

**STILLP • INT**  
A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

# OUT OF THE WRECK

## ANNE MARIE WIRTH CAUCHON

I'll start with the image of a ship lost, capsized, torpedoed, or a ship after collision, sunken salvage crumpled somewhere on the ocean floor. The wreckage of the hull, the mast, the majestic figurehead now headless, and the dead: having been trapped to drown, or having nobly steered straight down, deep into those watery depths, to Atlantis.

As I often do, I'll use myself as raw material, trying as I may to write my way out of such a wreck. Or not writing, as I instead look vainly to find and salvage all that's been lost, sailing through this Covid-colored tempest and fog, thick with boredom and grief and fear. This is where we began SALVAGE: looking about at our families, our friends, and at ourselves, as we all try to muster the will to reconstruct life from a strange kind of rubble. It's rubble that contains all the pieces of our former lives, but has been dismembered, or broken almost beyond repair. So we ask ourselves through long, weary days that seem to stretch all the way to that taunting and cruelly beautiful horizon called "the future": What can possibly be salvaged now? And what have we forever lost?



*The Meal (Bittersweet)* - Hanna Hetherington

In this issue there are forms of salvage that cannot be redeemed: salvage killings in the Philippines, the salvage that remains after war, the salvage and mutation of America's history of indentured servitude into the repressed and repressive reality of the American Dream. And yet, as these writers unearth nightmarish wreckages to dust them off and hold them up for us to see, they do offer a kind of hopeful salvaging. In looking straight at the horrors and brokenness of violence and repression—what glimmers underneath is the tender, new growth of other possible worlds, worlds growing secretly, in the empty, earthen places within the rubble.

And there are tender salvagings here too: materials pulled from the demolition site or the dump—reclaimed, scrubbed clean, put into a changed formation, and made proudly new. As presented in the fashion shoot and short fiction that follows, this kind of salvage is imbued with the spirit of forgiveness, not as patronization, but as a momentary opening that reveals interconnectedness: across class, across continents, across the cold, calculated severity of computerized life, and sometimes, across species. Through all the salvaging attempted or suggested in what follows here, weaves rescue: rescue from loss at sea, or rescue of those indentured for life by debt, or rescue of those threatened with salvage as death. And what is rescue—of wreckage, or of us—but the sweet taste of liberation, and setting free?

*In this issue you'll find:* an essay tracing the history of salvage killings in the Philippines. You'll see documentary photography showing glimpses of life in the neighbourhoods of Accra, Ghana. You'll find prose-poetry on the reverberations of the Biafra War, and a CGI-rendered world healing itself after destruction. You'll find carefully staged photographs meditating on desire and loss, as well as a playful performance that celebrates what might be learned from other species. You'll find short fiction that tells the story of a stolen bangle, and the opening of the space of forgiveness. You'll find a short essay on the ways the American Dream continues to permeate a collective subconscious. And you'll find a fashion editorial depicting the glitch of a digital fashion experiment, and the remaking of a fashion shoot as reclamation of one lost.

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*The Meal* is one of a series of photographs from *Bittersweet* shown at [stillpointmag.org](http://stillpointmag.org).

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