

Passionfruit Politics

GEORGIA ROSE PHILLIPS

We need to fight fascism, my grandfather said. At first, I thought he was talking to the passionfruit vines tangled around the wooden stakes of the trellis. He did not turn to look at me, he had been too busy searching. I was still in my pyjamas, staring into the bleary curtain of morning drawn around us, squinting. He was in his over-washed baggy white fronts that gaped like a spinnaker, waiting for the winds of progress to ensue. When I am old enough to read Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, I will draw a passionfruit vine in the background of Klee's *Angelus Novus*. I will add two magenta nipples, a grey hair curling. He was looking to see if any passionfruit were ripe enough for breakfast. I was looking for slugs that threatened the garden's sense of equilibrium. Fascism is the primary evil, he said again, before pausing contemplatively. And its biggest danger is that it can manifest under the guise of democracy. He lifted a vine to reveal a discrete green ball of something that barely looked capable of ripening to dark purple. The government's approach to mandatory detention, he continued, was less about judicial processing, and more about an iron-clad charade of deterrence. Tell me I am wrong, he added. You are wrong, I said. He stopped tussling the branch and looked up at me, mortified. An absence of words replaced his rambling distractedness. Tell me I am wrong is a *figure of speech*, he added, frowning. You are not wrong, I added quickly, as he went back to quietly exploring the vines. Through the strained silence came the croaky chorus of cicadas. The sudden heaviness of the humidity. Then, the frivolous skip of laughter that bled through the neighbour's navy Colorbond fence and blurred the distinction between what they thought belonged to them, and what they thought belonged to everyone else. I thought about the night before. We had watched a series of child appropriate movies. *The Lives of Others*. *Schindler's List*. History, my grandfather had said, with adoring enunciation, had to be learnt, as I sat there stupefied. Unable to comprehend the antics of the past. Now, when I see the etched pattern of the trellis behind *Angelus Novus*, an unripe passionfruit falls from the vine. As it hits the ground, the green skin burst open and a yellow liquid and black seeds peel down its skin, and I think of what it means to remember. I think of what it means to save the past.

Author

Georgia is a casual academic and a PhD candidate in the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Creative Writing Program. She holds a BA. English Literature with a first-class Honours in Creative Writing, also from UNSW. In 2018, her creative non-fiction novella, *Holocene*, was shortlisted and then highly commended for the Scribe Nonfiction Literary Prize. Alongside her research, teaching and creative practice, Georgia works as a literary critic for the *Historical Novels Review*. Her work appears in *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Programs*, *Literary Veganism: An Online Journal*, *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, *The Historical Novels Review*, *Verity La*, *Southerly* (forthcoming), *The Wheeler Centre Notes*, *Tharunka* and *The Quo*.

absolute shrew

from inside the workforce
you can administer your printer
gently fold one appearance
around another
be civil to local whistles
then take charge of
in-house materials
staged in landmark buildings
left nameless by
the planners who planned them

you really shine
in the casting call
for the office scenario
where an untrained child
demonstrates the pitfalls
of heavy lifting
up a ladder

I cord my hair
set barrettes in a kind of coronet
to bring out the highlights
which took 137 minutes to develop
tie my belt in tribute
be a cabochon in 'smart shoes'
minus complex facets
within a puffed data economy
nailed to the floor by sundries

'houseproud' is a structure
not a moral failing
still the grubby bohemia
of the local genius

who never repays the dinner invite
remains unloved

ferronnière

the dangling jewel of her intellect

historically

the running list scrolls on
as she detours to top up the caper reserves

ambition of the stone
carried lightly in her pocket
between transiting seedlike shapes
as we confront the tragedy
of her aimlessness
keeping ourselves
ceaselessly sharp with occupation
look for the winsome ergonomics
of sunken chairs in the lecture hall

forging consensus
demurring to stretch more helpfully
might detergent be
too heavy a metonym
(showing a baby a tree)

while trying to wash your clothes
in a portable laundry
they've put you in a headline
and locked up the taps
'for your own good'

ELLA O'KEEFE

Another Danged Migraine

Father of my son's friend wants a Trumped-up t-shirt straight from America & I've (*what?*) suggested Appalachia as a place for my family to gather, the state of Georgia where in 1992 a former grand wizard of the ku klux klan made a run for president and got the vote though the north Georgia mountains, it must be told, are beautiful this time of year: chicken-yellow Sunkist-orange & blood-red-running.

Guns kill people guns kill people, my heart no longer beating a straight line. It's possible one can feel at home & be a stranger & feel strange & be at-home, fear growing stronger with age, like cellulite & moles.

Leader 1 says his penis is bigger than the missile that belongs to Leader 2 so they whip out their weapons of mass destruction & play with their light sabres like *whack! whack!* not even considering that my vagina mass-created three separate times, so take *that!* and *that!* and *that!*

The mountains aren't to blame. Who is to blame? Even I have a soft spot for my son's friend's father. Every person is unique, it's what makes life so...*great*. It's what makes my brain ache.

Another danged migraine.

Heather Taylor-Johnson

River Run

I read Jenny's Wellington poems again

her friends are constant
flourishing by the Derwent
season to season

by Hobart's Derwent, some of mine
from half a life ago have blossomed

unwatered by visits from me, more deeply
channelled, more tangled

into themselves, nourished by their gardens
even while they dug them

melding themselves into their houses of sticks
clay, stone, rearing children

making livings, earning livelihoods
sending fledglings out into the world

when, one fine day, I come back, they put the kettle on

with tea we wash the dust of long roads

from our throats

the sky shines over the southern edge of the world
clouds scud over our heads

we acknowledge with better grace now

the onward tug of the river, pulling us with it

CATH KENNEALLY