

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

I was thinking about the amazing artists and writers in this issue and what it says about the culture we live in right at this moment. This year we have letters written from Sudan by Brandi Walker, who has devoted her life to creating programs to eliminate gender-based violence as a tool of war in conflict areas by empowering the female victims to create their own frameworks for rebuilding their lives and their countries. In order to eliminate violence against women we also have to recreate the gender norms that perpetuate it in every country. This summer she heads to Panzi Hospital to work with Dr. Mukwege in the Congo.

We also feature the opposite of the smooth-fronted Ken doll with Jonathan Ames' "Book Tour Diary." Which makes me think of walking through the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris and seeing all of these beautiful white marble statues with their genitalia obliterated by regimes from years' passed, which makes me think of the sexless offerings of most of American mainstream media which seems to be attempting to wash our brains with a brand of soap that is surely produced in a developing country.

And that made me think about the grace of Anthony Hawley's "Productive Suffix," and how beauty can be a balm in the face of daily war dead, social program eradication, and the privatization of everything not exported away.

And that made me think of Marx's worker alienation and how if we have no relationship to the product of our labor we will become unable to recognize beauty. We here at Ping•Pong find such beauty in bald headed and gawky condors. Everyone concerned with the condors worries that too much publicizing of their habitat will contribute to eradicating their fragile ecosystem, but lack of any kind of recognition does not help fund the condor recovery effort either, and so we offer what we believe to be a powerful essay written by conservationist John Moir. Henry Miller said the majesty of Big Sur cuts you down to peanut-size (my bad paraphrase). And it's good to be reminded of how small of a tiny human you actually are.

And what potential to create beauty, even if it's so ugly it's hard to recognize. All of the artists and writers contained herein speak a kind of truth we are honored to publish.

Cheers!

Maria Garcia Teutsch