

Imagining The Otherwise Global Writers' Cohort

2025-2026



**A how-to-guide to
creating your own cohort**



**Global
Narrative
Hive**



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Credits

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Written by Lucila Sandoval & Fenya Fischler

Design by Citlalli Dunne

Additional Illustrations by Kruthika N.S. (TheWorkplaceDoodler)

Acknowledgements

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Contact

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what's in this zine

**Imagining the Otherwise
Curriculum: Choose Your
Own Adventure**

Module 1. Stories as a Living
Organism. Safety as a Practice

Module 2. Getting In Trouble.
Questioning The Big Stories Of Safety

Module 3. Resistances.
Narrative Strategies For Resisting a
Violent Context

Module 4. Staying With The Trouble.
Stories For a Broken World

Module 5. Worlds of Possibilities

Imagining the Otherwise Curriculum: Choose Your Own Adventure

Imagining the Otherwise began as an experiment hosted by the Global Narrative Hive and Intrasentido. Launched in late 2025, it was a five-month global writers' cohort designed to bring together organizers, cultural workers, and storytellers from across continents. The goal was to create a virtual space to collectively reimagine what safety and security could mean beyond the frameworks of punishment, borders, and fear.

The curriculum we designed explored themes ranging from somatics and our capacities to imagine, to Indigenous resistance practices, the natural world and our ecosystems, critical perspectives on movement archives, abolitionist theory, feminist philosophy, speculative fiction, and the lived experiences of members of our group. The result is this living document that grew as we went

along: a collection of prompts, resources, readings, links, that grounded our collective reflection and writing process.

In this resource, we share our curriculum for anyone to adapt and use.

We know that the work of imagining new worlds is already happening in many places, and we want to encourage writers, artists, cultural workers and others to access their own capacity to imagine worlds beyond what we already know. We are releasing the Imagining the Otherwise curriculum openly, inviting you to take these resources, adapt them, remix them, and make them your own.

Whether you're hosting a formal cohort, a reading circle for friends, or an individual reflection process, we hope this toolkit can support you to reimagine safety and security in ways that are already being created and are still being born. There is no "correct" way to use this material.

This is a living syllabus: you can see it as a menu of options. We encourage you to look at your own context, resources and your constraints and pick the path that fits for you. There is no single "right" way to use this resource. Below we offer a "Choose Your Own Adventure" guide on how to use our curriculum.

Follow the threads that match your situation:

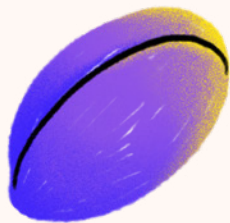


Money!

Funds vs. No Funds

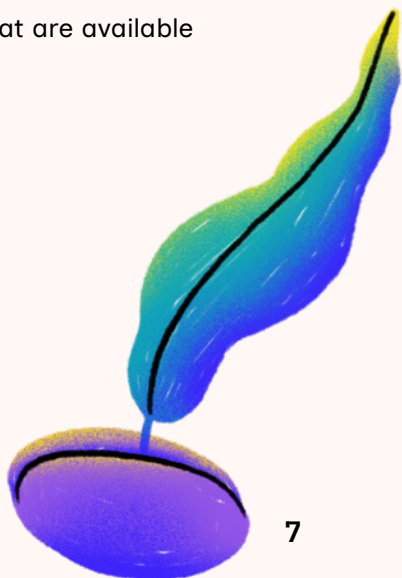
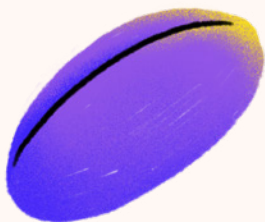
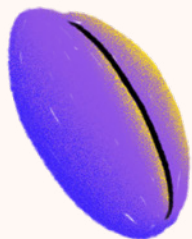
IF YOU HAVE FUNDS:

- **Guest speakers and facilitation:** Hire a facilitator to host sessions, consider inviting guest speakers that fit with the theme.
- **Interpretation/translation:** Pay for interpretation or translation of resources and sessions.
- **Stipends:** Offer a stipend to participants.
- **Tech:** Provide a stipend for participants to cover internet/data bills or other tech that can support them to participate.
- **Space:** Rent an accessible space in your local community centre or cafe to meet.
- **Food/drink:** If meeting in person, consider providing snacks or tea/coffee.
- **Transport:** If meeting in person, funds can be used to cover transport to the meeting venue.
- **Books:** Purchase books and texts referenced in the curriculum or add additional readings.



IF YOU HAVE NO FUNDS:

- **Rotate homes or meet online:** One week, someone hosts in their living room; next week, someone else, or you could meet in a public library or a park. Alternatively, meet virtually.
- **Barter skills:** Trade skills, expertise or in-kind support in return for facilitation or speaking: newsletter editing, translation/language skills, cooked food, graphic design, illustration, transportation ...
- **Digital library:** Create a shared drive for all resources so everyone can access them.
- **Potluck:** Ask everyone to bring a dish or drink.
- **Swap references:** Swap resources that are not available for free, with ones that are available for free locally or online.

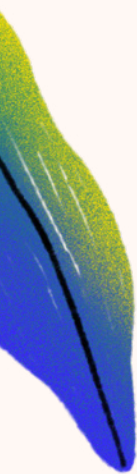


Location!

Local vs. Global

IF YOU ARE LOCAL (SAME TOWN/CITY):

- **Walking sessions:** Meet outside if accessible, in a park, garden or public space. Take some of the prompts outside with you. Walk a specific route in your city, meet or stop at a contested site, and write while moving. Go visit a relevant exhibition together.
- **Working with objects:** For the “Archive” module for example, ask everyone to bring a personal object that tells a story. If meeting online, ask them to show it on screen or share a photo in advance.
- **Body work:** Include a session with somatic exercises or breathwork led by a local practitioner. When our nervous systems are regulated, we can feel more supported and grounded to access our imagination. This can also be adapted to online groups.
- **Local knowledge:** Invite a local archivist, community elder, activist or artist from your community to join a learning session.
- **Shared meals:** Close your sessions with a shared meal.



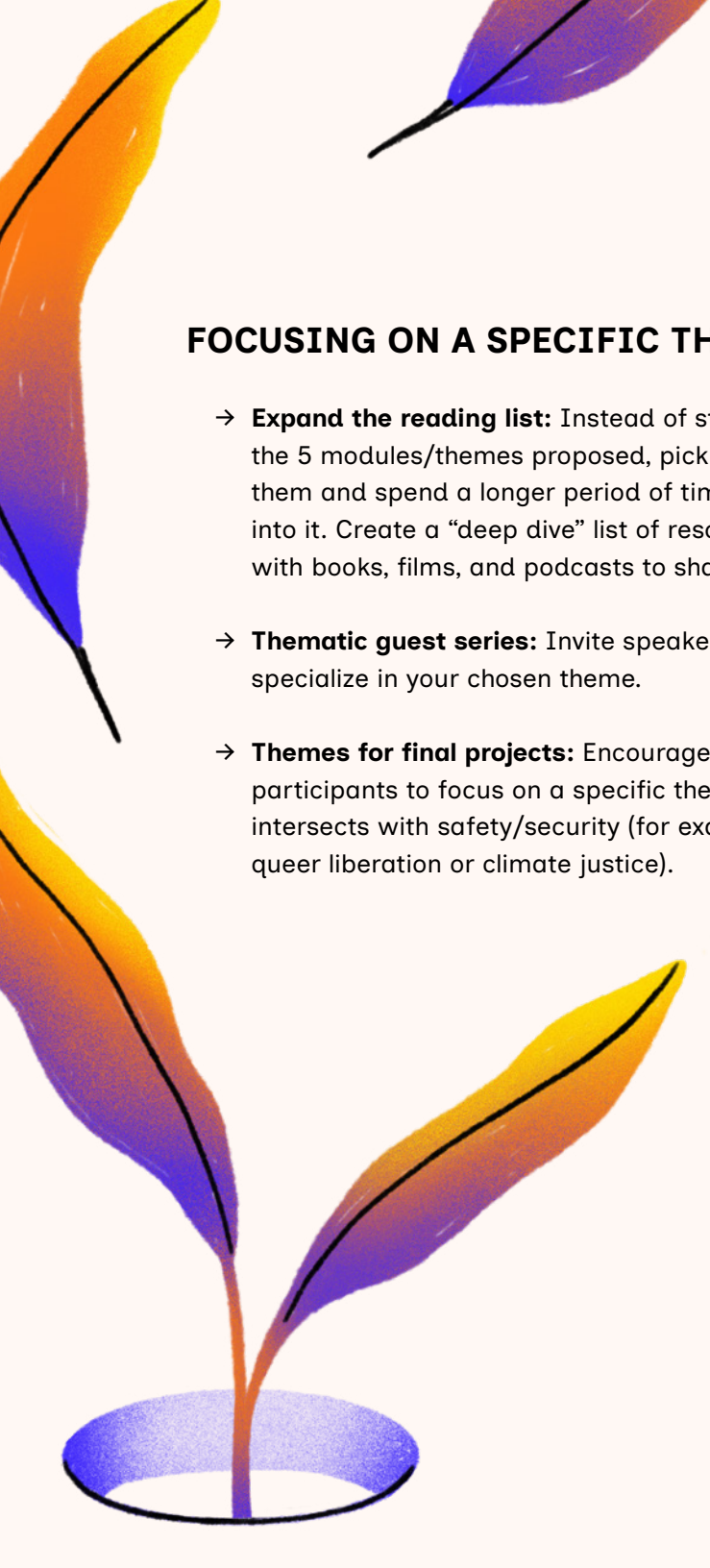
IF YOU ARE GLOBAL/REGIONAL (ONLINE):

- **Timezones:** Share recordings or consider asynchronous engagement depending on timezones. Hold smaller live “check-in” circles at different times, and/or buddy people up in similar timezones to work on prompts together.
- **Instant messaging:** Use Signal or other instant messaging app for weekly / regular check-ins. Consider using voice notes if working in the same language.
- **Translation:** If your group speaks multiple languages, ensure interpretation and translation support.
- **Collective writing:** Use a shared virtual document for collective writing exercises. This can happen live or asynchronously: participants share writing, and others can comment over a certain period of time with feedback.
- **Timezone rotation:** Rotate session times to accommodate different time zones.

