

Quinn Eades. *all the beginnings: A queer autobiography of the body*.
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**Écriture Matière matters:
a queer review of Quinn Eades's *all the beginnings***

To write *écriture matière* is to produce a literature of resistance—a text that speaks to theory, a text that shudders when theory speaks back. (Eades 30)

Before beginning(s): a question, then more questions

What am I doing here? Here being this moment, this place, this event: a writing conference panel featuring Quinn Eades, whose new book, *all the beginnings*, I am itching to buy and read. It's an exciting 'here' to be at, yes, except I'm in no fit state. My insides are knotted, pain knifing me the way it almost always does when I travel or stress or accidentally eat any of the multitude foods my body doesn't know how to digest (and right now is a triple-whammy). My bowel is writhing like a decapitated garden worm, blind and panicked, unable to grasp why I have dragged it via Melbourne's unfamiliar public transport system to this strange, too-bright room full of rigid chairs and strangers. Ironically, my bowel *is* the reason why—or a significant part, inextricable from all the o/Other parts and reasons collectively known as *the body*. This means *my* body, yes, but particularly my body as it relates (me) to those of o/Others, and to the problems as well as joys of embodiment, to the body as a shared cultural concept, a shared site for writing, thinking, rethinking and rewriting. For it is about writing the body that I am in this room, right now, to hear Eades speak.

Except I lie. I'm not in 'this' room and it's not 'now.' It's later, many later: at my desk, the kitchen table, local café, bus stop, library, sofa—all the fractured heres and nows in which I forge my blundering way in and through this writing, this text, all the text and texts it takes to make (fake) a single review. Yes, *review*. But not the kind where 'distance,' impartiality, 'logic' and 'evidence' reign supreme (Wallace and Wray 5). Pressed against such standards, my opening question is no longer just that of what I 'am' (was) doing in a gone here and now. It becomes a question of what my 'I' is doing in a text that ought to be all about Eades's book. In place of all that a review's introductory section ought to offer—namely, a statement of purpose, a set of review questions, and some overarching sense of focus (Wallace and Wray 137)—the reader has been subjected to self-indulgent whining about my personal problems. And not just any problems. Bowel issues. Yes, I have been writing pure shit.

I have been writing shit, but with good reasons, for writing 'shit' *does* introduce questions that relate and respond to *all the beginnings*. Most immediately, what is/am 'I' doing here— not to mention my shit? My response: 'I' is here in the spirit of Eades' own aesthetics-as-politics. For Eades's book leaks and spurts viscerality, makes the unspeakable speakable in deeply necessary ways—or so I will argue. In connection with the un/speakable, 'I' is also here is to practice and extend what Eades has elsewhere, under a different writing name, pioneered as 'queering the book review' (Quinn, 'I go far away . . .' 1). My approach to the queer(ed) review differs, it is true, from Eades's conversational interview strategy.¹ Yet it follows Eades in

aiming to ‘bring the reader close to corporeal detail, to the minutiae of the abject’ (Quinn, ‘*écriture matérielle*’ 2) and to resist the ‘power structures in which it [the body] finds itself’ (Eades 15). Like *all the beginnings*, this review owes much to an overlapping yet multiplicitous and diverse range of writing practices describable as fictocritical and/as experimental and/as feminist and/as queer (for instance, Gibbs and Tilson, Hecq, Kerr and Nettelbeck, Winterson) as well as the writings and ideas of thinkers including (but exceeding) Derrida, Foucault, Cixous, Kristeva, Butler, Barthes, and Deleuze and Guattari. Beyond these traditions (and perhaps now diverging from Eades, but in ways I hope are amenable to his aims), this review also attempts to confront what Bewes terms ‘the challenge of the present’ (2):

to rethink the scene of the critical encounter in the full acknowledgment that the notion of critical distance, and the innocence it implies, can no longer be regarded as given. (2)

In the face of this challenge, Bewes recommends that readers and/as writers (especially critics and/as reviewers) ‘dissolve . . . the distinction between writer and critic,’ and between ‘the activities of writing and reading themselves’ (3) by historicising, by critically engaging with-and-in (and/as ‘beyond’), ‘the moment in time’ in which ‘we ourselves are writing and reading’ (11). Towards these ends, this review presents a narrative based on² the events in which I read *all the beginnings*, with a focus on what Eades’s writings gifted me in moments of personal crisis. Can this review, then, offer a distanced or objective account of Eades’s book and what it offers? Hell, no! The review strives, though, to present one situated argument for why *all the beginnings* needs to be read.

