MARGARET KILLJOY

BEING THE EXPLORATIONS

#6
A photographic exploration of some of the life of a wanderer, including material from before the first issue and between issues 4 and 5. Countries depicted include US, Finland, Italy, Germany, and Sweden.

**PART I—TRAVELS IN EUROPE—SUMMER 2010**
- Germany 1–15
- Sweden 16–19
- Italy 20–66
- Finland 67–87

**PART II—TRAVELS IN THE US—AUTUMN 2010**
- New York 88–93
- Across the North 94–107
- West Coast 108–147

**PART III—TRAVELS WITH A DSLR—2008-09**
- Summer 2008 148–176
- Skinning a Mouse 174–179

**PART IV—FILM AS A TEENAGER—1999-2002**
- Maryland 180–183
- Finland 184–191
- New York City 192–199
- Summer of Crust 200–215

**MARGARET KILLJOY**
THE DARKEST HOUR

Gentrification challenges emancipatory projects that create alternatives to state and capitalism. An eviction of an autonomous housing or subcultural project is an attack against free spaces for antiracist, antisexist and anticapitalist theories and praxis. We will fight with all means possible in its defense.

IT'S JUST BEFORE DAWN
Sveriges Arbetarens Centralorganisationen
Konstituerande Kongress
NO AL RAZZISMO
NO AL FASCISMO
NO AL SESSISMO

NO DOGS
NO MASTERS
CRUST SUXXX

GOD or GOD

51
GET DRUNK RIDE JUNK

CA→NY→FL

WHAT THE MEN DON'T KNOW, THE LITTLE GIRLS UNDERSTAND

58K
8 to SBD

14-6a2

?
EVERYTHING IS PERFECT.
PART I—TRAVELS IN EUROPE—SUMMER 2010

1 I was staying in Mainz, Germany, at a wagenplatz—a squatted trailer park—on my slow-paced book tour across Europe. Anarchists and other radicals throughout the city called for a Reclaim the City demonstration, and thousands of reveling protesters descended on downtown to drink, dance, spin fire, and generally make illegal merriment. The point, as I understood it, was to argue that the city needed more social space and less gentrification, and that if the government wouldn’t provide it, we would take space for ourselves. This is the crew of us headed downtown from the wagenplatz. Unfortunately, shortly after this photo was taken, the police detained us and stole my little kid’s plastic armor breast-plate and another fellow’s Captain America helmet.

2 There were three sound trucks that joined the march, each with a live DJ spinning anti-capitalist music of most every genre, from hip-hop to pop to punk to reggae.

3 My friend asked me to photograph him dancing with a cop, but for some reason the officer wasn’t having any of it.

4 The police really wanted to arrest this kid for spinning fire masked up. Fortunately, there were too many of us around.

5 People brought question mark signs so that they could indicate that lots of things throughout the city (such as the police) needed to be brought into question.

6 Firebreathing is cooler when it’s part of an illegal street festival than it is most of the time.

7–9 The American anarchist hardcore band From the Depths played in Mainz while I was there.

10 From the Depths decided, foolishly, to try to take on some Germans in kicker. They got schooled.

11 Mainz is home to the Gutenberg Museum, a fabulous wonderland of crazy printing equipment. I took some photos successfully before security stopped me.

12 An anti-gentrification poster wheatpasted to a wall outside the train station in Berlin.

13 The guest wagon I stayed in while I was in Berlin.

14 The entrance to the one building in the wagenplatz I spoke at in Berlin. This particular space was right at the edge of an leftist/anarchist neighborhood. I was warned repeatedly that if I were to leave the gates, it was important I didn’t wander into the nearby fascist neighborhood, or my dreadhawked self would be a target for fascists.

15 I flew to Sweden from Berlin, and wasn’t there long before I found myself at the picket and blockade of a upscale nightclub and hotel called Berns. Berns had been firing workers indiscriminately, forcing cleaners to work 22-hour shifts. The protests were organized by the SAC, the syndicalist union of Sweden. The picket was more than symbolic: guests and others were kept from entering the building.

16 The office building owned by the SAC. I just find it amusing that there’s an anarchist office building in the world, with a kind of corporate-looking red-and-black flag logo.

