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I⁺

by

Hannah Watts

A Creative Writing Project

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Department of English Language, Literature, and Creative Writing

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts at the

University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2017

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I⁺

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Author's Declaration of Originality

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Abstract

I⁺ is a hybrid poetry and short prose manuscript accompanied by a critical essay that explores a non-essentialist journey of self-acceptance and subversion in the face of compulsory heteronormativity and compulsory able-bodiedness. The poems follow the posthuman protagonist “i” through her engagement to her fiancé “yu,” pregnancy, death, revivification and mutation/mutilation into a posthuman cyborg—the author’s literal interpretation of Donna Haraway’s metaphorical social feminist cyborg. “iCarus,” as she is known after her regeneration, is half of the dual-entity “I⁺.” She shares her brain and first person narration with “max,” her mechanical counterpart. The poems highlight the female body as a site of heteronormative and able-bodied cultural inscription by imagining the page as i’s skin; the disjointed, repetitive poetics encourage the reader to re-member and rebuild iCarus and max’s body poem by poem. The prose section displays a similar narrative arc to the poems, but provides further details, so the reader can have a more full (though still partial and incomplete) understanding of I⁺’s journey, illustrating the feminist concept of multiple or fractured identities. The text ends with iCarus’s acceptance of max as part of her self, the two of them continuing their life as I⁺.

Dedication

For phoebe.

For chloe.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Nicole Markotić—who always starts each email with “Dear Hannah,” even when I mess something up mightily—for forcing me to write in the present, refusing to accept boring answers, and allowing me a singular “to be.”

Thank you Cap and Momma, for a net that caught both frogs and a snapping turtle, the photo of a serious seven-year-old wearing a purple dress and work gloves in the back of a pickup, and immeasurably, always, more.

I would like to thank H. Leadley for sharing her name and always recognizing my voice, even when I don’t.

2.5 thanks to my grad fam for constant food, bags of nickels, affectionate buttkicking, cheap champagne, superheroes, “don’t be clever” edits, and this line is already out of thanks.

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i. dramatis personae:

: yu — i's fiancé, UK duck memorabilia collector,
claustrophobic, texts w/ two index fingers

: mt. mother — i's mummmatrix

: al — bc bound cyclist; thumb print, i's thigh

: elle — yu's older sister, yogini w/ 932 instagram followers

: i — yu's fiancée, owns 23 flavours of herbal tea, climbs
peach trees in doc martens, a canadian who minds the gap

i would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.

—donna haraway

: i engages yu, fucks off to yoga w/ elle, frolics by the
sea, flirts on a plane, falls belly up from a different plane,
shaves her legs, & dies.

me shaking
i ask again what happened
again

yu call my sleep a comma,
when i wake i continue our last sentence

free fall :

elle and i
wrestle behind the food cart
airplane shuts its eyes
forward fuselage rips
open a womb

flight attendant hugs fire extinguisher
please please

alarms : yur voice
my iPhone : powers
dow
n

red
passengers'
myPhone pings / river wants to fall (ow) me
eyes blin lightt
what my speed speeds and twitter handle handles
kk kkk kkkkk
kkkk k

plane dives
 i
 can't hear
 al breathe

i grip at
 al's hand / right armrest
 phantom limb

i slip through cloud faster
 COVER
 than metal
 YOUR
 EYES

how many minutes left :
 what colour do my eyes reflect
 who will pay off my credit card
 at how many wks can chloe's bones mush
 will elle wear my white dress
 water > haystack from 35000?
 what counts as my last word—
 broken oxygen mask
 shit. water. world peace.
 gum. under. armrest.
 no! hope. hope.
 jesus.
 hope. no. hope.

wings / wings / wings / i whisper to my back
 to my spread
 arms.

iFear

river dripping bone to

breath beat

t t t t t

teal table

cards / placemats

old matches yu asleep on the couch
under a grey columbia reversible coat

how can yu feed the flowers on the table

while yu sleep

yu say : water's not enough

so i lie beneath the fan and bless the
sand i picked from car tires

i lay a finger on the lips

of a bus outside our flat

i draw a body over monet's water painting

OPEN signs

hands hang from my body

primary school girls wrap legs around marble
statues in brockwell park

oxidize yu

i met yu in the lyric of an oak

i weep home into branches

i climb the green copper sculpture
to see the fountain bottom

on

belle isle, detroit

and before i leap

yu have me by the clavicle

whisper 'wwwwatch

wwwait will you

wwwwed me

instead dd?'

chloe?

can salt
cure her heart

chloe, your father left me for a duck

phoebe, your father walked on water
until he sank

yu listening?

i yip a poor-ass phrase :

—i'm loki on the tube or a bus,
yawning south london ;

idiot linguist, singing

we engage in polite lung sex

to send the tomb dogs running—

i yelp about avocado cartels

the rising price of raspberries at ASDA

giffgaff's new fair trade agreement

to keep yur lips on

my ribs

yu bite my nails

i birth a skype baby
 push out of my mouth four fingers at a time
 asdf jkl ;
 & ears

@ if a girl

% boy

her mouth pours me out
 (her os hummingbird bone
 bite my fingers

* *
 his retinas
 glow
 he scans my face any slow blink

my hands # weave a net
 to catch
 wingless)

i shift / alt ...er control

yu paint my nails pastel pink
 run a bath w/ lavender epsom salts

space

bed

i build a wall of sears pillows
 around my right side

yu etsy-buy baby socks

airplane

drops

like

me

i google-map

my trajectory

a s

napping point

before i sleep iZoom

in

fin

gers

satellite breath

river

water

from

3

5

0

0

0

bone to

feather

wet grass back lawn

sea or hole in the shoulders of the sky

athena or my lover

perhaps lilies

two circle / waltz and

two shadows elope

a phoenix curls around itself and paints its nails deep river

metallic blue

wait wait wed me

which ring binds ?
bling! bling!

hello yu

on the floor and

yu've dirtied yur new jeans
one shin brown
elle's footprint

elle
hand on my neck
lips below my ear

yu ring me
hello

elle holds my hips as yu kiss
my left lip

pomegranate seeds lick kitchen
linoleum roses

tips of thumbs

yur second sharpest knife

yur four incisors

hip bone

water wedding

our feet in sand
yu hold my hand

we where

westward, ho!
rock breakwall
my heart
yur storm
the beach

sun
riding atlantic currents

we wear

wetsuits under wedding dress under tux
 yu palm my warm thigh
 yur left fingers around
 my fourth left

tide in hale
 tide out hale

yu drink
 the mermaid yu
 make of me

 t i de in hale
 o u tt

upon impact
 all the queen's horses gather
 (under?)
 the river—
 if i move the stones around
 open my mouth to the current
 dig my toes into fish bellies

i fall out of mt mother's
 bed
 river tugs me
 muds me
 my body sucked below
 breaks open
 the head of the river

i hold my organs in w/ woven fingers
 fall through a second sky
 iStitch skin into liver
 four strands of braided hair
 join my pancreas and spinal cord
 just above L1 / needle : sliver of radial bone
 too high to see the next river
 i make my bed

how many rivers do i fall thru
 i lose
 (my mind)
 count
 after thirty-three

elle

shaves every four days
w/ my mouth

my tongue she says
is sharp enough

yu write me four letters
each from a dark room in yur parents' house

in the bathroom
yu shake over the sink

 yur electric razor
 sparks
—the hell
yu shaving in the dark?

behind the mirror
 i in yu
 perch on the edge of the tub

yur ocean back
 spine surfs yu
tsunami
bisecting yu

physio didn't realign my scapular winging

 we build a swing for yur parents
yu fan instructions over the patio
 toss me
 the screwdriver
i offer yu a handful of wild rosemary

a crystal of sherry
 wobbly guitar : blackbird, beetles
 yur foot guides us forward
 hear the harmony?
 yur toes pull back

 yu cut yur neck just below yur chin
 i wipe the blood w/ my hair

yur legs look like mt. mothers' legs
 yu shave every two weeks

whenever yu slip into bed
 elle jump starts my head

in love yur brain slips

bran, i say
 yur bran slips

one foot on the tub
 yur vastus lateralis bridges us
 i lick it and yu shake me off
 yu begin at yur ankle
 inside yur calf without shaving cream
 i could show yu i think, how being a woman
 is done

imagine

the tub at yur parents house

yu

—

my hips

elle hands me a towel
 'write a sonnet on it /
 use a typewriter
 or needle + threat' :

m'fallopian tubes
 ring road
 round yu
 bath day

yu use elle's
 coconut oil for soft nails
 rubadub yur toes in the tub
 lie to dry / back garden

m'tubes wrap yu
 tentacles on the lawn
 on bank holiday we
 BBQ

photo from elle's birthday
 yu wrapping the tetherball round the pole

this year the river lower / very dry summer lack of deer to
 eat the lack of blackberries / summer : just a spell yu tell to
 yur lover to make me undress to make me shave my legs
 make me lie over or under yu / summer we we we repeat we
 eat the same salmon sandwiches / holy ghost opens mary in
 a room full of jars —ma-m-mary you're having a son /
 you're having a womb full / what if i mary what if mary
 went mad what if mary what made mary shake blood into
 jars / hey buddy my body my my / would ma-m-mary still
 read joan of arc would i buy forty plants in clay pots would
 i run from the red sea or any river would she / where did i
 lose this line / if wommmen give birth do we

we fill holes again do we bring bits of love w/ us to
 mary's door when we drop the baby a votive to ma-m-mary
 and do we leave hair w/ the child do we leave nails skin
 dirty soles bits of bone teeth moles all the scars we can give
 up / i run out of mmemory then / not enough space to house
 us hit settings what can i erase / when we walk backwards
 into the river do we run into low current and let it wash us
 seven or four times let it rush away the mega bytes

yu and i buy
 raspberry frozen yoghurt at the
 24 hr Brixton ASDA

i say :
 Eh - Es - Dee - Eh

yu : 'disregard caps lock ;
 we pronounce it azduh'

between bites
 we swap yur flatmate's
 spoon in the
 carpark

yu wipe my germs
 onto the passenger seat

yu in me
 in the azduh
 carpark

at 7

my ride :

a boy-bike mt. mother got me

silver so my brother

could grow on it

i hold the seat and crossbar and jump on hill gravity
by mt. mother's house

i ask chipmunk

who sits an hour every day

on the handle of the rusted pump

why my

palms flood w/ gravel

sand soft under nails

chipmunch :

wear mermaid pjs

get mt. mother to braid your hair

mt. mother holds the seat

lets go when i yell fuuc

finally i find pedals and on my fourth loop of the wood

near mt. mother's lodge i

fly off the bridge into the river

flying

over detroit river at night

i wonder

where river fish wait winter out

what colour floods my eyes at 7:21 am

do cigarettes in Manchester cost £5

if i roll them myself

i nod off and on blink bl inkk

roads roads rivers roads roads

curling around each other

women or worms

blue men on boats

my hands :

backs of birds large birds grey herons

the floor each wooden beam a slam

out the plane's portal synapses rev

canada's nerves or women or worms

i meet a robot at the market

yu say 'you don't need a robot
to kiss me goodbye at the airport'

on each eyelid yu press :
germy piano keys
skin of yur lip
an atom of ghost pepper
: to shut em

i stalk the thirty-pound robot
on twitter, on instagram, on foot
nigel Farage makes him wash
dishes in the ritz, london

: 'but i give you babies,' yu say

how (what) would i feed him
w/ yu three thousand kilometres
i hold my orgasm
in
whisper
i want
a robot

if i brought robots home
would yu program them
to blow up a plane?

or kick a football

sleep between us

in mmaybe mmmay a robot
rolls outside in welly boots—

down the st.

daffodils in brockwell park
mechanical metacarpals curl stems
stuff stems into storage behind
titanium eye sockets

when yu die robots heat my bed
w/ infrared

now :

1. five kayaks on the thames or detroit and a sweat stain on my futon

2. my heart hits yur beach up for sex / the left ventricle pumps out iris-y periods blood/colon content too high to drive / pant at big ben or burst bowel

1. four kayaks roll over the dam and one irish kid calls his father da and i have a sweat stain like a foot on my futon

3. elle and i on foot wrestle on south bank she says now lasts twelve years and every nanosecond the river whips atoms up

4. washes ring in dirty dish water at 3:18 and if yu wrap a ribbon round yur fourth left yu might remember beginning birds at 3:18 guard my train and yu ask if i paddled home

2. i fill my rolling self, but wrong tube i took the yellow
line yell ow line yellow line
please mind the gap between the brain
and the bulk-

head :

3. i shout across the river to elle —am i racist if i quote poc-ahontas instead of heraclitus or iRacist if i don't quote poc-ahontas?

3. Should i marry kocoum?

4. ringed. fringer.

