



Editorial

A window, a mountain, a scape

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The first week of May, I toured my new office at the University of Augsburg in the south of Germany. I had arrived before my furniture. In the empty room, it was as if the window was stretching as wide as it could, projecting its view beyond the boundaries of its frame. “Apparently you can see the Zugspitze,” my colleague told me as she handed me the key. Clouds dusted the sky. Just beyond the rooftops of the neighbouring buildings, my eyes scanned a cluster of trees so dense it could only be a park. Some of the roofs were dressed in green grass, but the Zugspitze—Germany’s tallest mountain—was nowhere to be seen.

“It’s too rainy,” I reasoned in the weeks to come, followed by “it’s too humid” in the months that passed. And then I gave up, joking that even though I hadn’t found the landscape I was looking for I did find the title for my future memoir about my postdoc years: “I Was Told There Would Be Mountains (And Other Promises).” But I didn’t mind. I did not grow up in the

company of mountains. The rivers and lakes of my childhood—the lands and waters now called Toronto—crisscrossed landscapes instead of climbing them.

Art history, the first subject I studied, trained me to see landscapes as horizontal. But food studies, the discipline I now call home, changed this, adding the lens of verticality. Food connects what grows above ground to what is below, while also blurring any stable separation between the two, just as it connects land to water, stomachs to soil, appetites to environments. The word *scape* marks up an area according to a particular characteristic, be it how it looks or sounds, smells or feels. We thus frame landscapes, seascapes, foodscapes, and even dreamscapes (and, in our current times, it is impossible to not mention warscapes and hellscapes).

Canada hosts food studies programs and research groups, but here in Germany the field is still nascent and has yet to fully travel from the sciences to the humanities, despite the excellent efforts of some scholars. And so

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having been awarded a grant to establish a research group that bridges food studies and the environmental humanities, it means more than just a project to work on—it is also an opportunity to grow food cultural history in Germany at large.

The first week of October, I replicated my colleague's tour, this time welcoming two doctoral researchers.

“Apparently we can see the Zugspitze,” I duly repeated.

“I'm still waiting,” I added.

But a few weeks later they confirmed the rumour was true. “You have to stick your head out the window,” they instructed. I rushed to open it, stretching my neck as far I could to the right. I'm not fluent enough in mountains to name which one is which, but there they were, the first row of the Alps in all their might.

For months I had been looking in the wrong direction. Is the metaphor too obvious? Perhaps, but it is a reminder of the importance of community, of context,

and how much more you experience when you widen both. This also doubles as a description of why I wanted to join the CFS Editorial Collective, to expand community, to compare contexts, and to share how we inhabit and study landscapes, their peoples and other animals, their plants and microbes, and all that they host that we call food.

Now that I know where to find them, I check on the mountains when I arrive in the morning, taking note if they are hiding behind clouds or bathing in the sun, a practice that recalls what the anthropologist Anna Tsing calls the art of noticing. The direction in which we cast our noticing, as the mountains remind me, matters, as well as that we share our noticing with others.