17 I was there for the 100th anniversary of the SAC. Here in this photo are the founders, 100 years ago.

18 The 100th anniversary had a week of demonstrations and workshops. Here, syndicalist representatives from Spain and Britain discuss the situation in their own countries.

19–23 I left Sweden for Italy next, and went on a tour around the country to present the Italian edition of my A Steampunk’s Guide to the Apocalypse. We stayed in social centers and squats in a bunch of cities, and I was consistently blown away. These photos are of the gym in New Emerson, a huge squatted social center in Florence.

24 The indoor skate park in New Emerson. This place also had a full working kitchen, bar, show space, and dance hall.

25 The first steampunk graffiti I’ve seen, on the bar at New Emerson.

26 The back of the show space in New Emerson. The graffiti says: no to racism, no to fascism, no to sexism.

27 A tag on the wall of New Emerson.

28 A squatted villa in Florence. We stopped here for the squat’s birthday party. I think it had been around for a decade. There were talks commemorating the space and how the anarchist scene has evolved since the anti-globalization era. There was also the final game in the local squatter football league.

29 A closeup of the junk sculpture of a soldier committing suicide at the squatted villa.

30 The squatted orchard behind the villa.

31 A panorama of the Coliseum in Rome. A tourist place, to be sure, but somehow still amazing. Despite being a trope in fiction, it really is hard to conceptualize pitting unwilling contestants against one another in bloodsport.

32 The forum, a collection of ruins in Rome.

33 Underneath the floor of the Coliseum.

34 The best human statue I’ve ever seen in my life.

35–39 Replicas of helmets worn by gladiators.

40 A statue in Naples of Umberto I. This guy was king until 1900, when Gaetano Bresci, an anarchist and hero, put four bullets into his murdering face. (Okay, I don’t know if he got shot in the face, but I hope he was.) Umberto had given an award to the commander who turned the cannons on civilians after putting Milan under military control.

41 A mall in Naples. I can’t wait to squat this place after the apocalypse.

42 The Mediterranean Sea, seen from Naples.

43 A sunken marketplace in Naples. The place had big construction fences around it. My host asked a guy working in a nearby cafe and he happily showed us the easiest way to bypass the fence.

44 A fortress on the Mediterranean Sea. No big deal for Europeans, maybe, but we just don’t have this kind of shit in the US.

45 Gorgeous graffiti in the ghetto in Naples. I have to say that Naples is probably the most cyberpunk city I’ve ever been to: the whole city is filled with beautiful old architecture that is covered in graffiti. Kids play football in the streets, bouncing the balls off of ancient sculptures. The buildings are held together by scaffolding, ever since an earthquake a few decades ago. The government and police have almost no control over the city...
the mafia runs it. Immigrant kids played with remote-control LED drones backdropped by the Mediterranean Sea. An amazing place. And the birthplace of pizza.

We took a tour of "underground Naples" with ancient cisterns and tunnels, used thousands of years ago and also by the fascists in World War II. This is a sculptural installation commemorating the latter.

Part of the view out my host's window in Naples.

46 The entrance to hell was believed to be this sulfur field that's now in the suburbs of Naples. We took the subway out to see it.

47 Venice is magical. That's trite to say, but it feels true to me regardless. The maze of alleyways, the canals that are always flooding, the dimly-lit streets covered in graffiti. I've never been anywhere like it. A friend showed us around the city, and I lucked out to have her do so: she was an architecture student and a radical both, so she taught me all about the buildings and how they were held together but also about what the graffiti meant.

51-52 The fish market at night in Venice. Still reeked.

54-56 Graffiti in Venice.

57 A sculpture of a nude boy in Venice, in a protective plexiglass case.

58 Venice at night.

59 My tour guide.

60 Graffiti in Venice.

61 Communists, anarchists, and fascists all fight for control of the walls of the city. Here, a piece of communist graffiti has been gone over with anarchist graffiti.

62 Graffiti in Venice.

63-64 Graffiti in Padova, in the northeast of Italy.

65 The cross in the circle is a fascist symbol in Italy. Here, antifascists have crossed out fascist graffiti and added a gallows to the fascist symbol. Graffiti in Vicenza.