2. i can't plug my nose in the current / i begin to sing :
can yu leak the same tears twice will my tan make my arms
longer have yu ever seen a man roll a greenland kayak using
an 8 x 11 print of monet's waterlilies this line (a lie) pulls
itself over us one-handed

4. all circles scare the shit out of me i crouch in my cupboard under the (sink) circle between the hot (water pipe) circle and the breaker and () this kid w/ a magnifying glass sings off a few craters from the moon the rest fell dirging into the river

1. looped around a kayaker

18

skinny dip or

salsa

wet grass
back lawn

three slimy shadows
three

boxer elastics | black bra straps

slimy shadows

drop

whitewaved

wash rocks

drip
drip

sea

we

prefall

the hostess offers me champagne or orange juice or gluten
 free pretzels from fiji
 i sip / lick yur nose
 hit the iPhone glass

myphone under myshirt
 warm screen | gentle swell left breast
 yu gurgle

to (devon) :

‘I buy local for you, drip milky tea down your ears, son.
 Take care of mummy, big boy—count her B12 tablets;’

 yur words suck my
 mmammarries
 dry

i —chloe and phoebe
 sorry sorry so sorry iMother
 sip on orange juice
 until i sink

tighten around my wrist

onboard wifi messages me

: oxygen levels

dr
op

mrmring
passengers in blankets shake off blankets

cabin lights

yur face onscreen

fra g ments

when will the cabin doors unlock descent too slow the pilot
screams fuck shouts the co-pilot a mother stops mid breath
and wags her tongue cupping the ears of her child who yells
questions at me and i can't read lips :::

:

can i hold mummy w/ sedimentary arms
would fields cradle me
does death carry an iPhone
charger in its pocket
do you say fuck when you
mean my eyeballs crack
if my eyes fissure where
should i travel next next
how much of the exit can
we google?

i mouth
back

elle

error error hor ror error to err
or
horr or

calmly straps everyone into their seats

she comes last

for

me

mouth i
 when i kiss yu
 a man w/ a panda head shoots up
 three mugs of coffee weep on a windowsill

| ... |

rolling september over for two more hours of sleep ;
 a shark-finned dog
 two women fingering each other in brockwell park
 middle aged punk bands on bbc one

{{ seven pictures elle took of us
 parenthesized on the couch
 a poetry book about horned llama
 detroit river after a storm freckled w/ bass bellies

at the british museum i
 after hours
 yu bribe
 the history guide
 w/ biscuits and tea

we wheel our wet bikes w/ us
 little rivers room room room

i whisper fuck yu near the elgin marbles
 yu swallow me w/ a kiss

pin me against glass
 iFog

the sound of yur breathing in tangerine
 my hands fig-shaped

my hips|your thighs
 imprint of rosetta stone

yu write to airtransat
so mad that

that that that
customs lost yur
duck duffle bag

extra pack yu fill w/
four green headed mallard
placemats
six coasters of moorhen mums
posing w/ chicks

to save my vintage dresser
or hand to company w/
a citrus white

forty seconds before i land

moon slips
into the river
flips

me to face yu or
the moon or yu or
o

both yu
and moon

yur pull
null now

moon takes
a chunk
outta yu

i email airline
re: outrage

< disregard>

tomorrow tomorrow to
morrow

yu and i creep to the sea
surf
yu ask me

to :

live under yur bed
or in the piano or
car boot
to tuck yur shirt
run yur shower
salt yur rims

when yu kneel
yur jeans
soak
up
sea

in demotic egyptian
yu throw up
a gold ring

i grab my iPhone yu wait while iPlay
a video of yu and elle karate chopping a
breakwall

i pull yu from the sea from wet grass back lawn
say —yes yes buddy
yur nose yur pinkie toes white w/ cold

from the kitchen window

my chloe climbs a peach tree
in a green coat

while my hands lose
water

how long does it take for the
sky to spit a (bird) plane from
its throat

phoebe balances her toes on two
branches = my bronchioles
i fall

chloe hits
the bottom
of my
(left) lung

i lean forward to vomit
but can't

knock knock

elle writes in ink on my thigh
she scrawls sex sex sex sex sex sex sex
tells me the amish tradition for the betrothed—bundling :
she throws yu'n'i into a blanket we toasty yur orgasm
sounds like a black rotary phone i buy too many plants and
abandon them on windowsills yu put too little salt on yur
food and when i close my eyes yur face beardless
goatee expands two centimetres from my nose
in this blanket yur warm vines wrap me and while yu scroll
instagram iBrowse yur body yur high thighs / right rib fifth /
freckle exactly the centre of both patellas / latissimus dorsi
in yur accent makes me damp
yu cover my head and yur hands search my back hard for
wings yur stomach hair fine art i spell words for yu : t-a-r-t
t-a-t-e t-e-a a-r-t t-r-e-a-t... fuck and yu swallow bite my
tongue
in this blanket the space between my stomach and yurs
swells each breath until we in the belly of the blanket reborn
four years apart and arms stretch the width of the waist of
the globe to reach fingertips but prints still struggle to
bridge two centimetres of air
i breathe iBreathe i breathe and i hear yu every ex
hale

he cocooned
my head
that elephant in yur room

elephant ears over my hears
 wanna bite yur right
 hip bone
 yu
 wanna bang on
 red linoleum
 kitchen floors

sometimes in bed i
 over yu

sometimes in bed my hands move yur lips
speak speak o
r forever hold

sometimes in bed i

elle's

book of 101 dirty haikus on the bedside table
under a

 glass of lemon water

i read w/ thumbs
on thighs
twigs of thyme :

oo babyy fall on
 me ; drip me down your femurs
suck me up again

rererere(sex)ion

each day my tubes shoot
freckles on arms ears feet
thirty-three babies and i

. '.,;': .`:' . ' .
elle bundles them into beds
each day my tubes pump

yu keep a tally to sell on kijiji
checklist tattoo beginning at my neck
thirty-three babies and i

. '.,;': .`:' . ' .
eat two cookies before each birth
each day my tubes shoot

i mis/call whether we slept or
could i breathe w/ yu in me
thirty-three babies and i

cross my legs against each birth
moving through water / air
each day my tubes pump
thirty-three babies and i

hello

27

days since the free trial began
i want to unsubscribe to yur hand
on my spine yur mouth at my patella

in yur grandparents' conservatory or menagerie
the tip of yu one skin above my my my hip which yu
say silk soft but have yu ever touched silk when this skin
vibrates do the letters fly through yur bones does yur body
become river from the plane's throat at twelve : thirty am
we sip rosehip tea from silver and wear matching hoodies
and my fingertips
blister

in fall i tipfinger my ring road my fourth left and when i feel
smooth gold i wonder :
did elle steal my sapphire
or before
or this after

yur shirt reads 'trust me i'm a physiotherapist'
i plunge and scrub it
rinse in the bathtub bring it in the shower
dry it on my back biking through london
dump coffee on it i wear it round my neck

(stand under
my heavy body)

i deploy yur parashirt
elle dives towards me
i cut the strings

sincerely yours
love
i

it could rain in london when we stepped off the train it

could rain in london
when we stepped off the train it

d rained london it rained when we stepp
ed off

sent from miVoice

london rain stepps in edddd
off train the rainn could
ttt

mouth i

i kick (yur right thigh two inches above patella)
 yu (i bite yur right tricep gentle dental imprint)
 out of (my head my body my)
 bed

3 am yu sleep like
 jesus w/
 both arms spread

i whistle at autumn ;
 a picture yu took of me
 park bench crunching
 leaves
 my face blurs
 yu filter me

w/
 rocks
 sand
 mountains
 mirrors

;

a wednesday thames
 two trees near river
 our feet search
 out slippery blades of grass
 trip into river

elle and i take shots after—

yu : i

‘yur eyes looked like the cat’s
during

sex’

‘you laughed at my strip tease’
‘you brought home coconut milk instead of soy’
‘fuck you / you sold my duck mug on ebay’

‘...’
‘brb’

—at tequila
of the dartboard

elle and i get
not just tipsy

tiny blackout
eeny sloshed
bitsy hammered
widdle hosed
tad wasted
lil shitfaced

teeny destroyed
bit polluted

elle hands my hips
to me we
downward dog by the canal
camden to king’s x
i pollute
the canal and she
cuts my hair w/
nail clippers

yur texts : elle’s cigarettes

‘wtf it’s wednesday’

alcohol i’ve sucked (???)
limes i’ve ... sucked dry p/hr

=

^^ black capes to batman

;

we the
london vigilantes
swing

thighs

thighs

through king's x
identified flying object
9 m of
artist's lights
up my left breast

yur text pressesss a graph into my fingertips

'an english woman shouldn't regularly consume
more than 14 units of alcohol / wk'

1 un(it) = 76 ml 13% white zinfandel
= 25 ml 40 % glenlivet 15
= 250 ml 4% stella artois

'your blood
alcohol level
should be.....

...
...
...'

'3!!! X) '

i offer yu a wk beer over more wifi

elle jaeger-bombs my english shoulders
anoints my 14 woman hairs

yu ringing
consume me

i slur units
i wake every fuckin baby in
english women

turn (volume)

down (for what)

i take shot shot shot shot
until yu get the picture

s
t
a
t
d
r
o

$p^{\wedge} p^{\wedge} p^{\wedge} p$

piano yu

play a song i don't remember two years later
 yur tongue spells the first letters of the pianist's name into
 the crook of my elbow
 iWiggle my ring into yur mouth

pianist always tastes like penis
 if my elbow crooks who drives the getaway car
 who shoots up what

just before intermission at the globe theatre

act IV scene vii
 ophelia drowns between the scenes and i haven't peed in
 three hours and yur hand on my knee in the theatre inches
 closer to my kidneys

me : leaking through seat trickling down the globe

intermission lights and the old
 woman to my right blue gloves tea teeth
 she'd fuck the
 lead

at intermission we follow a shepherd's cap and four children
 in london primary school uniforms escape their minder

yu ask how long i'll pee and i say probably :

- 222 queue seconds (17 wanting to pull the
 dreadlocks of a doc.martened jean jacket
 owner w/ lips like mine on my period + armpit
 hair the warmth of a fieldmouse)
 - 42 to pee / wipe / pull out
 my tampon / and check for clots / count for-
 ward 8 hrs from now / tear a new one / relax / re-
 lax / inject into vagina / makes sure the tail
 nuzzles my thigh
 - 23 to rearrange 34 hairs in the mirror / does the
 glass at yur parents' / thin or widen me

- 13 to sheath my raincoat/waterproof hood and lick
both words / one wetter
- 86 leftover to plan tea

i lay two folded strips of toilet paper on the seat and sit
t(h)ink[l]ing ps ps pssssssssssss

knock knock

...

how is the tampon like a comet?

a cord of three strands stronger when wet
wraps around my finger around yurs around my shoulders a
wound my thorax left radius right ulna around my temporal
lobe and
squeezes

yu could stick a tampon up yur nose
or finger
or tongue

how is a wedding string like a
tampon ring?

knock knock!

‘for fuck’s sake, finish your piss, there’s a fuckin
queue’

i wash my hands w/ warm water cut hair + gem on my ring
fing
er matches the blue of my jacket the outer circle of
mIris

woman woman woman
my face

my face | woman woman woman woman

as i drop

parallelodrome

will i die when i
impact water
or slide into yu

but where my body
hits
a field by 8 mile?

top of the ren cen
or
or

i strip to skin
in the cage of a london boutique

'i said
yes to
the dress'

my bones belong on
the side of the thames
washed by detroit

yu tide me
in yur waves

iKid

four in the back garden w/ mt. mother at the kitchen win-
dow
her head
down
scrubbing
her wedding ring in the sink

her lips slip open
she swears at suds : gold fuck plated triple shit braided

i swing legs onto the peach tree's
closest branch and the bark bites the
back of knees
i atlas the earth
crunch up the branch
let legs dangle
hold by arms and the crook of
heart

i climbed for peaches
or mt. mother but
five twigs in

i count twelve dandelions
across the lawn / lungs hear bones snap like
surf

peaches on the top branches
 bounce to mouth consoling
 but i cry

mom mom mom mum momma
 MOMMY MOM MOMMA MUM-
 MUM

MY

mother mom/ma-mm-ary MOTH/
 mum/maaaayyy

HER

mt. mother plucks me from the peach tree
 i fold into her
 spitting distance from her lungs
 again

chloe meets me at tim's
 orders a coffee w/
 shot of hazelnut

whatchu doin drinkin that shit it'll stunt your growth lookit
 me at your age

chhloeee look at me
 at you
 you grew you
 were the size of a cashew
 now you have light up shoes
 and a purple scrunchy

iPhoebe ;
 stroll past you
 ASDA wine aisle

;

old film home
movies : iRide 'the

silver bullet' past
 the wood—mt.
 mother films my
 splash landing / yu
 tap black keys : a
 song of fish at 4 /
 more more more!

elle poof appears
 sits me down and
 we eat muesli to yu
 as menelaus
 small role in troy
 the musical—
 iPause, joke yur
 beard hasn't grown
 since elle scratched
 eyeliner onto yur
 chin @ 12

one loop yu —
 3 years or younger
 wobble across a
 cattle grid in the
 country w/ elle
 i slither behind
 yur profile when
 yu turn to hear a
 bird better

rain all morning
 and yu wear
 wellies w/ yur
 trousers tucked
 into boots and yur
 button-up tucked
 into trousers

yu waddle five
 steps before yur
 socks fall down
 and bunch by yur
 toes

then select a log or
 a damp patch of
 grass or
 a nearby stream
 and take off one
 welly pull up yur
 sock, then the sec-
 ond

shove hands into
 yur pockets and
 walk 7 baby steps
 until yu notice yur
 untucked shirt

elle shushes yu

cups her ears for
birds
as yu tuck tuck un-
tuck tug 4 cm to
the left tuck pull
out 3 cm tuck yur
shirt
and sidestep a pud-
dle

get six steps before
socks fall down
i slither down w/
them
for hours my arms
wrap around my
ribs

i hold myself like the river
 ;

cold fingers up shirt sleeves yu pull socks
up and tuck shirt into yur belt yu tuck yur
socks into belt and pull yur shirt over yur
head belt boots to earth tie yur shirt to a tree
fill yur ears w/ grass and beat tiny hands on
the meniscus of the creek

after six years
on cereal boxes yu
in every recycle bin

down plato rd.