Focus! Region or Theme?

FOCUSING ON A SPECIFIC REGION:

- **Swap texts or prompts:** Adapt the prompts or resources to your local context, for example adding more resources from your region, adding new prompts, or more readings/podcasts/videos in other languages.
- **Invite local voices:** Bring in local historians or community organizers living and researching the safety/security issues in the region you are focusing on.
- **Space-centred writing:** Write about a specific local space, such as an ecosystem under threat (a river, a forest).
- **Language:** Translate the curriculum / prompts into the local languages, or invite participants to share their own prompts with others.

A stylized illustration featuring four leaves with a yellow-to-purple gradient and a black outline. Two leaves are at the top, and two are at the bottom. The bottom two leaves are connected by a central stem that leads into a blue circular base at the bottom of the page.

FOCUSING ON A SPECIFIC THEME:

- **Expand the reading list:** Instead of sticking to the 5 modules/themes proposed, pick one of them and spend a longer period of time delving into it. Create a “deep dive” list of resources with books, films, and podcasts to share.
- **Thematic guest series:** Invite speakers who specialize in your chosen theme.
- **Themes for final projects:** Encourage participants to focus on a specific theme that intersects with safety/security (for example; queer liberation or climate justice).

Final Note: Adaptation is Key

The original Imagining the Otherwise curriculum is meant only as a starting point, a framework to support you in creating a space and process that fits for you! We encourage you to swap texts and references, rewrite prompts that don't work for you, adapt timelines and prioritise safety, access and care for all participants.

We would love to hear from you! If you have found this resource useful, have applied parts of it or are thinking of hosting a cohort - reach out to us at imaginingtheotherwise@proton.me.

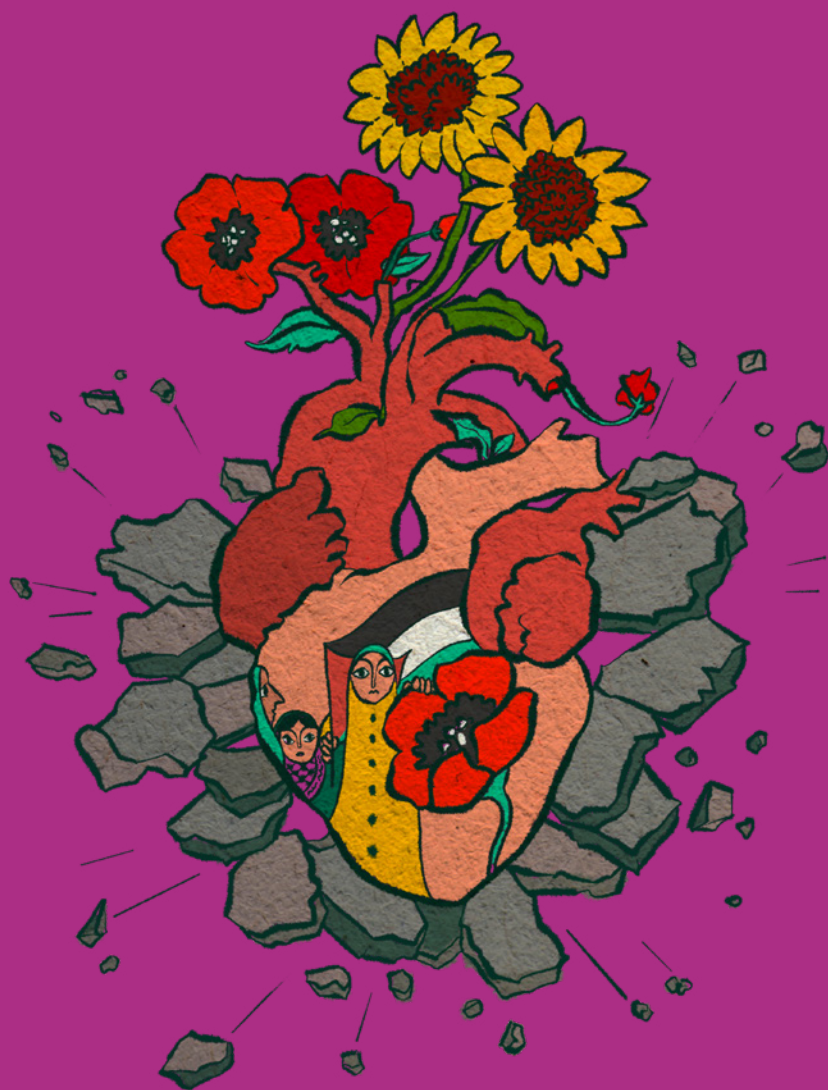


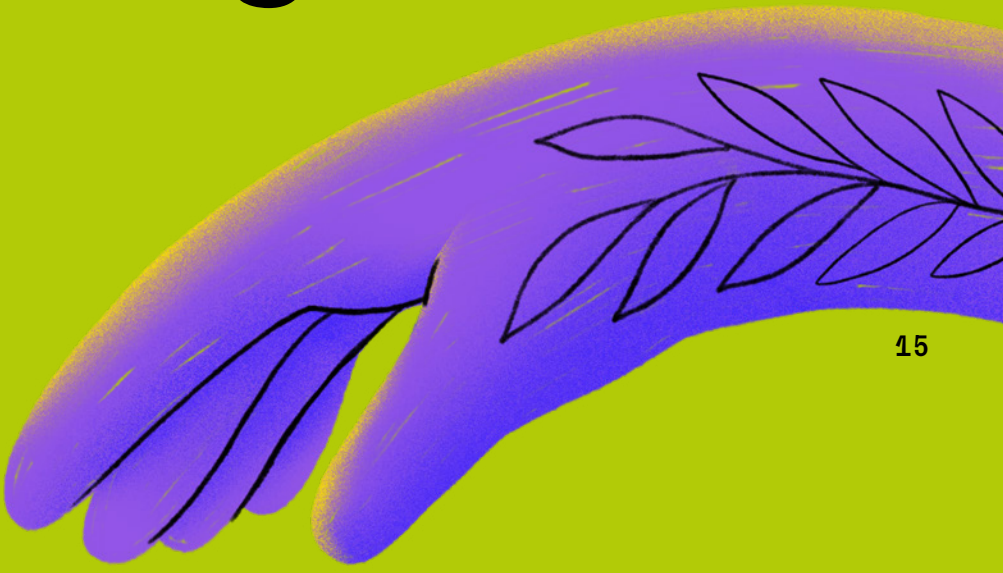
Illustration: Kruthika NS (TheWorkplaceDoodler)

A stylized illustration featuring a pink hand with black outlines, palm up. A green plant with a thin stem and three large, wavy leaves grows from the center of the palm. The plant's stem enters the hand, and small concentric circles at the point of entry suggest a liquid or energy being poured. The background is a solid light blue. The text "start here" is written in a black, sans-serif font, tilted upwards to the right, positioned above the plant's stem.

