

CEPHA  
LOPOG  
RAPHY

2.0

RASIQRA  
REVULVA



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LOPOG  
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BY RASIQRA

REVULVA



ALSO BY  
RASIQRA REVULVA

*Cephalopography*

*If You Forget the Whipped Cream, You're No Good As a Woman*

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LOPOG  
RAPHY

2.0

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A Buckrider Book

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# CEPHALOGRAPHY

*/Ce-pha-lo-pn-grə-fi/*

*noun*

1. A multiform exploration of various axes of human identity and experience through the lens of cephalopods and their environments.
2. An illustrated celebration.
3. A reminder to breathe.

*bruising violet;*

How to recite the Du'a convincingly if reading along, but not how to interpret its meaning. *Aik, do, theen, chaar, paanch.* That Hindi song with the counting – *Ek Do Teen ...* and so on. *Billi. Titly.* Food words. Swear words, but only those hissed by my mother. How to pretend. How to fail. How to fail at pretending. How to pretend at failing.

No words for the ocean, or for what it contains.

Negative space: where I am, but not where I originate.

*moonless black.*

It is sketched onto paper. It proceeds as a drawing. It is tinted. It is inked. It proceeds as a painting. It is dried. It is digitized. It proceeds as a painting of a drawing scanned into a document.

<*prismatic* –

A body that aches (of water). A body that moults (of salt). A body that mistakes (of flesh). A body that revolts (without). A body that splits (of water). A body that swarms (gestalt). A body that exits (the water). A body that transforms (at fault).

*flame's heart yellow;*

It opens on a screen. It reopens as code on a screen. It proceeds with poetry embedded into code on a screen. It augments. It opens on a screen. It reopens as code on a screen. It stutters. It opens on a screen. It reopens as code on a screen. It distorts. It opens on a screen. It proceeds as garbled translation. It is a glitch.

*bicuspid white.*

It has three hearts. It has eight arms. It has nine brains. We are the same.

– *puckering*>

As I am writing, flood waters are rising. In Houston, both *Jamat Khanes* my nani attends twice daily have been submerged for nearly forty-eight hours. In Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, places within me I can't begin to know and an *ummah* that I never will have been obliterated. In Church-Wellesley Village, charcoal-filtered water turns to ash inside my mouth.