From the question of why ‘I’ is/am here thus arise my specific review questions. These include, one, what is *écriture matérielle*? and two, why does it matter? Recalling early Butler (32), this latter tautology itself entails at least two interconnected questions: why is *écriture matérielle* important? and what can *écriture matérielle* make materialise in culture(s) and/as life(s)? These questions of mattering are interconnected not only with one another, but in my view also with the first—with the definition, the meaning of *écriture matérielle* itself. Therefore, this review does not address these three sites linearly or in turn but rather meanders queerly between them, noting expanded possibilities each time it turns and returns.

Beginning Again: *écriture matérielle* with and beyond *écriture féminine*

Where was I? Ah, that’s right. At the conference, waiting to hear Eades. And, in ano/Other space (the textual, placeless), I was—am—setting up the questions that drive this review. The most pressing question is, *what is écriture matérielle*? In simplistic terms, *écriture matérielle* translates to writing the material, and in Eades’s works this entails a significant focus on writing the body (not the only aspect of the material by any means, but often a primary mode of access to o/Other aspects, and furthermore, an aspect about which there is much to be written and discussed, for bodies are so diverse, so constantly-changing and often problematic). Yet *écriture matérielle* is more than its translation yields, and constantly becomes even more still. This continual becoming pushes *écriture matérielle* beyond the boundaries of what this or any review can fully relay. However, what I can describe, at least in part, is what *écriture matérielle* has meant, become and now means to me. ‘Meaning,’ in this context, entails definitions, yes, but also importance, or mattering.

As per my earlier account, on the day I went to hear Eades, I was in wrenching pain. Yet I left my hostel room, with its peppermint tea and gentle darkness, and dragged myself across town

to sit in a crowded room full of strangers. I did so because, having encountered *écriture matérielle* just briefly in one of Eades's earlier papers (Quinn, 'Écriture matérielle'), I was compelled by the possibility of a writing that 'insists' on 'leaving more than traces on a page' (Eades 30). At the same time, however, the pull towards *écriture matérielle* troubled and confused me, for as Eades explains (10), it derives from Cixous's *écriture féminine* (feminine writing / writing the feminine), which has always caused me unease. Why?³ Despite the positives I see in *écriture féminine* as 'a process of becoming' that 'un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenises and channels forces, herding contradictions,' promising 'radical effects of social and political change' (Cixous 882), it seems to demand something unbearable: that I reject masculinity—all masculinities—and admonish the masculine as something inevitably bound to domination, violence and oppression. I don't think this is what Cixous intended. After all, she sought to escape 'the dialectic which has it that the only good father is a dead one' (890). Yet when she remarks that 'writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural (and hence political, typically masculine) economy' that reflects and reinstates 'the phallogocentric tradition' (879), I can't help but feel I am being asked to deny my masculinity, to sever and suppress all aspects of my being that embody, express and lust for the masculine.

The masculine that I evoke here encompasses all the possibilities entailed in the broad body of literatures devoted to 'alternative masculinities' (Reeser, Noble) and, reflecting my personal interests, particularly 'female masculinities' (Halberstam). These are masculinities which have nothing to do with fe/maleness as defined by medicine, the law and/or social understandings (in line with Cixous's own insistence that *écriture féminine* need not be practised by those identifying with the category 'woman'). The masculine, understood thus, does not automatically oppose, oppress or undo the feminine, but is instead fundamental to it, part of it, and vice versa. If, however, this appeal to the masculine–feminine relationship seems oppressively binary (and to me it does), I furthermore venture, on the basis of points Halberstam raises (in Crowley, 461–62), and paraphrasing Bewes (11), that thinking with binaries and their problems is something among the most viable ways of working through and beyond them. Hence, I refuse to relinquish my masculinities, in my writing and/or/as life, and that is why *écriture féminine* troubles me.