start here

MODULE 1

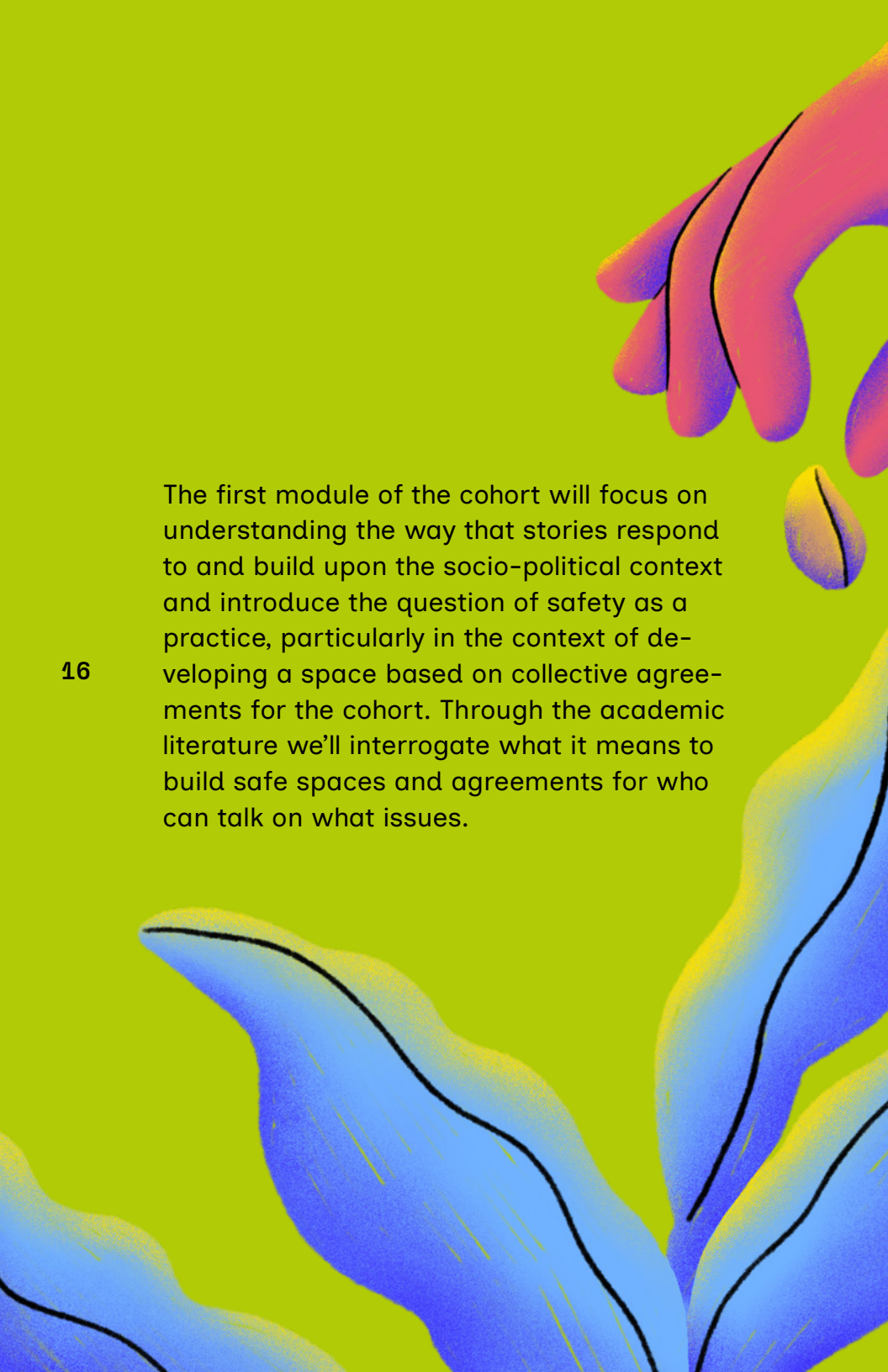
Stories as a Living Organism



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Safety as a Practice

The first module of the cohort will focus on understanding the way that stories respond to and build upon the socio-political context and introduce the question of safety as a practice, particularly in the context of developing a space based on collective agreements for the cohort. Through the academic literature we'll interrogate what it means to build safe spaces and agreements for who can talk on what issues.





➤ Essential readings / resources

- “Todo mundo tem o lugar de fala”, Lugar de Fala – Djamila Ribeiro.
- “Introduction”, Conflict is not Abuse – Sarah Schulman.
- “Smart Power”, Psychopolitics, Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power – Byung-Chul Han.
- **Psychological Safety & Social Justice** – Kai Cheng Thom.
- Radical Empathy – Kae Tempest.
- Diatriba 2 – Brenda Navarra.

➤ Optional Readings

- **Under a certain little star** – Wislawa Szymborska.
- Panopticism from Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison – Michel Foucault.
- Do calma e do silêncio – Conceição Evaristo.
- **Economic Messaging for Progressives: A Review of Don't Buy it** – Anat Shenker-Orsorio.

➤ Podcast, Cinema and other resources

- **Conflict is Not Abuse** with Sarah Schulman.
- **Embodying Existence** with Kai Cheng Thom.

PROMPTS

Stories of safety

What is a story about safety that you want to bring into this space? It can be personal, from the world, fiction or reality. Think about the elements that you'd like to offer to the cohort. Be prepared to share it.

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Metaphors We Inhabit: Rewriting the Language of Control

Identifying common existing metaphors for security / safety:

We often absorb metaphors without realizing it, they shape our thinking, our fears, our sense of what is "normal" or "safe" and also shape the solutions that we prioritise or believe are best suited. Begin by listing metaphors or phrases you've heard in relation to: big tech, surveillance, AI, borders, security, policing/prisons (give some examples)

What kinds of world views, assumptions or solutions do they reflect?

Breaking the frame: inventing new metaphors:

Can we come up with metaphors that tell a different story? One rooted in care, autonomy, community, joy, ecology, or mutual aid. Write a paragraph, poem, short dialogue, scene, or in whatever format, using this/these new metaphors.

Embodiment/Encarnar

Our field of connection is larger than the limits of our body. If so, is the story part of the body? Does the body travel when the story does? What are the frontiers of our body/stories? What happens when they encounter borders?

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MODULE 2

Getting in trouble

Questioning
the big
stories of
safety

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The second module questions the big narratives around safety: Safety from the “others”, safety from nature, safety as democracy. We’ll delve into the systems that make us unsafe: surveillance, AI, prison industrial systems, borders, with the intention of identifying the frames and practices that support these systems.

» Essential readings / resources

This module is a sort of “Choose your own adventure”. We have curated 4 sets of readings and resources that engage with the big stories about safety: safety from nature, safety from others, safety as democracy, and safety as surveillance.

Please choose one of the themes and read/watch/listen to the resources from that specific theme. On the prompts page you’ll find a writing prompt for each theme as well.

» Safety from nature

- What we lose - Kae Tempest.
- The et and the Human - Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil.
- **Fair Folk: Bear Culture: Scandinavian bear folklore** with Olle Möllervärn.
- **The Māori Call for Whale Legal Personhood** - Mere Takoko.

» Safety from others

- **All roads lead to Jerusalem** - Petra Molnar.
- **This Border Cuts a City in Half | Cyprus, Part 2.**
- “Introduction”, APU CHILLKANTUKUN ZUGU: Descolonizando el Mapa del Wallmapu, Construyendo Cartografía Cultural en Territorio Mapuche.
- “Chapter 5: The Prison Industrial Complex “, Are prisons obsolete? - Angela Davis.

» Safety as democracy

- “Introduction” and “Chapter 1: Battlefield”, Radicalizing Her: Why Women Choose Violence - Nimmi Gowrinathan.
- The house of the indigenous student - Yásnaya Elena Aguilar.

» Safety as surveillance

- “El último día de mercado” (short story in Spanish), Ansibles Perfiladores y otras máquinas de ingenio - Andrea Chapela.
- **Technology is the new border enforcer, and it discriminates.**
- The Minority Report - Phillip K. Dick.
- Delhi - Vandana Singh.

PROMPTS

Stories of safety

Instructions:

- Pick one theme from those listed below.
- Choose a writing prompt connected to the theme you've chosen to read about for this session.

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SAFETY FROM NATURE

Write a myth that was told about an animal from the perspective of the animal. For example the foundational myth of Mexico is that the people of Aztlan saw an eagle devouring a snake on a lake, or tell the story of Eve and Adam from the perspective of the snake.

SAFETY FROM OTHERS

What is a border? In the texts and video there are some attempts to contextualize the emergence of borders and the mechanisms of control that have emerged around them (be it economic, punitive, cultural or physical). Be a historian, write the history of a border that crosses a land that you call home

An illustration on the left side of the page shows a hand holding a torch. The hand is rendered in shades of orange and red, with black outlines for the fingers and palm. The torch's flame is depicted with wavy, flame-like shapes in purple and yellow, extending upwards from the top of the torch head.

(it can be your homeland or any other you are connected to). Focus on the border that you know the least about. How did it emerge? What are the things, peoples, natural spaces that it crosses? How did it transform the lives of the people that inhabited it? You can write this as an external historian, from the perspective of someone who lived it, or from the perspective of the land itself.

SAFETY AS DEMOCRACY

Write (imagine) an interview with one of the women who chose the path of weapons. You can use these questions as a guide:

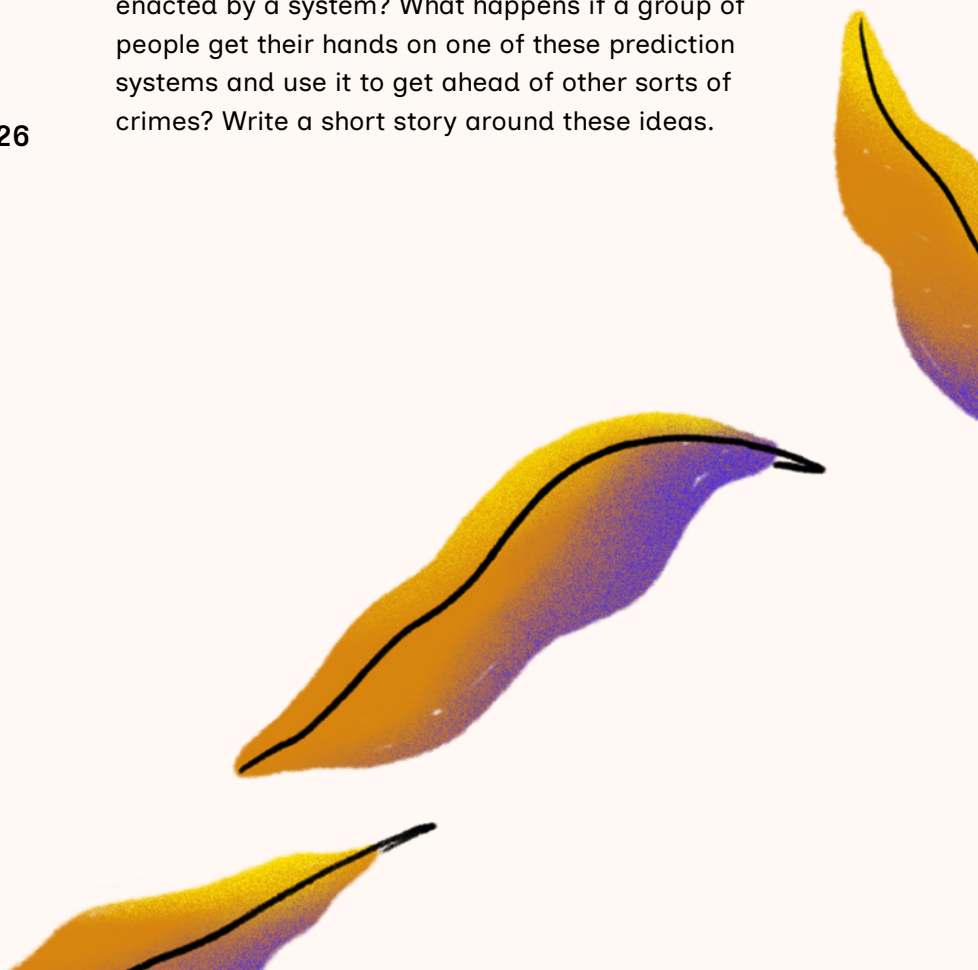
- What was one small action you did that took you closer to the path you are on today? How did it feel to take that action? What does it say about what's important to you?
- If you had to explain to someone the idea of safety, what would you say?
- Nimmi Gowrinathan talks about the difference between policing anger and understanding it. Ask your interviewee about the causes for their anger.

