

Libby Hague's

# martian odyssey #1



## Martian Odyssey:

**I will not be sad in this world \***

This is a fantasy of starting over in which children try to work out the rules of a new society. They must put aside hatreds, forgive and accept the good in each other. Something different.

Marianne, saves the baby in the box. Like each of us, she has a limited ability to affect change and like us is unable to anticipate the good that can come from small acts of kindness. When gang rivalries lead to anarchy and war, the problem for everyone is how to end it. Again Marianne does something important. She tells a joke. A very good joke where everyone laughs. The laughter breaks over them like a new emotion. Suddenly it's possible to talk to each other.

Conversations lead to unheroic solutions like compromise and the rule of law and from this emerges the fragile solution of forgiveness. Peace. Everyone becomes an artist. It's perfect. Now that we know the ending we can concentrate on how to get there.

Martian Odyssey is loosely structured on the conventions of the epic, the utopian novel, the science fiction film and the video game. Martian landscapes courtesy of NASA, and stellar skyscapes courtesy of Hubble, form the backdrop to the story acted out by small characters printed in stone lithography - foreigners in their digital world.



?aksug ?sta?ma nuu?i?  
SHE TOOK PITY ON HIM.  
so far: so good

Odysseus “The future is where we begin.”

The Odyssey, A Stage Version, Derek Walcott,  
The Noonday Press, 1993, pg. 59



### Marianne's story: thread 1

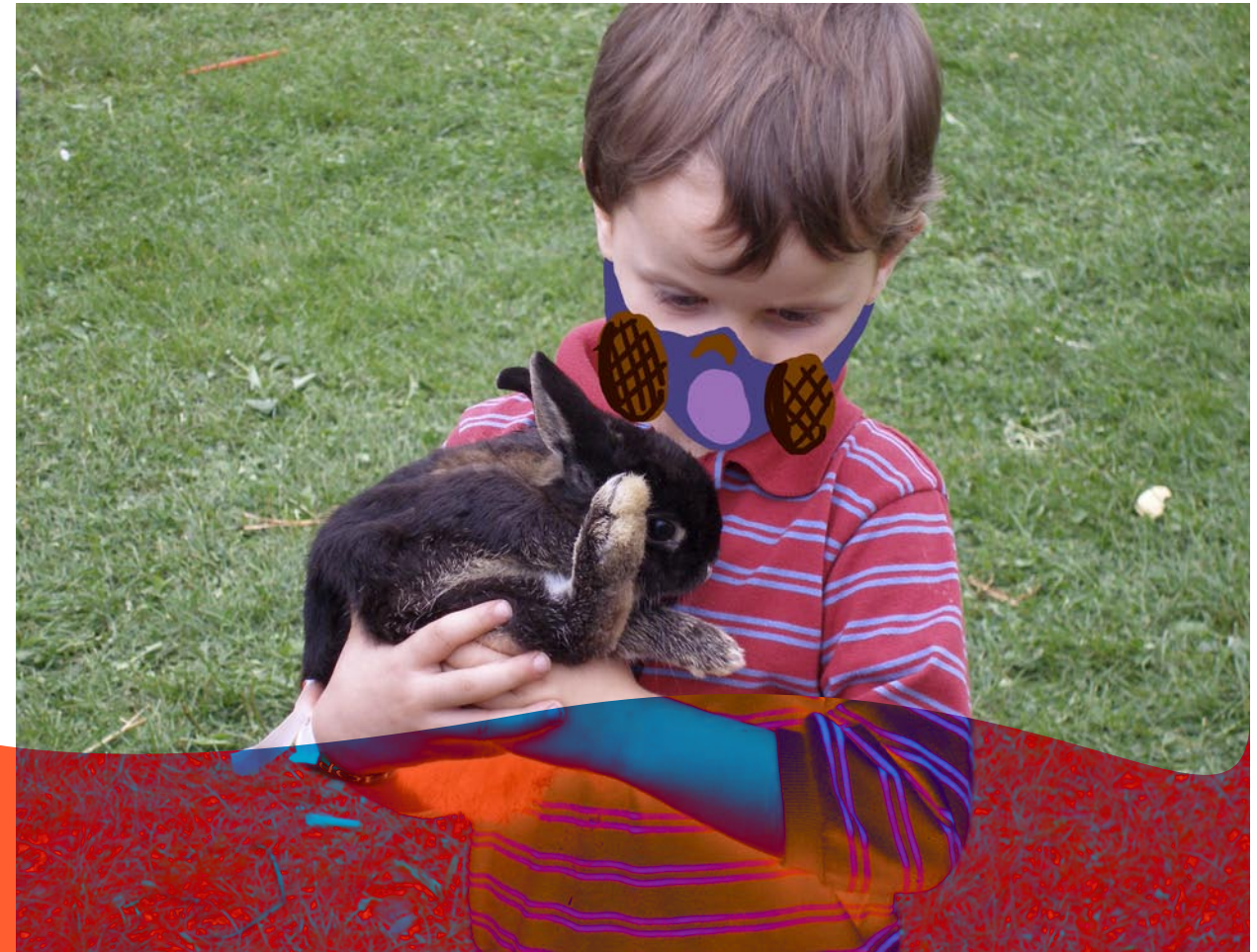
**I**t began with compassion. Marianne had saved the baby's life and now she felt responsible for it. She began to look around for a proper home. She wanted him to grow into sweetness in a better world but she wasn't thinking clearly. She began by naming him BB for "baby in a box."