In developing *écriture matérielle* through and from *écriture féminine*, Eades exhibits deep respect for the latter, acknowledging the historic cultural gains it has offered as well as the specific ways it has benefitted him and his evolving writing practices. Eades also, however, offers a deep and insightful critique of *écriture féminine* and the limitations it bears in rapidly-changing contemporary contexts that are very different from those Cixous and her contemporaries wrote in and for. Eades's thorough critique includes and exceeds the issues I have briefly raised. Ultimately, he decides that, despite an ongoing importance, *écriture féminine* 'no longer fits' (Eades 10). Eades then wonders:

what would happen if every body (not just woman's body), when allowed to inhabit the 'scene of writing,' to tell stories, to speak, was able to enact a form of narrative and civil disobedience: an unerasing of the corporeal from text? (25)

What happens is *écriture matérielle*—a bold poetics of matter(s) and making things happen, that is, of making it possible for things and/as being(s) to happen and matter in ways previously suppressed, repressed or unimaginable, for 'when we write the world, we write time, and space, and self . . . we allow the other to take up space. We make room for the fragment, the trace' (Eades 25). *Écriture matérielle* makes room for multiple masculinities as well as femininities, never suggesting any mutual exclusivity, nor insistence on pre-established categories. It might

even make room for writing beyond the categories, beyond the binaries, for writing new ways of being into being, for making the once unspeakable, or even unthinkable, matter. That's the beginning of *écriture matière* and why it matters—why it mattered enough to make me ride two trains on a day of pure pain. But it's still only the very beginning. Eades is only just being properly introduced. At last he takes the floor.

Back to new old beginnings: *écriture matière* and the in/visible pains of western medicine

Black clothing. Heavy boots. Two fish swim the stream of a biceped arm. Later, in Eades's book, I will learn more about these glittering koi, which hide—no, *protect*—older pictures, stories, secrets. For now, their laughing eyes underscore and extend a point Eades is making about scars and how we can/not celebrate them. A tattoo is, after all, a kind of scar—one the bearer chooses, yes, but not necessarily with full autonomy, for we are driven by our contexts in ways we cannot always grasp (Foucault 45). Eades then speaks of pain, of how it changes depending on why we are in it, on the shapes and meanings we give pain as it in turn returns meaning to, reshapes us. He deftly pins the very point that, in my former life as a nurse, I knew so well and yet could not know, was not permitted to begin to think: pain is always literary, and itery, always written, writing, re-citing in the Derridean sense. This makes me reconsider the pain I am in, reconsider how it writes and is written in and by me (could I write it—and me—differently?) Eades makes me contemplate the scars, the pains we cannot see, or not easily. For instance, scars left on my digestive tract by three decades of doctors not recognising or treating what the right scans finally showed to be a known, if rare and little-known, condition. And also the scars inflicted in, by and as language, history, culture, norms and labels. These scars frequently manifest not just invisibly, but *as invisibility*, or marginality—which itself often tears yet more scars.

After the panel, there's just enough time to buy a copy of *all the beginnings* before a new pain strikes in the form of my flashing phone—a missed call, a recorded message: my mother in Adelaide, not-hiding sobs; my grandmother is in hospital; bowel obstruction; emergency surgery; she's pulled through; the signs are good; no need to rush home; everything will be okay. Except it might not. From my nursing days I know, any surgery carries risks, especially if the patient is 100 years of age. Plus, even if things *are* fine, hospital is a hell place to be. Particularly the hospital my grandmother is in—the same hospital I worked in straight after graduating. That year, I wound up hospitalised myself, head in meltdown because I simply could not do or be the things that place demanded. Meaning, I could not switch off and treat human beings as though they were just extra bits of workplace equipment to be lifted, shifted, tidied and shoved like trolleys, beds or lumpy bags of sodden linen.

