

Co-editor's Note

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When a very dry fall transitioned into the winter of 2022, large atmospheric rivers roiled through my city and others on the West Coast of the United States and British Columbia, cutting off routes of connection between rural, urban, and transitional places. The farm fields became flooded—too flooded to farm—and the precarious routes that link rural and urban ecosystems and our networked food systems were impassable.

As a Californian, drought and wildfire nerves live in my body. In my West Coast bioregion that springtime, the land dried out, received late spring rain or snowstorms, and then dried out again—over and over, an undecided pendulum. Spring shifted into summer. In early July I visited a prairie in southern Oregon. At four thousand feet, this upland grassland still had green grasses and wildflowers in bloom, but the land and creek were dried out nonetheless. A deeply channelized creek, the absence of beaver, and the subsequent loss of transitional floodplains to percolate water through the meadow means that the land cannot hold onto water for long. The emblematic rush of energy and opaque blue featured on the cover of Vol. VI conveys that feeling, the reception of much needed water but in an overpowering fashion—one that breaks apart our systems and our soil.

In this book, summer moves us through and beyond the boom/bust cycles of a typical harvest season and the grasping at straws for water until the well is all dried up. The writings expand the view of how we define "farming" in the first place and speak to intimate connectivity and grounded relationality with the land in pursuit of personal wholeness. Many authors and artists within this volume explore the human connection to waterways and watery places, reimagining infrastructural possibilities: acequias in New Mexico, oceanic floating farms, and the potential of technological restoration for rivers turned toxic by mining. Philosophical exploration of pruning as an act of practical tending meets science fiction futures; stories of Indigenous Hawaiian farming practices; and commitments to farming with creativity and intimacy of scale are all within.

I work with others on a small grassland restoration project, and last year, we planted in July against popular advice to plant in fall. We did that because we can no longer rely on the

fall rains to come but we can rely on August fog. Along my coastal edge during the summer we are shrouded in thick, wet, and cold fogs. With this in mind, we planted under the dripline of a patch of old invasive eucalyptus trees, whose long leaves captured fog and rained it down on our new grasses all summer long. During the dryness of fall our plants were already well established.

Constant presencing, attention, and an aptitude for perpetual adjustment: these are very useful skills and ones that regenerative farmers and land workers practice everyday. Those who are attuned to the baseline, who are nimble in response, humble in their pace, and calm in a present of constant change and uncertainty are the skilled workers we need in this moment. Among the writings in this book we find flourishing autonomous expressions of gender, sexuality, community, economy, and temporality as they intentionally intersect with land practices that seek to produce conditions of abundance. These lifeways propagate despite the violence embedded in the land and the bodies of so many people, through cultural norms of nonconsent, dispossession, and white heteronormativity.

This volume is not filled with answer keys or bold new visions for the land; instead the adjustments and accommodations modeled come through subtle mindset shifts, attunement to the iterative potential of place-based intimacy, mutual aid exchanged between species, and relationality with the land.

I see other creative land workers practicing their own systems of logic, ones that purge purity drives and perfect plans; that practice a watery ethos: slowing, settling, sinking into the land with the common good sense of love and responsibility; and ones that work to create healthy systems and soil that cannot be so easily broken.