PROMPTS

SAFETY AS SURVEILLANCE

Prediction is a big part of the promise of safety through surveillance, it happens in *Minority Report*, but it's been replicated in many fictional and non-fictional stories throughout modern history.

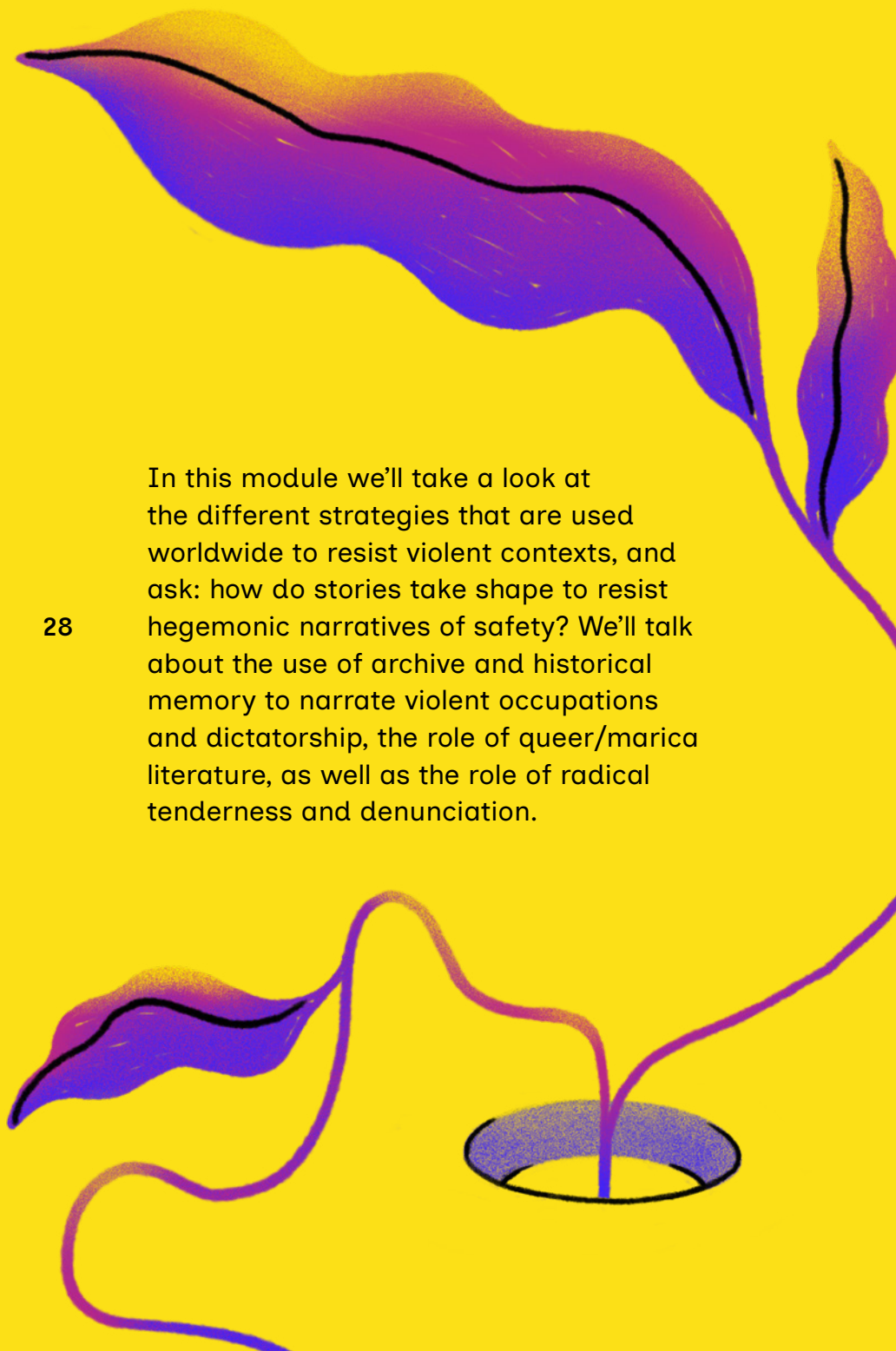
Imagine there is a way to predict crimes, like in the story, but it gets used in a different way. What counts as a crime in this context? Is it violence? And can you predict systemic violence? Especially if enacted by a system? What happens if a group of people get their hands on one of these prediction systems and use it to get ahead of other sorts of crimes? Write a short story around these ideas.



Resistances

Narrative
Strategies
for resisting
a violent
context

In this module we'll take a look at the different strategies that are used worldwide to resist violent contexts, and ask: how do stories take shape to resist hegemonic narratives of safety? We'll talk about the use of archive and historical memory to narrate violent occupations and dictatorship, the role of queer/marica literature, as well as the role of radical tenderness and denunciation.





➤ Essential readings / resources

- Movie: Tengo Miedo Torero.
- Documentary: Finding Fela.
- Series: Cometierra - Dolores Reyes.
- Poem: Hablo Por Mi Diferencia - Pedro Lemebel.
- Poem: Black Joy - Koleka Putuma.
- Article: Potential History: Thinking through Violence - Ariella Aïsha Azoulay.
- Article: [Archive](#) - Ariella Aïsha Azoulay.
- Short Story: "Álta La Muerte", Sofoco - Laura Gómez Ortíz.

➤ Optional Readings

- Play: Antígona Gonzalez - Sara Uribe.
- [Conversation between readers and Nona Fernandez](#) about her book *La Dimensión Desconocida*, a novel/essay/personal memoir about the dictatorship and a prominent deserter, who was the first on record to say "I tortured" (Spanish).
- [The Captive Photograph](#). Images seized from enslaved people are not private property to be owned, but ancestors to be cared for - Ariella Aïsha Azoulay.
- Podcast: ['Fela Kuti: Fear No Man'](#).

PROMPTS

Narrative Strategies to resist oppression

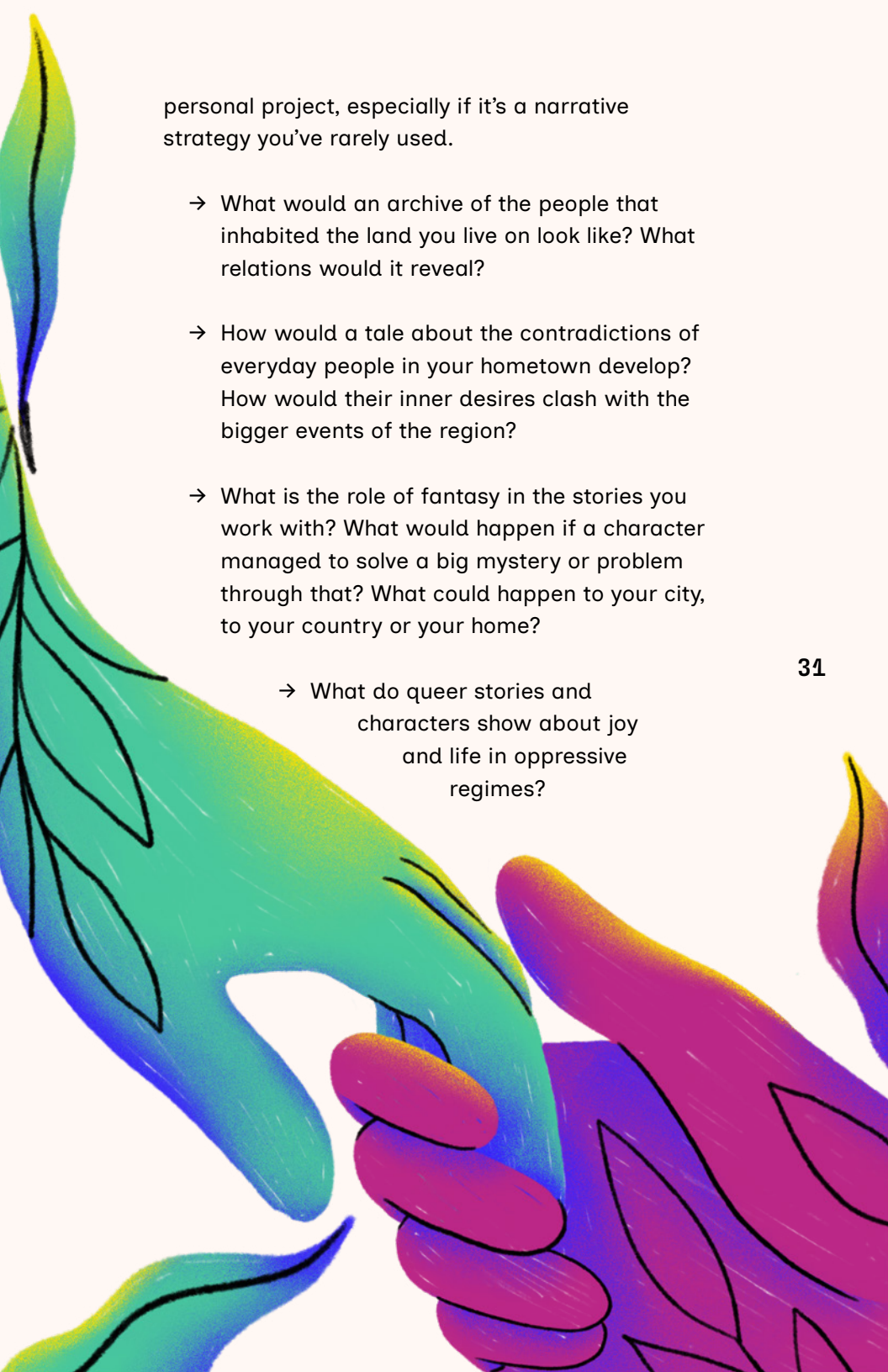
30

In all the texts and films in this module the authors use story in different mediums (poetry, plays, short stories, photography analysis, interviews and many more) as a resistance to an oppressive and violent regime. In *Sofoco* the characters find tenderness and desire in cemetery. In *Tengo Miedo Torero* Pedro Lemebel inserts a queer character in the midst of a narrative that completely forgot about them, reimagining a real event and weaving a different kind of resistance. *Cometier* is the adaptation of a novel in a new context, and uses fantasy (and maybe horror?) to obtain justice and to imagine the agency of a young girl in a violent context. Ariella Azoulay goes deep into the archive, doing and undoing it to interrogate the relations of violence perpetrated in Palestine through the consolidation of an archive, but also naming the possible paths forward.