www.flamechen.com from the Toronto Busker's Festival 2008



What is the Chinese story about intervention and consequences where a man saved someone from drowning and was responsible for him ever afterwards?



The theme of luck or fate is one of the many connections between this project and Homer's epics. It's hard to underestimate the significance of luck in the survival of everything from individuals to languages to cultures. Close your eyes and imagine scraps of paper from earth have survived by chance and acquired oracular status on this new Mars. Thus bits of songs, poetry, shopping lists and diary entries in Nuuchahnulth sometimes form the text in Martian Odyssey.

Why Nuuchahnulth? Formerly called Nootka, these people live on the west coast of Vancouver Island from Kyuquot to Barkley Sound. Their language is highly likely to become extinct because it is spoken by only about 200 people under fifty years old. In their language "t'ih means "to wipe the tears away with the back of the hand." What a specific and complicated gesture compressed in this one word. A word and gesture that seem to look into the future and see - nothing.



Nuuchahnulth,  
a white peacock to change your fate.



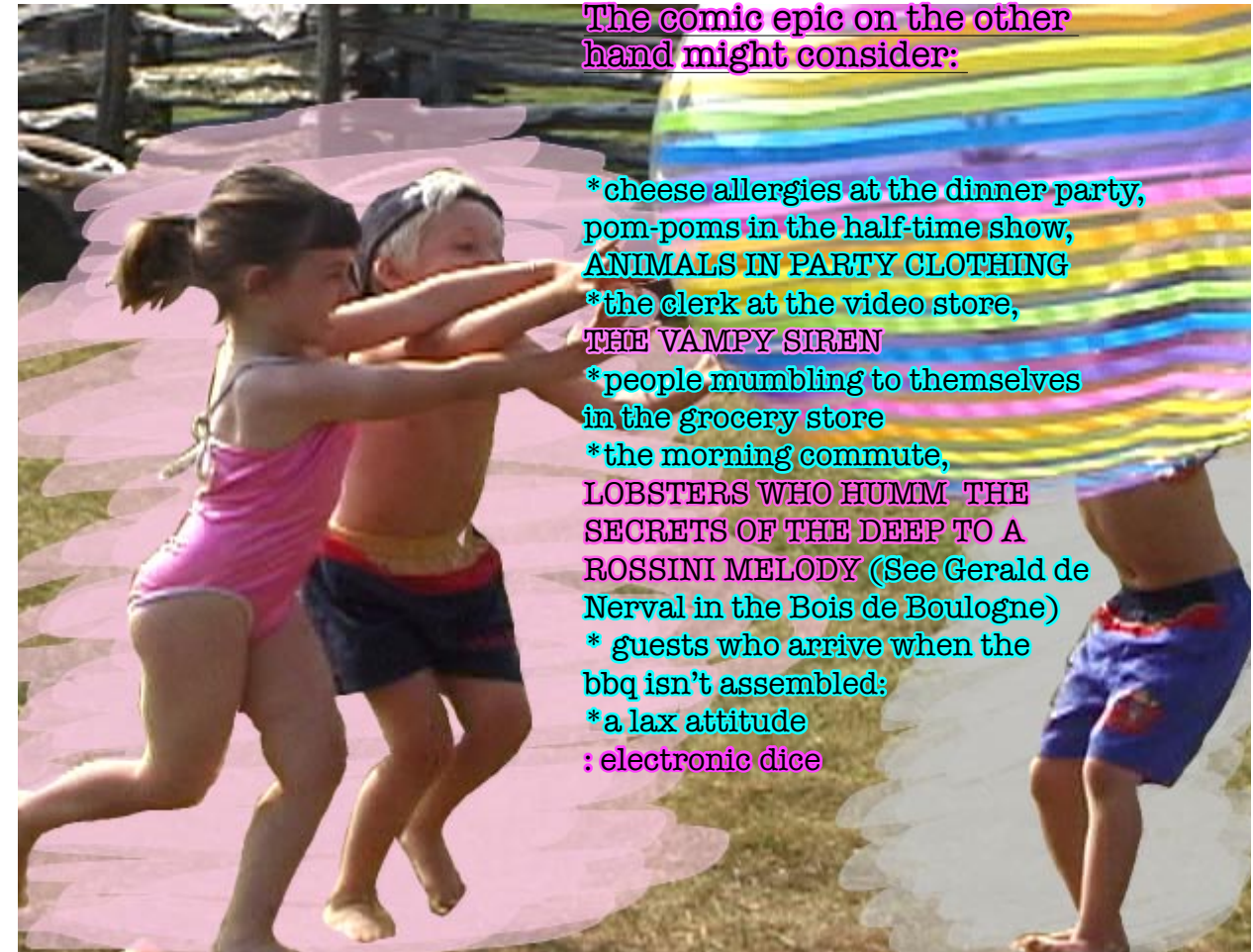


martian odyssey: luck, stone lithography with digital output, 20 x 78 in.



background image courtesy of NASA

The serious epic is serious about everything.



The comic epic on the other hand might consider:

- \*cheese allergies at the dinner party,