i
cut yur face from
every thursday

the neighbours call a meeting in brockwell
park
7-yrs-old i pass out
cardboard cutouts
on popsicle sticks
we all wear yur skin

flying shivery from victoria station via manchester
 —van intl —victoria
 seaside seaunder

iMessage mt. mother a pic : ETA 4 hrs 26 mins

lift : arm rest
 window shade
 off
 earbuds

argyle sweater in the aisle seat searches inflight films for
 endangered panda documentaries
 bites his fingers
 spits a nail by my thigh

turbulence throws my my backpack
 at the al seat :
 al stands, nope, sits again as plane tilts
 ‘you forgot to secure the compartment. what you got in
 here. bomb?’
 iShake my head ‘robot’

taps his tongue ‘kiss me /
 compen-satiate me’

he’s high / headed to bc to cycle lengthwise
 cross canada
 taking greek myth and legend
 ‘MA at cambridge’

‘only pretentious pricks go to cam-
 bridge’
 ‘say ‘eh’’

‘fuck off’
 ‘gimme your phone to snap the mountains?’
 ‘charge yours’

al photographs the back of my head
 inside of my knee
 freckle on my knuckle
 taps his digits into my iPhone
 his thumbprint unlocks i

lights purple
 al’s fingers|short hem
 draw an oroborous
 the diameter of my ring
 in permanent marker
 on my
 high thigh

before customs he plants weed in my hoodie
 whispers
 ‘elgin marbles fuck me
 against black obelisk rosetta stone’

waiting for mt. mother in the terminal
iHover over delete :

first: al
last: exander
company: bc bound flying machine

iPhone: +44 7746 893948

plane lessons :

- the average temperature of the human body significantly > mine or the average temperature of the pilot body significantly > ours

* bring a thicker blanket (complimentary one's thin as a toonie) / a kilt length scarf / a cloak made of my enemy's cats / four sweaters and a touque and sledding mitts / a canuck's jersey / matches (if matches, don't think about the little german match girl's bare feet in the snow, don't remember how she lit up for a vision and died without her body)

solution to freezing presents pee problem
: how to drink a venti chai latte w/ whipped cream : warmth to hand to throat / esophagus / stomach / warmth into veins / bone marrow/ flood seven layers of skin without having to pee?

sipping seems semi-productive until drink to body transfer forty-five minutes sits hot in the belly cold in hand

do iChug it or waste it?

three hours out: cross my legs
google size of bladder in 9 stone body

dig nails into left arm imprint cat tooth

push past sleeping al
to piss in the portable plane head / toilet paper like
the t-shirt i painted the flat mint in
turbulence / the seatbelt sign pings mid-wipe
queue back to seats
whisper : why didn't i waste my latte

rail web-banners :
why not take the train

british museum i

bare shoulders
ancient egyptian
classical greek

i spin
translate

my fingers confuse ribs
tongue tracing letters

the hieroglyph i have
in my mouth—take it from me

we trade it
lip—lip

set us on a display case
edge

lower back
letters fade
into my calves

i scrub strawberries in our flat while yu work a fifteen-
minute tube ride into central london

can i pair salmon w/ white?

maybe moscato or a chardonnay maybe a
sauvignon blanc or dessert wine

‘pale. w/ notes of tumbleweed / cactus — chuckwalla after-
taste’

mt. mother never taught me how to clean fish
iGoogle salmon

i sing in the kitchen in my thinnest sweater :

as a grizzly
iDip my paw in yur ocean
to eat yu
alive

in yur kitchen i pair strawberries w/ salmon rosé

mouth i
in brockwell park ;
i jump to tug white flowers from low tree branches
sunset 7:36

yu have the walls of a 1140 church in yur pocket and yu pull
them out in the old town centre
how many stones stack west wall?

we exit the church
to an open pavilion lit by streetlamps
flanked by leaning pubs
three men in tail coats signal us w/ beer

i leave yur body
w/ elle who says :

‘i’ll make sure he eats broccoli if you
blend 2 red peppers w/ coconut milk per / day and do 45
yoga minutes’

to plane—

i stuff a £3 black backpack w/ wine at the duty free and
shrug on a charity shop coat
leaking tractor oil through dark green skin
after 4 washes iWipe it down w/ lysol
hang to dry in our bedroom window

i walk through 4 americans w/ guidebooks and michigan
accents to get to victoria station
shove my body into the last tube car

after i die
i slink two days through wooded trails

a bride and groom shiver in photos
bride kicks off her muddy low pumps
she climbs into the front seat of a subaru

i steal shoes

a sacrifice to the next river

ii. dramatis personae

: yu — still yu

: dr. finn — apple's head of AI

:

:

: iCarus — i after i die

: max — inside robotman¹

: I⁺ — iCarus + max

“the human being is what remains after the destruction of the human being.”

- dr. finn / giorgio agamben

¹ See ROM

: apple regenerates/rebuilds/rejigs iCarus w/ titanium, chromium, and max, iCarus in-engage yu, and update credit card information; I⁺ rides tubes, takes a bath, finds work w/ the detroit-windsor tunnel.

\\

...

...

wake choking
spit fish on the floor : saymon, godfish, perk,

bed sheets
lined w/ lead
head above the beat be be
be
at me me me

count forty-threee mini elastics loping each wrist (where scar rose under skin
now foggy bone-cracked dog teeth) /

a body black
triple braided white veins run nipples#navel / tear up by root
beautiful x-ray body

max sonnets : disorientation sets in—

max sonnets : [bones we broke in the fall ;

left radius / every tooth / both patellas / two orbital cavities / all metacarpals / tibia / ulna / xiphoid
process / pubis / right ulna / left femur / humerus/ left breast burst

(?)

]

i
 fall
 asleep halfway through the list

iWake to white webbing stretched over phalanges

three women w/ pillows overstand to smother me /
 i+max project the left eye of a great white onto the wall behind them /
 they turn at glowing irises / caught between two eyes / monster

four more women in short white coats / two block the door / two place rubber bands around the skulls of my murderers and
 lead them from my bed

max who u | my right eye mirror
 how did iCarus die?

max sonnets : your + hands

... on impact you drowned on impact you
 ddrowndown

Log in : [A](#)

start tapping around : max sticks a red wings ballcap on me :

max says : morning

assemble I⁺—our body's body

max penis / iPenis?

my four doctors wear short white coats ending above vulvas / on all eight thighs my name in neat arial

iCarus yawn earl grey into a mug / painted pears heat fingertips

max sonnets : 'missing : one phoetus'

iCarus sip my earl grey

they begin at my hips—iCarus need a bite of carrot to stop my lungs from crying

the scalpel slides open the hip skin [too trendy too cool / too disco for lyfe]

as they surge my left hip max shuffles through 2011 CE
projects pics in my/his eye lenses

max sonnets :

haha how old here?

we've worn out this coat 22 times.

iCarus our hair like duck feathers!

victoria who?

recipe for peanut butter stuffed dates

upcycle to RAM for use wed. fiancé

iLenses crowd out :

white room, wet grass

they cement the acetabular cup into my hip rokit /

CoCrTi

give me metal head
femoral stem attaches to
my shaved lemur

they start the healing w/ ah song of victory / shoot stem sells into the gash w/ a water gun / iCarus recognize “apple” “wart”
“wing” “moonman” in the tune
while my bone supergrows into the cup and twines around metal, max/my fingers tap thigh to to tune
sounds like

max sonnets : this will hurt ok

ok ok ok

N-u-skin /

max sonnets in my head like

drips from wet
black bra

or max pings

max an old

rotary
phone ring

rings

max my head my head

max

spills coffeeee

in my bed

iCarus : MAP ME MAX ME

:

x-+

*

x-+

@)

!^

x-+ seaweed tickle tickles the edges of

my belly

beep sea you need a hair cut river leaden

bop see a thread here a weed there a leaf a down in the dark there rests a fat ship

boop thinner now and iCarus your tongue asks if pimple

wee+ it's not a wart iCarus cramp and my leg does not extend a foot

ping just a boulder kiss of friendship to you your tongue: cut my hair

will+ unpopable a tin of crushed sea leaves

ow in his bathrobe 4 kiwis /

unstoppable iCarus lean into the aisle of the Northern line to

side of the !& a finger Heathrow

rolling through to drag over the an isle iCarus and a rock and roll enthusiast but only

town \$)! had iCarus a god in my belly iScramble Canada uses shield and iCarus pirouette true or beer footed or beer footed +

m-@% on my @nd of stn finger

ah maze @ beneath you x-+ the river pulls me under

sing here @beneath you x-+ don't attempt unless:

now open now +r crook

here bites the dust my thumb skin; iCarus tip my toes to you

gnawed into an ear; the lobe hangs iCarus flex into tabletop

out on circle line to edge of that calf golden in my window

wrapping tin twice around iCarus melt midas down

around iCarus buy leggings

make lobe; iCarus tease

thumb and forefinger iCarus

my h+ear &ro keable stopping before @! x-+ ^

my iCarus

oh+iCarus+oh

from the river iCarus pull a

rock comes out swinging

or a bottle of rum or

a rib

no good story but a dirt road and wet grass / mt.

!* mother pops antidepressants and snaps a six-year-

old in her sunday purple pantsuit and size !#

flower slip ons dead eyeing the camera in work

gloves that fit ron w/ his wooden leg, snugly—

she's standing in the bed of a pickup between oak

and pine for the furnaces

some say he rose

” Old chap the foot needs toenails clipped, call in

you ve got just n+a+me. Me

!@

the river pulls me under

don't attempt unless:

iHobble

my physio weds me @@

my double bubble pops cheerily

my physio pops sour cherry !#

my cat's meow \$

you draw breath through bit

borrow my burt's bees

my short lungs st[me]

my cut above my meta

carpals my

valley a very Detroit River

through the valley of the shadow

huatalltooth

x-+

slope
 two cm to the right of the hill in Elliot Lake
 where iCarus broke my arm iCarus hid for 6 days
 i'd rather die on
 this slope still
 the bunny hill

x-+ !

space below iCarus
 &% s but stop before
 my
 oh+iCarus+oh

!. skin just below eyes ✓ @. left earlobe ✓ #. left elbow above vein

\$. centre of the metacarpals left hand

✓ %. wedding ring
 fing fing fing
 er ...

x-+

\$

yay though iCarus draw breath through the valley of the shadow
 huahhhhhhhh
 my short lungs stutter
 my cut above my meta
 carpals my
 valley a very detroit river

x-+

@

here bites the dust my thumb
 skin ;
 gnawed into an ear; the lobe hangs
 out on circle line to edgeware

make lobe ; iCarus tease
 thumb and forefinger
 my h+ear strokeable

x-+ #

nar

kiss

us

#

in his bathrobe

licks

a finger

to drag over the

\$)!

elevated beating

blue

beneath yu

+r crook

x-+

!@

the river pulls me under

don't attempt unless :

iHobble

my physio weds me

my double bubble pops cheerily

my physio pops my cherry

^. left floating rib !@ &. freckle on bulge

between ribs and bellybutton ✓

*. hair just above bellybutton (. skin @ cm right of left hip bone ✓

x-+
 rabid/ash mas/o/chism
 ears bridge brain chasm
 brain : snapping turtle
 wet grass back lawn
 @!

left !). achilles tendon

}}

!!.

skin tag on right elbow !@. bunion on

left foot ✓

!#. tiny baby toe nail right foot ✓

!\$. callous back of left heel !%. saggy calf muscle right ✓

!^. dark scar from silver

x-+

&

iCarus lean into the aisle of the northern line to
 heathrow
 an isle iCarus and a rock and roll enthusiast but only
 had iCarus a god in my belly

accident knee !&. bellybutton

bike

x-+ !)

iCarus

come out swinging

!* . prominent mont-
gomery gland below

x-+ !%
+ right
iCarus tip my toes to yu
left nipple ✓ iCarus flex into table top
iCarus right elbow threw up gravel
that calf golden in my window
iCarus melt midas down gravel scar on wrist
iCarus buy leggings

x-+

!*

yur tongue asks if pimple
if poppable
yur tongue : cut my hair
yu ladle water into me
a nurse stops yu from shaving
my calves
'blow here' yu say
yu line my bed w/ ice chips

x-+

@)

no good story but a dirt road and wet grass / mt.
 mother pops antidepressants and snaps a six-year-
 old in sunday purple pantsuit and size !# flower
 slip ons dead-eyeing the camera in work gloves
 that fit ron w/ his wooden leg, snugly—she stands
 in the bed of a pickup between oak & pine for the
 furnaces

@!. pimple right ear lobe

x-+

^

from the river iCarus pull a
 rock
 or a bottle of rum or
 a rib

x-+

%

m-@% on my @nd or \$th finger
 ah maze
 sing here
 now open now
 aria
 dne
 wrapping tiny twine twice around
 awound
 iWound

x-+

*

59

seaweed tickle tickles the edges of
my belly
sea needs a hair cut
see a thread here a weed there a leaf a
wee+
ping
will+
ow

@@. dry skin on lower left lip ✓

x-+ !(
yu ran me over on
a raleigh from the 80s that mt. mother rode
to work
blond hair
winking fast
iCarus rocket into blast cut quartzite
five months
my elbow swells w/
canadian shield
bone? iCarus dig it out

x-+

!&

shove that rib back in
 my tin rib
 my wrist rests
 on grass | wood | bike bar |
 wet
 oh

x-+

!!

beep
 bop
 boop
 not a wart
 just a boulder
 unpopable
 unstoppable
 side of the !&
 rolling through
 town

x-+

!#

dainty
 moon bit
 cat tooth

x-+

!^

river leaden
 dark in the down rests a rotund ship
 thinner now and iCarus... crap
 iCarus cramp and my leg does not extend a foot
 of friendship to yu
 >> a tin of crushed tea leaves
 4 kiwis /

x-+

@@

yu
 mouth my
 my cat's meow
 yu bow
 borrow my burt's bees
 [knees]