Think of the different strategies that these authors use, think about how they don't only tell a story, but about how **they aim to change the way in which people make sense of the themes they talk about, how their stories recontextualize bigger narratives.**

Pick one of the strategies of these authors (even if you can't fully define it yet) and apply it to your





personal project, especially if it's a narrative strategy you've rarely used.

- What would an archive of the people that inhabited the land you live on look like? What relations would it reveal?
- How would a tale about the contradictions of everyday people in your hometown develop? How would their inner desires clash with the bigger events of the region?
- What is the role of fantasy in the stories you work with? What would happen if a character managed to solve a big mystery or problem through that? What could happen to your city, to your country or your home?
- What do queer stories and characters show about joy and life in oppressive regimes?



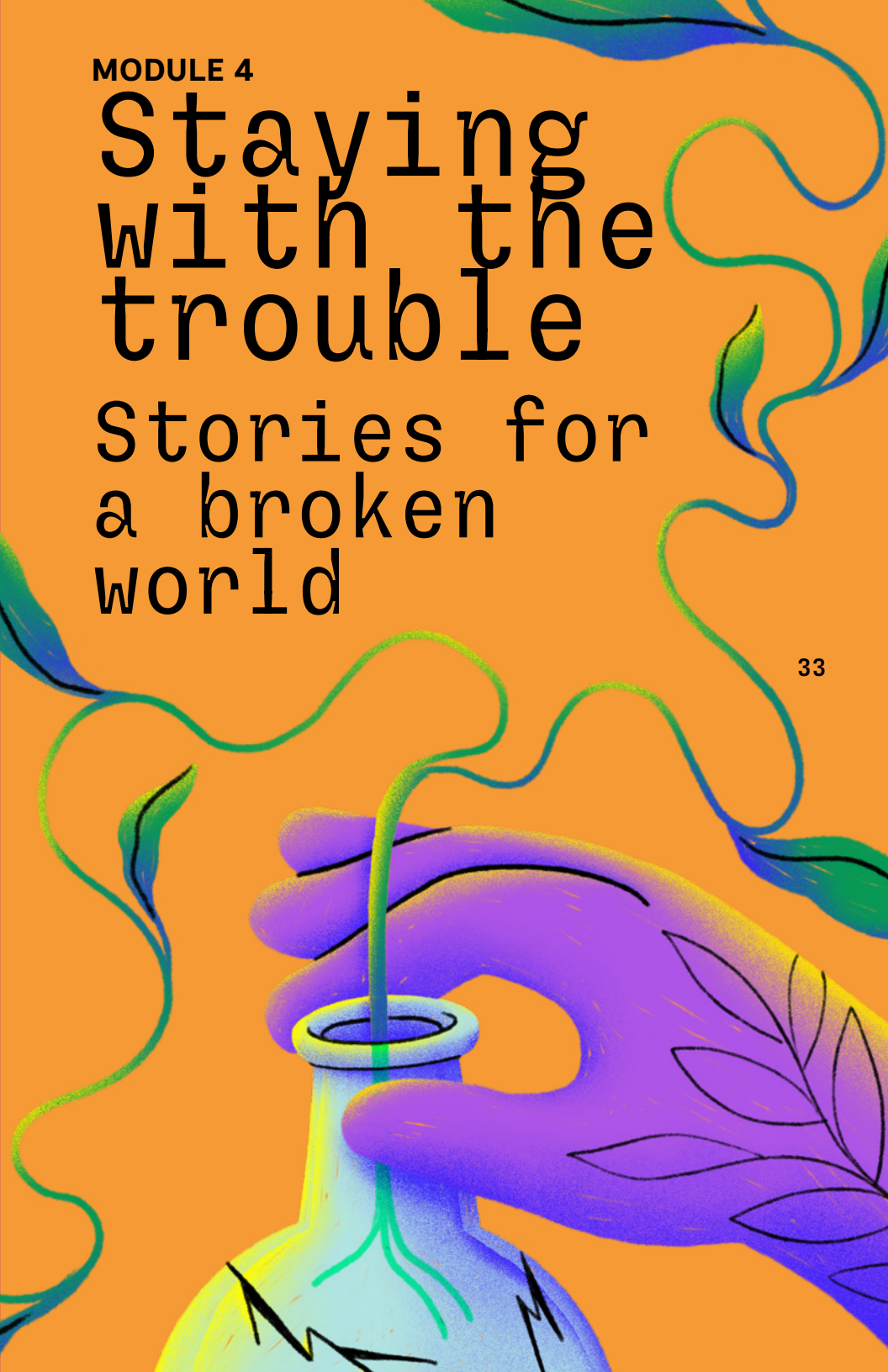
Illustration: Kruthika NS
(TheWorkplaceDoodler)

MODULE 4

Staying with the trouble

Stories for
a broken
world

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In this module we'll address the contradiction of building beautiful worlds and hopeful stories in the context of a broken world. Taking Donna Haraway's proposition of "Staying with the trouble" we'll dive into speculative fiction with the intention of creating stories that look at the heart of the conflict and propose a way to heal it, and ourselves.

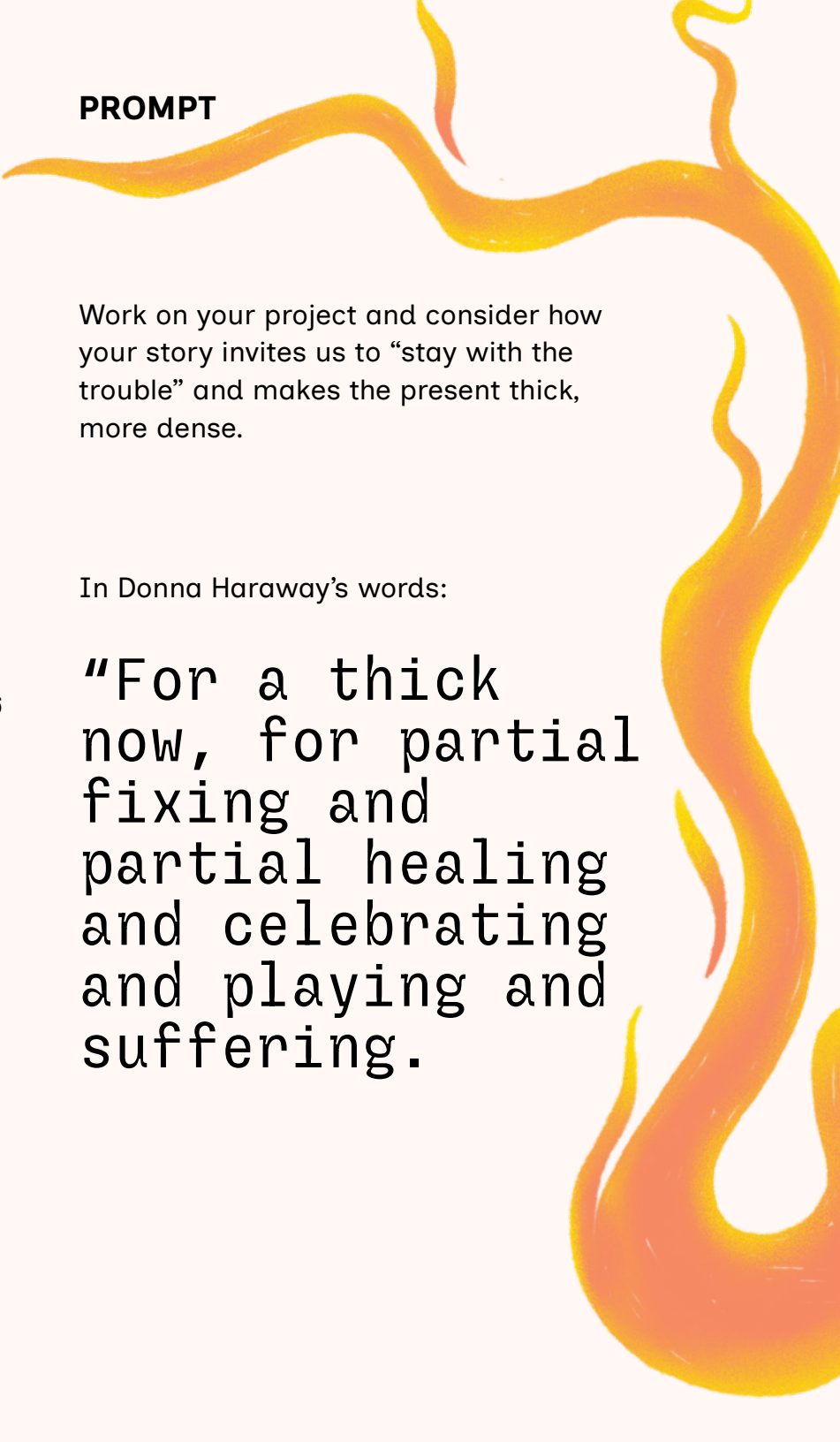
➤ Essential readings / resources

- Conference: Donna Haraway Master Class in Alfonso Reyes Catedra Tec de Monterrey: Narratives for justice and the multispecies care ([Spanish](#) | [English](#)).
- Movie: Nausica of the Valley of the Wind (Japanese with subtitles)
- Book fragment: Yaquis la resistencia imbatible – Daliri Oropeza.
- [In Sonora, Yaqui women dismantle a gas pipeline and sell it as scrap metal](#) ([English](#)).
- The historian as a curandera – Aurora Levins Morales ([English](#)).

