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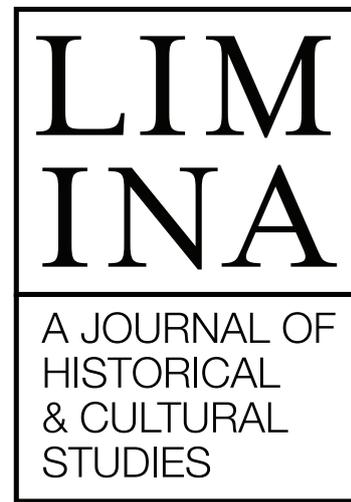
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Submitting to Limina

Information regarding the journal and how to submit can be found at <https://www.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/future>.

Cover Image

UWA Japanese Garden, Perth, Western Australia. Photograph by Rebecca Repper.



Eldritch Academia Vignettes

Prema Arasu

The University of Western Australia

grants

There are no more numbers left.

You thought you had a six-month supply left, at least.

Your supervisor knocks on the door of your office.

Since when did your supervisor know the location of your office? Since when did your office have a door? Since when did you have an office?

I need your chapters by tomorrow, she says.

I'm out of numbers, you say. I need to find more.

Look in the cupboards, she says.

The cupboards are empty.

You visit the grants office. I ran out of numbers, you explain, and need more to finish my research.

The creature at the desk peers down at you through empty lenses. She detaches her jaw and words come out: According to the archives you are nearing the end of the third year of your doctorate. The numbers allocated to you at your commencement should suffice, unless you have been abusing your resources.

You insist you haven't. You've been using as many numbers as your research requires. You just need more to finish your work.

They give you a stack of paperwork to fill out. You take it back to your office to fill out. This time your office is in the same location as it was when you left it.

Filling out the forms takes a long time. How long? You don't know, because the clocks have all been seized by the Department of Applied Metaphysics. They never seem to struggle for funding. They're favourites of the ARC.

You take the paperwork back to the grants office.

We're closed on Mondays, says the creature. Come back tomorrow.

You come back tomorrow. The creature tells you the documents must be submitted to an office off-campus.

decimal

You've never been in this part of the library before.

In your hand is a torn piece of recycled paper bearing the scribbled numbers 828.309. The books around you say 827, but the books are all on teeth.

You should be close.

827.454. 827.989. 828...

You turn a corner, and then another, and now the books are in the 900s.

They're all about teeth.

You glance back at the piece of paper. It remains clutched in a hand, and that hand is attached to the end of your arm. You turn corners for an indiscernible length of time.

The library has no clocks. No windows.

Like a casino.

Something slithers between bookshelves.

A rustle of paper.

A librarian?

Excuse me, you say.

Someone shushes you from behind a shelf.

The librarian rises up on his haunches, tasting the air. You explain your dilemma. You need help finding a book. It contains a reference. The article you are writing depends on citing this reference correctly.

The librarian stretches a limb past you, grazing your shoulder, then withdraws, holding your book.

yoghurt

Your bacterial cultures are in the lab fridge.

You forget about them, until one day you get hungry. You find them next to the yoghurt.

And in the yoghurt, and around it.

The yoghurt tastes good. Acidic, but also sweet.

You return to your work. In front of you is a spreadsheet. You copy one column of numbers into the next column, and watch the figures change with a ripple of pleasure. You increase some of the numbers to see what happens.

You're still hungry.

There's a bottle of agar on the shelf, and it looks appealing. You reach for it, limbs extending across the room, remove the cap, and drink it down.

You move more numbers around columns. You're hungry again, but there is no more agar.

You find the lab tech in the reactor. She's wiping something black off the walls.

I put a big order in last week, she says, but it was delivered to the haematology lab.

Everyone who works in the haem lab is very pale, tall, and good-looking. They welcome you in with pointed smiles.

You head to the fridge. It's full of blood bags, immaculately lined up and labelled. You reach for the closest, tear it open with your teeth and gulp down mouthfuls. You feel the erythrocytes slide down your throat. You feel their cell walls lose integrity and lyse in your stomach. You feel the amino acids enter your own bloodstream, you feel your own erythrocytes absorb them into their own bodies. You wipe the sweat from your brow and it's frothy white.