66 I don't really understand this graffiti, from Rome. But there's the crossed out fascist symbol, and I think Spacca Tutto means "break everything."

67-70 I flew from Italy to Tampere, Finland, and was met by new friends from the small town of Siuro, who were living the good life: working as little as possible, eating good food, hiking through the woods, making art, and organizing anarchist shit. These are photos from hiking through the fields and woods.

71 I was booked to speak at Musta Pispala, an anarchist conference in Pispala, a traditionally-leftist suburb of Tampere. The first night of the conference, we had a street march from downtown Tampere out to these abandoned factory buildings in Pispala.

72-73 A squatted DIY skate park in Pispala, Finland.

74 One entrance to an abandoned factory.

75 The cement walkway to the building was still intact.

76 Jyri Jaakkola was a Finnish human rights activist who was killed in Oaxaca in 2010. This mural on the wall of the abandoned factory is dedicated to his memory.

77 Some very bad math.

78 Graffiti inside the factory.

79 Sitting on the rooftop at midnight near midsummer in Pispala.

80 After midnight, but still twilight. The sun didn't really go away until closer to 2am. I left the party as the sun disappeared and walked over the hill back to the squat they had opened up to house out-of-town folks during the conference.

81 Punks on a nearby rooftop during Musta Pispala. While the parties were better attended than the workshops, the whole conference was well-organized and laid-back. There were whisper-translators available for anyone who couldn't speak Finnish or English well enough to follow the workshops. Most memorable for me were the antifascist organizers who came from Russia to discuss the situation there.

82-87 The first sailing of the Pelastusalus Silakka ("Rescueboat Baltic Herring"); a boat constructed almost entirely of trash. The catamaran hull is made out of empty plastic barrels. The deck is woven of firehoses. It was built by artists Teemu Takatalo and Tommi Taipale, and later, after these photos, it was sailed successfully across the Gulf of Finland to Estonia.

PART II—TRAVELS IN THE US—AUTUMN 2010

88-90 With a heavy heart, always with a heavy heart, I flew back to the US after my three month visa in Europe was up. I flew into New York City, where my friend joined me and we went out to New Jersey to watch trains and try to take photographs to illustrate the concept "crud goth." That is, crust punk meets goth. Like, you know, us.

91 For what it's worth, "get drunk ride junk" is a really, really bad idea. ("Junk" in this case refers to junk trains, the slower-moving freight trains that are usually easier to catch than the faster hotshot trains.)

92 Watching trains in New Jersey.

93 Pro-slayer graffiti. Unfortunately, the same handwriting had some racist statements to make about the sitting president of the US.

94-107 I headed out west on the Amtrak. Not very crust punk, but rather comfortable when you can afford it. I love waking up at dawn and watching the landscape of the northern US go by in the early morning light. I shot photos all through the day and into the fading light of dusk.

108-111 My friend was catching freight south from Portland to the Bay and I decided to join her as far as Eugene. I hadn't ridden freight in eight years, and I forgot how magical it is to sneak aboard. We caught a gondola and spent a pleasant afternoon heading south.

112-118 The landfill is a park in Berkeley that's built on, you guessed it, a landfill. There are huge chunks of concrete everywhere and short, windswept trees. Yuppies walk their dogs and homeless folks build shacks. It's apocalyptic and beautiful, and you can see San Francisco over the water.

