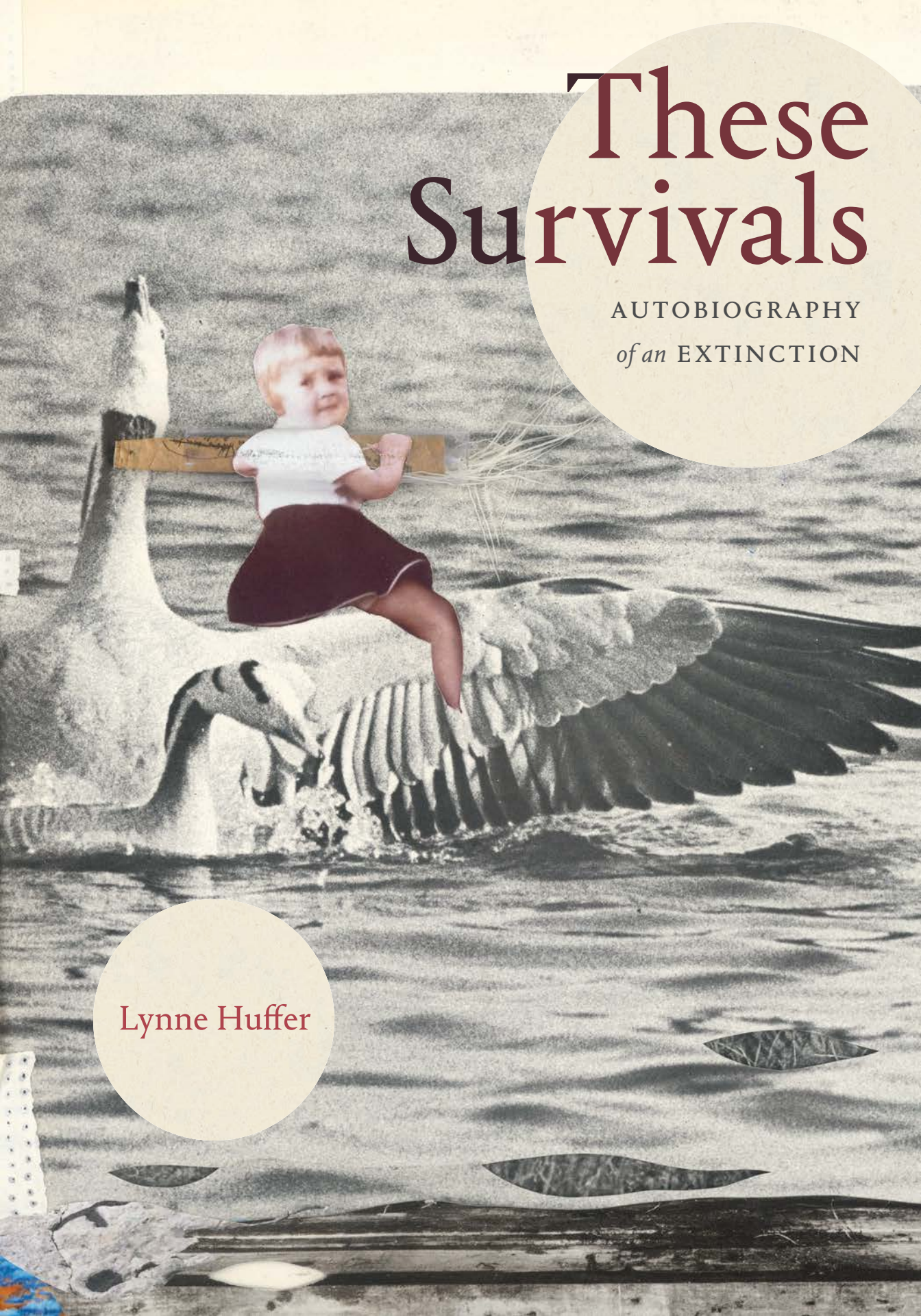


These Survivals

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
of an EXTINCTION

Lynne Huffer





WRITING MATTERS!

A series edited by Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Monica Huerta, Erica Rand, and Jerry Zee

