

The **OAKLAND INTERPRETER** Project



THE OAKLAND INTERPRETER PROJECT GREW FROM  
A SURVEY BROADCAST TO RESIDENTS OF OAKLAND,  
CALIF., ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARCH 2018.

THE SURVEY COLLECTED OVER 100 RESPONSES  
FROM ACROSS THE CITY.



Welcome to the Oakland Interpreter Project,  
a Master's thesis from Oakland for the  
Institute without Boundaries. We're  
constellating our neighbors' stories and  
aspirations to design better public services.  
Responses are anonymously submitted.

Cool - I'm in

press ENTER





CROWS

**LAKE MERRITT IS HOME**

**TO THE OLDEST WILDLIFE REFUGE**

**IN NORTH AMERICA. DOZENS OF RESIDENT AND MIGRATORY BIRDA <sup>SPECIES</sup> THRIVE HERE- IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN OAKLAND-INCLUDING THE TOWN'S UNOFFICIAL MASCOT, THE BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.**

THE BIRD SPECIES THAT VISIT THE LAKE HAVE SHIFTED OVER THE YEARS. RELATIVE NEWCOMERS LIKE THE **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** AND THE **SNOWY EGRET**, WERE DISPLACED BY DISRUPTIVE FORCES ELSEWHERE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA (CARQUINEZ BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION AND RACCOONS, RESPECTIVELY). OTHER ONCE-PROMINENT SPECIES, LIKE THE **WIGEON** AND THE **PINTAIL**, NO LONGER HAVE A PRESENCE HERE. AND THEN THERE'S THE **TUFTED DUCK** - A SINGLE TUFTED DUCK - THAT HAS BEEN SPOTTED OFF AND ON SINCE THE 1970s.

OAKLAND AND ITS GEM, LAKE MERRITT, ARE EACH ECOSYSTEMS OF **INTERCONNECTED RESIDENTS**, REFLECTING THE STRUGGLE AND BEAUTY OF LIVING IN - OR PASSING THROUGH - THIS UNIQUE CORNER OF THE WORLD.



RING-BILLED GULL



THE RAVEN



DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

COOPER'S HAWK

LESSER CROWDFINCH

BELTED KING-FISHER

CANADA GOOSE

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN

CLARK'S GREBE

SNOWY EGRET

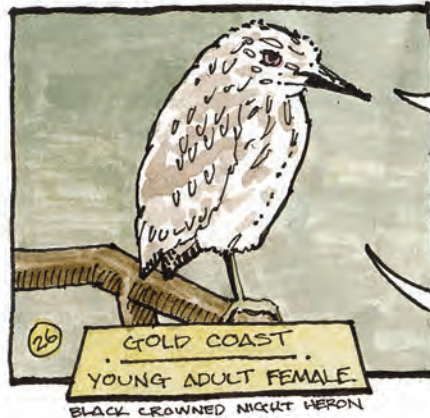
AMERICAN COOT

ONE THING GREAT ABOUT OAKLAND IS...

THE ARTISTIC DIVERSITY.

Q: WHERE WERE YOU BEFORE OAKLAND?

I MOVED FROM DALLAS, TX, FOR A TEACHING JOB, BUT GREW UP IN MICHIGAN.



GOLD COAST  
YOUNG ADULT FEMALE  
BLACK CROWNED NIGHT HERON

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR FROM YOUR CITY?

A VIBRANT CIVIC COMMUNITY.

I WANT TO SEE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE **CREATION OF THEIR CITY**, NOT BYSTANDERS OF IT. WHILE NEW DEVELOPMENT IS NEEDED IN OAKLAND, THE ONLY PEOPLE AT THE TABLE SEEM TO BE THE **MAYOR AND DEVELOPERS**. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE ACTUAL CITIZENS MORE INVOLVED.



WHAT'S BLOCKING YOU FROM YOUR ASPIRATIONS?

NON-RESPONSIVE ELECTEDS. WHEN ALL CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE ON THEIR **CELL PHONES** DURING PUBLIC COMMENT AT A CITY COUNCIL MEETING, IT IS **DISHEARTENING**.



ROCK DOVE





ALL OF THE CHANGE AGENTS IN OAKLAND ALSO SEEM TO BE **SILOED**: THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUPS DON'T TALK TO THE EDUCATION GROUPS, WHO DON'T TALK TO THE HOMELESSNESS GROUPS, ETC.

**COULD OAKLAND BE ENOUGH?**

OAKLAND HAS A LOT GOING FOR IT BUT WITH SUCH A **DIVERSE POPULATION**, THE CITY MUST **RISE TO THE OCCASION** OF MEETING DIVERSE NEEDS. THIS IS CHALLENGING, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

I WOULD LOVE TO STAY FOREVER, BUT ALSO WANT TO PURCHASE A HOME. SPENDING HALF A MILLION ON A 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT IS **OUT OF THE QUESTION**. I AM LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY.