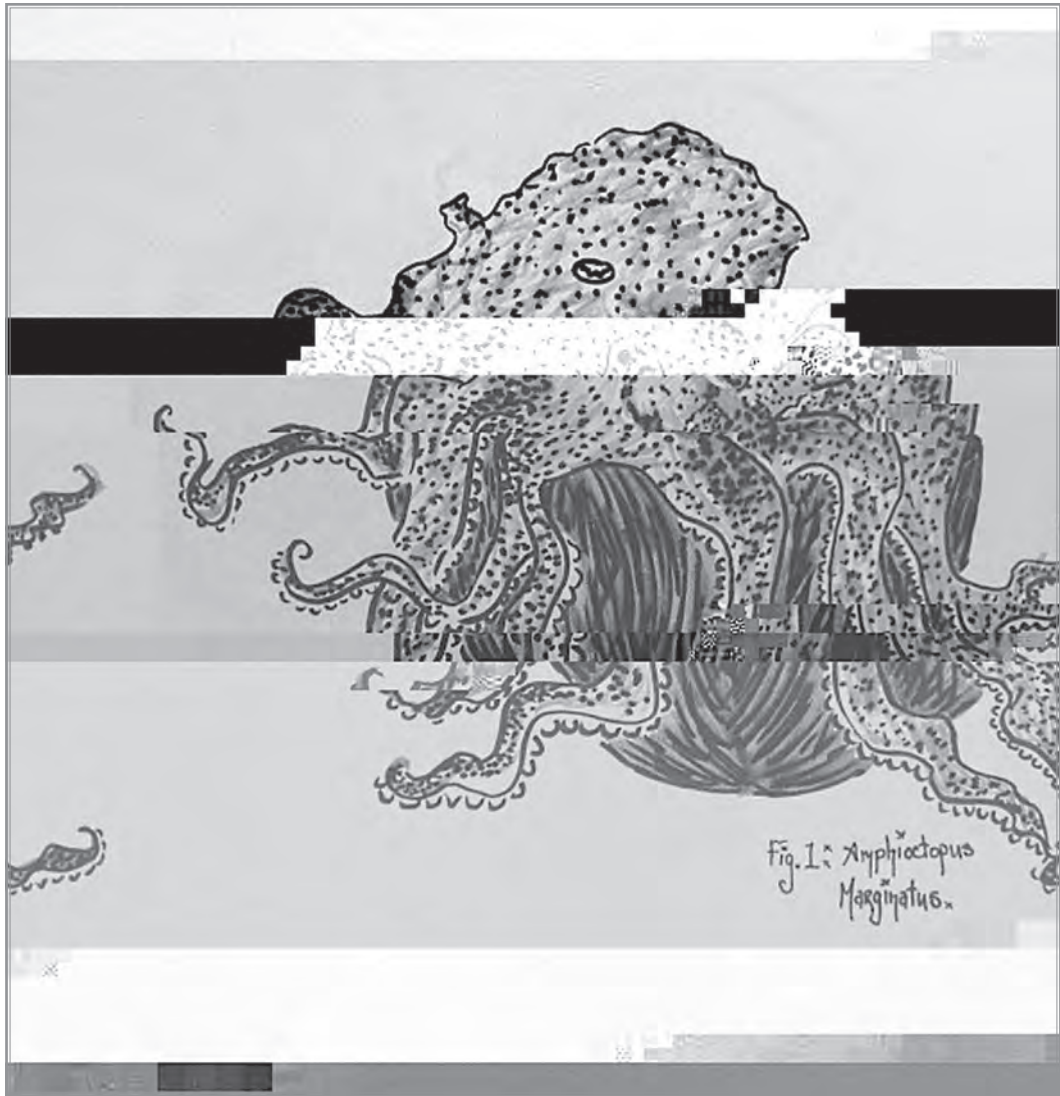


Fig. 1 *Amphiocopus marginatus*

## TOOL USE

in my claimed shell i face away

in undulation  
i whisper across leagues  
to the silk-ridged helm  
the chambered age and privilege dividing us and i

could slip  
between these curving fibres  
boneless  
painless  
parting the downy spines  
with eight fluttering tips  
separate and eager  
before shunting all feetandhead inside

and live in the hollow bowl  
and seek you in that space though my found shell blocks off the waves  
i still believe will bear me you

on waters i may never taste

so i  
still face away  
to mitigate the favour  
of leagues  
and genes  
and years

in the evolutionary diaspora of the deep sea

every husk  
a talisman  
in a liquid world.

# NAUTILIDAEISM

nacreous, chambered isolation  
*ya mawlana antas-salam.*

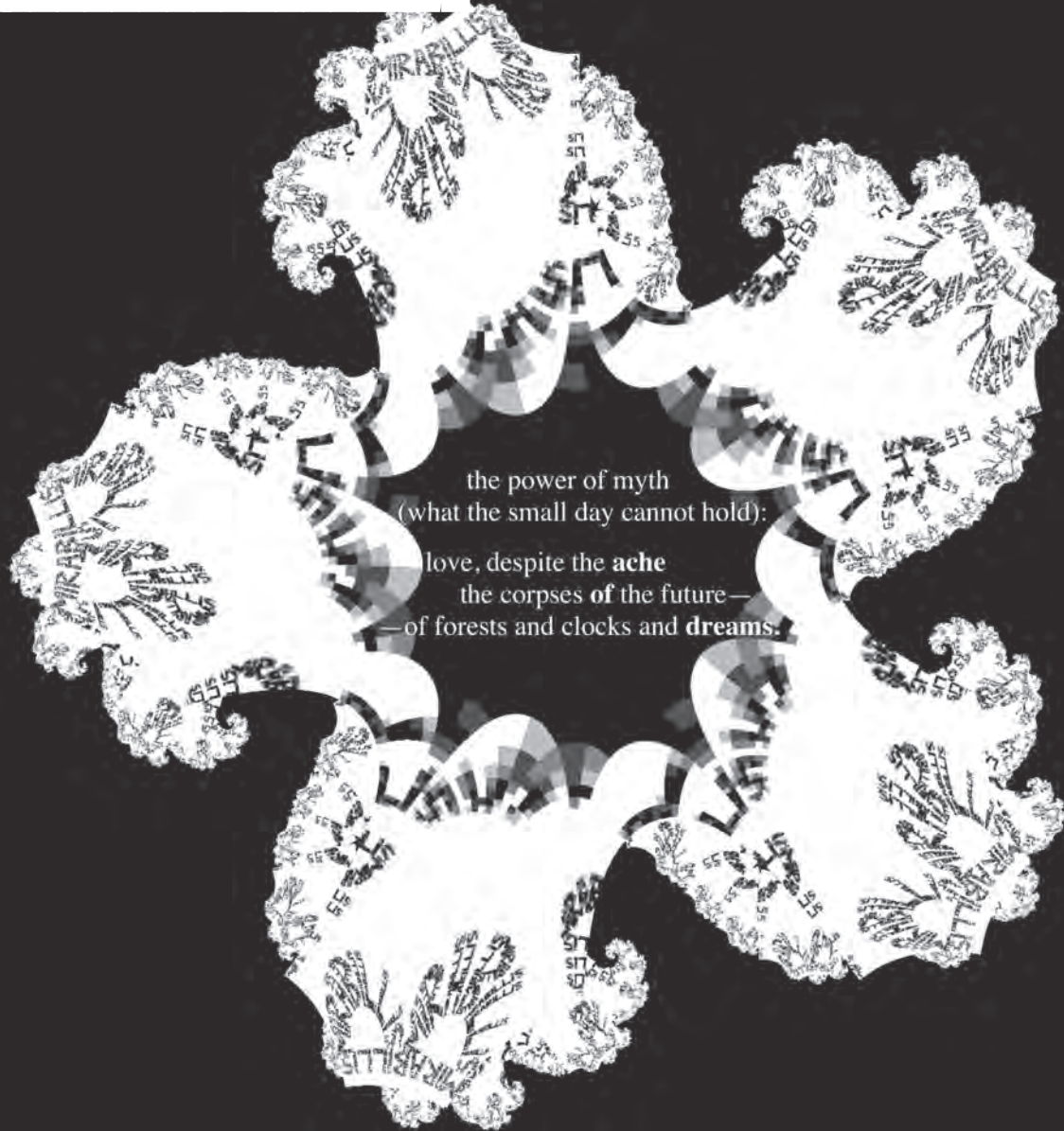
buoyant in bondage,  
*wa minkas-salam.*

