I undoubtedly am pulled back to this place. Perhaps, each character of the poem are simply spirits that roam this landscape, future echos only accessible by a bridge built through poetry, and for whatever reason, I was lucky enough to stumble upon them and their resonance, and now we are building a fiction, a world, a poem, a web, a ripple.

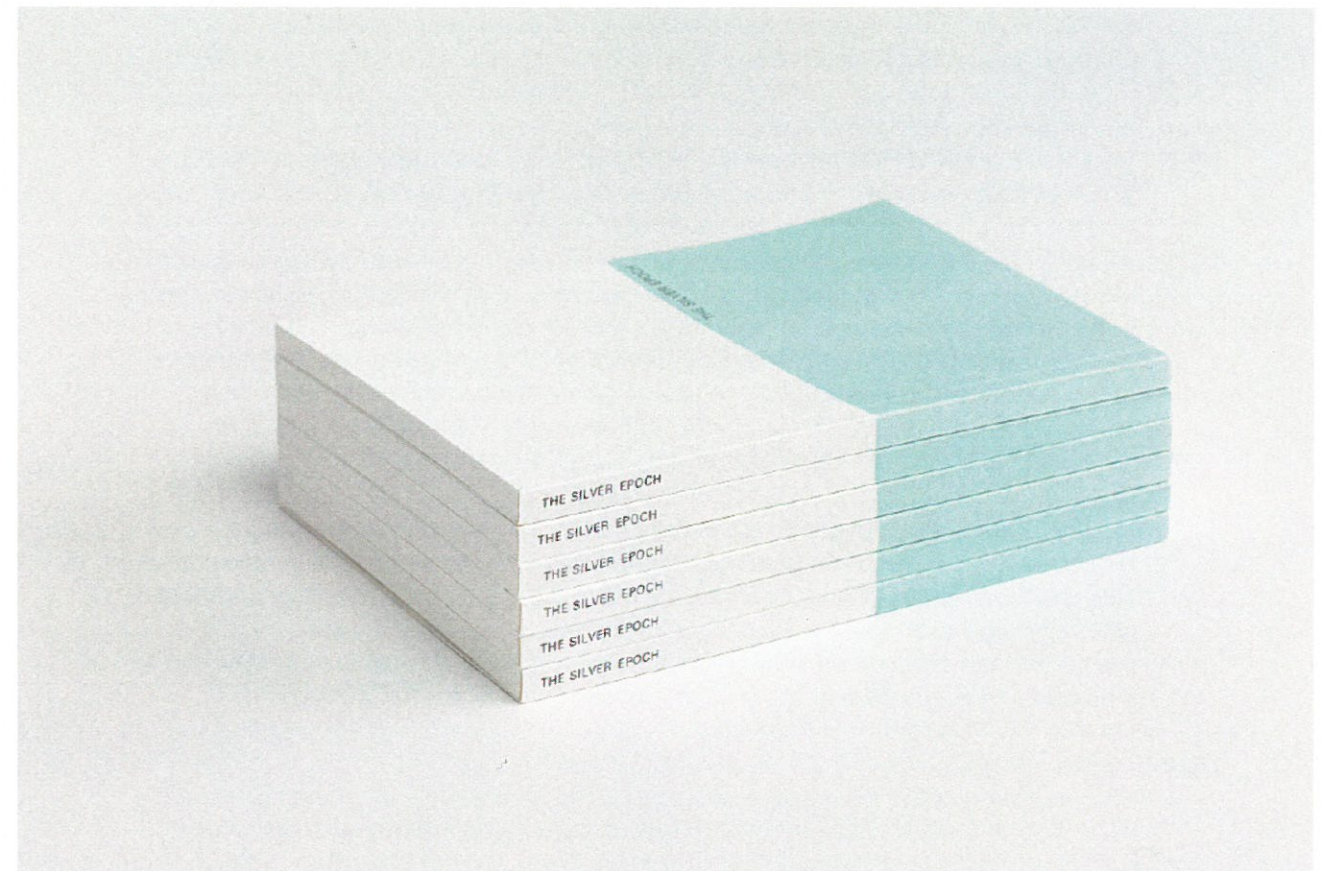
Each book completes the circle and acts as a beginning, forming a precipice which is the end of our map. Jump off — and where are we? We are in the world. The interstitium continues. The fabric of our bodies bleeds out into what is beyond us, the fragile-not-so-fragile web that connects us, the interstitial, a web of affection.

