



STILLP • INT
A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

SHADOWS

ANNE MARIE SPIDAHN

I'm writing this on the bank of a lake called Dead. I'm a guest here, an outsider. I'm present, but apart, isolated by my aloofness, by my fight with faith—which is, perhaps, where my experience and photographer Ejatu Shaw's meet, where our disparate melodies harmonize. On the lake's edge I'm isolated too by my shadow-life, a life that exists in no place, save the virtual. It's in the virtual that my labor resides, my fantasies, my desire, my quest to know and understand, my intimacies.

There's a me without a body, and with only the infrequent, digital reproduction of a face or voice, whose impotent efforts to communicate or understand must occur in accordance with a group of unspoken rules, rules that so often amputate even the meager, lingering potentials toward truths that still remain, latent in the prison-house of language. The dominance the digital imposes is a special kind of totalizing torture, one I couldn't have predicted, not really.

It's in these digital shadows that Issue 002: SHADOWS took root.

And now, days later, I'm writing this within a razor's edge of your reading, with my tiny kids' hands on me, with their delicate flesh pressed to mine, with the oven warming and the stove-top ablaze, in conversation with people in three-to-five time zones and my body rioting from the pressure: of the computer, of a world wedded to a 'no limits' version of performance, and accumulation. But I, and we, hold steady. I know you feel me. I *know* you feel me.

The thinkers who are gathering around *Stillpoint Magazine* are, perhaps first and foremost, drawing attention to the myriad versions of these uniquely rendered, collective shadows—overlooked, impermanent sufferings & happenings that shape, break, or elevate us, day after day. The thinkers who are gathering around Stillpoint Magazine are describing and interpreting the mutated new ways that struggle—to act ethically and in fellowship, to survive—happens beneath the forms that block illumination today: profit, patriarchy, race & racism, totalitarianism, empire.

We step into layers of shadow.

And recently—as we found truths that horrified and delighted us, and those that demanded of us no reaction other than that we hold witness—we have begun to speak and write most about the beauty and relief that can *only* be found in the shade. Hidden from the assault of the bright white or spotlight, in the darkness, it might still be possible to rest without burning, it might still be possible to observe without suffering blindness, to think & contemplate until dusk arrives.



Polypnea – Ejatu Shaw

Across oceans, our shimmer-selves have taken to the cool of shadows, shadows that have split open like ebony imaginariums until ideas that, at first, appeared to demand only despair have revealed themselves to demand, at the very least: that we bear with—and witness—

the uncertainty of today, and that we create from the negative, from the refuse, in the destruction that surrounds us.

Anne Marie Spidahl is Editor-in-Chief of *Stillpoint Magazine*, and Creative Director of the PrairieCare Institute's Center for Applied Psychoanalysis, the mother of two, a literary critic, and the author of the novel *Nothing*.

Ejatu Shaw is a multidisciplinary artist with a master's degree in Photography Arts at the University of Westminster. Using various editing techniques, she produces unique, impactful images that allow viewers to intensely experience the thoughts and feelings of the subjects involved. She has had her work published in *Gal-dem*, *DAZED*, *Vogue Italia*, and *Vice*.

Polypnea is shown here as a portion of the full accompanying artwork originally featured on stillpointmag.org.