Suddenly everything's happening in flashes and jolts, a tumbling mode of freeze-frame, simultaneously fast and slow motion. Leaving the conference. A tram to the hostel. Phone call. Bus ticket. Departure date. Changing. Tonight. The room a mess. Grabbing backpack. Grabbing clothes. Stuff Stuff *Stuff!* Forget the phone charger. Always do. The smell of petrol. The station. Waiting. Years. Engine rumbling. Some film. Watching headlights instead, forehead to the cold glass of the overnight Firefly express. A few more years. Adelaide. My partner waiting. Driving. Home. Shower. Leave. Arrive. Hospital foyer. Still tumbling. Buy flowers. Hurtle corridors. Walls. The same ugly colour after twelve fucking years. Plus all those lost across the past ten hours. At last. My grandmother. Nana. Arms around her. Breathless. Her tone so joyous as she scolds my silliness. I didn't need to come home early. Oh no. Oh yes. I did. This is my Nana, yes. But she's also my second mother, my sister, my friend who

lived with us and had the bedroom down the hall from mine when I was young, these days my cheeky friend who I talk, laugh, read poetry and drink wine with. A dearest and best friend who I have so much in common with. Even the same bowel condition. My pain is strong as ever, except now I'm grateful. Eades is right: the meaning of pain changes pain changes meaning. In this scenario, pain reminds me, whatever I'm feeling, Nana must be feeling worse.

My parents are at the hospital too, as are three of my aunts, three uncles and two cousins, one of whom has his toddler—Nana's great, great grandchild. A nurse enters and coughs loudly. I notice a sign bearing blockish words: *maximum three visitors*. Crap. We are already *that* family. Functionally illiterate. Disobedient. My grandmother asks the nurse for some pain relief. The nurse checks the chart. No, it's not time yet. Meanwhile, some of us will have to leave. *No, it's not time yet!* I want to rebut. Instead I breathe. Raggedly. I know it's not the nurse asking. It's policy. What the nurse really thinks doesn't matter. Hatred and pity knot as I nod, silent. My family and I spend the rest of the day playing musical bedsides, taking turns to walk or get coffee. When it's my turn, I go to the hospital courtyard, sit on some fake lawn and pull out *all the beginnings*. I read:

. . . at the hospital many others are triaged before me. I cannot sit. I cannot stand. I cannot bend. I lie myself on the floor and vomit from pain. I try not to moan. I am aware that they think I am a hysteric, and so perform stoic, and stable, but fail. I have laid my body on the ground. I am not following the waiting room rules . . .
 . (Eades 20)

Solace and angst curdle together as I am reminded that my family's run in with hospital law is hardly unusual. For this reminder alone, *écriture matière* will surely matter to countless o/Others—patients, family, and yes, healthcare workers themselves—who have battered heads with Western medicine's rigid regulations, I think to myself as I wonder whether my grandmother has had her pain relief yet. Meanwhile, my own pain is only growing—physical pain now compounded by that of separation, of riding ten hours on a night bus only to be shooed away like a loiterer. I agree with Eades: hospital rules enforce 'a kind of torture' (21). But there is empowerment in reading Eades writing this, naming the beast as it needs be named. He makes it not just thinkable but un-unthinkable that *things do not have to be this way*. If more bodies and/as o/Others write these silent pains (as Eades's book invites us to), perhaps, one day, things *won't* be this way. This is another reason why *écriture matière* matters, why *all the beginnings* must be read.

Beginning to make ourselves matter in and beyond institutional discourse

It's nine p.m. and my mother is begging not to have to leave the hospital. She is scared that the lingering anaesthetic, combined with opioid painkillers, will make Nana (who is ordinarily lucid) grow confused. It happened to her father, my grandfather. The staff tied him to the bed with sheets. He got loose and fell anyway. Fractured a hip. Died within months. Mum is asking for a floor mattress, or even just a hospital blanket so she can sleep on the chair beside Nana's bed. Our *that family* ranking scales several notches. No. Impossible. Visitors go home at night. That's the rules. We can come back tomorrow, please no earlier than eight.

