Volume 5, Issue 2 Autumn 2026 Pg. 261 - 265

Matrix: A Journal for Matricultural Studies

https://journal.networkonculture.ca/index.php/matrix/index

Mending for Unity

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Abstract

In a time marked by war, hardened borders, and the displacement of millions, direct language can collapse complexity into accusation or slogan. Poetry allows another kind of speech to emerge. In Mending for Unity, *language becomes labour: a figure stitches across a vast cloth that resembles the world itself, moving over continents, fault lines, and oceans, trying to loosen the seams that divide lands and people. Each thread attempts repair, even as the work wounds the hands that perform it. Metaphor and myth become a form of protection, carrying what cannot safely be said into the fabric of the poem, until the act of mending itself exacts its cost.*

The poem speaks through metaphor and myth, allowing vulnerability to appear without complete exposure. What cannot be said directly is stitched into the fabric of the poem itself.

Keywords: fabric art, poetry, metaphor

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Resumé

À une époque marquée par la guerre, le durcissement des frontières et le déplacement de millions de personnes, le langage direct risque de réduire la complexité à une simple accusation ou à un slogan. La poésie permet à une autre forme de parole d'émerger. Dans Mending for Unity *[« Raccommoder pour l'unité »], le langage devient travail : une silhouette coud sur une vaste étoffe qui figure le monde lui-même, parcourant continents, failles géologiques et océans, cherchant à défaire les coutures qui séparent les terres et les peuples. Chaque fil tente une réparation, bien que ce travail blesse les mains qui l'accomplissent. La métaphore et le mythe deviennent une forme de protection, tissant dans la trame du poème ce qui ne peut être exprimé ouvertement sans danger — jusqu'à ce que l'acte de raccommoder finisse par exiger son tribut.*

Le poème s'exprime par la métaphore et le mythe, permettant à la vulnérabilité de se manifester sans pour autant être totalement exposée. Ce qui ne peut être dit directement est cousu dans la trame même du poème.

Mots-clés : art textile, poésie, métaphore

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Her infinitely long fingers struggled to guide the 13,000-kilometer cloth whenever her hands trembled with the constant roar of greed, envy, and selfishness moving through the world. The fabric lay across her lap like warm, breathing, broken skin ready to be healed.

She began at Polaris, planting small yellow stitches to close the tiny holes made by points of light that asked nothing in return. There, the thread obeyed. It did not snag.

As her needle moved south, through boreal dark and permafrosted memory stretching across Canada into the vast quiet of Siberia, the weave thickened. Ridges rose where none should exist. She smoothed them with blue backstitches, tracing the long breath of the Atlantic Ocean, touching the inland tension of the Great North, trying to erase divisions.

The cloth resisted.
It preferred tension.

She stitched along the planet's old wounds, across mountain spines like the Andes and the Himalayas, never fully healed. Cities flickered like constellations beneath glass as she, through her spectacles, tried to remind the Congo Basin and the Amazon River that they were once one.

At the Rio Grande, her needle struck resistance. Red surfaced, sudden and metallic, then vanished into the flow as if the water had learned to forget the brown bodies, clashing into a dissonant symphony of agony. She laid gold along the lower edge to silence the noise. But gold demanded entry. It pierced her as easily as the cloth.

The canvas gleamed.
Her hands did not.

She turned east, where time layered itself without mercy, dust over dust, empire over ruin across the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. Lines refused to stay buried. They rose through her stitches, crossing and recrossing through cities that had outlived their names. She worked slowly, not erasing but softening, coaxing edges to forget their sharpness.

Across the largest ocean, islands surfaced like unfinished thoughts, scattered from Hawaii to the Philippines. She circled them in green. Still, thin poles pierced their shores. Symbols strained against the wind.

Salt entered her wounds.
The sea accepted everything.

She stitched over waters burdened with claim, the South China Sea, and over lands opened too many times, from the forests of the Congo Basin to the heated margins of the Persian Gulf. The fabric tightened wherever memory refused to settle.

The more she stitched,
the wider the holes became.

At last she set aside the gold. She chose a quieter thread and stitched against the grain over mountains, through cities, across places that insisted on division. She did not follow borders. She crossed them.

For a moment, the fabric loosened.
The world seemed to breathe.

She imagined it whole, with crossings that did not consume those who made them. Inland seas like the Mediterranean returning names instead of erasing them. Places torn open, from Ukraine, Gaza, Haiti, to Sudan, closing without scar.

But the tremors returned. Seams reasserted themselves. Markers multiplied. Rust deepened. Her hands faltered. The cloth took what it needed.

Still she stitched.

Until one morning her dominant hand no longer answered her. Swollen, darkened, it seemed less her own than something claimed by the fabric.

It was taken.
Without ceremony.

She stopped mending.
But the borders continued to form.

Yet somewhere in the folds of the cloth, her soft, luminous lines persisted, faintly attempting to erase what the world insisted on keeping.



Figure 1: Untitled, *2026* © *Dipti Gupta*

Biography

Gloria Macher is an award-winning author and graduate of McGill University and Université de Montréal. She has published eight books, including one translated into French. Her honors include the 2014 International Latino Book Award and finalist distinctions for Ibero-American literary prizes. Her writing appears in Canadian journals and international festivals.

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