A Vision Statement for Thinking, Writing, and Publishing Otherwise in the University without Condition

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Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

~ Audre Lorde, “A Burst of Light: Living with Cancer”

By their very nature, ideas cannot be property.

~ Aaron Swartz, “Information Wants to Be Free”

… it ought to be the role of the public research university—and by extension, of its platforms for disseminating research results—not to regulate and officiate thought, while also subjecting its potential publication to market and disciplinary conditions, but rather to create the hospitable open conditions for its creative emergence, beyond what we think we know, in whatever forms it might take.

~ Eileen A. Fradenburg Joy, “Not Self-Indulgence, but Self-Preservation: Open Access and the Ethics of Care”

As scholars, we are often locked up into our own disciplines, but sharing our research with the public, with colleagues, with other departments, and especially with non-academics, can only be enriching. The more we share our work, the better it becomes and the best way to share it is to make it available to everyone, to make it open access no matter where anyone lives or how much they earn. This seems self-evident, but we will have to fight for it every step along the way.

~ Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei, “Publishing as Activism: punctum books, Aaron Swartz, and the Medieval Sudan”

**Who We Are and What We Do**

punctum books, founded in Brooklyn, New York in 2011, and now incorporated in Santa Barbara, California as a public benefit corporation co-directed by Eileen A. Fradenburg Joy and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei, is a queer- and scholar-led, community-owned, and peer-reviewed open-access book publisher devoted to cultivating trans-disciplinary and genre-bending scholarly work that takes risks with form and style. We foster authors both within and outside the Academy, including thought leaders at prestigious universities, early to mid-career researchers at a wide variety of academic institutions, precarious academics, independent scholars, artists, and others who want to push the boundaries of established disciplines and methodologies, who understand that where they publish is just as important as the content of their work, and who believe that sharing their work with the global commons is vital and necessary. punctum is further dedicated to publishing work that is not only trans-disciplinary in innovative ways (digital poetics, imaginary materialisms, theory-memoir, counterfactual film history, and meme studies, for example), but that also helps to bring new fields of thought into being (such as exoanthropology, cognitive museum studies, anthropocene studies, speculative musicology, soft architectures, object-oriented ontology, fan theory, queer literary forensics, and more). We are
also committed to supporting projects of translation and multilingualism across a wide variety of historical periods. punctum seeks and houses work that feels and thinks in the realm of “away from,” the grammar of the de-, that which deforms, decolonizes, deconstructs, defenestrates, demystifies, detoxifies, destabilizes, decenters, degentrifies, demythologizes, defers, detaches, defends, decriminalizes, demobilizes, delocates, depolarizes, denationalizes, decalcifies, decommissions, delaminates, and delegitimizes.

punctum is partnered with the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Library, and with them, and with other institutional libraries, we have developed an open-access book publishing model that never charges fees to authors and that privileges cooperative expertise and knowledge sharing between librarians, knowledge managers, publishers, and scholar-researchers. UCSB Library has helped us to build community-owned infrastructures for open-access books as well as a digital catalog that is fully legible and integrated into universal research systems valued by librarians and other research-intensive organizations, while also ensuring that our books are available to a global readership without economic, technical, or other barriers. For a long while now, university libraries have been on the front lines of protecting and fighting for the community-led commons against its takeover and privatization by obscenely rapacious commercial-conglomerate publishers. We stand with the librarians who work to care for and curate the catalog of available and open knowledge, and who are using what little resources they have to support open-access publishing.

punctum is a founding member of ScholarLed, a consortium of small- to medium-scale open-access book publishers who are seeking to develop powerful, practical ways for smaller-scale, scholar-led open-access presses to grow and flourish in a publishing landscape that is changing rapidly. We asked ourselves: how can we scale the work we do as presses, while preserving the advantages of being small- to medium-size, academic-led publishers with distinct identities and priorities? Instead of aiming to fit within the current infrastructures, processes, and priorities of a publishing system that tends to serve larger (often commercial) presses, we want to establish collaborative modes of working and to build infrastructures that will support the work of publishers like ours, in order to enable more such presses to grow and flourish. We are also key partners in the international COPIM project, building community-owned, open systems and infrastructures to enable open-access book publishing to flourish.