spiralled aortal filtration  
*wa ilayka yarji-us-salam.*

shearing radula: cascading sight  
*hayina rab-bana bis-salam.*

aloft, enclosed and boneless,  
*wa adkhillna daras-salam.*

MORPHOLOGY AND ANATOMY:  
ARCHITEUTHIS DUX



the power of myth  
(what the small day cannot hold):

love, despite the ache  
the corpses of the future—  
—of forests and clocks and dreams.



## MANIFEST DESTINY

Kaleidoscopic hatchings, eighty-six metres below the waterline. Bruising violet; moonless black. Flame's heart yellow; bicuspid white. Moist sepia. With prismatic tissue puckering into coarse, beige papillae, the flamboyant cuttlefish takes her first steps.

*A travesty of locomotion. A bobbing, poisonous punchline. **Strangle** each wavering horror. **Weaponize** its dead, toxic flesh. It's only natural.*

A strapless javelin slicing the water's surface. LED blue. Seafoam white. Brick red. Fins deployed and arms displayed; the Japanese flying squid holds his first breath.

*A tragic waste of jet propulsion. A star-spangled mockery on display. **Vivisect** the abominations. **Militarize** their Icarian arrogance. My love, it's only natural.*

## OCTOPO AND TEUTHIET

Two *Octopoteuthis deletron* squid collided in the Pacific depths at sunset in July. Each one mirrored the other, with a shimmering, voluptuous, sperm-plastered mantle, and engorged arms bursting with come-hither barbs. The squid fell deeply in love. But soon they found themselves unable to feed. Both *deletrons* were inevitably drawn to hunting the other, now possessing the only flesh each craved in all the ocean. They pledged a vow of starvation, lest they risk consuming each other. With every passing wave, their bodies grew less sumptuous; their love more incandescent. And one November morning, both flesh and love were gone.

## MIMIC : PASSING

bury your siphon  
six arms and your head  
in a scraping cover of sand;  
extend the remainder *Sea Snake*  
one clubbed and one  
tapered  
as a seamless, muscular ribbon.

glide along the floor:  
flutter your edges like  
cuttlefish petticoats and *Flounder*  
flatten your centre over  
an imagined web of bone.

sail stiffly  
through the  
shadowless shallows.  
arch your *Lionfish*  
arms into  
waving banners  
proclaiming:

i am a LIE  
    (onfish)  
i am a LIE  
    (onfish)  
i am a LIE  
    (onfish)

and so i  
survive.





## RASIQRA REVULVA

is a queer femme writer, multimedia artist, editor, musician, performer and SciComm advocate. She is an editor of the climate crisis anthology *Watch Your Head: A Call to Action*, and one half of the experimental electronic duo The Databats (Slice Records, Melbourne; Toronto). She has published two chapbooks of glitch-illustrated poetry: *Cephalopography* (words(on)pages press, 2016) and *If You Forget the Whipped Cream, You're No Good As A Woman* (Gap Riot Press, 2018). *Cephalopography 2.0* is her debut collection. Learn more at @rasiqra\_revulva, @thedatabats and [www.rasiqrarevulva.com](http://www.rasiqrarevulva.com).



## PRAISE FOR CEPHALOPOGRAPHY 2.0

*Strange and marvellous as the deep sea, full of beauty, fear, myth, play, multiple hearts and legs, these are poems of invention, creativity, self, sex and surprise which celebrate the marvellous glitch that is life – what it is to be alive, to communicate. Here our tongue is a tentacle alert to the weird and sensual beauty of language, to the alien and ourselves as we navigate the vibrant dark that is our home. This twisted squidster is a wonder.*

– GARY BARWIN, author of *For It Is a Pleasure and a Surprise to Breathe*

# CEPHA LOPOG RAPHY 2.0

*Cephalopography 2.0* is as much a passionate celebration of cephalopods in all their plurality and finery as it is a collection of poems exploring human identity and experience through the lens of these marine animals. These experiments with traditional poetic forms such as ghazals, tankas and cinquains, as well as more contemporary forms, make poems that are uniquely and beautifully composed. *Cephalopography 2.0* plunges into the depths of human experience to daringly remark on the wild and transformative links between cephalopods and humanity beyond the land and the sea.



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