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Checkpoint, December 2018  
Work developed in residency in August 2017

**Project:** My novel is set in a world where a majority of the population has lost the ability to dream. Dreams are bought and sold at the Emporium, a place where Builders, exiles with special abilities, manufacture and sell dreams to the afflicted. A string of mysterious deaths exacerbates this uneasy trade. An investigator and a Builder eventually team up to discover a terrible conspiracy that threatens the entire social order and makes them question their own allegiances.

**Work process:** While at Can Serrat, I spent the month exploring my three central characters and seeing how their independent storylines would intersect and cohere. I was also interested in seeing how minor characters and their viewpoints might be used to tell the larger story arc of the protagonists. Another process I undertook while in residency was figuring out different approaches to building the world of the novel. I experimented with writing various “inserts” to go between the chapters and the dramatic action, such as journalistic pieces, historical dispatches, and other kinds of text.

The germination of compelling fiction for me starts when two unrelated things, two autonomous ideas or incongruous concepts, come together. In the case of this project, it was ‘dreams’ and ‘economic systems.’ As I continue to work on the book, I want to see if I can make use of dream logic in some technical fashion in the way I craft scenes. For example, maybe the characters’ investigation swings from formal and procedural, to more feral and chaotic.

In many ways, this novel is a hybrid of genres that I’ve always enjoyed reading. I like crime fiction for the way it employs psychological tension with its characters; the way it can be introspective, or expository, even lurid. I like science fiction for the way the stories feel larger than life and philosophical. My hope is the finished novel will have elements of these qualities. I’m currently working on revising the first draft. Updates on my various literary publications and this work can be found on my website <https://genevievedeguzman.carbonmade.com>. Follow me on Twitter @gen\_deg

## **Excerpts:**

### **Emporium marketing video, a Ministry Studios-produced commercial**

[CUE music intro against a picturesque sunrise. A singer croons the jingle, “Dream a better life.... at the Emporium!”]

Hello and welcome. My name is Toral Alef, Governor of the Emporium and your humble guide today. For two years we have worked to develop and refine our dream transfer technologies to help the citizens of Bay City achieve normal lives again.

For those of you who don't know us or know us only from our past, we understand if you might be wary of our commitment. I have worked hand-in-hand with the Ministry on both sides of the political aisle to allay these fears. Rest-assured, our loyalty and dedication to you is unwavering and as solid as the shale rock the Emporium is built on.

[CUT to an overhead shot of the Emporium grounds, with views of the cliffs. The building is solid and stalwart, a safe haven. CUE voiceover of the Governor.]

In the ancient myths, sleep was not the domain of science but governed by the goddess of the night, Nyx. Nyx hovered across the night sky with her heavy-lidded son Hypnos, occupying those liminal zones between sleep and waking. Guardians of nature's circadian rhythms, these gods roamed the world, scattering poppies, sending people into heightened states of grace and oblivion.

Dream loss that afflicts our population today is certainly an epidemic of proportions that the ancients could not have predicted. They couldn't fathom the explosion of sleep research and sleep clinics, how this disorder is targeted for eradication and prescribed rounds of medication. The existence of the Emporium, however, is something those ancient gods would understand. In some ways, we regard ourselves as their handmaidens, inheritors of their important work.

That is why we are excited to offer memory extraction and dream neuropatchwork for our medical patients, and a range of rendering and experiential programs for our recreational clients as well. When you come here, you will be treated by only the most skilled artisans working in the dream build industry today. We employ the best of the best at the Emporium: Builders who have been recruited from independent talent pools and have undergone rigorous in-house training, certified personally by me and the Ministry.

[CUT to a close-up of Toral Alef's unblinking smiling face. Her eyes have been darkened for cosmetic effect to hide the afterflash damage.]

There is absolutely no risk in visiting us, only the rejuvenating slumber you crave, the peace of mind you deserve. Here, at the Emporium, we want to promote the love of sleep again. We want you to love sleep, not out of desperation or necessity, but out of a desire for the intimate. Let us be that bridge to your dreamy-eyed Hypnos. Tilt your head back and receive the gift!

[CUE music set against another overhead shot of the Emporium.]

Human-driven technology is our passion. Come to the Emporium, your trusted partner for achieving the best you can be.

## **Trans Polis Pact Guiding Principles**

- Improve diplomatic relations and enhance cooperation between peoples.
- Establish trade agreements that promote better integration of the Emporium into Bay City commerce, allowing Builders to receive economic benefits and open businesses outside the Free Zone.
- Support the growth of micro and medium-sized businesses involved in dream production and sales.
- Develop means for political representation for Builders in the Ministry legislative bodies.

- Expand the supply chain for dream events.
- Expand access to dream events for disadvantaged populations.
- Integrate dream-therapy into a more inclusive health care system and provide provisions to the most dream-depressed areas.
- Recognize that the state-owned Emporium will continue to play a primary role in production and will spearhead all dream technician training.
- Protect and enforce labor rights of Emporium employees, improving working conditions.
- Recognize joint activities between Parties to work toward a definitive treatment or cure for dream deprivation.
- Promote the sharing of knowledge about dream deprivation.
- Recognize the importance of cultural identity and diversity across the dream ability spectrum.
- Establish an Agreement to identify future trade and investment interests and contribute to advancing deeper cooperation.