

*Book of Yet* is set in an imaginary borderland past the western part of the US. The main character, Manfred the Disappearing Man, flies to the sun to embark toward Horizon City, an area that barred him from entry. After Manfred reaches the sun, he descends down to earth, his space craft—an incendiary body—hits the Back Bay Hydro-Nuclear Plant, causing a dust plume resulting in widespread public health ailments and a perennial night. Richie Singleton, J.D., Manfred’s estate attorney, demands Lefty Westin, a Perceptual Scientist and former mentor of Man, listen to Manfred’s story and write a book suitable for publication. Not only will the publication of this book take care of the outstanding receivables owed to Singleton, but such a story would make Manfred, a disappearing man, legible as a person. While Manfred lives on, fully cognizant and verbal as a pile of dust in an urn, only those who believe he is a person can hear him speak. Thus, Lefty Westin is tasked with the efforts of emboldening the humanity of his friend’s disintegrating spirit. The book follows the trial-worn story of two friends, displaced by flooding and living in a Best Western. They must make amends as Westin seeks to translate Manfred’s disaster into a redemptive story. The majority of the book takes place in the aftermath of Man’s flight, which is radical in its hubris. The two must grapple with this underlying disaster that transforms the health, sustainability, and geography of the region.

Taking use of historical traditions such as the prominence of print-based media, the legacy of appeals in nineteenth-century American political thought, and the rise of an individual imagination, *Book of Yet* employs the epistolary genre in a broad sense, as it is composed entirely of documents. Such forms include legal treaties, newspaper clippings, archival requests, first-person descriptions, scientific studies, geographic surveys, business invoices, and a smattering of reviews, publisher’s notes, and journalistic portraits. While this work most explicitly follows the genre contours of the disaster novel and western, this satirical cowboy fiction speaks about the process of ‘disappearing’ across social and political registers. Manfred, representing someone who cannot speak for himself, makes this western a tale predicated on an individual’s indivisible reliance on others. Most explicitly, Manfred, the Disappearing Man, represents an interpretive response to the narrator of Ralph Ellison’s *The Invisible Man*; while Ellison’s character is an orator, Manfred’s story cannot be told by him alone. Thus, as a disappearing man, Manfred depends on others and their regard for his story. Other literary influences that shaped this manuscript include Franz Kafka’s emphasis on bureaucratic power, W. G. Sebald’s formal aesthetics, the humor in Paul Beatty’s *The Sellout*, the prosaic pyrotechnics of Joshua Cohen’s *The Netanyahus*, and an orientation towards the western genre similar to Ishmael Reed’s *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down*.

Reevaluating the independence common to the western, Manfred’s dependency on others to speak for him attests to the vulnerability of securing rights. He is only partially understood to be a human being, and thus represents a state that is not exclusive to the dictates of fiction. A quest to be seen as a human is central to how a country navigates the complexities of rights on conceptual and literal borderlands. In a genre that historically prizes exceptions and outliers, this story revamps the western to investigate how sovereignty influences a person’s quest for independence. A horizon, a disappearing edge, marks who can possess the freedom to roam. Yet, ultimately, social and governmental laws dictate the difference between dreams that are delusions and those dreams that forecast the future trajectory of ambition’s expanse.