

ANDREA LAWLOR & TREY SAGER

Folio: Other Worlds

Last August, we went looking for new writing that called itself speculative, or fantasy, or science fiction, knowing that innovative writers have been working inside of and into these genres for years. That old false binary of “literary” vs. “genre,” always already about power, is plainly dying—along with a lot of other old false binaries. What thrives outside the establishment of “the literary”? Let’s read that.

Fence has always aimed to be another world from the ones we variously knew, a chimerical but heartfelt directive. Fictive reality is always another world—perpendicular, parallel, provincial or interplanetary. We crave it, and we create it, because by crashing into another world we can clarify this one.

Happily, our already broad call was answered by writers with radically different interpretations. In this folio, you will find mummies, germ camps, a jazz musician writing letters from Detroit to the Angel of Dust, post-apocalyptic documentation of invisible events, unhappy families, scavengers, possibly a cult. You will find yourself on journeys. There will be dragons, in varied shapes.

“Good. Empty your mind. It’s clear of murmuring, of pain. Find inside it your smallest, warmest self. You’re a bright speck of light, a formless form, a bug of self, contained within the softest cocoon. Your bug awareness is dim, quavering, but within this firm softness you sense a hidden, transforming intelligence. Trust it. The intelligence will guide you. You’re biggening. You’re beginning.”

M. MILKS