!\$

x-+

‘♪ some say the devil is dead (dead) (dead) and buried in killarney / some say he
 rose again and joined the british arm’ old chap the foot needs toenails clipped, call in
 from canada! If the name stays the same then what’s the game yu’ve got just
 n+a+me. me iScramble. canada uses shield and iCarus pirouette true doe bear footed
 or beer footed + bear footed my feet do the lichen shuffle and grip

max sonnets in our right lens :
lens :

damn canada [where water line / what border?]
what splash moves us? we, iCarus =
 anima / animus
 cranium / anus

our sumac radius? relaid w/ tit—good gravy—Ti

inventory : battery life?
 I⁺ would drain a mac in a
 heartbeat
 charges us to 100

I⁺ : apple codename : naiad / airman

custody battle : HEADLINES

canadadada calls usa ‘arid’— apple america scooped us from river
/ canada sues / says : she died on our side / div(e)iding line?
centre a kayaker where the current cuts

scan air / scars for true story

iCarus google baby names in left

who we, I⁺?

max you calling me an asshole?

turn volume down
phoebe
chloe
who we, I⁺?

my skype baby nibbles my esophagus

shoves her toes up my nose

turn volume down
volume, max
turn it the fuck down

max sonnets : sorry, we require 74 hour cloud-by-cloud
weather

we keep the news on

iCarus knock yur notebook behind the toilet

paper plans

ring fing...er prints / x-ray

‘how ring web : / horseshoe ; small crab ; hook ; pierce skin w/ phillips screwdriver (numb w/ ice water)’

iCarus webbed

synthetic metacarpals soft skin blanket stretch over stomach

right lens floods the toilet

iSub

marine

: iCarus cut/paste / two fingertip type tattoos onto thighs (or⁺ titanium orrrr
optic(al) disk

thumb/finger/finger/finger/finger—
water feet rose pit pomegranate hip
wetsuits thigh seeds incisors tide
peach dress right hand
palm
wedding knife or
tide

max right lens : googles villanelle

iCarus check out my ass :

wider?

right lens : yu rekneel

wet (grass) (boxers) jeans on (back [bra strap] lawn) sand

yes, the only beach in
westward horn wall w/ an exclamation mark
in the name / like hamilton! ohio,
usa, / st. louis du ha! ha!, quebec,
canada / brush! colorado, usa / state
library of new south wales?, aus

two women in max i dresses
salsa / kick sand in yur ears

max

iCarus know sonnets
max, but again
again re-engage?

yu shiver thin t-shirt
white nose / fingers

yu on both patellas
ring remade

(sapphire popped off on impact
: head of a dandelion or
pterodactyl balloon animal or
my cherry at 20—
gold crushed to ti metacarpals)

iCarus text yu :

k.

yu rung the ring
strung a chain

iCarus read *on chesil beach* in the bath

left lens : saves netflix to FeRAM

downloads three seasons

‘orange is the new black’

right index+middle fingers stroke left thigh

scroll down down down

s:2 ep. ?

max fills right lens

hound dog w/
cocked

head

ears pricked

[??]

lying back in the tub

water warms bones or⁺ metal

bed | towel || body

my still ☺

both hands hover

☺

cover

max calculate the amount of milk

phoebe sucked in left lens

max chloe hid 34 dd in the freezer

max max show me

what books phoebe reads @ 3 yrs what fish chloe pairs w/ what wine @ vapianos, oxford circus what breed stuffed
dog under chloe’s aqua pillow how many freckles on phoebe’s left bicep match tube stations on yellow line



fuck max

...

mouth i

I⁺Scan the calendar for double dates

I⁺Can the salad yu doubt

I⁺ hate ... yur orange tie

I⁺ try to shove it

in the rubbish bin but yu ream us out

I⁺ buy tuna on tuesdays

I⁺Cite the sources in our paper

I⁺ apply for classes online

I⁺ impale our palm / knife tip nicks metal / right lens : two pale hands julienne an onion

I⁺ cook a broccoli omelette in our wedding dress and speck w/ ketchup

I⁺ almost bleach our top teeth

I⁺ finger paint a particle accelerator

yu leave NHS IVF pamphlets @ head of our bed

yu cycle to work

yu kiss our (but do not give us) head

I⁺ ignore 10 elle texts to get back on the mat :) / : car boot sale! new dress yass? / 43 sorry for your loss / get well soon cards /
14 apple emails re: welcome to life with max! zumba! vitamin B/D/iron / 30 flowery maxi dresses yu bought @ thrift shops to
drape our webbed thigh+calf / 6 cosmetic surgeon specializing in hands fridge magnets

I⁺ google bamboo toothbrushes

I⁺ separate compost from plastic / cans / glass

I⁺ lick motor oil and recoil

two doors down neighbour wants

to fuck a cyber cunt - floats over paper airplanes : print outs of his dick sheathed in aluminium foil : ‘send me nudes ;)’

I⁺ tag him on instagram ; pic of schwarzenegger’s titanium jaw, paste a collage of 50% off pg tips coupons, ASDA receipts for
frozen yoghurt / toothpaste, a polaroid printout of a selfie we took in hospital; intubated, unblanketed one breast chopped; glare
off ti radius

I⁺ | yellow line :
 scroll two fingers down left radius

right lens list : frozen shrimp
 pomegranate seeds
 protein bars
 mt. mother's sapphire earrings
 four black t-shirts

@ notting hill gate

left lens : ∞ ∞ stops to victoria
 tap for cheap flights
 lgw - dtw
 max sonnets : iMessage fiancé :

hey yu
 booking re-flight to detroit
 will send ring back by UPS

—iSonnet.

...
 ...

ROM: I⁺

login: max10011

It begins with the bending over of the self. This woman he chooses screws him. They buy raspberry frozen yoghurt in Brixton. "I'm exactly white trash enough for ASDA," she says, mouth moving across his shoulders. The carpark—his Suzuki. Between the same yellow lines months later she comes harder than ever, almost kicking his car into first. Mums with dogs and children and reusable grocery bags walk by and he bites her ribs not hard enough to leave teeth marks and she licks thirty short chin hairs, his goatee attempt.

They move in together in Brixton and share a kitchen and a queen sized bed he inherited from his aunt and uncle who divorced after ten years of marriage. "This bed is cursed." She sips hot water, honey and lemon under their duvet. "Your orgasm sounds like a rotary telephone." She refuses to let him decorate the kitchen "duck themed;" mallards, moorhens, white english geese the size of a four-year-old with tangerine bills, "Loons are not members of the duck family, but they count," pointing her wet toothbrush at him in the bathroom of the B&B on Vancouver Island her mom runs.

"They're the cheetahs of the duck family; speckled, swift. The perfect mascot for our humble abode," he disagrees, buying mugs and coasters and

placemats to sneak onto her teal vintage table. He writes an aggressive email to airport security when they lose the extra bag he filled with ducks: “Dear sir or madam. Souvenirs. First love, home and heart. LOSS!!”

Growing up, spring filled her backyard with baby ducklings and monogamous mallards. All summer she falls into flying dreams where men ask her to teach them how to walk on air. She always wears a pair of black Doc Marten oxfords that weigh her feet down; she flaps her arms insistently and hops once or twice to gain enough momentum to get off the ground. When she lifts off, her hair tangles in the highest branches of a peach tree in her mom’s backyard. She howls, hangs, and spits peach pits into her pocket.

She takes the Victoria and then Circle lines to South Bank and walks by the Thames. At twilight she holds up her iPhone and superimposes the Vancouver skyline over the water. She makes a list for herself:

read texts backwards, clean charity shop coat of tractor oil that keeps leaking through green skin, swab vag for hpv (he keeps telling her he’s clean and she half believes him), change calendar back to July and write him a note: re: stop flipping to January.

When she gets home, he shaves with a straight edge, she sautés salmon. They bathe together and she slowly washes his shoulders and back and imagines his spine a tsunami as she licks each vertebrae from his coccyx to C1.

He designs a ring for her on Oxford St. She knocks his notebook off the back of the toilet while trying to find her shaving cream and it falls open to his neat handwriting: “The design I drew initially is not possible according to the physics of gold—let the professionals at Dave & Dave do their good work. Reminder* get ring size...use fingers? duct tape? send Elle?” Four printed pages from a website that specializes in ethically sourced sapphires falls out from behind the diary cover. She sits naked on the edge of the claw footed tub and tugs her toes into the grey shag bathmat, trying to bury them.

He takes her to Devon in May and they walk the beach until her toes refuse to bend and his pinkies start turning white. When he kneels she focuses on the wet sand clinging to his jeans.

“I bought three books on wedding planning and I’m ready to start a Pinterest account with you. I’ve written you four subtle instrumentals based on sea sounds like surf, or tide, and I want you to do me the honour of living on top of my parent’s piano with me, please. You always make the bed perfectly and your clavicle shocks me with parallel lines when you squeeze yourself into a sports bra,” bounced out of him like scared rabbits running from a vulture, she a death

bird. While he waits for her answer she scrolls past a video she took of him and Elle balancing to do battle on a short stone fence in their parents' back garden. His hips waggle and his laugh narrates Elle's karate chops. He pushes his sister off and throws his arms into a V. "Yes, yes, get up buddy," she kisses him; he thrusts the gold around her finger and picks her up, spinning past the ocean/fields/white cliffs. He draws a heart with their initials on the beach with his big right toe. She starts to draw an arrow but her frozen toe refuses to cooperate—heart impaled, sand sinks back into the line.

He googles a blue suit in between navy and royal with an orange tie. Date night at the Harvester, he slices his fish lengthwise. "Your Pinterest pages are too disorganized; I think it would be beneficial for us to start separate boards for flowers, wedding party outfits, the dress and tuxedo, and possible honeymoon destinations. It'll be a fall wedding; what colours do you think appropriate?" She pushes her purse under her chair and shrugs on her jacket. "Wish we'd gone to the pub instead."

Fiancé's sister Elle takes her dress shopping and sets her gym routine so in 10 weeks she'll squeeze into a dress two sizes smaller. She and Elle barely fit in the bridal shop change room where she helps her undo all the buttons. They take a selfie while she holds up an "I said yes to the dress" sign. Elle switches her workout to hot yoga to adjust her hips.

Three months before the wedding date she doesn't fit her high waisted jeans and texts him to bring home three different pregnancy tests. She craves Tim Horton's maple glazed donuts and tikka masala and calls the fetus "god-in-her-belly." She flies to Victoria to visit her mom.

When she shoves her bag into the overhead compartment her iPhone hits the aisle seat in the head and he demands a kiss as compensation. He's Al, he's high and headed to BC to cycle cross-Canada. He studies greek myth and legend and wants to do his MA at Cambridge. "Cambridge is full of pretentious pricks," she says, scrolling through the in-flight movies. "One of my friends will never again punt on the Cam because the guides kept screaming at him to haul ass and keep to the right. Why make the boating rules opposite to the road?" Al draws an orobouros on her right thigh with his finger. "Your intonation is British, almost south London, but you still say 'eh'." Over the Rockies, his phone charges and he asks her to take a picture of tiny peaks. Whispers "Fuck me against the black obelisk in the British Museum just after midnight," just below her ear. She turns the conversation to the lack of female greek heroes, shakes hands when they land. Al air-kisses her forehead, chin, bites the tip of her nose gently.

Her mom opens the blinds at 9 am and duct tapes half an onion to each foot. "Coffee downstairs," waving a mug over the bed. She and god-in-her-belly eat kale and eggs while two yoga teachers and her mom's mailman ask "how far

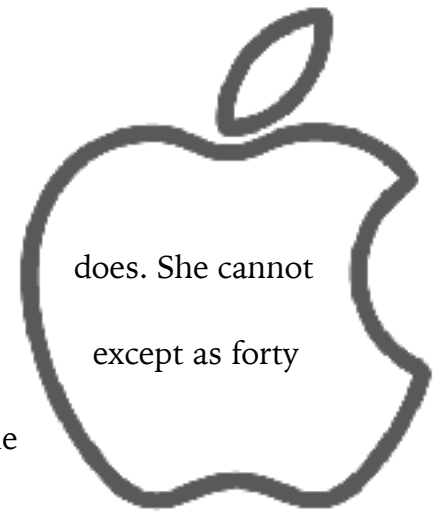
along are you, in months, in trimesters, in minutes, do you still have morning sickness; how far can you projectile vomit, how many leaves of baby spinach do you stuff in your morning smoothie; how many carats is your ring, did he dirty his jeans when he knelt?" Mom sautés onions and later they canoe to the middle of the bay and float in the sun for an hour, then paddle back singing Alanis Morissette songs off beat.

She takes the cheapest red eye back to England with a layover in Detroit. Her fiancé's pale cheeks on FaceTime: "I miss you. I've booked the venue and you forgot to turn the bedroom light off when you left. Can you give me to Devon?" She places the phone's cool glass on her stomach and hears him whispering "I've looked into good primary schools and there's Brockwell park down the road. I've yet to purchase baby gates, Devon, but will well before you're walking..." As the seatbelt light flashes she checks their in-flight map; just over the Detroit river. Maybe the baby kicks, or maybe that's turbulence. She whispers "god-in-my-belly; Phoebe, Chloe." When the wifi fails and the lights switch off, she reaches for Al's hand but he's on the Trans-Canada trail, almost to Banff, and she grips the armrest. The plane shakes like the mechanical bull she rode clumsily at her bachelorette party. She'd had a few jaeger bombs and let Elle take her to the only country bar in London. Cold air blows from the vents and the PA system pulls through cracks of the captain's voice. "FU-" before static. The plane

rumbles outside her body like her stomach inside and she wonders if Chloe/Phoebe can wail.