These Survivals

AUTOBIOGRAPHY *of an* EXTINCTION

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Lynne Huffer

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For Alexa

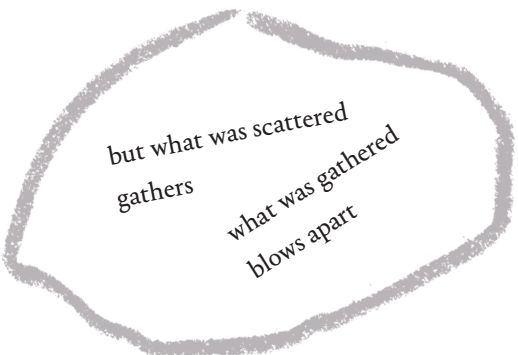
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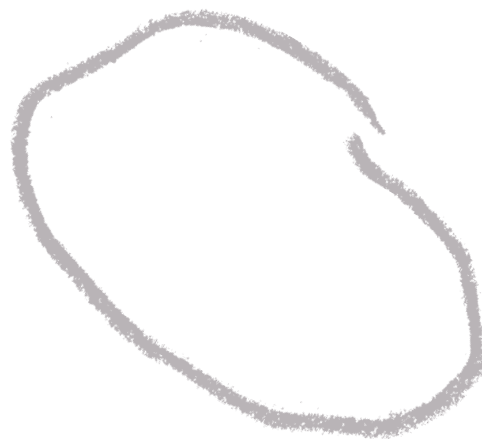
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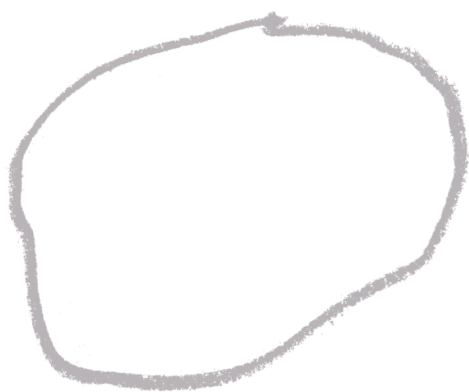
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but what was scattered
gathers
what was gathered
blows apart





I

FRAGMENTS COMINGBACK

]
]



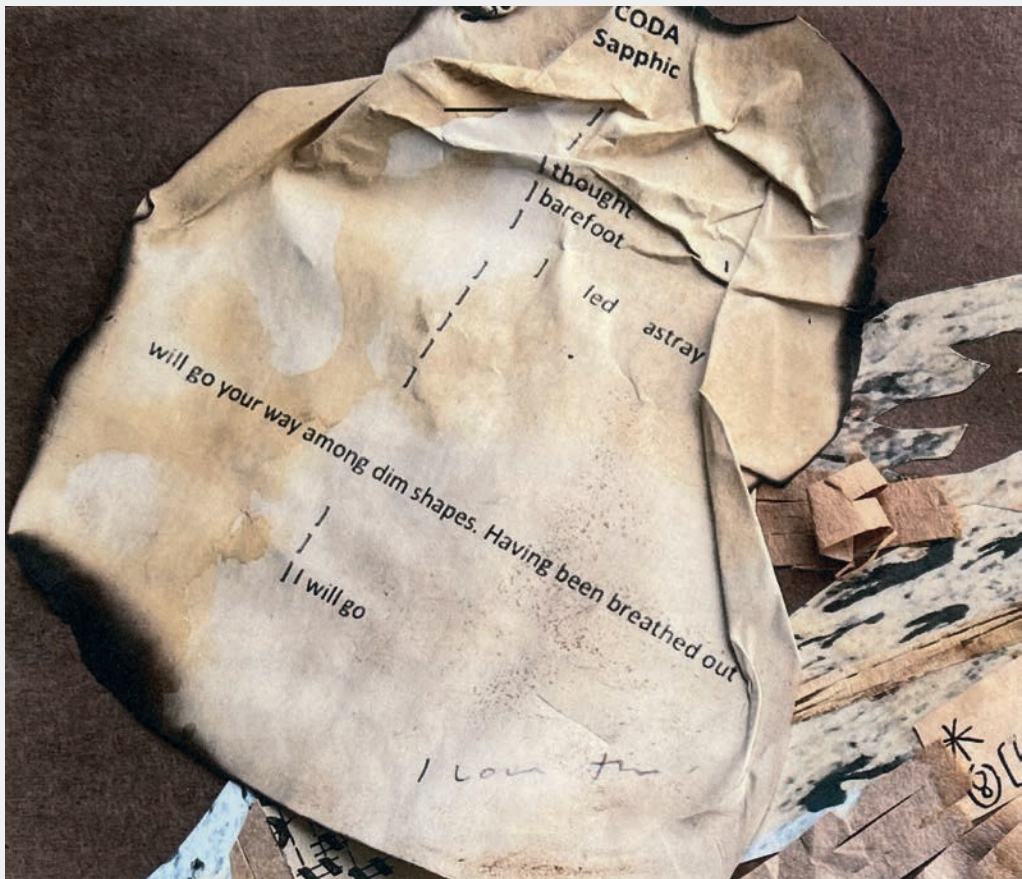


FIGURE 1.1

,

What you wrote, quoting Sappho, at the end of a book, the last in a trilogy you made,
(feverish)
was the promise of an ending

]]
] I will go

(eros growing cold
after Sappho)

Yet here you are again,
] led astray

] by words and the silences they shape. One day, perhaps, you will no longer know what
this was. This heat. This cutting and pasting, collaging yourself into negative space: both
steadfast and strewn. You will have gone your way
among dim shapes