OAKLAND COULD BE THAT PLACE, BUT IT **MOST LIKELY WON'T BE** BECAUSE IT CAN BE DONE LESS EXPENSIVELY SOMEWHERE **ELSE**.



DIVERSITY, SENSE OF COMMUNITY.  
**MY FOREVER HOME.**

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IN OAKLAND BECAUSE MY DAD'S PARENTS HAVE LIVED HERE **SINCE 1940**, AND HE GREW UP HERE AND WENT TO SCHOOL HERE.



**CHABOT PARK**  
YOUNG ADULT FEMALE  
BELTED KINGFISHER

BEFORE I REALLY LIVED HERE, I STAYED WITH MY GRANDMA EVERY FRIDAY FOR HELLLLA LONG.

GRANDMA HAS LIVED NEAR THE CORNER OF EL MONTE AND OUTLOOK SINCE THE 60'S, AND OUTLOOK IS LITERALLY **ALL RUBBLE**. SHE SAYS THEY PAVED OVER IT ONE TIME IN THE 70'S, BUT SINCE THEN **NOTHING HAS HAPPENED**. AND THE ROAD IS LITERALLY GRAVEL.



I WANT TO SEE FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN OAKLAND AS LONG AS I HAVE **BE ABLE TO STAY**.



MY BEST FRIEND'S AUNT (WHO SHE LIVED WITH) HAD A RANDOM HEART ATTACK, AND BECAUSE SHE WASN'T EXPECTING TO DIE OR ANYTHING, THE GOVERNMENT **RECLAIMED HER HOUSE**. THAT HOUSE HAS BEEN IN THEIR FAMILY FOR 120 YEARS! AND WITHIN 3 MONTHS THEY GUTTED AND REMODELED IT, AND SOLD IT TO SOME WHITE PEOPLE THAT DON'T EVEN LIVE HERE.



I REMEMBER HAVING TO DEFEND MY CITY WHEN I SAID I LIVED IN OAKLAND AND PEOPLE WOULD BE SHOCKED AND GO ON TO ASK ME HOW I SURVIVE IN SUCH A "DANGEROUS" PLACE. AND NOW THERE ARE WHITE PEOPLE WALKING THEIR DOGS AT 10PM ON 106TH AND BANCROFT AND IT'S DISHEARTENING.

EVERY MONTH IT SEEMS I KNOW P.O.C. WHO ARE BEING FORCED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO GIVE UP THEIR HOMES AND LEAVE.

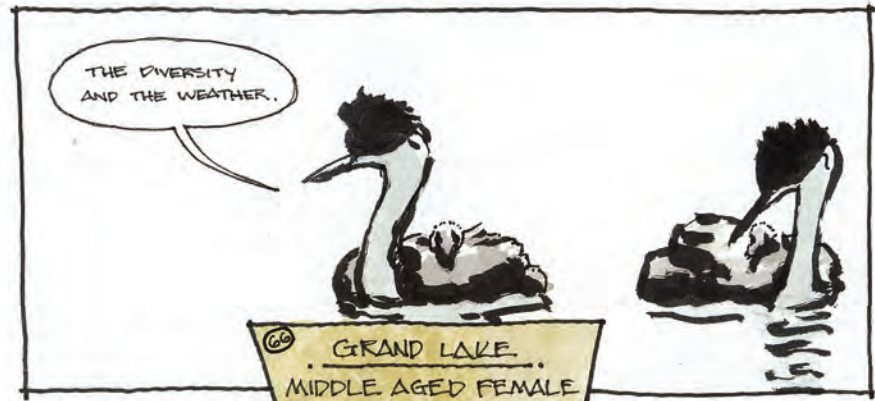
EVERY DAY THE CITY BECOMES LESS AND LESS LIKE THE OAKLAND I KNEW GROWING UP.



IT'S A SHAME THAT OUR CULTURE GETS WASHED AWAY WITH OVERPRICED COFFEE SHOPS AND CHAIN RESTAURANTS.

MY FAVORITE MEXICAN FOOD AS A KID WAS A BURRITO SHOP ON LAKESHORE. A FEW YEARS BACK A CHIPOTLE OPENED UP RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET. WITHIN A YEAR THE BURRITO SHOP HAD TO CLOSE. NOW PEETS IS EXPANDING INTO THAT SPACE.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY WE ARE LOSING AUTHENTICITY AND REPLACING IT WITH CORPORATIONS.