A couple nights ago, I dreamt. I dreamt that I was in a poetry competition with several of my peers including Rory Gilmore from *The Gilmore Girls*.³ In this dreamt up poetry competition, our last task was to write a poem by the name of *maestranza*. The only problem was I couldn't remember what a *maestranza* poem consisted of. I asked around, but the world was too hectic, and no one could tell me. Then I woke up muttering

3 *Gilmore Girls*. By Amy Sherman-Palladino. Performed by Alexis Bledel and Lauren Graham.

the word *maestranza* to myself, and remembered where I had first heard that word. I had heard it on the netflix original series, *Chef's Table*. It was used by Argentine celebrity chef Francis Mallmann where he defined *maestranza* as “the people around you helping.”⁴ He was referring to food and the network of loving help that exists in a kitchen. But a book also has a *maestranza* because a *maestranza*, at least in the way Mallmann uses it, could also be another word for the interstitial web. This poem's *maestranza* or interstitial web now finds itself slowly spreading, starting off as a collection of people whom I deeply care for and expanding unto itself in ways that are completely out of my control — who was this book published for? Here, this public, the PNCA community, my aunts, my cousins, my peers, my best friends, my teachers, my wonderful mentors, my father, my mother — meant to be passed between these hands and to then radiate out — like a silver ripple — in unknowable ways.

4 *Chef's Table*. “Francis Mallmann.” Netflix Original Series, 2018.



6 of 12 captured in a moment before complete dispersal.

Bernstein, Sara. "Magic Books And Hungover Sisters: How I Decided Beauty And The Beast Actually Is Kind Of Feminist." *Dismantle Magazine*. March 30, 2017.

- This article seems to succinctly point towards the interstitial, talking about how the orbit of information that surrounds a piece of media is often where meaning is made. This article also became an important node for me because Bernstein emphasizes a specific experience which is founded on the relationships between femme individuals. I thoroughly resonated with this idea.

Chef's Table. "Francis Mallmann." Netflix Original Series, 2018.

- This netflix original series looks at the artistry of various chefs throughout the world. While watching this show, I realized that food, just like any medium, can exist as a poem or art object, possessing its own intention, logic and team of influences. However, it was not until I had the dream (explained a couple pages previously) that I realized a deeper influence which this show had upon me, my psyche, and my understanding of poetry; that of the concept of maistranza or "team of people helping." It was Francis Mallmann, a chef featured on *Chef's Table*, who introduced the concept of maistranza long before I became aware of the interstitial.

Coolidge, Clark. *The Crystal Text*. Sun and Moon Classics, 1986.

- In this poetic text, Clark Coolidge dives into the interstitial by writing an epic poem for a singular quartz crystal. It was on the back of this book where I found Bernadette Mayer's influential quote about Clark Coolidge's ability to capture the beauty of the interstitial and how this beauty could inform a perspective which could then act in weaving the world back together. I like thinking about an artist as a weaver, working towards some perspective which allows the world to be woven back into a singular cosmic narrative. I think this idea is quite beautiful.

Estes, Clarissa Pinkola. *Mother Night*. Sounds True, 2009.

- This is an audiobook I have passively listened to for several years now. As I was nearing the end of my thesis project I went for a walk around my neighborhood while it lightly rained and listened to this collection of pseudo-lectures by Jungian dream psychologist, Clarissa Pinkola Estes. While I have some reservations towards the second wave feminist connotations/audience of Clarissa's work, I was struck very deeply by her understanding of story and the vital role it plays in our lives through rediscovering the mystery, through returning to a place of integral knowing/unknowing.

FRANCINE L. DOLINS, PAUL A. GARBER. "Primate Spatial Strategies and Cognition: Introduction to this Special Issue." *American Journal of Primatology*. 2014.

- This article, suggested by my mom, became my integral source for beginning to understand primatological research regarding spatiality. It was this article that introduced me to the idea that primates are most likely able to encode complex spatial maps because of a need to relocate food sites. I found this capacity and what it potentially allowed for to be extremely fascinating, referencing it in essay 3, "Spatiality and Primates, Fiction."

Gilmore Girls. By Amy Sherman-Palladino. Performed by Alexis Bledel and Lauren Graham.