κτεποταμένα

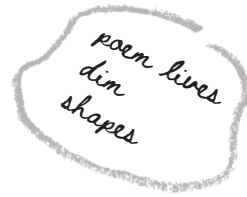
[“having been breathed out”]

Anne Carson notes: “Cognate with words for wings, flying, fluttering and breath, the
participle *ekpepotamena*, with its spatter of plosives and final open vowel, sounds like
the escape of a soul into nothingness”

these pages

you, me
petrified bits of tooth,

saying



rockglint in gullies

(Père Cuvier's archive: paleofossil record
& [you&me]
stonecold human anatomy)

what is black in the museums of Paris?

if you're Sarah Baartman you bear the cost of the stonecold archive:
kidnapped from Africa for London parade this *unbearable* display for
postmortem parts preserved in Parisian ManMuseum jars

these stonecold fragments dug up from gypsum mines in the Paris basin
(*Anoplotherium commune* drawn but never published)
in museums, unbearable, fragments endure:
poem life overburden (dread, surprise, suspicion, longing) and



wish my pussy could live
in a different shape and get
some goddamn respect

one day

jars will shatter
in the Musée de l'homme

,

: & whiffs of freedom
(whiffs of respite)
pause at stations of reflection
saying sapphic breaks [] in worldending (Anthropocene) violence

,

A rule for writing:
Don't say Anthropocene.
The word sags from overuse.
Unsay Anthropocene with a (Holocene) fragment.



FIGURE 1.2

Spring 2023. Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. At the end of her public lecture for our climate crisis seminar, the anthropologist Anna Tsing showed us a picture of a skull. A classic still life: *vanitas*



miniaturized collapse of civilization

A *vanitas* image is the pictorial equivalent of an open landfill where heaps of meaningless yet valuable things are laid to rest along with the worldly values attached to them for everyone to see

Carefully arranged. Bleached bone radiating an arrangement of objects: grasses, leaf bed, lavender nodules of *Laccaria amethystina* bubbling up from the earth. Tsing interpreted the red deer skull sprouting amethyst deceivers as the return of Holocene life in an Anthropocene patch. Psychedelic fungi figuring purple respiration. A skull breathing in the overburden of an abandoned coal mine in Denmark.

]]

[haiku fragments for Anna Tsing]

unexpected things
happened when they left the mines,
left them leaving piles

of unstable sand
mixed with coal. With the mine red
deer died together

where they had gathered
(in Denmark almost extinct)—
herd becoming sign.

But skull doesn't speak
forevering void: unspeaks
last of a species.

comingback bits in
the midst of our sad planet's
pits of disturbance.

FRAGMENTS COMINGBACK / 9

the fragment endures while the whole crumbles

IMAGINE YOURSELF AS
A BIT OF BONE. A
FRAGMENT OF A FRAGMENT
OF TOOTH. WILL SOME
IMAGINE YOURSELF
FIND YOU WHEN YOU
CATCH THE SUNLIGHT

a piece of meteor
from an unknown
sky

It is the fragment and the fragmentary sta
that are the enduring and normative cond
conversely, it is the whole that is ephemera
and the state of wholeness that is transitor

Any walk through a museum
will support that thesis.

what is black in the museums of paris?

far from paris a desert museum:

Purified dada junkyard after 66 neon signs

this creation of beauty from ugliness

,

The Holocene fragment (red deer skull still life) speaks more truthfully (Adorno thinks, thinking fragment with totality) than any Anthropocene whole. This

renewed possibility for a Holocene ecology	(Tsing says)
something to look for	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">in the remains</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">in the remains</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">in the remains of Anthropocene mining</div> </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> in the remains of Anthropocene me my mine- ing </div>

,

Give yourself rules for writing. How you create form:
Exercises for sapphic erasures or haiku condensations or verbswept weather reports or
abecedaries or acrostics or wordcollage.
But forms will be broken (décollage)

Try as you might,
(or perhaps not trying)
you will trip and fall,
[[

you will break a rule, then another, even the experimental ones you've set
for yourselfandnooneelse
(newformslikeoldgreekcompoundwords)

Like all broken things, newforms will scatter (let her scatter)

		you
]] for	rself
	andno	
		one
for		
		else
no		
on		
e		
		els
e		

remembering

66 Signs of Neon
police killing in Watts so hot neon signs melted
more signs in these times allthetime

,



breath mark
luftpause
if you're singing or talking
(wind instrument)
take a breath

,

this is not a comma

(respite)

the fragment endures while the whole crumbles

It is the whole
that is fragile,
transitory,
poignant



FIGURE 1.3 Noah Purifoy, *No Contest (Bicycles)*, 1991.

Courtesy of Noah Purifoy Foundation © 2025.

,

Another rule for writing:
It's ok to say "I," but let her scatter.
[she was already scattered]