At three a.m., the phone rings. It's Mum. The hospital called her. They want us to come in, to help calm Nana down. Because it happened. She got confused. She climbed out of bed. But she didn't fall. Oh no. She ran. At one hundred. Outran her nurse. Made it to another ward. Smack bang into another nurse. Screamed something about being taken captive by brutes. Threw a left

hook. Apparently a winner. It took four security guards to restrain a five foot, forty-five kilogram centenarian who owes whatever strength she has to her love of the garden where she feeds and watches out for tiny birds.

When I arrive, Nana is tied to the bed. Not with a sheet, but with a special style of vest, patterned with smiling owls. The owls are what make me think: *vest*. But then I recall Eades, recall the power of naming torture, and I know I must rethink, rewrite: *straightjacket*. I *can* (re)write this. But how to unwrite what I see next? On the wall above Nana's bed, a blazing placard announces, *CODE GREY RISK*, and advises procedures for an unarmed attack. This is on display for every other patient and visitor to see. Worse still, it's in Nana's file now. Can never be erased. This is ironic, because it *is* an erasure—of her rights. I know this because thirteen years ago, one psychiatrist in one appointment wrote something that changed how every doctor, nurse and healthcare practitioner has treated me ever since. It doesn't matter whether I'm seeing a new stomach doctor or simply asking for a sick certificate; it has happened to me at the gynaecologist, and in ED after I was hit by a car. The first question is always whether I am still taking the medication that three other psychiatrists separately confirmed I did not ever need to take. And no matter how I respond, anything more I say becomes muffled, lugs a caveat. The attempts at correcting one callous error somehow never stick, can't erase the original sin inked in my record—a record of my body (mind included), which matters to my body, because it affects my right to have my body fairly treated. But on this front, again, Eades offers me and other o/Others degrees of solace, and perhaps hope, when he writes of hospital files and their violent implications. Through his reflections on experiences of 'not being believed' to degrees so extreme, so persistent that 'the game starts to work and I think maybe they're right' (21), Eades portrays the insidious ways in which bureaucratic systems of language enable the filing of patients, of *people*, into categories that make those patients less than people, leave them with 'no face' (21). This counts not only for the files kept in hospitals, but also those of education, the legal system, and in countless more institutional contexts.

By writing about the processes through which institutional paperwork—institutional discourse—pigeonholes and erases people and their pains in ways that can mean the difference between good treatment or bad, and even life or death, Eades makes thinkable the thought that, as much as institutions and their systems write us, they are also written things. Their procedures and protocols are rewritable, as are their un/spoken cultures—cultures connected to and driven by the broader social Culture, that melting pot of privileges and prejudice, but also of movements that seek to, and historically have managed, at times and in ways, to redress imbalanced relations of power, to (re)make life more liveable. *Écriture matière* can speak in and to both cultures. It can lay bare the violences of current procedures, and, if there develops a great enough groundswell of writings that do just this, then change, again, may become thinkable, possible. Those of us whose needs are currently erased or illegible beneath scarring labels may at last make ourselves matter—gain recognition and respect—in and beyond institutions and their discourses. Again, *écriture matière* matters.

Beginning to un/write violence

For the remainder of her two-week hospital stay, Nana has at least one family member present at all times, thanks to the magic pen of a night-duty doctor who inscribes her file as follows: *Family to be permitted and encouraged to remain with patient at all times. Floor mattress to be provided to accommodate overnight stays.* (Turns out the rules *can* be rewritten—by the right Author, brandishing the right signature). Because I'm the one with formal nursing training, we decide I should visit in the mornings so I can shower Nana, who doesn't like

strangers seeing her undressed. *The morning shift*, I catch myself calling it, and this scares me, as does the ease with which I resume all the old motions, the patterned rituals I have not performed for going on six years now, but which were drilled into me in seemingly quite permanent ways. This ward is two floors up from one I worked on, its layout identical. I inhabit the space like a prodigal daughter, reclaiming the home she hated and fled. I even start making beds while Nana is dozing. *To give the nurses more time to focus on important things, like pain relief*, I tell myself. But really I am craving the yoga-esque flow of tucking sheets and folding blankets. It's this that blows my cover.