~~CLARK'S GREBE~~  
~~WESTERN GREBE~~

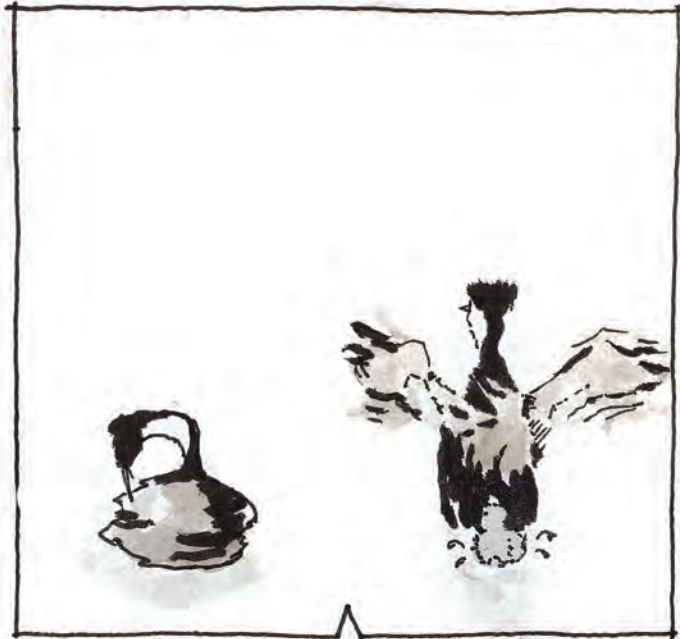
I GREW UP IN THE BAY AREA, AND I HAVE SPENT ALL MY ADULT LIFE IN THE BAY AREA ... OAKLAND IS THE CITY I HAVE LIVED IN THE LONGEST, AND IT IS THE ONE I LOVE THE MOST. (OTHERS BEING ALAMEDA, EMERYVILLE, AND SAN FRANCISCO.)



I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD LEAVE OAKLAND, OR THE BAY FOR THAT MATTER, BUT IT'S GETTING HARDER AND HARDER AND I FEEL TRAPPED IN MY RENT CONTROLLED APARTMENT. IF I CHOOSE TO LEAVE, I WILL MOST LIKELY MOVE TO SACRAMENTO OR OUT OF STATE.

I THOUGHT I COULD SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE HERE BUT...





YEARS AGO I THOUGHT OAKLAND HAD EVERYTHING. IT'S JUST IN THE LAST 5 YEARS OR SO, I FEEL LIKE THE DIVERSITY IS **DRAINING AWAY**, AND GENTRIFIERS ARE MOVING IN AND BRINGING THE RIDICULOUS HOUSING PRICES WITH THEM. PRETTY SOON IT WILL JUST BE A CITY FOR **THE CLUELESS RICH**.

I'M FROM SAN FRANCISCO. MY WIFE AND I LOVED THE **NEIGHBORHOOD FEELING** OF OAKLAND AND ITS **BIKE-ABILITY**. SO WE MOVED.



WE'D LOVE TO STAY HERE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. NOT SURE IF WE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO MOVE OUT OF OUR **LITTLE STUDIO APARTMENT**.



BIG CITY THAT FEELS LIKE A NEIGHBORHOOD.



TEMESCAL 88  
YOUNG ADULT MALE

FORSTERS TERA

BETTER BIKE LANES THAT **STRETCH THE WHOLE CITY**...WOULDN'T IT BE NICE TO HAVE SOMETHING SIMILAR TO THE SF WIGGLE WHERE BIKERS FELT SAFE TRAVELING THE WHOLE CITY?

ON THE PUBLIC TRANSIT FRONT, IT'S SUPER DIFFICULT TO **VENTURE PAST THE BART LINE**. I DON'T SEE THAT CHANGING ANY TIME SOON THOUGH.

OAKLAND COULD BE ENOUGH WITH TRANSPORTATION. YOU FIX THAT, AND **OAKLAND WILL BOOM**.







© ADAM'S POINT  
YOUNG ADULT FEMALE

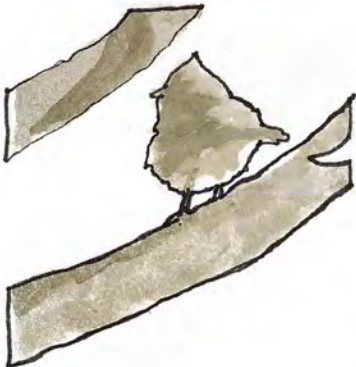
OAK TITMOUSE

IT'S QUIET AND PEACEFUL.  
THIS IS SUCH A NICE  
CHANGE OF FACE.

I ALSO ENJOY THAT  
THERE IS MORE  
DIVERSITY AND GRIT.

I CAME HERE FROM SAN FRAN-  
CISCO. MY FIANCÉ BOUGHT AN  
APARTMENT OUT HERE. I DON'T  
MISS LIVING IN S.F. AT ALL,  
BUT STILL WORK THERE.