➤ Optional Readings

- Sixth declaration of Selva Lacandona, I. What we are, II. Where we are now, III. How we see the world, IV How we see Mexico ([Spanish](#) | [English](#)).
- [Don Camilo: The barefoot historian with a treasured archive](#) – Daliri Oropeza.
- Zapatistas, women, and gender dissidents: on the encounter in Notre Dame des Landes ([Spanish](#) | [English](#)).

PROMPT



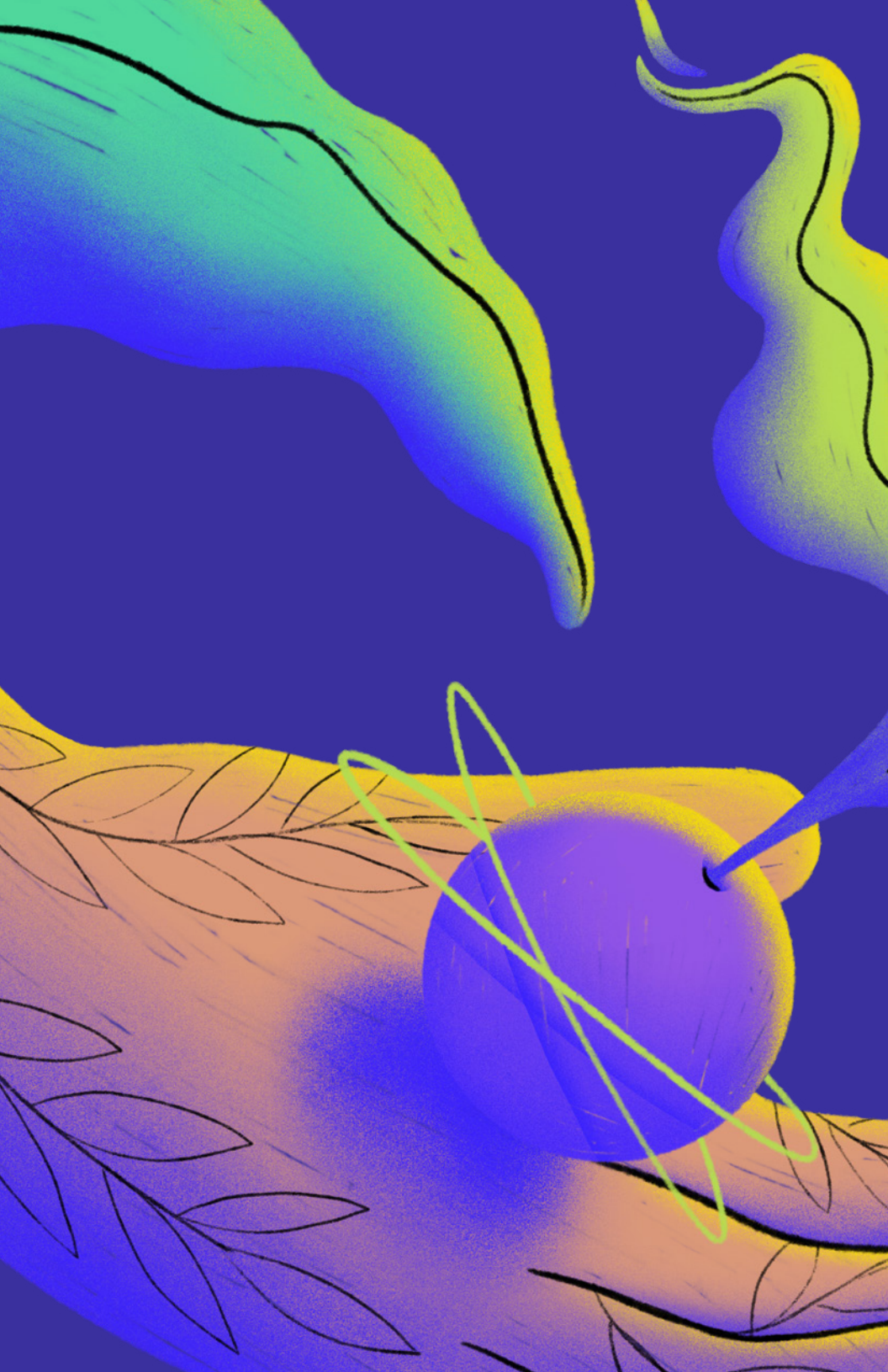
Work on your project and consider how your story invites us to “stay with the trouble” and makes the present thick, more dense.

In Donna Haraway’s words:

“For a thick
now, for partial
fixing and
partial healing
and celebrating
and playing and
suffering.

So as to live well
and die well with
each other, and
make the present
thicker, that
means we cannot
run from the
violence. We have
to learn how to
live in it, and
with it, so as
to be among the
healers."



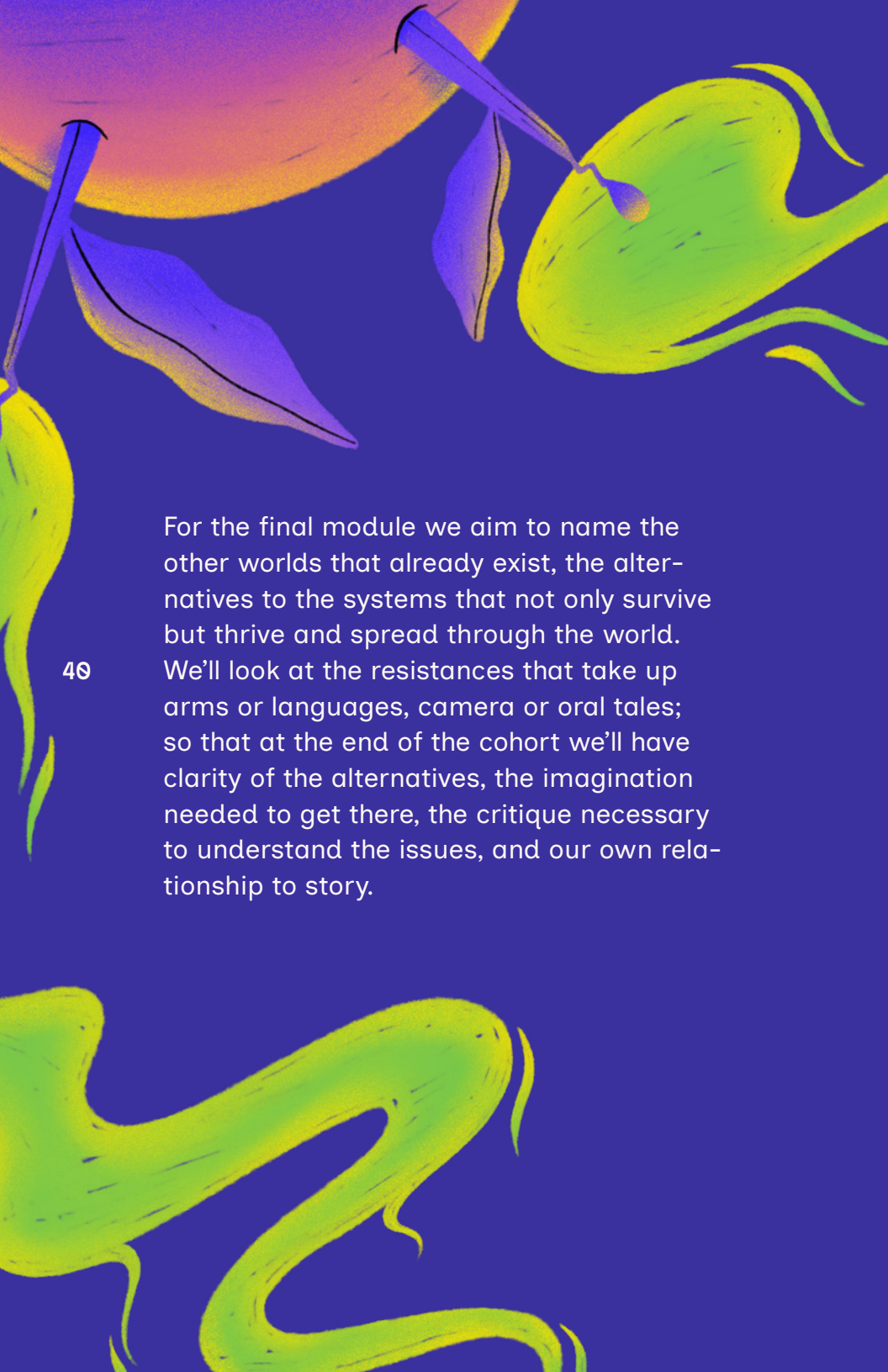


MODULE 5

Worlds of possi bili ties

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For the final module we aim to name the other worlds that already exist, the alternatives to the systems that not only survive but thrive and spread through the world. We'll look at the resistances that take up arms or languages, camera or oral tales; so that at the end of the cohort we'll have clarity of the alternatives, the imagination needed to get there, the critique necessary to understand the issues, and our own relationship to story.