We choose the name punctum, following the idioms of the Middle Ages and Roland Barthes, to evoke simultaneously the moment (Augustine’s punctum; writing as always momentary); the pricks and punctures and perforations made by awls punching holes in medieval vellum (thus helping to create the blank and open book that makes writing possible, an opening-to-writing); and the pointed instrument that disturbs the studium: the sting, the speck, and the cut, into and out of which anything might fall or emerge, and by which we feel ourselves pierced (writing as shock to the system—our minds, our bodies, but also systems of knowledge more largely). punctum is also the cast of the dice: we’re taking chances out here. It’s a form of play, but it’s also work, perhaps the best precarious job at present in the humanities at large.
With our readers, authors, and editorial board, we endeavor to adhere, always imperfectly and brokenly, but with unwavering devotion, to the following values:

**On the Necessity of Open Access**

…open-access publishing is a brilliant way around the failure of academic and trade publishers to fend off corporatization and the consequent loss of quality (such as the ever-intensifying limits on page-length and reference apparatus) and even corruption. Open-access publishing also helps us to resist growing administrative and corporate attempts to interfere with academic intellectual property rights (academics, unlike journalists, do not “work for hire,” and therefore legally retain the right to publish their own material as they choose)—unless, as so many scientists have done, we sign away said rights on behalf of the corporations funding our research. When taxpayer money is also used in such projects, the “public” university becomes yet another covert means of transferring wealth from taxpayers to private corporations. Openness cannot guarantee fairness (only because nothing can), but in these days of plummeting transparency, it seems both strategic and joyous to embrace it. Share what you know.

~ L.O. Aranye Fradenburg, “Driving Education”

Information is power. But like all power, there are those who want to keep it for themselves. The world’s entire scientific and cultural heritage, published over centuries in books and journals, is increasingly being digitized and locked up by a handful of private corporations. Want to read the papers featuring the most famous results of the sciences? You’ll need to send enormous amounts to publishers like Reed Elsevier.

~ Aaron Swartz, “Guerilla Open Access Manifesto”

punctum is an open-access press, which means we not only have a moral obligation to grant to all of our readers free access to our titles, but that we also have an obligation to grant to our readers and authors, in the words of the 2003 “Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities,” “a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly, and to make and distribute derivative works [remixes and mashups], in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship,” and with the further understanding that the remixed works not be produced for commercial gain in any form whatsoever. But punctum feels strongly that this is not a robust enough definition of what open access should ideally mean, and we further believe that that the term “open access” should remain perpetually open for continual debate and ongoing re-definition, especially because the open-access movement is now being thoroughly co-opted and marketized by behemoth for-profit publishers (think: Relx, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, SpringerNature, etc.). With some despair, we realize that Aaron Swartz’s and others’ idealistic belief that “information wants to be free” has gone largely unheeded in the neoliberal capture of everything as a commodity, even publicly-funded research. Which doesn’t mean that we can’t have an open commons free from neoliberalism, but rather, as Mackenzie Wark has written of the Situationists, we must
imagine “a space of play in the interstitial spaces of the policing of the city via the dérive,” which means we “now have to imagine and experiment with emerging gaps and cracks in the gameplay that the commodity economy has become.” punctum works as much as it can within these gaps and cracks, and we also labor to heed Dave Ghamandi’s call, “Can scholarly publishing break from neoliberalism? We must find out through a collective struggle that fuses reflection and action.”

We are an open-access press, not just because we make our titles broadly available to the public without paywalls or complex digital protocols, but because we are dedicated to opening up access to the means and modes of publication for authors who otherwise might not find a publisher, either because their work does not fit within a readily recognizable current disciplinary paradigm, or because they want to experiment with the forms and styles of academic writing, or because their work engages in disciplinary mashups that would make marketing their work overly difficult, and so on. It’s a matter of making space for and curating personal freedoms — what Ivan Illich once memorably advocated for as “the protection, the maximum use, and the enjoyment of the one resource that is almost equally distributed among all people: personal energy under personal control.” As publishers, we want to be an agent of sustenance for our authors and of their right to self-invent and to change. We have learned, partly from Thomas Kuhn and his work on scientific revolutions, that we need to serve as the lighthouse and lookout station for disciplinary “anomalies,” which are also glitches in the system whereby new knowledge paradigms emerge into being and change the rules of the game. As Robin R.D. Kelley has argued, this means we also have to be on the lookout, not just for the turbulent counter-shifts of academic disciplines, but also for social movements that “generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions” and whose “most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting systems of oppression.”