- pom-poms in the half-time show,
- ANIMALS IN PARTY CLOTHING
- \*the clerk at the video store,
- THE VAMPY SIREN
- \*people mumbling to themselves in the grocery store
- \*the morning commute,
- LOBSTERS WHO HUMM THE SECRETS OF THE DEEP TO A ROSSINI MELODY (See Gerald de Nerval in the Bois de Boulogne)
- \* guests who arrive when the bbq isn't assembled:
- \*a lax attitude
- : electronic dice

Why do I care about Homer? He stretches my middle class imagination. The vivid similes that connect everyday experience with the literary action integrate both and make the events vivid and comprehensible. The truthfulness of the human relationships and the magnificence of language smashes upon us. The themes - from a time that believed in the possibility of greatness, inspire.

The Iliad can be read as a great antiwar poem that piles gory details in a reeking pile until we say enough, no more. Achilles, a doomed and splendid, terrifying killing machine, has to show empathy to regain his humanity. Not that this saves him, but it does redeem him.

Finally, through the brilliance of the great translators like Ewings or reinterpreters like Christopher Logue and Derek Walcott, we have the poem itself. It has miraculously survived thousands of years with its capacity to astonish and instruct intact. Since that time history has piled war on war. The existence of a great poem seems like a redeeming counterbalance for us as a species. We may be doomed, but we are also worth crying over.