119 On our way out of the park we found this sign. It fit my mood rather well, at the time.

120 I hitchhiked from Eugene to Oregon after riding trains down and the woman who gave me a ride was off to go see her friend's new black metal band, Wight. Which, spelled out, is a really cool name for a black metal band. Spoken aloud, it's not so good. But they weren't racist and the music was awesome.
We had this elaborate plan and costumes for the whole Silhouette shot against the setting sun in Goblin Valley. A cow in the middle of the road. It took its time, just the Valley of the Goblins. Perched atop our valiant steed, Smaug, on our way to Valley National Park. Ruins of a ghost town, since incorporated into Death Long-exposure photos, shot in late twilight at Goblin Maybe at Arches National Park? Running along a rock formation in southern Utah. A portrait of us in our finery, at Goblin Valley, Utah. A lizard or something on the path in California. An old-school pencil sharpener in the museum at Bodie. A closeup of moss in Oregon, shot with a DIY macro lens I made. A pinhole nude, shot on the Clackamas river in Oregon. A friend of mine, 9 months pregnant, on the Clackamas. I flew from Portland to Oakland. I don’t like how cold and alienating airports and airplanes are, but there’s something so majestic about flying that I love it regardless. As good goths, we went to the Oakland Mausoleum on Halloween. A day of the dead procession in San Francisco. Halloween at Hella, a long-lived squat in Oakland. Here, my friend is dressed up as a carebear hunter. I’m not sure what my friend’s halloween costume was. Drunk punk? DIY armor for halloween. I left Oakland with a bit of a heavy heart, on an Amtrak back up to Portland. The train passed through Klamath Falls right around dawn.

PART III—TRAVELS WITH A DSLR—2008-09

In the summer of 2008, my then-partner and I took a roadtrip across much of the west. Here’s a forest path somewhere I think in northern California. A self-portrait framed by a burned-out snag in the forest just south of Yosemite, California. Panorama of junk outside Bodie, California, a well-preserved ghost town. An old-school pencil sharpener in the museum at Bodie. A lizard or something on the path in California. A portrait of us in our finery, at Goblin Valley, Utah. Running along a rock formation in southern Utah. Maybe at Arches National Park? Long-exposure photos, shot in late twilight at Goblin Valley State Park in Utah. My companion overlooking the Valley of the Goblins. Ruins of a ghost town, since incorporated into Death Valley National Park. Perched atop our valiant steed, Smaug, on our way to the Valley of the Goblins. A cow in the middle of the road. It took its time, just stared us down. Silhouette shot against the setting sun in Goblin Valley. We had this elaborate plan and costumes for the whole trip and were going to do a photo-illustrated book of our adventures in the post-apocalypse. It never really panned out, but it made the whole thing even more fun and left us with some interesting shots. In this one, shot near the campground in Goblin Valley, I believe the idea is that goblins came and stole our clothes while we were off swimming.

A canyon wall in Zion, Utah. Long exposure shot after the sun set on Bryce Canyon. The same scene in Bryce, minus the kissing couple. Two ravens up on an overlook over Bryce Canyon. One of them later landed on a car’s rearview mirror and made the beeping noise that a car’s remote unlocking device makes. Bryce Canyon. After returning from our trip to Utah, we went over to the Oregon coast to camp some more, and discovered these wildflower gardens growing out of abandoned train cars. More abandoned rail cars on the Oregon coast.

I went with a group of steampunks and assorted ne’er-do-wells to Vernonia, Oregon for a photoshoot. At one point, I went back to my friend’s car to get the swords out of the trunk. I tried the wrong car first, then the right one and got the swords. Twenty minutes later, the police arrived. My friends looked confused, but I’ve known for a long time: if the police show up somewhere all of the sudden, they’re probably there for me. So I approached them and asked what the problem was. They said “we got reports of a black guy breaking into cars.” Damn racist cops heard “man in black” and were looking for a black guy. Fortunately, it was Oregon, so there weren’t any black people around for them to harass and they soon left.

My friends playing around in an abandoned mill on a lake in Vernonia. Trees grown up inside the ruins of an old mill. Come autumn, I moved to Baltimore and spent more of my time alone and reading then out in the world photographing. But my friend’s cat killed a mouse and they decided to skin it. Being macabre, I photographed the process.

PART IV—FILM AS A TEENAGER—1999-2002

Immediately after graduating high school, myself and friends went to Deep Creek Lake in Western Maryland to camp for a week or something. I remember back then, in 2000, deciding that it would be totally doable to live in a vehicle and camp full time. “What a great way to get some writing done,” I decided, overly romanticizing the life that I later took up.

One of my best friends from high school. Lit by a flash at night.

To be honest, I couldn’t tell you when or where I took this photo. All my old black and white negatives were cut up into strips and put together nearly randomly in binders when I found them and scanned them more recently.

Steven Archer, the guitarist for Ego Likeness, in 1999 or early 2000. I took private art lessons from him back
then. He taught me how to paint, got me into art school, and changed my life.