**The Right to Publish Everything**

If a radically innovative and public cultural-intellectual milieu is to flourish, then what we need now is more — more papers, satchels, Kindles, iPads, filing cabinets, shelves, teletype machines, Python code, microchips, mimeographs, lithium batteries, candles, pens, Javascripts, and so on — and not less of everything. We need print books as well as e-books, yellow legal pads as well as the mystic writing pads of our Evernote apps and Remarkable tablets, baroquely lengthy multivolume works as well as manifestos, minigraphs, and memorandums. And we need close and affectionate and even codependent editorial curatorship of others’ work, and so on. We need to multiply and also invent new trade routes and modes of exchange for disseminating intellectual work—going for baroque, or broke—and we also need the courage (or wise foolishness) to depart to extraterritorialities not bathed in the harsh fluorescent lighting of the academy “proper.”

We are not interested in the maintenance of specific genres or disciplines (is it literary theory? poetry? philosophy? art history? memoir? sociology? cybernetics? speculative fiction? code? who can tell?), and thus we take seriously Jacques Derrida’s belief in a university “without condition” which would “remain an ultimate
place of critical resistance—and more than critical—to all the powers of dogmatic and unjust appropriation,” and which has the task, especially by way of the Humanities, of ensuring “the principal right to say everything, whether it be under the heading of fiction and the experimentation of knowledge, and the right to say it publicly, to publish it.” We want a radical open of thought. This is thus also about freedom, and about desire, something in very short supply in the University these days, and which also has something to do with individual and communitarian well-being, with eudaimonia (in the Greek, the “good demon, or spirit, inside”), which must be cultivated in the singular on its way to the plural and back again. So this is also about flourishing — what Aranye Fradenburg Joy has argued for as environmentally enriched forms of thriving over and against the depredations of only surviving.

**Academic Freedom & The Refusal of Prestige**

*What does academic freedom cost those who are said to enjoy it? This is a question that is … corollary and secondary to the question concerning the cost of academic freedom that is meted out upon the ones whose oppression brings it into existence and relief.*

~ Fred Moten, “Statement in Support of a Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions”

*How do you measure the value of work in the Humanities and Social Sciences that often has small, highly specialized audiences and whose influence grows slowly over long stretches of time? You can't measure the “impact” of work whose influence ignites in the future. Which is why the present goal of the Humanities should be to create the conditions that would enable all sorts of freedoms, available to all, that are so necessary for maximizing thought, for making it smolder, sending smoke signals and ciphers to the avant-garde of the next generation of post/humanists.*

~ Eileen A. Fradenburg Joy, “‘An Instrument for Adoration’: A Mini-Manifesto Against Metrics for the Humanities (To Be Elaborated Upon at a Further Date)”

There is perhaps no concept that is seen as less debatable among academics than academic freedom, which is supposedly guaranteed by tenure. But even if all faculty at all universities had tenure automatically, there would still be very little academic freedom, not just because tenured faculty can be fired at will, regardless, for the things they might say and write (we see examples of this all of the time, in quite frightening ways), but because of all the myriad ways in which academic researchers are coerced (both forcefully and more subtly) to think alike, or to follow certain methodologies of thought, outside of which it is believed only bad or nonsensical scholarship could result. Not to mention that the current process by which faculty and administrators collectively judge their colleagues’ scholarship and teaching is tied to protocols and computations for advancement that are specifically designed to catch out and thus instantiate failure as well as to affirm and reward, according to calculations made out in advance, the pursuit and supposed achievement of “excellence,” a suspect and empty term masking a calibrated commodity of higher education often paired with “impact factors” and “prestige.” If we care so much about prestige, we might remind ourselves that the word
derives from the Latin *praestigium* (“illusion” or “trick”) and only later came to mean “glamor” and, eventually, something that is worthy of “admiration.” With the advent of impact factors, tracked and calculated by for-profit companies, the gamification of prestige has come full circle. In the vein of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s *undercommons*, we reserve the right to refuse that which has been refused to us.