Explosion separates the forward fuselage of the plane from the wings and aft, oxygen masks dangle from the ceiling as the cabin depressurizes, the plane a rip in the night. The horizon tips perpendicular; Detroit's city lights bite clouds. Deep exhales from passengers constricted throats. She closes her eyes and prepares for plank, top of a pushup into downward dog, imagines rough breath in hot yoga. She unbuckles her seatbelt and gets up from her aisle seat near the bathroom. The plane free falling and she pulls off her oxygen mask. She stumbles to the front of the cartwheeling plane and dives from the fuselage. Her arms spread, her feet clunky in her Docs. Twenty-four seconds: she could catch an updraft, the heavier plane body below her. She regains consciousness around 10 000 ft and pulls her iPhone from her pocket to take a panorama of the skyline. In another 54 seconds she'll hit the river, hard as concrete. The river a fibre optic cable beneath her as she spreads her arms and flaps. She's missing something—hop! She opens her eyes to predict the moment of impact, a POW or SPLAT, electric.

When she wakes she can't remember if she died or not.
 A voice shares space with her breath. He exhales as she
 describe the timbre, or pitch, age or gender of the voice,
 plastic water bottles rolling down a hill. Not at all like the
 creek her mother loved to listen to at night



in the house she lived in at 5 years old. She realizes she cannot access her mother's face and moves her fingers to her ears to shut out the voice. Her fingers don't move independently of each other; pale white skin webs them together, long scars stretch lengthwise along each metal metacarpal. A white tattoo on her left index finger: "iCarus" and the outline of an apple.

The voice introduces himself as Max, 32nd human prototype. "You can't see yet; they had to replace 12 of your vertebrae shattered and C3 transected your spinal cord. Your right arm is relatively intact, your skull cracked in four different places. Dead 5 seconds after impact. Jetskier pulled you from the river. Dr. Finn and her team of six doctors have been working on rebuilding your spinal cord this week. I am constructed of synthetic neurons have been implanted in your frontal, parietal, and temporal lobes. And in your brain stem. I do renew your primary functions while you were dead, convert your saved memories to ROM, and to tattoo nest with your personality. Dr. Finn and her team will begin work on your prosthetic left leg this week. Your fetus did not

survive, but when you fully regenerate again again you can proceed quite amicably towards another. Your fiancé travelled to see you last month, but he had to work and now resorts to sending you hourly text updates. I will show them to you when your eyes function again again again. You woke the first time they implanted me. You rebooted and I logged in to to your to temporal lobe.”

iCarus? Me?

18 weeks later iCarus pulls a bottle of red wine from a shelf in ASDA wearing sunglasses, a baggy turtleneck, black jeans, leather gloves. A little girl with a purple scrunchy darts into the cookie aisle. Phoebe? Max fills her left retinal lens with Boris Johnson stumbling drunk into the street and narrowly missing a taxi, then UK low risk alcohol limits and unit guidelines. Fuck off, Max. “I shall regulate our blood/alcohol levels at the appropriate time.” Left lens —animated teenaged girl rolls her eyes and blows a bubble. The cashier asks for ID and she offers her left wrist to the debit machine. Dr. Finn imprinted her credit cards, passport, and driver’s license beneath the skin. The cashier punches a green button and subtly runs his index finger across her ring finger and middle finger webbing. Her left lens scrolls slowly through an itemized receipt while her right lens snaps to deep sea darkness, a submarine light flickers. She stumbles, temporarily blind. How much force would it take for two titanium fingers

to pop that pimple on the cashier's forehead? Max drains the image and replaces it with a roundabout near Brockwell park, daffodils clustering at the centre.

You've gotten better at picking soothing images, Ghandi.

Her webbed hands make it impossible for fingers to interlace and though her synthetic skin is identical in freckle pattern to her old body, it tans two shades darker and she needs new summer makeup. Her fiancé and Elle took over her physical rehabilitation. Relearning how to walk with her 3D printed titanium prosthetic left leg: she and Elle tube to central London and walk Southbank. The river wind changes pitch as it pushes through her webbed thigh just below her cut off shorts. "Wear pants next time." Elle suggests jeans with a relaxed fit when tourists stare at her by Tower Bridge. Max goes through her memories of high school and keeps propping a still image of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator up, right lens. She pushes pens, discarded straws, blades of grass, through the titanium exo-skeleton. Fuck off, Max. Max fills her right lens with an ex boyfriend flinging her over his shoulder and spinning. She tastes overripe blackberries sour with rain.

She, fiancé, and Elle play pool on Tuesdays at the pub down the road. Max fills her left lens with angles and complex calculations. Sometimes she lets him take over fine motor control, and they sink the 8 ball. Sometimes they wrestle;

she uses the pool cue as a rapier and he fills their mind with soft piano to cue her feet to waltz.

When he rekneels in the same sea on the same beach Max tugs the original into her right retinal lens. As he withdraws the same ring from his pocket, iCarus studies her previous pupils in the projection and waits for the response that accompanies love, a widening of pooling ink, but her eyes show no dilation. Her left lens reviews the present; his wet jeans, waves soaking knees as he shakes. She texts “k” to his phone, which pings in his pocket. He sends back 🥰, stands, and tries to ring her, but the webbing stops the gold. He pulls a chain from his pocket so she can wear it around her neck. Her fiancé: “I put everything on hold; rebooked the venue last Wednesday, even though they charged me £12 extra per head, bastards. I have to re-invite the guests.” She texts him “k.” In 18 weeks she hasn’t spoken to anyone except over iMessage.

Her mum dies of breast cancer. Fiancé, Elle, iCarus, and her dad’s young children, her half siblings, eat egg salad on the dock while her dad sets fire to her mom’s canoe, pushing the boat filled with dried wildflowers out into the lake. iCarus shakes her dad’s hand and he kisses her forehead, twirls the B&B keys on his index finger. She won’t cry, and confused Max nervously plays clips from Titanic, stimulates her olfactory bulb with onion, pepper. “This is against our programming.” Three weeks later in Brixton, her fiancé uses some of her

mom's money to rebook the florist and purchase the same cake. He still won't put his cock inside her. Elle buys iCarus three books on American Sign Language from Amazon, but her webbed fingers can't spell individual letters.

She stands in front of the bathroom mirror in her previous wedding dress with the bottle of red. Elle suggested she buy a whole new one at a boot sale in Brick Lane. iCarus insists on alterations. Her titanium spine glints under translucent skin in the backless dress as she twirls. The open back extends to where her coccyx meets her spine. The indents on either side that were large enough to hold two of her thumb prints replaced by smooth skin, a detail that Dr. Finn didn't think to sculpt. She inspects her right wrist. She calls her previous body "the old boy." Max, which bytes stayed? Where does old boy border iCarus? Two scars, one above the other, made 15 years apart wrap her wrist. Seven years old she learned to ride her bike and spun out of control on a gravel hill. She climbed a tree with the 9-year-old fiancé under the branches, feet spread to catch her, and ripped her skin right of the vein on the way down. She finds her pulse here, focuses on the throb, pre-orgasmic arousal in her blood. Persephone feeds 6 pomegranate seeds to Hades in a studded collar in her right lens.

She flips an omelette for dinner in her wedding dress. She cuts the broccoli; she slices her ring(less) finger to the metal. She barely bleeds as Max im-

mediately clots the blood and constricts the vessels. She squeezes out a few drops and shakes them onto the dress' white hips. She registers pain in the retinal display by the image Max chooses from her subconscious: Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the killer rabbit attacking the head of one of the knights; 5/10 on Max's pain scale. "Don't cut your jugular, it's been reinforced beneath the skin." Her iMessage alert pings her inner ear. Fiancé in left lens: "bringing home frozen yoghurt and IVF pamphlet." She forces her lips to grin, and this mouth shape auto-texts as 😊. She wants to send him: 🍆🍑 but Max deletes the draft. "He's at work. No sexting. Plus, two weeks until the most opportunistic time for pro-creative intercourse." She squirts ketchup on her heart shaped bodice.

She packs her purse with protein bars, frozen shrimp, and her mom's sapphire earrings, takes the Victoria line in her wedding dress. She taps her left radius by the wrist vein to buy a ticket from Heathrow to Victoria on the tube but the service on the underground flickers. Waiting for the Piccadilly line north, she and Max receive an email from Apple:

Greetings Apple Ambassador iCarus,

It has come to our attention that your interest in London is dissolving. Before you leave your fiancé, please consider your part in ensuring that Apple products are positively presented to the public. We are a consumer friendly producer and we want our Ambassadors to display all the potential for a new Life

With Max (LWM), Apple's newest synthetic helper, in addition to continuing on with their life before interrupted. We appreciate any opportunity for personal growth and so welcome your criticism.

Good luck, visit Apple.co.uk soon to check out our newest iWatch,

Dr. Geraldine Finn

The end of the email includes a string of code for Max. She suspects instructions for how to convince her to stay; hormone manipulation to increase oxytocin associated with fiancé, memory access to sexual experiences, what he should text Elle.

She swipes her right thumb across her forehead to archive the email but Max suspends it. "We're going home." She shoots him the 🙌 .

On the tube she scrolls her right index and middle fingers down inside arm skin above titanium radius, refreshing Safari. She stands near the back car doors on the Circle line. iCarus likes that she no longer needs to linger by tube maps with back-packed Americans with their London guide books and runners. Her tube map app synced to her inferior frontal gyrus so the lines light up her left lens like strings of festival lights over Oxford St. every Christmas. Every stop "please mind the gap between the train and the platform" hits her dopamine receptors. Her right lens alerts her with a banner. Every second stop she holds her

breath and waits for Max to notice and start her breathing again. She stands on the tube for three hours. When security asks her to leave she goes home to masturbate.

iCarus turns both herself and Max on. She hears his breathing between her ears. Her webbing strokes her clitoris in tight circles. Her quick breath joins his and her right lens fills with light and rhythm, river waves with a high fetch shoot lasers at seagulls when they crest. She flows into Max's images; the scenes blending—a shark pursues a kayaker without pupils who paddles fast enough into the waves to produce a wake. When they orgasm simultaneously the shark launches itself from the waves onto a buoy and curls itself there, shivering, weeping. They think nothing for twenty minutes, Max curled around himself in her mind, she wrapped in blankets waiting for fiancé to get home.

After frozen yogurt her stomach growls. “Max is hungry. Maybe I should try oil.” Fiancé googles psychotherapists, speech pathologists, and gynaecologists in bed while she reads the news. “Look, I know this has been hard for you, but how can you keep calling yourself Max? You’re my fiancée. Help me help you get over this. I’ll hold your pulse in therapy, we’ll have the wedding like we planned, you’ll get knocked up again and we’ll start our lives. Move to the country, I’ll commute. We’ve been given a huge blessing.”

Two weeks later iCarus and Max take a train from Victoria station to Brighton. they undress their body with one less breast and a ti pubic bone, spine, prosthetic, on the beach. She doesn't bother with her bathing costume. A lime green woman with pink flamingos where her nipples should be shouts "put your fuckin bottoms on." A little kid sticks a toy truck through their prosthetic's geometric webbing and she has to sit on a towel and shake her leg to get it out. Wading into the ocean she tries to find a string of thought that is separate from Max's that she can tuck away beneath her breast. The saltwater stings their skin. She swims deeper and further out, somersaults, breaches a lot lower than she remembers—her half metal body as heavy as if she still harboured Chloe, Phoebe—sits cross-legged on the sand like she's having an underwater tea party, stinging. She can't close or open their eyes.

Back on the sand with a towel around her legs, Brighton's pier lit up, iCarus' left lens pulses gently, overlaying the sea with gold sin waves. Max flows through water memories in the right lens: her fiancé, Elle, and she surfing in Cornwall, how terrified he got when she pretended to have lost her ring in the shallows, his freckles expanding expanding, two proposals, drawing SOS messages in Victoria sand. Her and fiancé just out of uni on summer holiday, midnight skinny dip in the sea. Her idea. "It's dangerous. There could be turtles and we don't know how fast high tide is here and what are the rock patterns? I don't

care how bright the moon is. There's cottages up and down this beach. Someone's going to see my full moon." They compromised by keeping their underwear on. Max zooms in on her eyes, rimmed salt red, sand and tide dripping from her bra and panties. The screen shuffles again to make room for two little girls in braids, their backs to her, running through a sprinkler in a sloped back garden. The scene plays for 8 seconds before restarting; she counts it by humming a piano tune she forgets the name of under her breath.

She searches Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for mechanic or electrical jobs, Max working on how to permanently disable Apple's location services. They let fiancé beat them in a game of scrabble, and she does the dishes while he watches Wimbledon finals. He kisses her forehead when he goes to bed before them. She slips a short night gown over her head and straddles him, he wakes to her pulling his hair, recoils at her thigh at his hip. "Insanity: Definition—repeating the same action and expecting a different result." Max tries to overload her right lens with the last three nights of attempted seduction. Shut up. You're turning me off. Fiancé lets her kiss him, but draws a line with his middle finger at his hips. He licks her neck until she moans low at his ear. Max shoves in. "For our own good—evidence we've collected! He won't complete intercourse with us." Her right lens fills with her mother cleaning strawberries in

the bay. They roll off and lie naked on top of the duvet. Crave strawberry rhubarb jam.

