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CULTURE REVIEW

## Yes

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Yes I said yes I will write something. Not two hours earlier I had said yes to her yes I too check the news upon waking there in the quiet, cats still asleep what chaos awaits, will crash into this day upending all sense upending which lives and where, and when, yes when, will it crash upon this front stoop here, yes here? *And the bird with the bright yellow beak and bright black feathers alights in the birdbath delights in fresh water splashing and fluffing and chirping and the cats yes watch from behind the kitchen window and yes the sunlight pours down and all of us, yes all are entranced.*

Yes, and what about the thing—you know—oh yes we should but then we'll need to, and then there's that, and yes I know, but it's, you know, yes. And the language dribbling from our mouths grows increasingly unrecognisable yet still we listen, yes, listen for something. Students. Their eyes still puffy with sleep, drink bottles clutched in their hands, no paper or pen in their bags, still they come to the tutorial, come to the office, come to the lecture, and while refusing to speak still they listen, yes listen, for something. And yes the refusal to speak seems to be spreading, spreading-expressing a feeling, the feeling, perhaps, that the structure has shattered. Words poured over fragments and shards become splintered and torn into sharp little weapons so silence yes silence does the least harm. Yes and in silence the lies cannot spread. *Yes and when I am in the garden kneeling on earth digging out weeds not saying a word I am entranced by the blossoms and ants and the birdsong and upon my shoulders yes I feel the gaze of the cat on the window ledge and yes I am hearing some wordless something.*

It's true yes there's too much to de-clutter too much to decry we must strive for efficiency—thought leaders say so—enhanced performance is key to success. Yes. Success and I can't help but see amongst the thought-followers all of those eyeballs glazing over yes over and shouldn't we do so much less, much more slowly? Yes it is true and enough is enough, but which 'it' is true and which 'enough' belongs to 'us' and which belongs to 'them'? Yes we're all in a muddle, caught up in strife and stupendous stupidity, all in it together like it or not and we don't, no we

don't. Melancholy, solastalgia, narcissism, whataboutism, look over there—we are surrounded yes surrounded by all the above yes and well down below the plants they are dying the dams they are empty the forests ablaze. Yes ablaze. This is our here and this is our now and there's no way to grasp it. No way at all. *Yes I said yes I will write something, stutter-splash words onto page, trust that you, yes you, are feeling this 'something' too.*

Yes, I thought, yes—it's absurdly prophetic that *Cultural Studies Review* will be no more, has come to its end, now. Now. When the disintegration of western culture is so far advanced. When its last, hoarse cries trumpet ugliness and rage minute by minute, hour by hour. I watch the second hand, and realise the clock is broken; it goes in circles but does not tell our time. Yes, and I watched the smoke from yesterday's bush fire billowing over the mountain. I watched the ash fall from the sky. Yes and I think smoke and ashes are a better measure of our time than clocks or calendars. *And I remember that last winter I took the ash from the fireplace and forked it through the veggie bed for yes it replenishes potassium (but do not add to blueberries—it's bad for them) and soon the tomato seedlings must be transferred to that bed and surrounded with baby basil plants and we'll construct a temporary possum-barrier yes and keep the water up and the weeds down and then, yes, delicious. And I remember there are other ways of telling time and keeping time and I think, yes.*

Finish this sentence and there are only three hundred words remaining. Yes and we are waiting on a finish, dreaming of a finish what can't go on forever won't go on and I dream of waking up one morning to find the Internet is down for good, the smart phones only good for paperweights and we'll have nowhere to look but at each other and we'll have to speak to one another face to face and won't it be surprising what we'll see and what we'll hear. Yes, surprising and discomforting. Sentenced to each other's company. *Yes, and the cat did not want me to leave for work this morning wanted only pats and strokes and the chance to purr in my arms and yes I wanted that too and yes I think you too might want for pats and strokes we almost all of us in need in want of simple kindness and affection.*

Yes, it is getting far more difficult to insist on yes: to witness, to perceive, to untangle the confusions, to keep the faith in telling the confusions, the shards, the fragments, the lives discounted discarded diminished denied – to persist. To persist in making meaning here and now as meaning is increasingly unmade. *Yes and now an end is nigh and sorrow is honest and yes it runs deep the temptation to wail and keen breaks to the surface. There ought to be a ritual event to mark the passing of this well of wisdom, this source of inspiration, this home to dreamers and activists and thinkers and writers who do not fit within established boundaries. But something, yes something, will keep the writers writing. Will keep the dreamers dreaming. Yes the spirit of this journal will live on, will never die, will persist and I think to this we all say yes.*