This is why punctum believes that academic freedom is neither a natural right nor a right to be granted to and possessed, supposedly without impediment, by those with secure institutional status, but rather, as Angela Davis has taught us, it is an endless, always unfinished, yet necessary collective struggle. For us, that means clearing and securing, against structures and systems of academic privilege, the open spaces of radical hospitality within which individual researchers might have more freedom to experiment, to take risks, and most importantly, to pursue in their work *their* (and not *our*) desires, unencumbered by professional anxieties over whether or not those desires are legitimized in advance by what particular fields, or tenure and promotion committees, have already deemed as proper. punctum feels it is worth repeating: academic freedom, or the freedom of speech more largely, is not a right to be granted to just a few who have supposedly earned it (which is obscene in the extreme), but is rather an everyday practice, an ongoing struggle, that we must work at collectively on behalf of others, especially including Others who, although they may desire it, have no secure foothold whatsoever in the university proper. With poet Lisa Robertson, we say that we want “an intelligence that’s tall and silver, oblique and black, purring and amplifying its décor; a thin thing, a long thing, a hundred videos, a boutique.” And for this, we also “need dignity and texture and fountains.” And we have to fight for this.

**Publics, Public/ations, and the Para-Academy**

… it cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of — this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university.

~ Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*

*The University (and, more especially … the ‘Humanities’) have a responsibility to foster events of thought that cannot fail to unsettle the University in its Idea of itself. For this to happen, the special institution that the University is must open itself up to the possibility of unpredictable events … in a way that always might seem to threaten the very institution that it is. On this account, the University is in principle the institution that ‘lives’ the precarious chance and ruin of the institution as its very institutionality.*

~ Geoffrey Bennington, “Foundations”
We distinguish, as Paul Boshears has urged, between “publishing” — “making stuff knowable” — and “publication” as “public-making,” which is a “process … of saturating,” of instantiating and also drenching with writings many publics. Public/ation would thus be focused on creating tools and platforms and holding areas (some call these books, journals, zines, serials, weblogs, podcasts, databases, editions, etc.), around which certain activist-intellectual communities might coalesce, and be sustained. More than just publics, these spaces would be counter-publics, in the sense given to them by Michael Warner as “spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poiesis of scene making will be transformative, not merely replicative.” And a “press” would be that which, following the word’s Old French etymology, serves as the imprinting device, but also as the pressing crush of the crowd into and out of the commons. The university — and the presses associated with it — will hopefully continue to serve as one important site for the cultivation of thought and cultural studies and critical resistance more broadly, but increasingly their spaces are so striated by so many checkpoints, watchtowers, administrative procedures, and forms of corporatization, that truly radical modes of publishing are difficult to pursue and develop. And this state of affairs is not conducive to opening up the important question of what counts as scholarship, such that we might begin to build new avenues of access for outstitutional modes of thought and writing.

punctum books is an outstitutional press that is both within, alongside, and outside of the University proper. For us, the term “para-academic” is best suited to describe this situation. “Para-academic” captures the multivalent sense of something that fulfills and/or frustrates the academic from a position of intimate exteriority. Para-academia is that which is beside academia, a place whose logic encompasses many reasons and no reason at all (“para-,” meaning “alongside, beyond, altered, contrary,” from Greek para-, “beside, near, from, against, contrary to”). The para- is the domain of shadow, paradigm, daemon, parasite, supplement, amateur, elite. The para-academic embodies an unofficial excess or extension of the academy that helps, threatens, supports, mocks (par-ody), perfects and/or calls it into question simply by existing next to it. We believe that the university’s classrooms (and especially its activist “reading groups,” as Robin D.J. Kelley has shown) will continue to be important sites for keeping open the productive question(s) of thought and for fostering important modes of ideological and political struggle, but we also think it is time, with Harney and Moten, for a subter-fugitive, vagabond, rogue para-academy that takes what it can from inside the university and brings it elsewhere.