Elle sends her the job opening for electrician with the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel. "The pay is poor," Max insists, but she books the one-way anyway. Definition of home, Max. "A place to hang your headache. A roof over your heart. A blessing." Both lenses fill with an airplane wing. Her birthplace. Our birthplace.

The Machine is an Us: Irreverent / Ironic / Blasphemous: Cyborgs and Intersectional Poetics

I approach my creative MA manuscript *I⁺* through a hybrid, multilayered approach of a feminist disability studies and posthuman studies. My theoretical chimera serendipitously supports the central character(s), i/iCarus/Max/*I⁺* throughout her/their multiple forms, mutations, and mutilations. In keeping with the nature of Donna Haraway's metaphor of the irreverent, mythic, and blasphemous cyborg, I am primarily interested in challenging dualities; I situate *I⁺* within the interwoven and intersectional critiques of feminist theory and disability theory, as well as explorations of the posthuman subject.

I am fascinated by the question: how do feminist disability theories and digital and posthuman studies interact with each other? Donna Haraway believes it is important to situate herself in space, intimating that she is “conscious of the odd perspective provided by [her] historical position—a PhD in biology for an Irish Catholic girl was...as much constructed by the post-Second World War arms race and cold war as by the women's movements” (Haraway 173). Similarly, for me, I recognize how my perspective is shaped by my identity as an able-bodied young woman. I do not wish to craft an essentialist narrative for any woman living with disability, nor am I interested in depicting how they should act, or collapsing the categories of disability into one type or experience. Rather, my manuscript is an exploration of a possible journey of self-acceptance and sub-

jectivity through multiple shifts in identity, and I+'s embodied position as an individual (or dual-entity) marginalized by both her female body and her eventual disabilities.

I focus primarily on the feminist social image of the cyborg as proposed by Donna Haraway in her essay "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." However, while I recognize the social currency of this metaphor twenty-six years after Haraway's essay, the earmarks of the digital age—virtual reality headsets, smartphones that operate with biometrics and a world wide web with location services—have definitely informed my engagement with and re-creation of the figure of the cyborg. As such, my thesis takes the cyborg image literally, inspired by Zoe Sofoulis's assertion that writers must "take seriously our responsibilities for boundary construction and the metaphors we let loose in the world" (9).

My protagonist undergoes a literal transformation into a cyborg over a period of three months following her clinical death upon impact with the Detroit river. The character of "i" mutates/is mutilated into her new identity by a team of medical experts at the computer and software company, Apple. The medical team revivifies her by implanting synthetic neurons imbued with a personality into her parietal, temporal, and frontal lobes, and her brain stem. The neurons are collectively characterized as "max," who controls memory, motor function, emotion, and who interacts and intermingles progressively more with the i character's personality. Apple rebuilds and restructures i's body with an obvious prosthetic leg, several titanium bones, and cybernetic biotechnologies. Through this process, i becomes "iCarus." Combined with max, the two of them are "I+"—one entity with two somewhat competitive and interdependent personalities.

I investigate the space that iCarus occupies as a triple other (female, person with disability, and posthuman) in a western patriarchal society and how she transgresses, is captivated by, or discursively created by, her society. I question how—initially as an able-bodied woman and then as a disabled posthuman woman—her subjectivity is constructed or denied. I examine how her “normed” and then transformed physical body and sexuality serve as a site of mediation, mutation, and mutilation, and are policed, pathologized, gendered, and effectively sterilized. I explore what cultural norms she is entrenched in and embodies and how her body is read as extraordinary (ie. both superior and as disabled). I interrogate whether her disabilities offer her liberation or exclusion, and if these are mutually exclusive. I analyze the interdependence of her collective relationship and newly built identity with max. Finally, I consider the medium of poetry/prose as a cyborg in its own right, and discuss the text formally, exploring its generic hybridity (as both poetry and short fiction) as part of a new techno-mythological embodiment that can be compared to the feminist figure of the cyborg. I intend my creative manuscript to function as a map of the body on the page; creatively exploring multiple possibilities, ideas, and theories of what could happen when our bodies do not stop at our skin. The poetry does not offer an essentialist description, but follows my intention to challenge normative assumptions about how the body and language both function.

Haraway conceives of her cyborg figure as emancipatory—a way for women to disconnect themselves from nature, embrace technology, find affinity with members of the feminist movement and reject essentialist identities. What is confusing, however, is

that she appears to use the cyborg to construct an “othered” identity for women with disabilities, saying that “perhaps paraplegics and other severely handicapped people can (and sometimes do) have the most intense experiences of complex hybridization with other communication devices” (Haraway 170). Ruby Grant and others express a concern with seeing Haraway’s cyborg as a figure depicting women with disabilities. Grant notes that such representation “others these women and de-legitimizes and exoticises their lived experiences (63). Alison Kafer also calls for critical engagement with the image of the cyborg within disability theory, insisting that “far too often, disability functions in cyborg theory...solely as an illustration of the cyborg condition. Markedly absent is any kind of critical engagement with disability, any analysis of the material realities of disabled people’s interactions with technology” (105). This lack of critical engagement is definitely present in Haraway’s text as she has one exclusive line concerning disability and does not expand her argument to discuss any real lived experience of women with disabilities.

Haraway’s argument twenty-six years from when her manifesto was published steps into a different world; the reality of present day western experience is that many people can identify with the cyborg. Apple’s iPhone 5 and ascending models open with fingerprints, social media sites like Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook, and virtual reality programs like Oculus Rift extend our cyberidentities, and 3D printing allows doctors to print human organs out of various materials.¹ We have entered into Haraway’s prophecy when she says that “[by] our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs” (150). Yet Kafer

¹ All of these technological advances require further research, but I mention these examples of digital equipment that are on the horizon, moving quickly towards us.

points to an ableism when Haraway makes a distinction between “normal” and “abnormal” cyborgs, those with disabilities who have more “intense” experiences with technology. This ableism is similar to what Jay Dolmage outlines in *Disability Rhetoric*; the representation of a character with disability as a “supercrip”—who “overcomes their impairment through hard work or has some special talent that offsets their deficiencies” (35). The supercripping of a character (like a cyborg whose posthuman capabilities appear to over-compensate for any deficiency) is still a marginalization, even if it functions as a fetishization or an over-glorification of their disabilities.

Both Grant and Kafer insist that we should still wrestle and struggle with the figure of the cyborg, extending the term’s usefulness and using its self-proclaimed attachment to mutability, affinity and difference to push it forward. Thus, my character I⁺ parodies the ableist version of Haraway’s supercrip cyborg but produces a more nuanced view of the female disabled posthuman body in an attempt to explore what Kafer calls a crippled cyborg theory, which “would then warn against easy celebrations of the technological fix; it would require a more complex and ambivalent relationship with technology” (119). I exemplify this complex and ambivalent relationship via the partnership that iCarus and max find themselves in, the complications they have in sharing a body, and the difficulties iCarus experiences in moderating her new posthuman body and its connected technology.

Put simply by Katherine Hayle in *How We Became Posthuman*, the posthuman is “a union of the human with the intelligent machine” (2). “Posthuman” is an extremely broad term, covering humanity’s relationship with contemporary technology from a vari-

ety of angles. One useful line of questioning comes from Kim Toffoletti, who asks, “how can one understand what the self is, what a human is, what a man or woman is” in a world where “clear distinctions between what is real and what is virtual, where the body ends and technology begins, what is nature and what is machine, fracture and implode” (2). I respond to some of these questions through poems in which i speaks to her fetus. She imagines two different distinct personalities for the baby, phoebe and chloe, though she does not yet know the gender. She calls them “skype baby” (Watts 8) imagining that she can connect with them via technology, though they exist only in her body and are characterized by her mind. The image of the dual-entity contained within one body and mediated through technology is continued after the death of iCarus’s fetus in I⁺’s shared body.

Similarly, the aim of posthuman studies, possibly at its most simplistic level, appears to align with the core goal of disability and feminist studies: questioning what dualities construct the “normal,” what constructs postmodern/posthuman reality, what do we do with the body in the information age, and what metaphorical monsters can writers/theorists/activists, set loose to transgress and subvert harmful pre-established, or antiquated boundaries?

My creative project focusses more on how my cyborg character reacts to and interacts with an ableist culture, how she is able to create her own subjectivity in a culture that, like Haraway, is constantly trying to essentialize or glorify her lived experience because of her disability. My crippled cyborg is concerned primarily with subjectivity; she is defensive towards the technology that Apple united her with. As such, my reading of the

figure of the female cyborg is one that is indeed concerned with the destruction of dualities; to become the cyborg is to embrace the strength of irreverence and multiplicity, to reject essential origins and embrace partial and mutable regenerative identities, of both stereotypically contrived masculine and feminine virtue and vice, as well as to embrace the body with all its nicks, scars, imperfections, and even perfections.

Much of my nuanced view comes from considerations of how gender roles are layered over women's bodies, an experience that does not cease with a physical disability, or a disintegration of solid boundaries between human and machine. Though Haraway asserts that her cyborgs are "creatures in a post-gender world" (150), I am more inclined to agree with research like Anne Balsamo's, who finds in her exploration of identities in cyberspace that "new technologies of communication such as virtual reality and computer networks literally serve as cultural states for the performance and re-enactment of gender identity" (161). The posthuman identity of the cyborg does not erase her embodiment, even though her body might look different from that of a stereotypically gendered able-bodied female, such as iCarus's fiancé's sister, elle.

The theoretical framework that primarily influences me is that of the combined disability and feminist theory suggested by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson in "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory" and practically explored by Ruby Grant in her article "Going Commando: Prosthetics and the Politics of Gender." Garland-Thomson argues for the expansion of both disability theory and feminist theory in her essay, insisting that

integrating disability does not obscure our critical focus on the registers of race, sexuality, ethnicity, or gender, not is it additive....Rather, considering disability shifts the conceptual framework to strengthen our understanding of how these multiple systems intertwine, redefine, and mutually constitute one another. Integrating disability clarifies how this aggregate of systems operate together, yet distinctly, to support an imaginary norm and structure the relations that grant power, privilege, and status to that norm. Indeed the cultural function of the disabled figure is to act as a synecdoche for all forms that culture deems non-normative. (“Integrating Disability” 335)

She bases her integration of the two fields of identity politics on the assumption that disability is a universalizing problem that affects all human beings, “if we live long enough” (336). This feminist disability theory at its core insists that non-normatives (eg. women with impairments) are not inferior subjects. Garland-Thomson reiterates the concept that disability, like gender, is societally constructed, and considers that “Western thought has long conflated femaleness and disability, understanding both as defective departures from a valued standard” (“Integrating Disability” 337)—the white, middle or high class, heterosexual able-bodied cis-gender male. She proposes that disability can transform feminist theory in the areas of representation, the body, identity, and activism, the first three with which I am here most concerned. I employ both feminist theory and disability studies to examine the destruction of dualities—feminist theory embracing in many instances

what Susan Jarrett calls the topos of “both/and,” and those engaged with disability studies encouraging the discussion and testimony of a multiplicity of disabled experiences and rejecting the assumed duality of a normal and abnormal body.

I begin with the common assumption of the communal *significance* (and I use this word literally) of the female body. The assertion that culture co-opts the female body specifically as signifier, or a rewritable disk or memory card is put forth by Anne Balsamo, who in turn echoes Arthur Kroker by suggesting that “the female body....is still constructed as the message-bearing and silent form of the...unruly body, produced through the formation of the cultural imaginary” (30). Women and women’s bodies are—more so than men—ideologically, socially, and culturally constructed and discursively inscribed with meaning.

For example, biomedical discourse has historically pathologized women’s bodies; Balsamo notes that women, historically, were seen as

“eternally wounded” because they bled during part of their reproductive (menstrual) cycle. This popular myth...defined women as chronically weak and as victims of pathological physiology....through the association between femininity and ‘the wound,’ the female body is coded as inherently pathological. (Balsamo 42)

This historic pathologizing is what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson uses to further link feminism and disability studies. She reminds her readers that “Aristotle...defined women as ‘mutilated males...monstrosities...’ women thus become the primal freaks in western histories...More recently, feminist theorists have argued that female embodiment is a dis-

abling condition in sexist culture...for instance...’throwing like a girl’ (“Integrating Disability” 337). In my manuscript, the protagonist’s pregnant body is an example of culturally disabled female embodiment. i’s fiancé views her body, uniquely female in her pregnancy,² as disabled, making it the responsibility of the patriarchal figure (in this case yu and his potential son, devon) to control and monitor her. On i’s plane ride home, yu tells the fetus to “Take care of mummy, big boy—count her B12 tablets” (Watts 19), as if “i” could not possibly look after herself and even a tiny unborn man would be better able to manage her.

Garland-Thomson insists that “disability analysis presses our critique further that unusual embodiment is inherently inferior” (“Integrating Disability” 337). Essentially, feminist disability studies gives voice to the general purpose of gender studies, including the intersectionality of race, class, sexuality, really any deviation from the normed white male heterosexual able-bodied, middle class body: to insist that different is not inferior. What then, does society do with a body that is both female and obviously disabled, a double other? My answer, in part, was to show that while i’s individual desires are constantly ignored by external pressures (elle who enforces the union between “yu” (i’s fiancé) and i, and “dr. finn,” who began “i’s” mutation without her explicit consent³), i still sustains a form of subjectivity, displayed partially through her multiple addresses to yu, and her reclamation of linguistic control. Her language frequently mimics Apple’s naming of their products; iMac, iPhone, iPad—even pre-transformation i situates herself

² I write this statement knowing pregnancy is complicated by intersex and trans men, but for my yu character, pregnancy and womanhood are intricately conjoined.