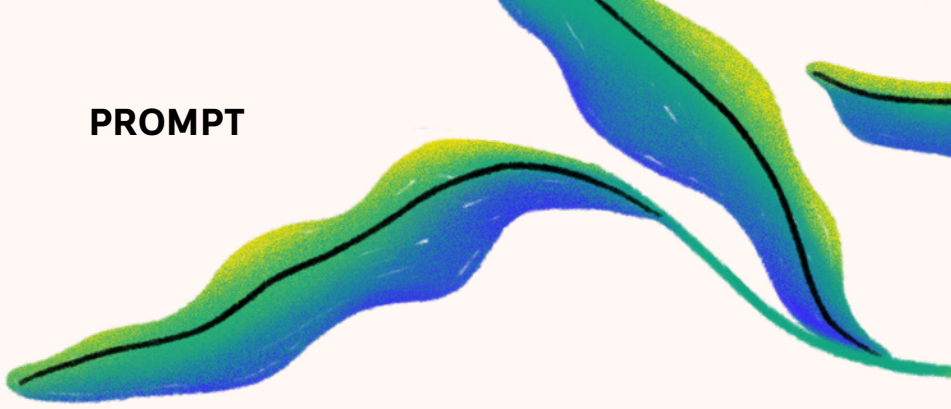
➤ **Essential readings / resources**

- Conference: [Traditions of the Zapatistas Movement](#) - YouTube.
- Sixth declaration of Selva Lacandona ([Spanish](#) | [English](#)).

➤ **Optional Readings**

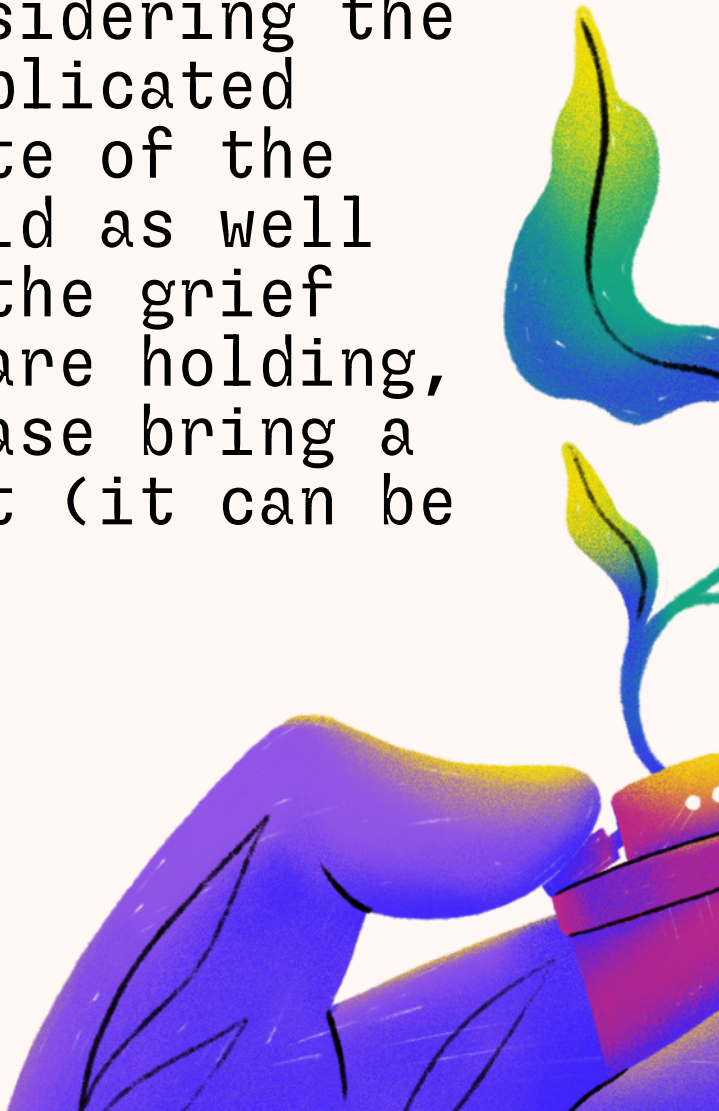
- “Chapter 5: Open Ticket, Oregon”, The mushroom at the end of the world - Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing.
- “Why are Americans afraid of dragons?”, The Language of the night - Ursula K. Le Guin.