- While I do not view this source as an extremely relevant node within my thesis research, I feel as if it deserves a certain head nod. I had never watched this popular TV series until about 2 months ago. Since this point, I have been almost compulsively binge watching this show whenever I have a free moment. While this show is drenched in problematics and unlikable characters, it became casually important in how I was thinking about the ways in which an audience will interpret media with their own intention and agency. I talk about my book, *The Silver Epoch*, as only becoming truly whole with the entrance of a reader. The same goes for any piece of media, and I am fascinated how this forming of meaning – even if it is formed alongside something as occasionally disturbing as *Gilmore Girls* — can be potentially subversive and progressive depending on the audience member and the discourse which surrounds it.

Granovetter, Mark. "Strength of Weak Ties." *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 1973.

- "Strength of Weak Ties" is a widely cited scholarly article, largely influential in the fields of social sciences. This article introduced the idea that weak ties are integral within the effective functioning of social networks, meaning that human connections which are predicated on the least amount of depth can become the most important bridges for the quick and broad dispersal of information. The terminology in this article helped in creating the conceptual underpinnings of essay 6, "Networks and Cohabitation," found within *The Silver Epoch*. Ultimately, I used inspiration from both social network theory and the form and function of spider webs to think about alternative structure making.

Hamilton, W.d. "The Genetical Evolution of Social Behaviour. I." *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7, no. 1 (1964)

- This essay ultimately poses a formula for altruism. Hamilton believed, through his acute observations of humankind, that there must be something driving all of human behavior. Hamilton, through his research, ultimately came to the conclusion that altruism existed as a way for the continuation of that individual organism's genetic material. Hamilton was the first to establish that the basic unit of evolution is not the organism. According to Hamilton, the organism does not matter, it is merely a vessel. This thinking led to the concept of the selfish gene. I look at the phallacies inherent within thinking that the gene is selfish in essay 2 of *The Silver Epoch*, ultimately attempting to dismantle the conceptual remnants of Hamilton's research, implying the selfish gene has no place in *The Silver Epoch's* imagined world, allowing the characters within the fiction to shed any idea of the gene being inherently selfish.

Kyger, Joanne. *Places to Go*. Los Angeles: Sparrow Press.

- I found this book of poetry when perusing the PNCA library for relevant sources with my mentor, Lisa Radon. We were both taken aback by the subtle craft of this book – the whole book being letterpress printed and made by a small press known for their exceptionally special books. I came to see *Places to Go* as a rare gem, not only in the fact that it was such a well considered object, but also in the fact that it held such poignant writing. In a sort of eerie way, I discovered that the small press who published this book were actually some of my family's oldest friends, and I had been entirely unaware of this until I showed my parents this specific book of Joanne Kyger's.

Little, Ruth. "Testimony: Art for the Sake of Place." In *Elemental: An Arts and Ecology Reader*. Edited by James Brady. Manchester, United Kingdom: Gaia Project Press, 2016.

- This reading, introduced to me through my Art and Ecology course, became important while considering the role of the world within this work. Fear over the state of our ecological crisis was always a center point for *The Silver Epoch*, and this reading helped in articulating the importance of some of those ecological inclinations. While at a point, I thought that *The Silver Epoch* had perhaps veered away from addressing some of my more deeply rooted ecological anxieties, I found that by paying heed to the landscapes which define me as a body, I was in fact coming to terms with vital aspects of ecological thought.

Mayer, Bernadette. *Utopia*. New York: United Artists Books, 1984.

- This is a poetic book which became largely influential in the way I was thinking about how a poem's scope can be pushed. I read more of Mayer's work, but I spent the most time with this book and feel it had the most pull for me in the ways it explores voice, prose, and future worlds expounded through poetics.

McFarland, Robin. *Conversation*. 2018.

- I have had many conversations with my mother over the course of my thesis project (and life), and I feel as if I would be doing my project a great disservice if I did not emphasize the importance of my mother within my research methodologies. Just a few examples; conversations with my mother led me down the track of considering primate spatiality as well as the misogyny of the selfish gene as well as the importance of talking to Adrienne Zihlman, (premiere primatologist). In this small way, including my mother in *The Silver Epoch*, references the importance of a femme line of lineage in regards to knowledge, science and empathy. I am unquantifiably inspired by my mother as a scientist possessing a PHD as well as a wonderful woman possessing a deep and resonant sense of affection and love.

Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *Hello, The Roses* (New York: New Directions Books, 2013).

- This is the book where I happened across the wonderful poem, *Mouse*, which I reference in my paper. Beyond *Mouse* I am constantly inspired by Berssenbrugge's subtle and destabilizing words which have an almost uncanny power to shine and vibrate within the space of reading and imagining.

Okorafor, Nnedi. *Akata Witch*. Turtleback Books, 2017.

- While I never directly referenced Okorafor's writing, her work with fiction became hugely important to me as I neared the end of my project. Okorafor possesses an amazing knack for vivid world building. To me, Okorafor and all the books she has writing — with a special emphasis on *Akata Witch* — seems to embody the awe-inspiring power of fiction in leading us into highly empathetic future/present worlds.

Oscar Tuazon, *The Social Life of the Book #1*. 2011.

- This reading clarified thoughts which I could have never clarified on my own. Tuazon speaks to my heart when he talks about not caring about the craft of writing, but rather seeing writing and bookmaking as synonymous to sculpture. This thinking put into perspective how I had been approaching the form of *The Silver Epoch* all along — viewing the making of *The Silver Epoch* the same way I would approach any other art object.

Perec, Georges. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2012.

- Perec speaks about an idealized space, a space which is created through any act of making. This reading became seminal in the way I understood not only the space of the page but also how I understood the collapse of language and space in general — using writing/making as a way to access what Perec refers to as "a space of reassurance."

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter 1-7*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1997-2007.

- The *Harry Potter* books and the *Harry Potter* world became specifically relevant in Essay 3 of the book where I speak of primates and spatiality. However — in a broader sense — The *Harry Potter* world resonates deeply for me. My mother made a practice of reading out loud to my brother and me. I have distinct memories of not speaking to each other when my mother would pull my brother and I out of school early almost every Friday in order to go eat at a restaurant and listen to her read various fiction stories out loud to us. It was by far my favorite part of any school week. From this reading, one of the worlds which settled most deeply in my psyche was that of *Harry Potter*, that of Hogwarts, that of the burrow, of the ministry of magic, of the Great Hall at Christmas time. In this way *Harry Potter* becomes an example of how a fictional world can hold lasting weight and create networks of loving connections.

Serres, Michel. *The Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

Serres, Michel. *The Natural Contract*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

- While I have not read this whole text, I know of its relevance within environmental thought through other sources. It is while talking about this book that Serres shares the quote about Goya's painting. This quote became important to my research as it introduced the idea of the world being "the secret fourth."

Seuyeun Juliette Lee. *Solar Maximum*. New York: Futurepoem, 2015.

- This long form poem proposes a speculative future and became relevant to how I was considering my work as both poem and sci-fi.

Twilley, Nicola. "In the Future, We'll All Wear Spider Silk." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 19 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/in-the-future-we'll-all-wear-spider-silk.

- Nicola Twilley explains the different ways in which humans have attempted to harvest spider silk over the past 300 years or so. Twilley discusses the goats who are imbued with an orb weaver's genome, and how varying companies are attempting to utilize spider silk within their own designs. This article helped me in thinking about the ways in which synthetic spider silk could be produced. It ultimately led me to thinking about how recycled plastic could act as a filament with imbued spider silk qualities.

Zihlman, Adrienne. Personal interview. 2018.

- Adrienne Zihlman is my mother's mentor. I conducted a phone interview with her in regards to her current and past research of the two species of chimpanzees. Not only did this conversation become the center source of information for the last essay of the book, I also viewed this dialogue as a vital key in building the femme lineage which ultimately became the conceptual spine of this book.

Zihlman, Adrienne L., John E. Cronin, Douglas L. Cramer, and Vincent M. Sarich. "Pygmy Chimpanzee as a Possible Prototype for the Common Ancestor of Humans, Chimpanzees and Gorillas." *Nature* 275, no. 5682 (1978): 744-46.

- This article explores some of Adrienne's early research which proposed a varied model of evolution based on the pygmy chimpanzee.

poem, book, hybrid art object, far future, ecological anxiety, matriarchal, quest, fantastical, weaving, world of water

6 1/4 inches by 9 inches by 3/8 inch