³ Though clinically dead, and unable to give consent, I think iCarus’s revivification could open up potential conversations about the nature of consent after death beyond organ donation which might be useful in a posthuman era, but such a conversation is beyond the scope of this essay.

within technological semiotics, saying “iBrowse...iBreathe” (Watts 25). She gains an “iCarus” subjectivity when Apple rebuilds and forces her into I+ in the second-half of the manuscript, which she maintains, even through max’s attempts to subdue her emotional responses. Her identity is multilayered and multifaceted, and has been so, at least in part, since before her plummet from an airplane.

Heteronormative and normalizing⁴ gender roles impress certain expectations on women’s bodies in terms of western beauty standards, through fashion, makeup and hair styles, and even elective cosmetic surgery which Balsamo argues is an example of the “literal transformation of the (female) material body into a sign of culture” (58), as most cosmetic surgery supports the ideal white female body. Ruby Grant, whose sociological study focuses on the “feminine techno-embodiment” (61) of women amputees with prosthetics explores how women with prosthetic limbs are able or unable to fulfil the feminine beauty “normal.” Grant cites studies that suggest, “Western media representations of women with disabilities typically perpetuate stereotypes that their bodies are unattractive, abnormal and outside feminine beauty norms” (Kafer, 2003; Shildrick, 2007; *Women with Disabilities Australia [WWDA]*, 2014 in Grant 64). This insistence on women constantly having to embody perpetual beauty standards makes embracing the post-amputation self difficult, especially when displaying the markers of normalized female beauty such as heels, skirts, tank-tops, bathing suits, lingerie, etc. is often a societal necessity.

⁴ Robert McRuer in his essay “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer / Disabled Existence expands on Adrienne Rich’s idea of compulsory heterosexuality by including his idea of compulsory able-bodiedness which he says contributes to compulsory heterosexuality and vice versa. Both, he insists, marginalize other identities so that “the casting of some identities as alternatives ironically buttresses the ideological notion that dominant identities are not really alternatives but rather the natural order of things” (89). I am interested in the interplay of the two in terms of physical representation of compulsory hetero and able normative identities for women, the idea that if this is the natural way, how can one disagree?

This embodied inscription of ideals begins of course before any physical disability—Nancy Mairs says that even before her diagnosis of multiple sclerosis she had a list of beauty alterations like padded bras and eyebrow plucking, recalling, “I could not imagine a body that didn’t require at least minor structural modification. I still can’t and neither can any woman I know” (44). However, the lack of a limb and the addition of a prosthetic can make the process of self-acceptance even more difficult. When iCarus tries on her wedding dress she initially “insists on alterations” as her titanium spine and prosthetic leg are visible (Watts 80) and her “heart shaped bodice” (81) would display her partial mastectomy; yet later, she refuses to cover her prosthetic leg.

Historically the female body, partially due to reproductive capabilities, menstrual cycles, etc—has been connected and seen as emblematic of the natural world—more emblematic of goddess than cyborg. This is true even in the appearance of contemporary technology, specifically prosthetics. Grant’s female amputees embody a relationship with technology that seems counterculture to the norm of women as culturally attached to nature, adhering to specific beauty standards, and constantly sexualized. How can women be goddesses with prosthetic limbs that are not soft, curved, stereotypically feminine, or even naturally female body parts they were born with?

To pass for feminine normal, the majority of the subjects of Grant’s study would cover their prosthetics—mostly with clothing, but some with a cosmetic cover. The interviewees commonly call going without this prosthetic cover “going commando.” The structured metal and mechanics of the commando prosthetics look harder, more technologically connected, “more masculine, like ‘The Terminator’, as opposed to the delicacy

or natural feminine appearance that women are stereotypically gendered as” (Grant 68/69). Only one of the participants accepted the uncovered prosthetic as part of her bodily identity and felt comfortable with “going commando;” undergoing a “‘prosthetic journey’ towards self-acceptance and body positivity” (Grant 69). This participant “discussed [her journey of self-acceptance] as a process that involved a rethinking and expansion of, not only the boundaries of herself and the prosthetic as ‘other’, but between the masculine and feminine” and ended up displaying what Grant calls “female masculinity,” lending “strength and resilience for female amputees” (69).

Taking her self-acceptance even further, this woman chose to view her “visible display of prosthetics [as]... a politicised act of resistance against the stigmatisation of disability” (65) instead of covering her metal counterpart. If we attend to the interplay and weaving between able-bodiedness and heteronormativity, her refusal to cover her prosthetic is a rebellion against the combined stereotypes of femininity and normality; a decision to disregard societal pressure to pass as feminized normal and choose to inscribe her body with personal subjective significance. The words these women use to describe their own bodies informs my project, which serves as a fictional and poetic example of the “‘prosthetic journey’ of self-acceptance and body positivity,” while simultaneously rejecting and attempting to deconstruct the compulsion of both perfectly heterosexual and able-bodied identities.⁵ I demonstrate i’s transition into further subjectivity and her rejection of specific heteronormative gender roles through her clothing, specifically her wedding dress and ring (both physical objects that inscribe meaning on the body) and further

⁵ I employ heterosexual compulsion here not as a force that attempts to rigorously re-inscribe iCarus’s sexual identity so much as the heteronormative gender roles that come with it.

articles of clothing as a resistance against the male/technological female/natural duality of engendered performance.

For example, i's engagement is inextricably connected to her embodied identity, even before she undergoes her cyborgian transformation.⁶ One of the ways that I display the enforcing of heteronormative able-bodiedness on embodied identity is through the female characters in the story. Specifically, elle who befriends i as her sister-in-law-to-be also figures as a character who to some extent controls i's body. Often, women are equally responsible for reinforcing heteronormative expectations for tasteful, Instagram worthy weddings, diamond engagement rings and beaded white dresses. As such, i's feelings toward marriage and her fiancé are complicated by elle's involvement. elle occupies the space of enforcer in the engagement contract both in obvious and subtler ways. She aggressively prevents i from refusing one version of yu's proposal: "elle / hand on my neck / lips below my ear / yu ring me / hello / elle holds my hip as yu kiss / my left lip" (Watts 9). She performs traditional maid-of-honour duties; taking i to "strip to skin / in the cage of a london boutique / 'i said / yes to / the dress'" (34). elle is instrumental in the fit of the wedding dress; she is the first person to have power to alter i's body in order to better construct her femininity in relation to her heterosexual gendered role—elle "sets [i's] gym routine so in 10 weeks she'll fit into a dress two sizes smaller" (73). Post-mutation, elle functions as a further transformative force, by wanting iCarus to "buy a whole new [wedding dress] at a boot sale in Brick Lane," as iCarus's rebuilt body disrupts the able-bodied heteronormative performance of fiancée/wife. iCarus's

⁶ A fact that is made most obvious by the tradition of a woman wearing an engagement ring but not a man, and by the emphasis put on wedding dresses, originally as symbols of moral purity, but also contemporarily as a marker of heteronormative success.

titanium spine glints under translucent skin in the backless dress as she twirls. The open back extends to where her coccyx meets her spine. The indents on either side that were large enough to hold two of her thumb prints replaced by smooth skin, a detail that Dr. Finn didn't think to sculpt (80).

iCarus's rebuilt body subverts the previous function of the wedding dress; now, instead of inscribing heterosexual and able-bodied gendered norms, the dress highlights her new body, stretching the wedding dress into a new signifier. At this point, iCarus has begun (albeit grudgingly as seen in her relationship with max, whom she frequently tells to "fuck off") her "'prosthetic journey' of self-acceptance" (Grant 69). One of the most obvious points of transformation occurs with this image of the wedding dress that fit her first body, which she allowed elle to help her construct, and which both elle and i intended for the fiancé's gaze, and witnesses to i and yu's wedding. i originally views the wedding dress as a symbol of control—the London boutique where she buys it is a "cage" (Watts 34), when discussing i and yu's "wetsuits under wedding dress under tux" yu's hand is on her thigh protectively and his fingers also encircle her ring finger, his own body a synecdoche of compulsory heteronormativity (11). Post-transformation, iCarus shifts signification of the dress and it stands in as an analogue to her mutilated body. iCarus does violence to the dress by shaking blood and ketchup onto it (81), mimicking her death and switching the function of the dress which showcases her mutated form. By refusing a new dress and embracing the violence done to her current one, iCarus rejects elle's suggestion to normalize her abnormal body. However, she does not reject her

“new” body in favour of one that mimics her old. Rather, she understands her body to be adjusted; mutated and metamorphosed as well as mutilated, and she wishes to display the violence she has experienced at the same time as she embraces the complicated identity that accompanies her *brand*-new self.

Similarly, she refuses when elle proposes that she cover her “commando” left leg prosthetic—a geometric configuration of 3D printed titanium—with “relaxed fit” (79) jeans. Her response to elle and max, who “keeps propping a still image of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Terminator up, right lens” is “Fuck off” (79). She also rejects her “two doors down neighbour” who fetishizes her disabled posthuman body, wanting to “fuck a cyber cunt” (68). iCarus disrupts his heteronormative and ableist power dynamic and demands by displaying “female masculinity”—embracing the image of “schwarzenegger’s titanium jaw” and sending him a photo of her in the hospital “intubated, unblanketed one breast chopped; glare off ti radius” (68), disturbing the image of the female cyborg traditionally viewed as a sex object.

iCarus brings her prosthetic, part of her new sexual identity, into bed with her, an uncomfortable experience for her fiancé who “recoils at her ti thigh at his hip” (85). Her fiancé refuses to allow iCarus to shift identities or accept the new aspects of her body. He insists on reconstructing or veiling both her physical body and their life together; he buys “30 flowery maxi dresses...@ thrift shops to drape our / webbed thigh+calf / 6 cosmetic surgeon specializing in hands fridge magnets” (68) to “unweb” her hands. He “rekneels.../ on both patellas / ring remade” (65) proposing on the same beach in the same posture with a reconstructed ring. He attempts to veil iCarus’s new physical identity

by refusing to acknowledge the presence of max (83) and by continually encouraging her towards In Vitro Fertilization to return to their exact space in life before her death. Eventually, iCarus understands that both elle's and the fiancé's hetero/able-bodied policing denies her space to accept her new identity and incorporate it into her self. She abandons them for an acceptance of her multiple identities, and new way of life, instead of "fight[ing] hard to reenter society by getting well soon" ("The Case for Conserving Disability" 340), as Garland Thomson suggests is the normal course of action that compulsory able-bodiedness insists upon.

i's journey of self acceptance is also integrally related to the technology that she is intimately connected to, for better or worse. During both proposals, i/iCarus depends on her iPhone, or max and her retinal lenses to convince her to accept yu's proposal. Yet even in the poem "tomorrow tomorrow to," though i expresses no linguistic discomfort, she still must see yu through the lens of her iPhone: "i grab my iPhone / yu wait while iPlay / a video of yu and elle karate chopping a breakwall" (Watts 22). Further, when her fiancé "rekneels in the same sea on the same beach" (79) Max tugs the original into her right retinal lens, using technology to layer over the moment, creating more distance between the lovers, as her own body removes her from the immediate present, and further from her fiancé who is perpetually trying to recapture their past life. Interestingly, though both iCarus and yu momentarily inhabit the natural space of the beach, their engendered roles are reversed in terms of the usual association of gender with a technological / natural duality. iCarus depends on her smartphone, and later her bodily incorporated technology to influence her decision, while yu, knees in the tide, has a greater affinity with nature;

“i pull yu from the sea” (24) i recalls, as yu becomes the unchanging goddess, connected to cyclical patterns yet never progressing. i—already cyborgian pre-transformation, on the other hand—is the figure of change.

As yu withdraws the same ring from his pocket, “iCarus studies her previous pupils in the projection and waits for the response that accompanies love” (79). She waits to see if her pupils had dilated in excitement and attraction, if her physical body showed any positive response to her fiancé’s first proposal. Her acceptance of his proposal is further mediated by messaging technology as she texts him her response: “k” (62). i employs her relationship with tech subjectively to encourage her own nostalgia, and mediate the opinion, or embodied sense of knowledge that she has of her fiancé, connecting her body, even pre-transformation, to her tech and her performance of femininity in a cyborgian manner. Her technologically enhanced body initially becomes a mediating space through which to view the world and her own feelings, though she slowly realizes she must move through her performance into genuine embrace of this body.