—*Nice hospital corner. So where did you train?* The nurse's sceptical tone tells me there's no point lying.

—*Here.* I keep my head down, gaze focused on folding on ensuring the pillowcase opens away from the door, as I was taught.

The bed incident makes me think again, but differently, of the scars we can/not see, can/not celebrate. I am reminded that 'tattoos live under, not on top of, the skin' (Eades 8). The way I tuck corners is a kind of tattoo—one in/visibly inked into muscle, neurones and synapses, inked as bodily memories like those of a boxer already dodging a barely-seen punch. Did I choose this tattoo? Would I erase it, if I could? Erase five years of clocking on and clocking off, signing drug charts and documenting every act(ion) in the lulling passive voice? (*Observations taken four hourly, as ordered, all within normal range. Wound cleaned and dressing changed, minimal clear ooze observed . . .*) If my body still dances, of its own accord, the quick steps this institution taught it, what other parts of me are still marching to, still beating its drum? What violences is western medicine enacting in, to and through me, unbeknownst to me?

At the same time, it is because I am scarred in these ways by this place that I am able to assist Nana to shower safely, maintaining the dignity a stranger's eyes and hands would literally strip from her. It is because I am scarred in these ways that I know to ask, when biopsy results reveal that the obstruction was a tumour, that the cancer is malignant, for a nightly glass of wine to be written on her drug chart—because, like me, she loves her wine, and every day now is a gift to be toasted. I rub her legs with her favourite perfumed cream, and as I do, I read them—with my fingers, a kind of braille, and with my eyes, which want like cameras to capture and keep every detail of all the scars that she thinks are so ugly and which to me make hers the most beautiful legs of anyone in the world.⁴ There's one where the flesh is gouged out completely, a tennis ball-sized cave inside which a curve of bone shies, vulnerable as an oyster, a precious pearl with nothing but skin sparing it from the indecencies of open air. Another is triangle-shaped and silver-white as the moon—a skin graft I remember her getting when I was still in kindergarten. There are many more. Some I recognise and remember, others are total mysteries—echoes of things that happened before I was born, maybe even in her own childhood. That last word I use loosely, for Nana's childhood was not a childhood, by today's standards. Her family were poor. Starving. They sold her to work as a servant for a man who brandished a whip. He brandished a whip and I don't know what else, but I know that my grandmother suffered nightmares well into her eighties. From down the hall, her screams used to wake me, brought me to tears even though I was a cared for, safe child in a soft, safe bed. It was and is thanks to Nana that I could be safe in those ways: she devoted her life to ensuring her own children and grandchildren would never experience the things she did; though she was so deeply written with violence, she found the rare strength not to rewrite it.

Thanks to Eades and *all the beginnings*, I am able to think, *my grandmother's legs are stories*—of her life, and also mine, which, though so very different, can only be written, only read, thanks to hers. And thanks to Eades's book, I know the dangers in this thought, for 'we can interpret symbols and even intention, but they are just that: a telling, an approximation, an interpretation' (12). Hence if I choose to read Nana's scars as stories, I must do so with full admission that I am misreading. But misreading can be creative, even valuable, if practised with caution, acknowledgement and respect (Garcia Landa). And my misreadings sustain me through the long and aching hours at Nana's bedside—hours during which I decide to believe, for here and now, that *yes*, her mystery scars are ones I can best read, for the present context, as tattoos won through struggle, souvenirs of her strength, her beauty, a beauty all the more beautiful for its contrast to the ugliness she survived. She has shared this beauty with me, has shared the possibility that whatever nursing and hospitals wrote into, still write through me, does not have to re-perpetuate violence, and may indeed be a story worth telling, one capable of re-writing—or at least, in small ways, unsettling—those from which it grows. This is a gift my grandmother gave to me, *yes*—but one I was able to perceive, to treasure because I was reading *all the beginnings*, because I was thinking (through) *écriture matière*, which matters because it shows us how to read texts (including bodies and their scars) in ways that matter, and which for me thus mattered and continues to matter, deeply.