**Chance, Contingency, and Itinerancy**

*To be full of hap is to make happen. A politics of the hap is about opening up possibilities for being in other ways, of being perhaps. If opening up possibility causes unhappiness, then a politics of hap will be thought of as unhappy. But it is not just that. A politics of the hap might embrace what happens, but it also works toward a world in which things can happen in alternative ways. To make hap is to make a world.*

~ Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*
To wager on a poetics of the conceptual swerve is to believe in the constancy of the unexpected—source of terror, humor, hope. I’ve attempted to use the energy that comes from that triad in all the forms my writing takes, to develop a poetics that keeps mind in motion amidst chaos. This motion on the page is analogous to that of the swimmer who takes pleasure in the act that also saves her from drowning.

~ Joan Retallack, *The Poethical Wager*

punctum does not publish books that will serve the needs of some worn-out (and yet still oppressive) methodological paradigm that has run out of steam but continues to dig its claws into its academic “real estate,” refusing to open the door to teratological thought. The sign above punctum’s door says, “HERE BE DRAGONS.” Our books are powered by the winds of chance and bodies of thinking otherwise, for we know, along with Michel Foucault, that “in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. In a society such as our own, we all know the rules of exclusion. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns what is prohibited [to be published].” punctum opens the door to chance — to fruitful wandering and surprise encounters, and we seek to publish what has been prohibited to be published in as many creative forms as possible. We call this the ethics of academic publishing.

Nicolas Bourriaud opposes the “radicant” (a vegetative figure, like ivy, that adapts its growth to whatever terrain it finds itself in) to the “radical,” a chief (and sometimes bogus) figure of modernity and post-modernity who supposedly cuts all roots and ties with the past (which, on some level, says we can get away from history somehow, which of course we cannot do, ever). The radicant doesn’t cut her roots—she both sets them down and takes them with her elsewhere, engaging in an endless series of re-enrootings and re-translations. Thus there is attachment as well as a transitive mobility within a frame of openness to contingency. For us, this means that, wherever we go, we take the university we’ve left behind, in whatever pieces and scraps we have, and we keep everything in motion as best we can, even when we’re stuck. We embrace itinerancy, neither rejecting the past nor always inclining towards some projected future. The future, of necessity, needs to remain always open to the unforeseen (even if it is a catastrophe or disaster, the final act), but there is no reason to defer everything. Certain decisions can be made (every day, in fact) that keep the future productively open, and that also keep the presencing of the now in place, even when it’s a mess, in ways that are sustaining of the self (if only for a short time, or from time to time). punctum operates the holding area in the middle, and also builds makeshift shelters and escape pods for intellectual vagabonds and their treasures.

**Jouissance, Optimism, Self-Care, and Community**

And if the accusation is that we are mixing the personal with the professional, our passion with our labor, then yes: we are guilty as charged. At punctum books, we strive not to alienate ourselves from our work
to such an extent that any possibly different way of producing scholarly books can only be imagined by assuming deception and deceit, or by following the deadening routines of the status quo publishers.

~ Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei, “Here’s What You Can Do with Your Overhead”

I think that this is an era where we have to encourage that sense of community particularly at a time when neoliberalism attempts to force people to think of themselves only in individual terms and not in collective terms. It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism.

~ Angela Y. Davis, Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement

In an era where neoliberal capital turns our dreams and other forms of resistance into commodities in the space of a nanosecond, and where our every move is surveyed, digitized, and sold as data to whoever wants to purchase the information necessary to plot our moves in advance of our arrival at desires we didn’t know we had and which we cannot own, should the academy of thought not be, on some level, a haven for resistance to such techno-capture of every aspect of our lives, even if, as Mark Fisher argued, we are way beyond an “alternative” culture because all “subversive potentials” have been “precorporated” by capitalism’s “pre-emptive formatting and shaping of desires, aspirations, and hopes”? We don’t disagree but we insist nevertheless on creating makeshift tents built on aquifers where like-minded seekers who value unsettlement, even when painful and traumatic, can gather (if only for the time being). We have to be willing, if necessary, to “drop everything” when it’s time to run, or stay stuck together on a flying island headed toward an eventual crash, perhaps with another flying island. Whatever the outcome, with Michel Foucault, we ultimately believe that “the connection of desire to reality” still “possesses revolutionary force.” And thus we ask ourselves, if even ridiculously, as Foucault asked, “How does one introduce desire into thought, into discourse, into action? How can and must desire deploy its forces within the political domain and grow more intense in the process of overturning the established order?”

