CHAPTER 5

Trump Universe

words by Adam Bessie and pictures by Peter Glanting

The day after Donald Trump won the presidency, we experienced vertigo...

...as if we walked through the wrong door...

...stepping out into an immense void...

...we slide between light and shadow...

...we felt dimension beyond human perception...
Hyperbole is the native tongue of Trump Universe.

Especially since Trump seems right out of the pages of a science-fiction comic book.

Indeed, The Simpsons even predicted a President Trump.

Science Fiction seems a particularly apt form of hyperbole.

...a language of the fantastic made real.
But is it hyperbole? Or real?

To find answers, readers are turning to science fiction.

Dystopia is trending. Sales of classic books are on fire.

Philip K. Dick's classic *Man in the High Castle* - an alternate history of World War II - is a hit on Amazon.

And as readers have found, dystopia feels a little too real.

The line is blurring...
It’s tempting to think we are living in a literary dystopia...

...and, thus, it’s TheResistance.

It’s thrilling to feel that we’ve crossed the threshold into this alternate world...

...we are Winston...

...fighting against a great totalitarian evil...

...in an epic narrative...

...trapped in the past tense.
One of the most famed creators of alternate worlds, Ursula K. Le Guin, cautions against sci-fi analogies with Trump.

"Sci-fi authors make absolutely no pretense that our fictions are 'alternative facts.'"

Science fiction never lies; it makes a contract with the reader from the start to tell the truth, but not the facts.

For Le Guin, there can be no alternative "facts"—no, there are just lies.

"Lies are told in order to reassure oneself, or to fool, or to see, or manipulate others."
Trump’s Universe is not composed of science fiction, but of lies — and this line matters.

Trump’s lies are designed to maximize his administration’s power, its gravity, its ability to shock us to its very real will.

Trump wants us to confuse fact and fall...

...to make them indistinguishable so that nobody knows what’s real or not...

...and at a certain point, we get too tired to even care, or try.

A fiction fatigue.
This is not The Twilight Zone.

No, it's 2017.

And Trump didn't come from an alternate universe, as much as his behavior is out of this world.

No, he came directly from our reality, our society, our history.

And that's a fact.
In Trump’s universe, we are but characters. Extras, really...

...inconsequential to Trump’s narrative, appendage to the plot.

But we are real, not characters.
We are authors.
This is our story.
And it's time for a radical revision.
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Adam Bessie writes cartoons and non-fiction graphic essays which have been featured in many national outlets, including *The Atlantic*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *Truthout*. Adam is a Professor of English at a San Francisco Bay Area Community College.

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Peter Glanting is a cartoonist and illustrator. Pete holds a B.A. in English from the University of California at Davis, and an M.F.A. in Comics from the California College of the Arts. He lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

**PETER GLANTING**

Reality Management Representatives, Inc.
17 Simulacra Street
Desert of the Real, CA 10101