After *all the beginnings* again . . . What next?

Now I am here. Still. Months later. At my kitchen table, and elsewhere, finishing this review, which has been, as promised, in no way distanced or objective, but which has, as likewise promised, and via a personal narrative based on the circumstances in which I read *all the beginnings*, presented one situated perspective on why this book needs to be read, why *écriture matière* (the theory and/as practice that *all the beginnings* both demonstrates and describes) matters. In sum, my argument is that *écriture matière* can promote deeply-needed cultural changes, particularly in the contexts of hospitals and other often-violent institutions. There will be o/Other perspectives. *all the beginnings* and *écriture matière* will be read by, used to read and/or/as write (and re-write) many o/Other bodies and/as situations; and will matter to different readers and/as contexts in differing ways. For instance, because of my personal interests, I have focused primarily on western medicine, institutional discourses and histories of violence, and on the prospects *écriture matière* presents for changing situations that presently are, for many of us, deeply painful. I have said little about sexuality, gender, transgender, family, parenting, or any of the o/Other myriad important issues to which *all the beginnings* likewise bears great significance. Nonetheless, I hope my limited and idiosyncratic example has demonstrated this book's prolific capacities to matter—to prompt a reader to think, re-think, re-conceive (give birth to) ways of seeing, of being, with-and-in bodies and/as our world(s). *all the beginnings* has changed how I read and write. It is a book I will recommend to my students and/as fellow writers, a book I will re-turn to, re-read in different contexts, in ever-new ways, towards ever new possibilities for being, becoming, and, *yes*, re-beginning. I look forward to seeing what happens next, for *écriture matière* is a story—many stories—that has only just started.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Agnes Roselina "Billie" Graetz, 27 August 1915–16 December 2015. The smartest, bravest person I've ever known.

Amelia Walker, University of South Australia

ENDNOTES

¹ I write that Eades 'pioneers' the queer review practice. However, it is worth noting that in a queer review written by Quinn himself, he cites Donna Lee Brien's interview with Lee Gutkind as a precedent and 'model' (Eades published as Quinn, p. 2; and see also Brien). The broader concept and practices of 'queering' are meanwhile very

extensive, bearing histories too long and too complex to discuss in the present context, although for those seeking an informative overview and/as demonstration, I suggest the anthology *Queering the Way* (2011).

² ‘Based on’ is a crucial disclaimer: my priority, in this piece, is to review Eades’s book, and the narrative is crafted to support this end; although everything I relate is ‘true’ inasmuch as any remembered event ever can be, I have selected and re-ordered events in ways designed to support the flow of my critical argument. To relate every precise detail in its precise order of occurrence would require a far longer piece of writing—one that, though potentially valid in o/Other ways, and potentially worth pursuing at some o/Other time, would not, I believe, well serve a reader wanting to learn about Eades’s work and/or/as *écriture matérielle*.

³ For the purposes of this review, I discuss just one of the problems I perceive with-and-in *écriture féminine*. There are, however, a number of others, which readers of Cixous have discussed at length. For an insightful exploration into the merits as well as limitations of the theory and/as term and/as practice, I recommend Wardle’s introduction to her thorough and thoughtful exploration of the prose of Hyvrard. Wardle considers why it is and is not helpful to label Hyvrard’s writings as *écriture féminine*, (while acknowledging *écriture féminine*’s important contributions to writing and/as culture) argues a need to go ‘beyond’ (Wardle 2007). As I also go on to explain, *all the beginnings* itself offers a thorough critique of *écriture féminine*’s benefits as well as constraints.

⁴ ‘the most beautiful legs of anyone in the world’ is a direct reference to and echo of Eades’s reflections, in *all the beginnings*, on his tattooed arm, and also to remarks that Eades made in his live speech.

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