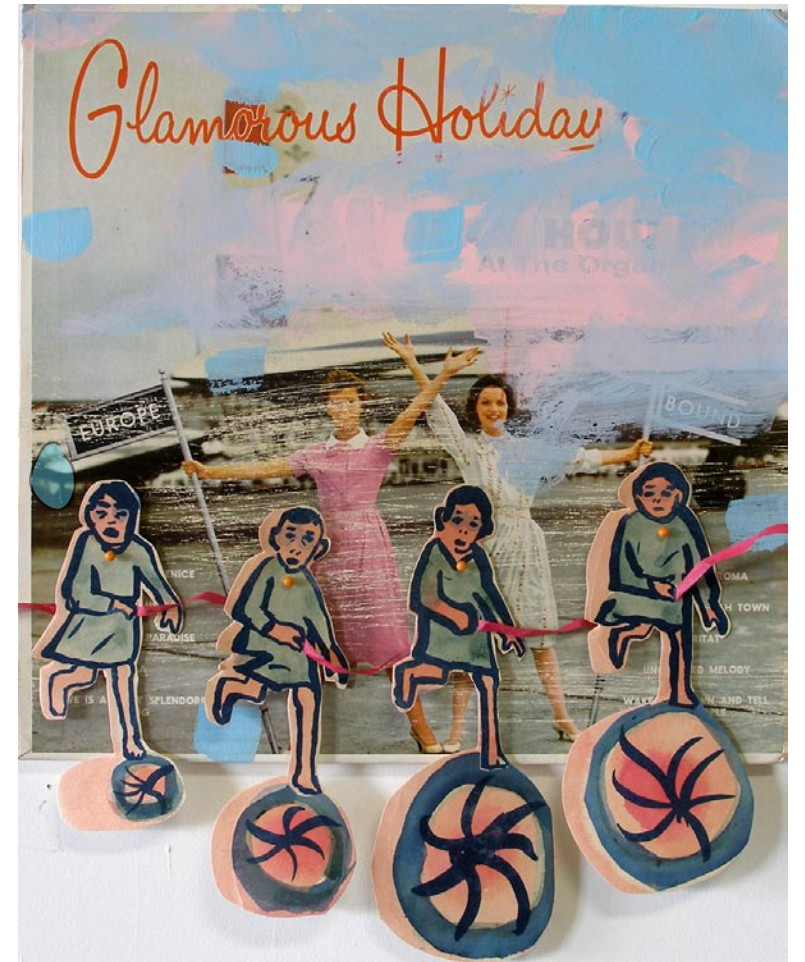


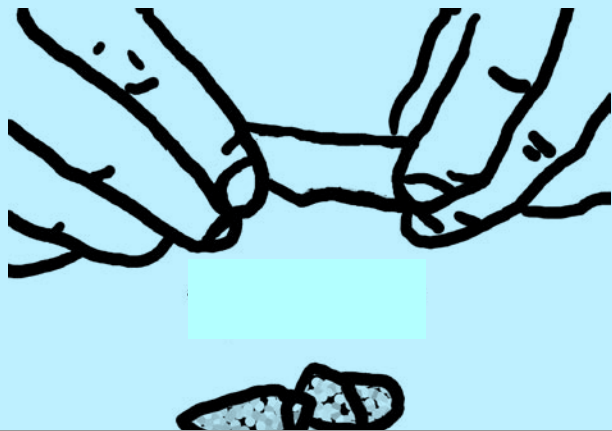
## 1000 YEARS AGO THIS IS HOW HUMAN BEINGS BEHAVED

“...in Sarajevo ... people used to speculate about the fact that all it took was a stroke of luck, a change of plans at the last minute, a meeting that went on longer than expected, or that was cut short, or that miraculously changed its venue to escape being at the point of impact when a rocket landed.”

Bernard-Henry Levi, “My Views of Israel” NYT, 08:06. 2006, pg 27

Which brings me to Martha Nussbaum and her idea of the fragility of goodness and the overall sense of contingency in ... everything.





### Thanks to:

Phil Anisman  
my parents

\*Djivan Gasparian for his song title  
Sally McKay, # 6, 8, 10, 14, 15,19, 26,  
27, 28, 30, 19, 21,  
Harry Glasbeek # 5  
Smadar Peretz # 23, 24  
Sasha Pierce # 7

and the many authors quoted in these  
books

### Brief project description:

This web /pdf edition of 30 booklets, connect and complicate the individual artworks in the Martian Odyssey series previously exhibited at Loop in Toronto. These booklets are intended to serve as a basis for comments on the artwork and their themes. If you want to have your comments considered for a web edition you can respond by sending an email to [libbylibby@sympatico.ca](mailto:libbylibby@sympatico.ca) with a subject heading of Martian Odyssey. I will be regularly updating the pdf's.


