

Southern Cross University

Nollie Nahrung

Queer Aunt Charlotte,

Biographical note:

Nollie is undertaking her PhD in the School of Arts and Social Sciences at Southern Cross University (SCU). Informed by queer, anarchist and feminist perspectives, her thesis explores the potentiality of relationship anarchy using creative and critical approaches. This project embodies methodological anarchism, in which theory and creative arts practice, and additionally form and content, play equal and inter-related roles. Nollie holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree with First Class Honours from SCU and a Bachelor of Multimedia Studies with Distinction from Central Queensland University. She was awarded the University Medal in 2012. Her research publications are available from <https://scu-au.academia.edu/NolJoy>

Keywords:

Creative Writing – Queer writing – intertextuality – queer kinship – visual poetry



Charmed, Aunt Charlotte, charmed.

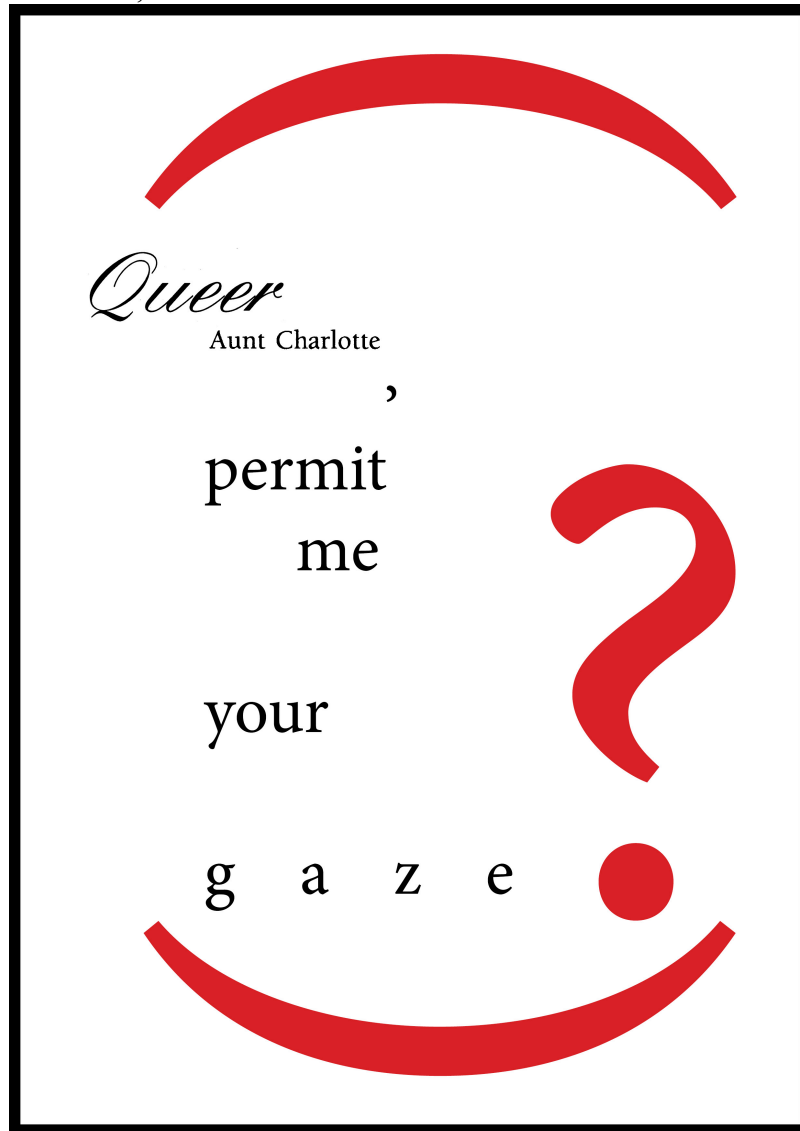
The surface ... the hue ... the threads.

This old thing? / You are too kind.

Snow White
with
missionary position
brown trimmings:
(the home she grew up in).

Bless you, Aunt Charlotte.
A cold or the flu?

Ah, I see ...



