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INTRODUCTION

How will I recognize you? The revolution is happening now, everywhere, in the bodies and faces that pass by in a blur. Our revolutionary potential is considerable. It has not been erased, so much as we have forgotten how to recognize it. Much works against us. A grotesquely swelling neo-liberal political economy blocks our potential to originate or live bountiful and joyous collective change, at any scale. What does revolution look like? This book is an attempt to teach ourselves how to see and how to be seen.

The book was conceived, written, and produced in a deeply social process, driven by friendship, conversation, mood, fatigue, hunger, laughter, and the pleasure of travel. Our work composing the texts was more like performance than like the writing processes we were accustomed to. We completed it in less than two months, beginning in August, 2011, in France. We spent a week in a house with hundreds of books on a long table, making our selections. We composed our annotations in September and October via Internet document-sharing, sometimes writing simultaneously from La Malgache, France and Portland, Oregon, watching distant words pop up on our computer screens as we both wrote across time zones. In Berkeley, David Brazil

was compiling an annotated bibliography of revolution. In late October we met again in Bordeaux to produce the book with Thomas Boutoux and a dozen collaborators at Publication Studio Bordeaux.

Our choice of texts answered our desire to be faithful to our existing histories as readers, rather than any need to become historians of a category. So this book doesn't represent revolution as a general concept, but it follows the specific revolutions we have experienced in our conversations with one another, in our friendships and communities, and with the writers we love. Every one of these texts is in this book because we have been moved by it, emotionally, intellectually, and bodily. And it was our need to bring revolution home into our bodies, to experience the radical potentials of our limit, our human embodiment, that energised our work. The risk of embodiment is what these texts have in common too. We think that there is no public space that is not an embodied public space. We think that there is not a politics that does not begin in our desiring cells. We think that this corporal surplus, the movement beyond our biographies and our perceived or administrated limits, is the force that makes and changes worlds. One of us uses the word soul to name this surplus, and one of us doesn't. But what we have learned from our intense performance together is that a common vocabulary is not necessary, and probably not desirable. For us, revolution will be the difference that each of us brings into living, the difference that resists the imperatives of markets and market ideologies, and that resists even the smoothing activities that can be part of community formation. It's only by staying with the often difficult texture of difference that we can begin, that there can be a stance that opens into a movement beyond. We are committed to giving each other the space for such an opening, and we call this gift politics.

We organized our selections by stages in life—beginning, childhood, education, adulthood, death—because revolution is a lived process. This is an experiment in collectively reading through the body. All the parts and stages of life, which we recognize don't happen consecutively, or even one at a time, are incipiently revolutionary. The change that we need to discover is already happening at every point in each of our lives. We are already in revolution, now, in the present, and every part of change, even infancy or death, is about to show us something completely new about collectivity and co-existence. So we bring our listening to the organism.

How will we see the revolution beginning every day? Who are our comrades? Are you that man who was kind to me in the library? Are you the meth addict who wants to mow my lawn? Are you the five-year-old licking my groceries? Are you jerking off in the stall next to mine? Are you sitting near me in the park, staring at my child with a foolish smile? Are you a goat farmer? Are you a dog?

This book is pragmatic. How will I recognize you?