With Aranye Fradenburg Joy’s urging, we want to take up “the question of the jouissance of the academy, rather than assuming it is our task to discipline jouissance out of the academy. For one thing, we cannot discipline jouissance out of the academy, because discipline is always permeated with enjoyment. So why give ground on our enjoyment?” punctum does not want to discipline jouissance out of scholarly work, but rather, we want to keep desire, enjoyment, and jouissance in our work, as a vital part of its disciplinarity, and not its antithesis, even when those things steer us in the wrong direction or temporarily disable us. And we believe this will give to us the (not always cruel) optimism, that in Lauren Berlant’s terms, can be “a social relation involving attachments that organize the present. It is an orientation toward the pleasure that is bound up in the activity of world-making, which may be hooked on futures, or not.” punctum believes that this world-making is best secured when we realize that, in addition to attending to the business of publishing books, we are
attending to the self-care of ourselves and also our authors — we are taking care, which we see as more important than performing according to so-called professional standards and protocols.

Under continual assault and threat by protocols and checkpoints for tenure, for promotion, and for professional affirmation and advancement in general, we have lost sight in the humanities and social sciences of the important meaningfulness of singularity and self-expression, in our work and in our relationships, and this is an issue that raises ethical questions regarding how we care for others’ ability to self-express. And the business-as-usual of academic publishing plays no little part in hampering our capabilities for such. Which is why we begin with the caveat that we are existentially obligated to others in their singularity, and that publishing—as a vital mode of disseminating research findings, and thus also of seeding publics and counter-publics—is a form of care for our authors’ work and their singular desires for such work, whose economic limits could never be set in advance, and which requires, instead, what Jan Verwoert calls a “community committed to the politics of dedication,” a sort of “mutual admiration society,” but also a “convalescent ward,” in which we choose to “re recuperate” together, which itself means “to take back”—to take back ourselves to ourselves, to take back our humanities, our university, and our commons away from here, and to have some room to conspire, which is to say, to breathe together.

But we also always understand that any community we form with our authors and readers is always “inoperative.” With Jean-Luc Nancy, we understand that “it can no longer be a matter of figuring or modeling a communitarian essence in order to present it to ourselves and to celebrate it, but that it is a matter rather of thinking community, that is, of thinking its insistent and possibly still unheard demand, beyond communitarian models or remodelings. … we must expose ourselves to what has gone unheard in community.” This means we need be open to being upended by what Sara Ahmed has called, following the work of Audre Lorde and bell hooks, the “killjoys” who serve as “blockage points” that threaten the group’s social bond, and who “get in the way” of any group’s “enjoyment and solidarity.” The killjoy is a “willful” figure who might never “get over it,” who importantly enacts a critical “style of politics: a refusal to look away from what has already been looked over.” We need the killjoys, whether they arrive from the inside or outside of our community, to unsettle our so-called successes and happiness and to break the ground on which we think we stand, however disorienting. So we work, as best we can, to embrace community and groupification, in Berlant’s words, as “the collaborative risk of a shared disorganization,” an “emotional time of being-with, time where it is possible to value floundering around with others whose attention-paying to what’s happening is generous and makes liveness possible as a good, not a threat.” Because of this, we also embrace the failure suggested in floundering as integral to what we do without giving up on each other, our work, or our desires, wherever they lead, and even if they fail to ever arrive at a destination mapped out in advance. And although failure may lead to feeling as if we are stuck in some sort of impasse, we can also see this, as Berlant writes, as a “holding station,” “a singular place that’s a cluster of noncoherent but proximate attachments.” We could do worse than to be stuck together in the impasse which is also a holding station, which we call a publishing house.
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