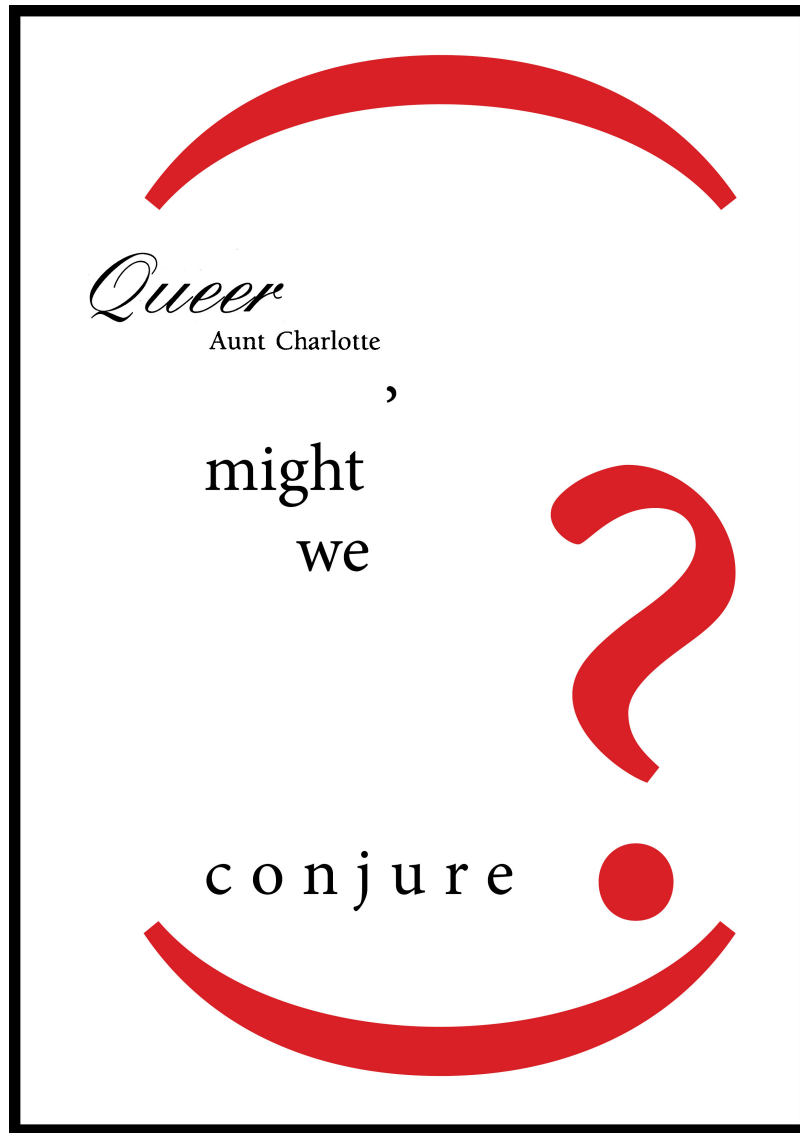
I may easefully enter
narrow stalls
behind doors marked
with the sign
of the frock
without thought.

I am not followed through
the shops
as I lack
the kinds of differences
that arouse
suspensions of theft.

I wander around looking like just another cunt.

Each month when the unfertilised egg is **expelled**
I feel somewhat like a dissenting farm animal
while **longing** for the day
when I can discard
this JuJu.

[Once, when Auntie Flo visited,
the issue of tampons and landfill was pondered]



A nice cup of tea and some Scotch Fingers.

Glyphosates in wheat.

Fucking Monsanto.

Dying bees.

A good news story (for vegans?):

Flow Hive, honey.

I said pet I said love I said pet.

Cory Bernardi's slippery slope.

Intergenerational relationships.

Zoophilia.

Photographs by Bill Henson.

Peter Madden's glitterbombed hate truck.

Alan Jones and Fred Nile and CSG.

Bentley: songs around a fire you don't burn rubbish in.

Plates get washed so people don't get sick.

Direct democracy: mundane-making-it-work-revolutions
(queerly familiar, I am sure).

Toilets, Aunt Charlotte, toilets.

No alcohol

and

definitely no pot.