In the summer of 1999 I left the US for the first time by myself and flew overseas for the first time ever. I went to Helsinki, Finland, to visit my finnish girlfriend. Anxiety and fear kept me physically ill for more than half the three weeks I was there, but it changed my life forever regardless. I learned that there was a world outside the US and that I could experience it. I also learned that traveling terrifies me and makes me ill... yet, thirteen some years later, it's still how I live. This photo is of the street in front of my girlfriend's parents' apartment.

The courtyard behind where my girlfriend lived in Helsinki.

Walking through a park in the suburbs of Helsinki.

A supermarket in Finland with an unfortunate name. The KKK supermarket is owned by Kesko, the largest supermarket chain in Finland, and basically they used to call their different types of stores K, KK, KKK, and KKKK. Eventually, they must have caught some bad press, because I’ve been back a few times since, and now they’re just K-supermarkets instead.

On an island in the Gulf of Finland, I believe.

Myself and three friends (pictured here), drove a motorboat out to a small island in the Gulf of Finland to spend a few days in a rather nice summer house without electricity. The forested island couldn't have been more than 200 meters in diameter, and the other side of the island had a wood-fired sauna.

A snow brush at the base of the steps to a house in Finland.

I spent two years studying photography at Pratt Institute in NYC. Art school is a strange, strange place. In this photo, myself and some friends were drunk in the film studio. My thought was to mock street photography by shooting poorly composed photos “from the hip” in a studio environment.

Friends of mine at Pratt

Studio nudes I shot in school.

I took this photo on either 9/9/01 or 9/10/01. I can’t be sure. It is of the view out the window of my dorm room in Brooklyn. The next photo on that roll is #199, which I shot on September 11. It was, obviously, a strange time to live in NYC. Mostly, I was just numb to the tragedy. In some ways, I still am. My film teacher lived a few blocks away and stood on his roof, filming the jumpers on 16mm film. After September 11, he stopped shooting film (for good? I have no way of knowing).

Still, we couldn’t help but be sacrilegious. This couple asked me to photograph them like a tourist photo.


I dropped out of art school in 2002 to become a traveler. And it doesn’t surprise me, in retrospect, that I like my photos since school a lot more. Here, a punk friend of mine poses somewhere... maybe Michigan, maybe Maryland.

Folk singer Ryan Harvey as a teenager. In this photo, I’m riding my first freight train. (And his second, I think?)

Street kid life in Lansing, Michigan. We hung out outside this liquor store for days or weeks, playing music, making bad art, getting drunk, and generally having an alright go at life.

My friend and her dog. We traveled together for a month, hitchhiking until she got a cheap car. This photo is somewhere between St. Louis and Baltimore.

On a freight train, summer 2002.

Photo of myself that a friend shot with my camera. My first summer of crusty life, 2002.

Gunpowder Falls is a park with an ice-cold creek running through it outside of Baltimore that we always used to go swim at. One kid we didn’t know dressed up as a super hero.

She loved that dog more than she’d ever loved anyone.

The view of a lake at dawn from a freight train somewhere between Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

I left Michigan in the company of two friends, heading west. We never made it further than Minneapolis, but the train we road there was one of the most amazing—and coldest—experiences of my life. We were in an open gondola, on a bed of steel splinters, with two sleeping bags for the three of us, autumn coming on hard in the north.
“I’m not going to be much use as a character in one of your novels, not even one who just appears to make the plot thicken. I’m a man who just passes through. At times I have the daftest explanations, even for important things.”

—a fictional Sebastian San Vincente from Paco Ignacio Taibo II’s Just Passing Through

It’s no surprise to me, looking back on my photos from my teenage life, that those of my travels matter the most to me—the ones I never turned in for any assignment, the ones that never faced peer review in a photo class. Two rolls of color film from my wanderings in Finland gave me more images I care about than the binders full of negatives I have from my two years at art school. Dropping out was, without a doubt, one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.

Wandering makes for a strange life, to be sure, but a fulfilling one.
The photographic explorations of the life of a wanderer. This issue fills in the gaps of previous books, including wandering in a post-apocalyptic desert, squats and demonstrations across Europe, and hopping freight trains across the US.