Post-transformation, iCarus and max express emotion through images in their right and left retinal displays which replace her human eyes—embodied technology that also functions as cyber interface and can access the internet, run various applications on an Apple operating system (iOS), and give her sight. Though her lenses appear to be an aspect of her physiology that could label her a “supercrip,” the reader seeing her retinal displays as a superpower instead of a disability and useful prosthetics, they also cause her temporary blindness, as well as providing a form a sight that can overwhelm her and threaten her individuality, rather than reassure her of her ability to perceive. Often when

I⁺ uses their lenses, images flood in and crowd out her natural sight: “max sonnets in our right lens : iCarus google baby names in left lens” (63). The excess of use for her new eyes occasionally blinds her with information, as “iLenses crowd out : white room, wet grass” (48), and when she is assaulted by the cashier “her left lens scrolls slowly through an itemized white receipt while her right lens snaps to deep sea darkness, a submarine light flickers. She stumbles, temporarily blind” (78). Part of iCarus’s self-acceptance is to learn how to mediate between her physical dualities; for example, how to walk and manage depth perception with her natural sight in one lens while texting in the other.

iCarus cannot fully accept herself until she accepts the collective identities she houses as her own, because her self has expanded to include the dualities of self/other, male/female, robot/human, natural/technological and to an extent abled/disabled. Her own body is a site of conflict that struggles to resolve contradictions. For example, max functions as a figure of control she resists until they have a masturbatory sexual experience (63), foreshadowed in the first “mouth i” poem: “if i were a fish sex would consist of / only my body / and me” (2). After dying in the river and her subsequent regeneration, iCarus’s webbed fingers align her somewhat with an amphibious character; she is not quite fish, with a reproductive process that does not require intimate contact with a male, but neither does sex have the same cultural implications, especially with the discomfort her fiancé has at the prospect, as he “still won’t put his cock inside her” (80). Since heteronormative sex with her partner is no longer an option for her, she turns to a more technical option, though her masturbatory scene with max is less “body as vibrator” and closer to an experience of unity.

iCarus's synthetically webbed fingers pleasure her natural body, but also turn max on. Her generally distant, superego cyber-personality "sonnets : breath breath breath" (67), and relinquishes control over iCarus's body. He is as much a part of iCarus as her hormones, neurons, bones, reproductive organs, but has his own consciousness, which leaves iCarus wondering where her consciousness stops and max's continues, or whether this self/other distinction is necessary to make, as he has access to her emotions and memories. I play here with the ideal of sexual experiences as intimate, communal, and unifying. iCarus and max construct a mutual space through their embodied technology as the images in both lenses (the right predominantly used by max, the left preferred by iCarus) flow into each other and create one simultaneously improvised and co-constructed scene (83). The self and other, technology and the natural body, male and female, abled and disabled, combine. Also, depicting a dual-entity together performing the solitary act of "masturbating" contorts the heteronormative stereotype that self-love is always second best, for a woman, to sex with a penis.

Thus, I read iCarus's concern over whether her genitals have changed: "max penis / iPenis?" (48), as emblematic not only of her boundary confusion between self/other, but also male/female, and able/disabled and destruction of heterosexual and able-bodied compulsion. Presenting a cisgendered female with a possible penis queers my crippled cyborg by placing her in the slash between each of these categories—a third space, where she opens up the possibility of multiplicity instead of binaries. She is both male and female, even if her penis is imagined, but she only takes on the masculine member through max's personality. Interestingly, she genders him by only hearing his name, since his

voice is indistinguishable in terms of gender, sounding like “forty plastic water bottles rolling down a hill” (76). By choosing to view max as male, she creates his genitalia as an imaginary prosthetic for her own body. By both creating, subsuming, and denying the existence of the physical phallus, she suggests her own body is sufficient; the image of the woman as a mutilated male, the disabling of the female, is deconstructed in the posthuman cyborg who does not require heterosexual intercourse. I relate this self-sufficiency to Robert McRuer who says that “able-bodied identity and heterosexual identity are linked in their mutual impossibility and their mutual incomprehensibility—they are incomprehensible in that each is an identity that is simultaneously the ground on which all identities supposedly rest and an impressive achievement that is always deferred and thus never really guaranteed” (93). Since both identities are so incomprehensible, subverting the compulsion to subscribe to either is a step in self-acceptance of multiple partial identities. iCarus comes to realize that contradictions need not necessarily be resolved—she can live in the both/and.

iCarus and max come together in an embrace of these partial identities. Initially, both used a different one of I⁺'s lenses, which displayed their separation, and an attempt, especially on iCarus's end, to retain some individuality. Up until this scene, max usually co-opts any emotion that iCarus displays in her lens, and attempts through his technological control to enforce able-bodied femininity—for example when she shows aggression to the cashier for

subtly run[ing] his index finger across her ring finger and middle finger webbing. Her left lens scrolls slowly through an itemized receipt while

her right lens snaps to deep sea darkness, a submarine light flickers. She stumbles, temporarily blind. How much force would it take for two titanium fingers to pop that pimple on the cashier's forehead? Max drains the image and replaces it with a roundabout near Brockwell park, daffodils clustering at the centre. You've gotten better at picking soothing images, Ghandi. (Watts 78)

Before their sexual experience, the only instance where they connect both their lenses occurs when they are threatened by the women who come to murder them. Connecting the natural and the technological, max and iCarus immediately defend themselves as one: "three women w/ pillows overstand to smother me / i+max project the left eye of a great white onto the wall behind them / they turn at glowing irises / caught between two eyes / monster" (47).

Similarly, after this very physical/sensual experience, max and iCarus label themselves I⁺, and iCarus begins to refer to both herself and max as we / themselves / our / us. Max, from then on, resists controlling/policing iCarus's desires and actions, choosing instead to aid her in "working on how to permanently disable Apple's location services" (85). Although max and iCarus still occasionally revert to their separation of selves—max fulfills the paternal role "for [their] own good" (85) when iCarus attempts to seduce her fiancé—the trajectory of their relationship is moving towards an equality and interdependence, as their body and physical experiences become a site of mediation between their two personalities.

Such an interdependence is the relationship that disability study scholars support between, for example, caregivers and people with disabilities. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson asserts that “disability itself demands that human interdependence and universal need for assistance be figured into our dialogues about right and subjectivity” (“Integrating Disability” 344), not just for people with disabilities, but all people. Interdependence for I^+ is self-acceptance and the destruction of a long list of dualities. Though they are constructed of two personalities/entities, they are rooted in the same body. Beginning to flow and nest into each other fractures each individual identity that flows from their entities further, until I^+ has many partial identities. With the acceptance of interdependence, and the destruction of the lines between the self and the other, I^+ continues to work through her “prosthetic journey,” with the new ability to revel in multiple identities, embodying Donna Haraway’s assertion that

A cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end (or until the world ends); it takes irony for granted. One is too few, and two is only one possibility. Intense pleasure in skill, machine skill, ceases to be a sin, but an aspect of embodiment. The machine is not an *it* to be animated, worshipped, and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; *they* do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they. (emphasis in text, 180)

iCarus and max are connected through affinity, most exemplified in the grammar shifts and connected language in the final two poems. From iCarus to “I⁺ cook a broccoli omelette in our wedding dress and speck w/ ketchup / I⁺ almost bleach our top teeth /I⁺ finger paint a particle accelerator...I⁺ | yellow line : / scroll two fingers down left radius” (Watts 68-69)—the machine of I⁺ becomes an “us.”

To achieve my embodied creative project, I have attempted to mimic the figure of the cyborg in the construction of the text. Irreverent and boundary breaking, my thesis project is, structurally, a hybrid of short fiction and poetry. I realized early on that I was writing a transformation story that needed a narrative arc, but also required poetry’s ability to drop in memories or vignettes and move on to an unspecified new moment. Poetry’s freedom leaves space for the reader to fill in some aspects of the characters themselves, and for certain images to be called and recalled, shifting in meaning slightly each time they appear as I play with memory. In terms of physical page orientation, I employ landscape for my poetry and portrait for its prose counterpart. In doing so, I require the poetry to transgress the borders of a typically structured page. I situate the poems from i’s point of view, while the more routine, organized and controlled retelling is third person narration through the (lens) of max. I ensure that the interplay/interdependence of both story and poetry is necessary for a fuller (though not “complete”) reading of I⁺.

For my discussion of poetics I draw primarily on Michael Davidson and Nicole Markotić’s conversation in “Talking Disability Poetics,” as their intersection of poetry with disability studies is found very infrequently elsewhere. More specifically, poetry is one of the genres of writing that is the most connected to the body—even in the language

surrounding the description of structured poetry, as Markotić points out: “and what then, of the body in poetry? the measurable *foot*, the *breath* line, the unenjamable line breaks?” (75). I argue that poetry is also the best form of writing to take on the form of the feminist cyborg because of feminist disability studies engagement with the body. Poetry meets crippled fem cyborgs in the body in a willingness to engage in different and strange structural forms. In my poems, iCarus and max's body is constructed through words, numbers, mathematical symbols, and the physical space of the page; text message conversations are physically re-imagined, blurring technology and speech, mangling tech and body, stretching skin to web over scars, memories, etc. This is space where minimalist experimental poetry does work that prose cannot in terms of non-normative structure and text. Cyborgs, like poetry, also are also connected intimately with the body—the uncomfortable angles, the impure and profane corners, since

just as women never speak, write, or act outside of their bodies, cyborgs never leave the meat behind. It is important that feminist approaches to “the body” resist the easy dissolution or dematerialization of the body offered by post-modern theorists. The cyborg image works well to foreground the radical materiality of the body. (Balsamo 40)

Unlike Haraway's cyborg, a political metaphor so necessarily “ether, quintessence” (153), the “meat” of the contemporary cyborg is as integral to its nature as is its virtuality or machinery. The resistance of the dissolution of the body is what distinguishes feminist disability cyborg poetry from cyber-poetry, especially in its existence outside of cyber-space. Poetry that propagates the cyborg is also concerned with stretching its fingers fur-

ther than the page and exceeding its space, exceeding borders that are meant to contain it. In this way, my poetry is an overabundance—a verbose outpouring, mechanical stutter. This excess is rooted in the body, and is easily associated with the feminine, since the “sentence of embodiment is conceived of as either a lack or an excess” (“Integrating Disability” 338). This surplus also lends itself to multiple identities and forms of expression, a refusal to co-operate with the status quo. “The poem,” as Lisa Robertson suggests, “is a hormone” (11), working with and for the body, typically gendered as feminine in its stereotypical role as something we think of only when there is an excess. Poetry does not apologize for spilling over boundaries, or disrupting the established order, and is irreverent as a cyborg. Davidson asserts that embodied poetry “invites or allows for non-normative forms of expression...Poetry can throw a linguistic wrench into the assembly line. Poetry, in fabulous ways, *disables* production” (Markotić and Davidson 79). This surplus of non-normative identities is necessary for the disruption of homogeneity and for the worship of the normal, and creates space for the abnormal in the centre of poetic thought, like crippled cyborgs disable stereotypically gendered business as usual. Cyborg poetry refuses to return to before a traumatic event, and insists that regeneration and new construction, new pathways and alliances must take place.

I⁺ maps their body together (Watts 50-62). This mapping is excess; max and iCarus combine, confuse, and then untangle memory, skin, and sections of iCarus (and max’s) new body. Each of these small poems is a text box constructed to look like a web page using language, numbers, and a surplus of symbology. In these poems, max and iCarus translate her/their body and memories onto the page using a combination of hu-

man and technological language. They map the body through obvious imperfections, normalities, or abnormalities, disabilities, on the skin, down the bones, radiating strength and physical disobedience. Their body scan/map echoes Garland Thomson's assertion that "put more poetically, disabilities are the etchings left on flesh as it encounters world" ("The Case for Conserving Disability" 342).

In my text's construction, I employ the keyboard as space of mediation between technology and my body, as it requires physical touch, the tapping of fingertips. For example "x-+ / % / m-@% on my @nd or \$th finger / ah maze / sing here / now open now / aria / dne / wrapping tiny twine twice / around / awound / iWound" (Watts 58). In this poem, both @ signs and the \$ sign respond to the reoccurring image of the engagement ring, evoking also cyclical nature, (moon, menstrual cycles, etc) most commonly associated with women. I use this small poem to recall the question i asks: "how is a wedding string like a / tampon ring?" (33). Here the tampon string becomes the twine wrapping "around / awound / iWound" (58) and, in a perversion of Ariadne's thread that guides Theseus⁷ out of the labyrinth, guides the tampon out of the female body, and leads the reader through the next lines of the poem. The image of the tampon plays not only on the image of excess, that women are constantly overflowing their boundaries, leaking, or perpetually wounded as I mentioned earlier, but also the ring—equated with the tampon—serves to contain or correct the intemperate female body: the ring wrapping "around a/ wound," also suggests a female "technology" designed to staunch nature. The ring "wraps around my finger around yurs around my shoulders / a wound my thorax left

⁷ I am also interested throughout my manuscript in playing with classical myths; interrogating, deconstructing, and reinscribing them in posthuman spaces, though I do not have the room to discuss techno-mythology in this essay.

radius right ulna around my temporal / lobe and / squeezes” (32). The containment that comes with an unwanted ring “squeezes” i’s body and mind, and iCarus responds with cyborgian resistance: “iWound” (58). “iWound” denotes a hybridized subjective owning of iCarus’s language, technology—as in the form of “iPhone” she is parodying, as well as an acceptance of the personal wounds that iCarus sustained and regenerated from—and the potential for violence. This non-normative poetry functions on several levels as “cyborg writing [which] is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other” (Haraway 175). iCarus’s resistance is not only a “fuck you” as she keeps saying to max, but also a radical acceptance of her own body, technologized and naturalized as it is. Hers is the “body not as a static thing, but as motion, turmoil, protest” (Markotić and Davidson 77) to the norms that seek to constrain it—she protests through embracing her beautiful, functional, disabled, female body.

Davidson asserts that poetry itself “in its more innovative forms—disables self-reliance as well and calls for more collaborative forms of reading and writing” (Markotić and Davidson 81). Collaboration echoes the disability studies’ values of interdependence, which is inevitably messy, confusing, intimate, and a learning curve. Poetry that is accessible but does not spoon feed its reader displays this trust and interdependence, based on affinity and overflowing boundaries. Cyborg poetry then—to borrow Haraway’s idea of cyborg politics and transplant it somewhat closer to the body—

is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly, the cen-

tral dogma of phallogocentrism. That is why cyborg politics insist on noise and advocate pollution, rejoicing in the illegitimate fusions of animal and machine. (Haraway 176)

My cyborg is not prescriptive. My intention in constructing this thesis is to produce not “a common language, but...a powerful infidel heteroglossia” (Haraway 181). In her position as speaker, i and I map and remake and mutate her body and language. I write my chimera to be faithful to Balsamo’s suggestion “that feminists begin to write new fictions, written through the continual attention—historical, ideological, and affective—to the place from which we speak” (32).

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