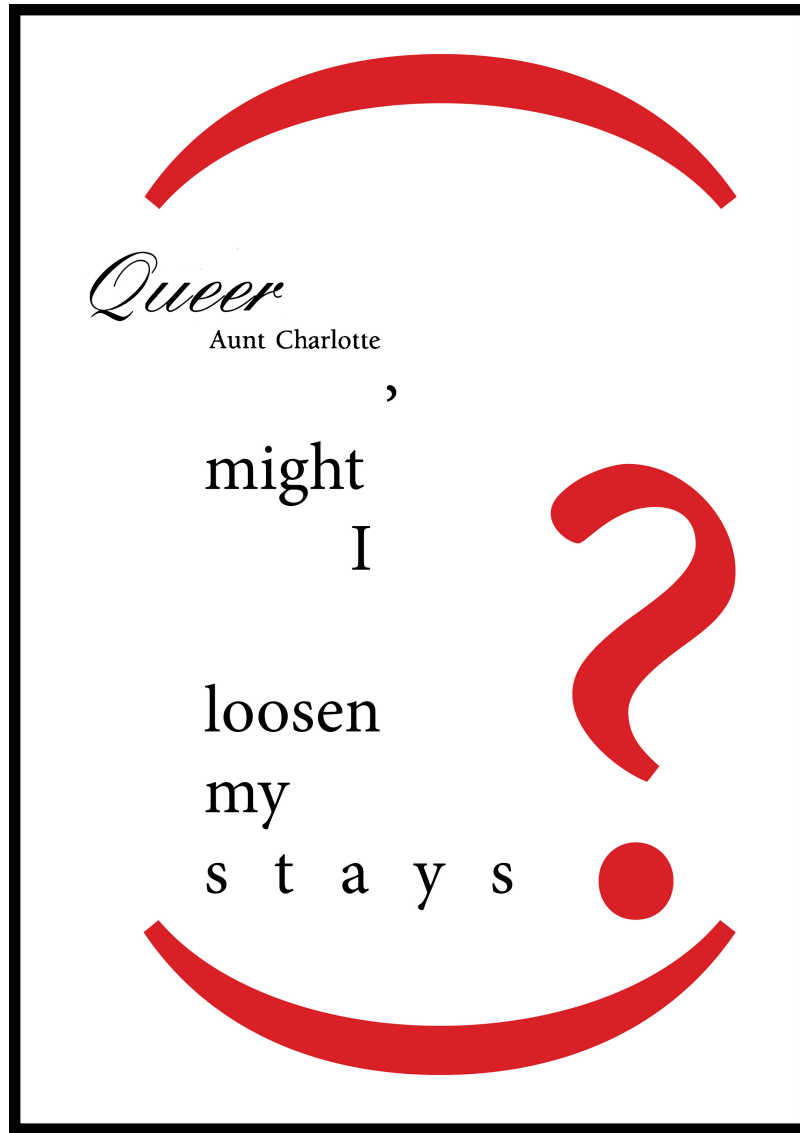
In case of police

and media

(keeping ourselves nice keeps "the public" on our side).

It seemed to work: nobody got Stapled.

Who did *we* claim we were?



My fingers say
that I am
not
naturally
promiscuous.

I seem to be confusing
mating strategy phenotype
with
pleasure.

*We cross now to a couple of prairie voles,
undemocratically elected
as the current poster kids
for **monogamy**
in the animal kingdom.*

(Bonobos occupy the other side of the binary.)

Why are the animals supposedly *married*?

Tick tick tick:
when things get
under your skin
and
into your blood
familiar feeds
might grow toxic.

Commitments:
two green toothbrushes
(one in each home
and
a red one in my bag,
for adventures
involving oral hygiene).