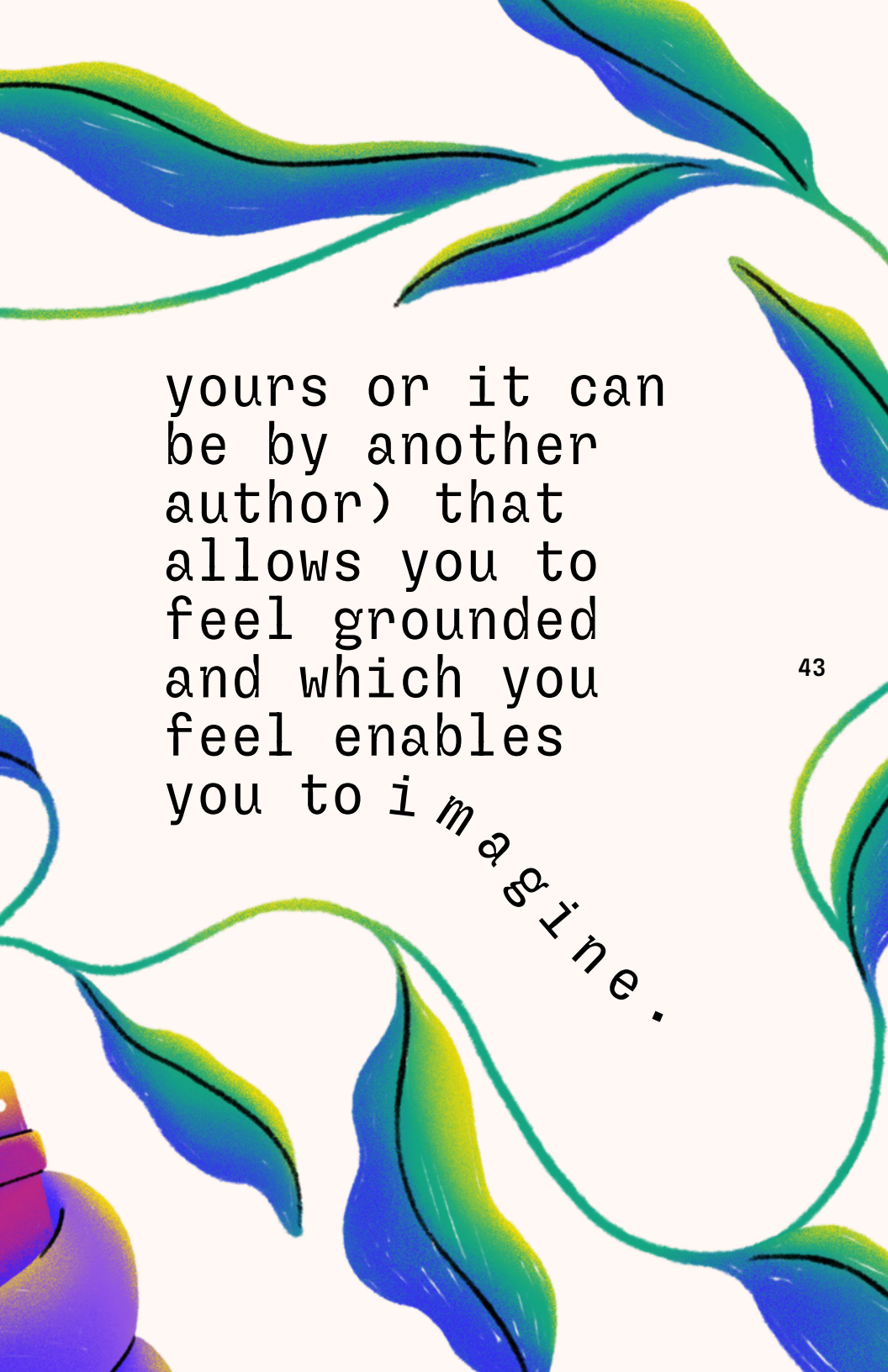
PROMPT

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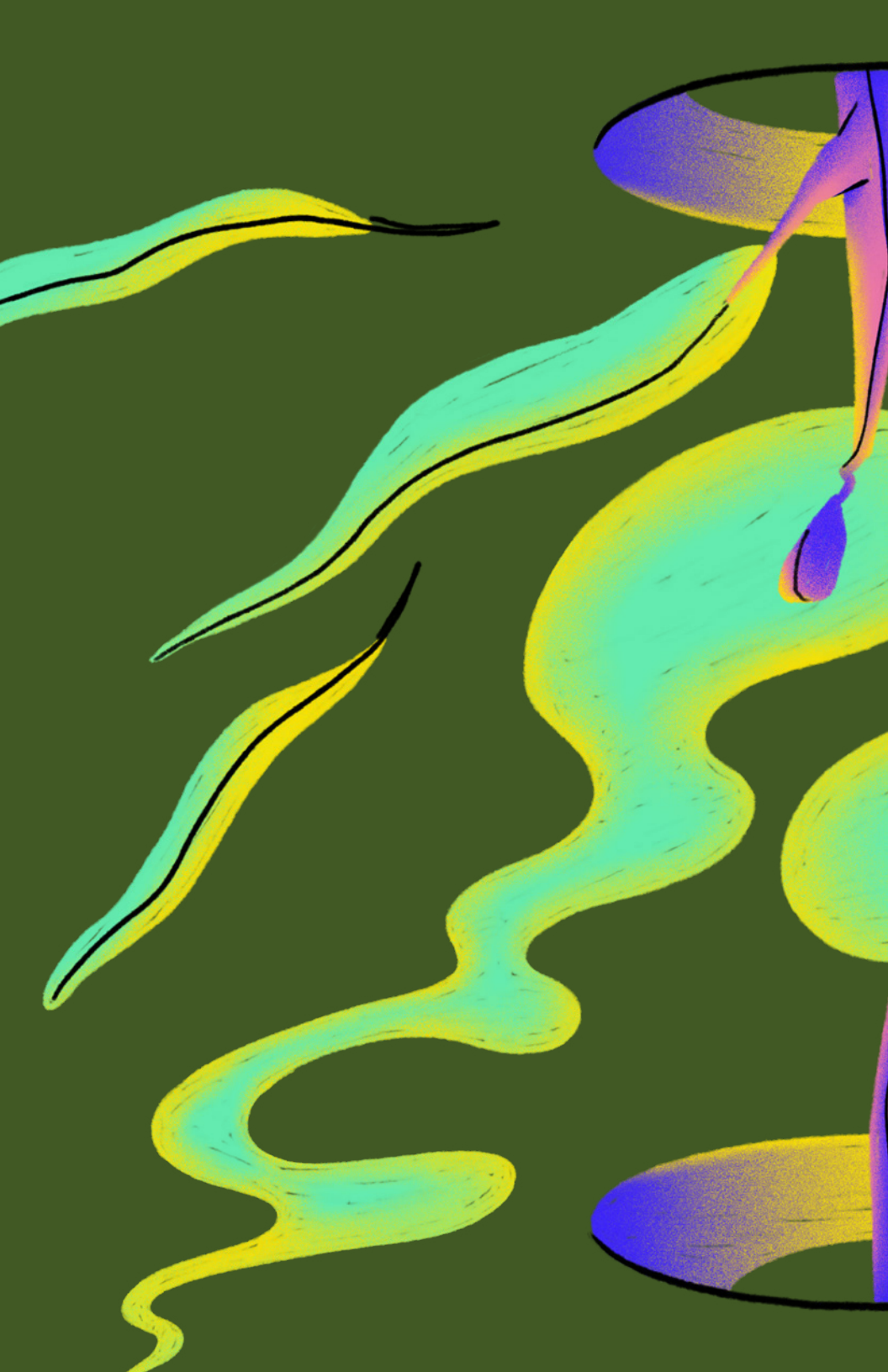
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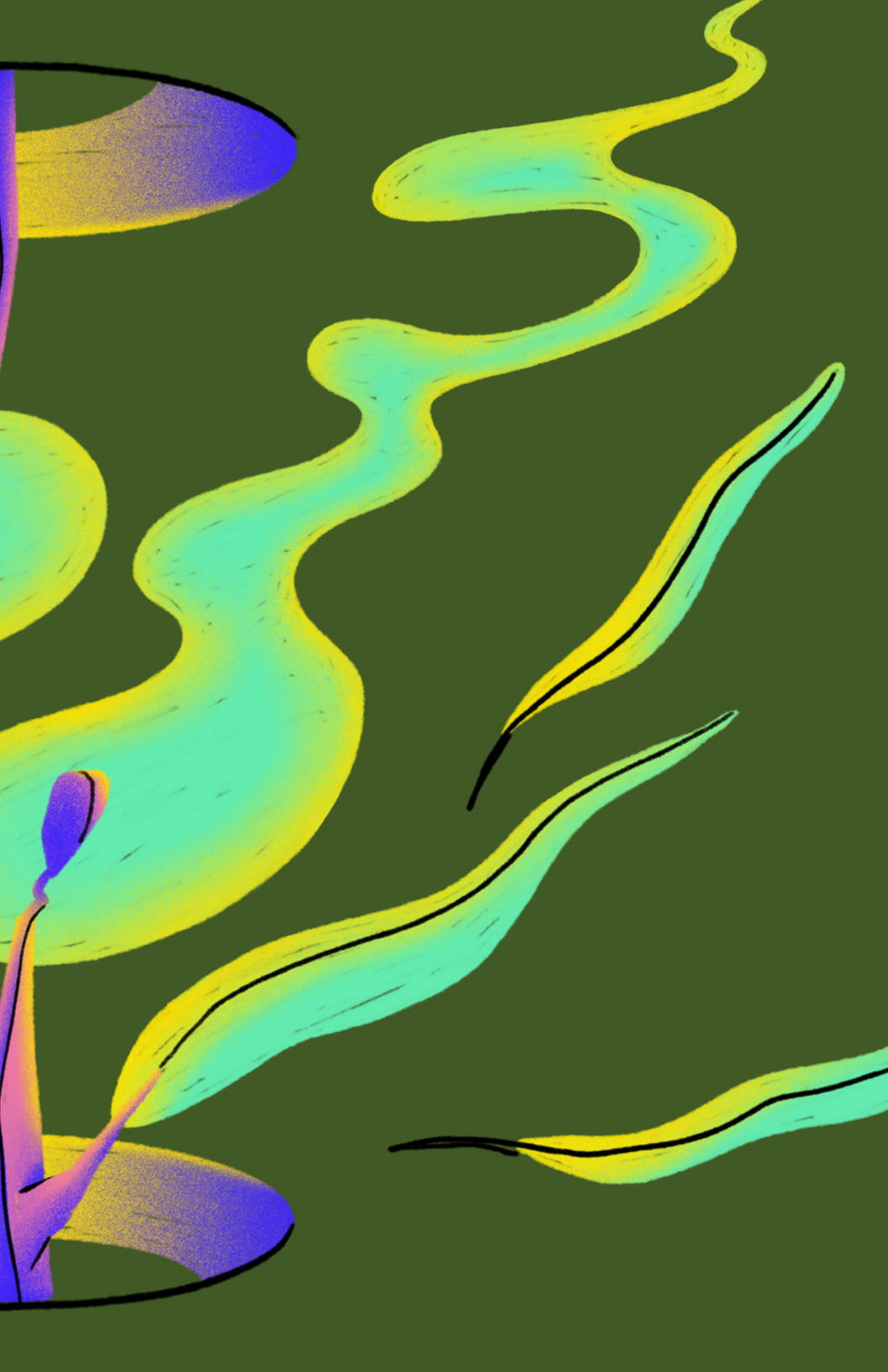
Considering the
complicated
state of the
world as well
as the grief
we are holding,
please bring a
text (it can be

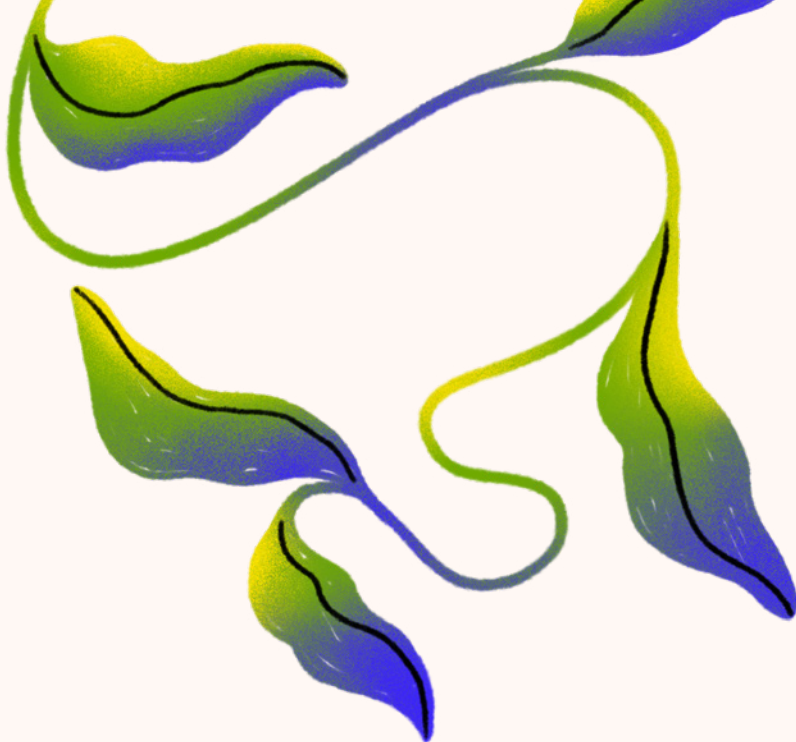
Stylized, colorful leaves in shades of green, yellow, and blue, with black outlines, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

The page is decorated with stylized, wavy leaves in shades of blue, green, and yellow, outlined in black. The leaves are scattered around the central text, with some appearing as if they are part of a larger plant structure.

yours or it can
be by another
author) that
allows you to
feel grounded
and which you
feel enables
you to *i m a g i n e .*







Imagining The Otherwise Global Writers' Cohort
2025–2026 was completed in May 2026.

The typefaces used for this zine are **Sligoil** by Ariel
Martín Pérez, with the contribution of Đông Trúç
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Sans** designed by Olivia King.

Format

Digital zine, designed for digital and print
distribution.

Notes

This publication is intended as an open resource
for facilitators, organizers, and narrative change
workers seeking to build collective learning spaces
grounded in care, resistance, and imagination.

We encourage you to adapt, translate, and ground
this material in your own context. Please share your
versions and plans with us!

No change for
the good ever
happens without
being imagined
first, even if,
at the moment
we imagine this
great change, it
seems absolutely
impossible.

History teaches
us, too, that we
are the agents
of this great
change.

Martín Espada