### Martian Odyssey titles:

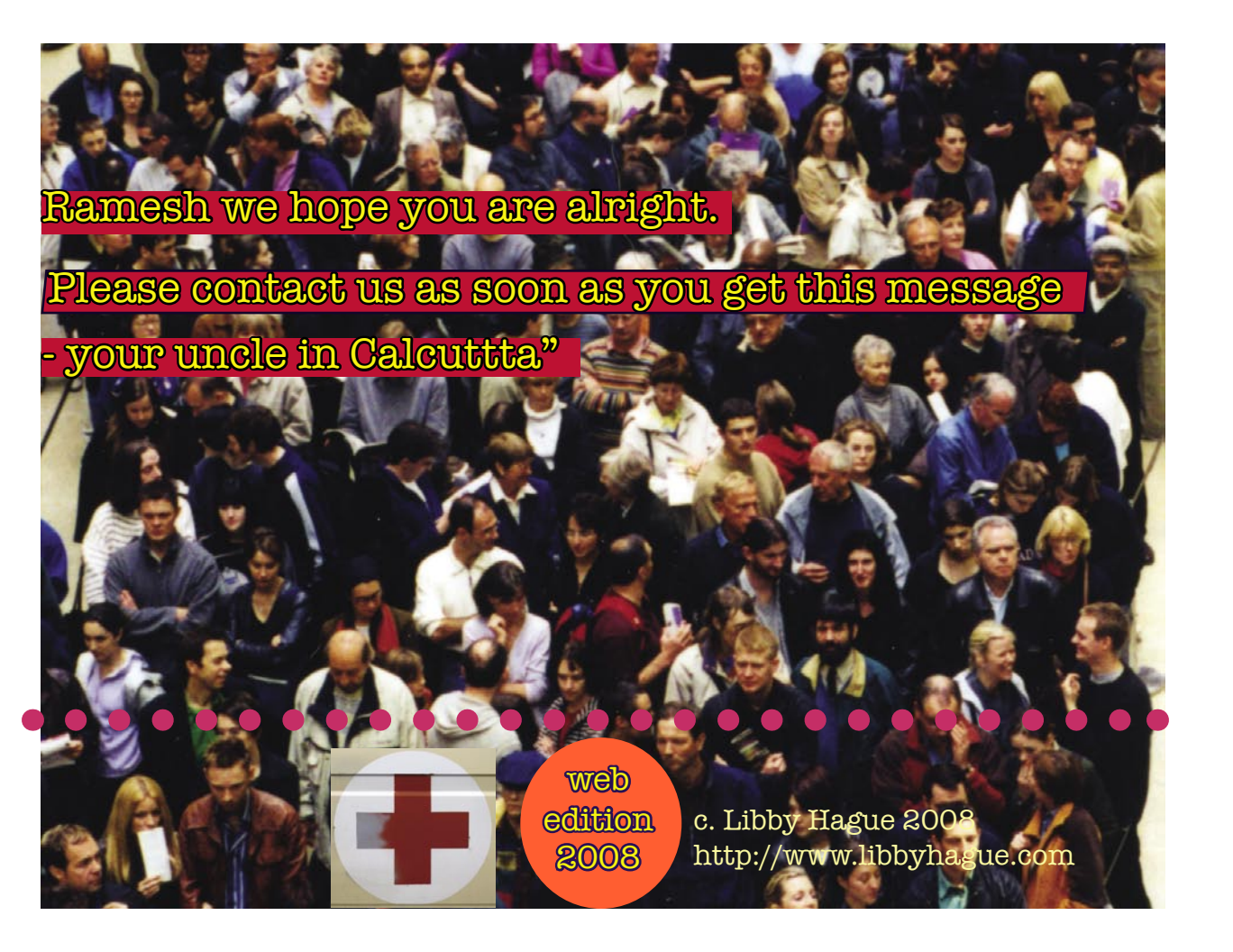
1. luck 2. riddles 3. the animals 4. translation  
5. corps de ballet 6. The Girls 7. weave 8. net  
9. slow motion 10. Big Bang 11. alouette  
12. the wrong boat 13. the disaster  
14. RAGE 15. white arms 16. plague  
17. amnesia 18. ah.. 19. string theory 20.  
laughter 21. dreams 22. Rules 23. justice  
24. forgiveness 25. day after peace  
26. un-rebuilding 27. blue-sky-blue 28. play  
again 29. stars are wide 30. sing

**Libby Hague** is a printmaker + installation  
artist exploring themes of disaster, rescue  
and hope. [full cv](#)

Go home and watch Tom  
Tykwer's "Run Lola Run".

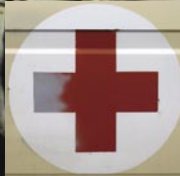
torontodarts council  
An arm's length body of the City of Toronto

 ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO



Ramesh we hope you are alright.

Please contact us as soon as you get this message  
- your uncle in Calcuttta”



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