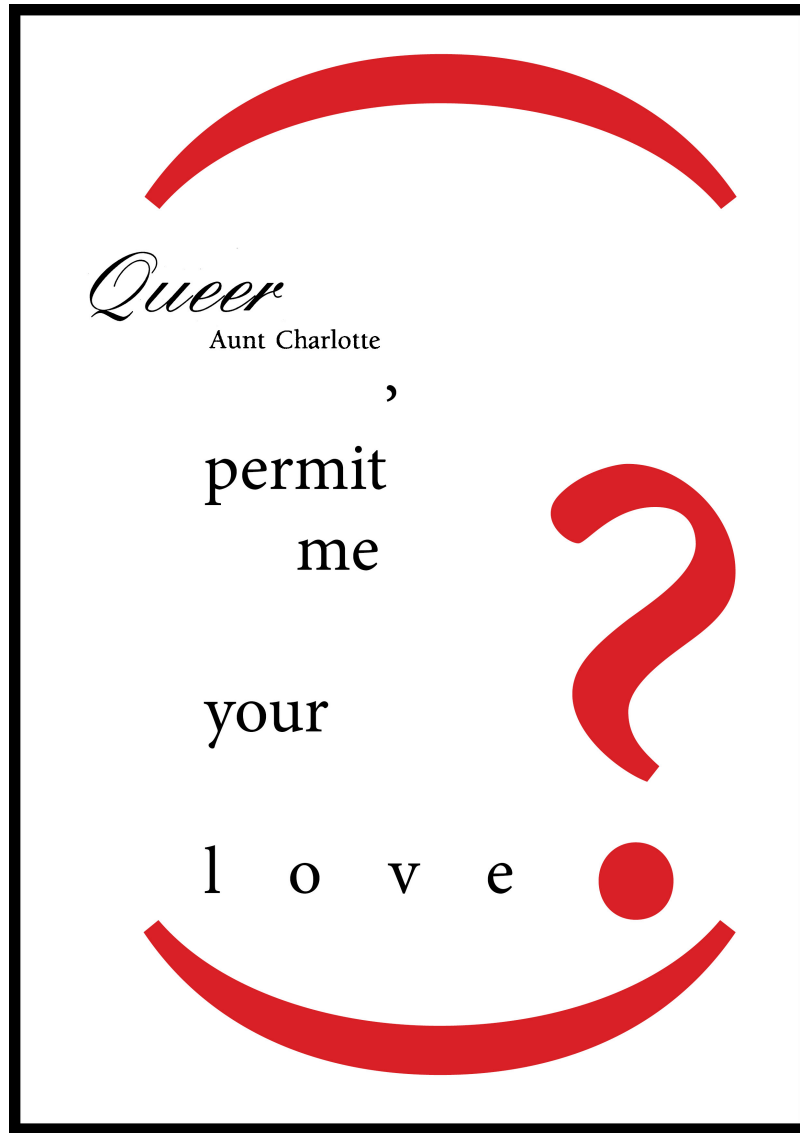
A blackened thumbnail
grows out
while we drink coffee and
smoke
(too much).

When representatives of the state
dropped from the sky
for some extreme landscape degeneration
we went to the pub.
(Communal living / secret gardens.)

Kisses goodbye
then *hello sailor!*
First day of autumn / how lovely.

Holding you when your dad died.
Comingling together
with no time to waste.

Aunt Charlotte, what does it mean to settle ... down?



To belong
without offspringing
in standard
human formats:

kinship
in queer
words?

Spinning outwards,
ever outwards
(like
washing machines
in a Laundromat
occupied
by Satan).

Lucifer's laundry, Aunt Charlotte!

Renewal? Anewal?
Fresh blossoms on familial trees?

Or,
perhaps,
rhizomatic eruptions
and
reverse shoplifting
ensure
we'll never become
well and truly **rooted**

whoever the fuck
(they think)
we are.

Research statement

Research background

This work pays homage to MacNeill's 'wittily ambiguous' *Cigarette, Aunt Charlotte?* published in *Australia Queer* (1996). In 'writing back' to this poem, this work addresses literary influence and intertextuality. Illustrating how 'reading a poem can be a way in to writing a poem' (Brophy 2009: 93), this research asks how poetic form and content may be entwined to foreground intertextuality as theory and practice.

Research contribution

This work illustrates its relationship between reading and writing in linguistic and visual modes. Through ongoing address to a character drawn from *Cigarette, Aunt Charlotte?*, the poem's content asserts the primacy of MacNeill's text within its construction, and establishes a mode of queer relation between the two works. The inclusion of scanned images of the words 'Aunt Charlotte' and 'Queer', taken from *Australia Queer*, visually reference the material source of intertextual relation enacted within the work, foregrounding intertextuality through its entwinement of form and content, destabilising boundaries between the visual and the linguistic (Caldwell 2014) and explicating cultural production as a mode of queer kinship (Freeman 2007).

Research significance

Contributing to both conversations and connecting them via a queer temporality, the research merit of this work is evidenced by its publication in *TEXT*.

Works cited

Brophy, K 2009 *Patterns of Creativity: Investigations Into the Sources and Methods of Creativity* New York: Rodophi

Caldwell, G 2014 'Visual Poetry – Crisis and Neglect in the 20th Century and Now', *Axon* 6, at <http://www.axonjournal.com.au/issue-6/visual-poetry%E2%80%94crisis-and-neglect-20th-century-and-now> (accessed 26 February 2015)

Freeman, E 2007 'Queer Belongings: Kinship Theory and Queer Theory', in GE Haggerty & M McGarry (eds), *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies* New York: Blackwell

MacNeill, I 1996 'Cigarette, Aunt Charlotte?', *Meanjin*, 55 (1): 173