I WOULD BE OPEN TO STAYING  
HERE FOREVER, OR MOVE TO A  
MORE AFFORDABLE AREA OUT-  
SIDE THE BAY AREA. I DON'T  
LIKE THE YUPPINESS OF A LOT  
OF THE NICER AREAS IN THE  
SOUTH BAY, LIKE PALO ALTO.



THE CITY SHOULD BE SAFE,  
HAVE A GOOD WALK SCORE,  
THINGS TO DO, HAVE A  
GOOD SOCIAL SCENE.

I REALLY DON'T LIKE THE  
TENT CITIES WE HAVE  
GOING ON. I DON'T LIKE THAT  
PACKAGE THEFT AND CAR  
BREAKINS ARE SO PREVALENT.

AS FAR AS WHAT'S MISSING,  
BETTER PARKING WOULD  
BE GREAT.



ALLENDALE  
YOUNG ADULT MALE  
EARED GREBE

YOU CAN GET KICKED OUT OF  
MIDDLE SCHOOL, BARELY  
GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL, DROP  
OUT OF COLLEGE, AND 10 YEARS  
LATER OWN A BUSINESS EM-  
POWERING YOUNG ADULTS TO  
CREATE THEIR OWN SUCCESS.  
OAKLAND CREATES DIAMONDS  
UNDER PRESSURE.

AFTER LIVING IN OAKLAND FOR  
26 YEARS, I MOVED OUT TO  
RICHMOND WHEN I GOT MARRIED.  
MY WIFE DIDN'T LIKE THE NEIGHBOR-  
HOOD I WAS LIVING IN BECAUSE  
SHE DIDN'T FEEL SAFE AND NOW  
I'M 7 MINS FROM MY JOB.

A CITY SHOULD PROVIDE COMMUNITY,  
WORK, AFFORDABLE LIVING, FAMILY  
SUPPORT, SAFETY, EMPOWERMENT,  
FOOD, AND FUN.



I'VE BEEN PURSUING MY GOALS  
FOR A YEAR NOW. BEING BACK  
IN OAKLAND IS PART OF IT  
BUT IT'S ABSOLUTELY TOO  
EXPENSIVE AND IF I WERE  
TO FIND AN AFFORDABLE  
PLACE IT WOULD BE A  
STUDIO IN THE HOOD.



QUSD NEEDS MORE MONEY PUT INTO THE SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS NEED TO BE COMPENSATED FOR THEIR SUCCESS IN CREATING MEMORABLE MOMENTS FOR STUDENTS AND PUSHING THEM TO THEIR FUTURE.

WE NEED MORE TEACHERS LIKE TIM BRENNER AT CASTLEMONT AND MAUREEN BENSON WHEREVER SHE IS RIGHT NOW TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE 'CAUSE THEY HELPED CHANGE MY LIFE.

MOST IMPORTANTLY OAKLAND SHOULD PROTECT & PRIORITIZE THE LOCALS WHO LOVE AND HAVE SERVED IN OAKLAND AND CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW JOB TRAINING WITH THE UPCOMING TAKE-OVER OF THE TECH INDUSTRY IN OAKLAND...



... SORRY I WENT ON A RANT.

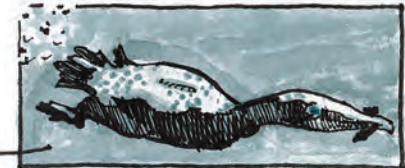
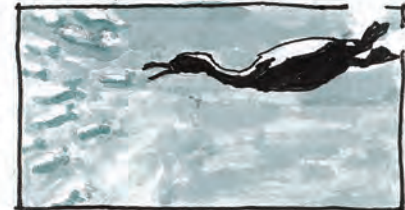


AFTER GRAD SCHOOL, I DECIDED, HAVING LIVED IN NYC ALREADY, THE ONLY OTHER CITIES WORTH THINKING ABOUT WERE CHICAGO OR SF. I CHOSE SF. AFTER THE COLDEST SUMMER IVE EVER EXPERIENCED, I MOVED TO OAKLAND - FOR WARMTH AND BECAUSE THERE ARE MORE THAN A FEW BLACK FOLKS.

I'M A BLACK ARCHITECT. UNTIL RECENTLY I HAD NO "AFTER OAKLAND" PLANS. BUT I TRULY THINK OAKLAND IS FAR MORE INSIDIOUSLY RACIST THAN WE LIKE TO BELIEVE.

THERE ARE NO BLACK ARCHITECTS ON ANY OAKLAND PROJECT OF SIZE. OUR CITY ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS THAT DISPARITY THROUGH INACTION.

SO I'M THINKING ABOUT DETROIT.



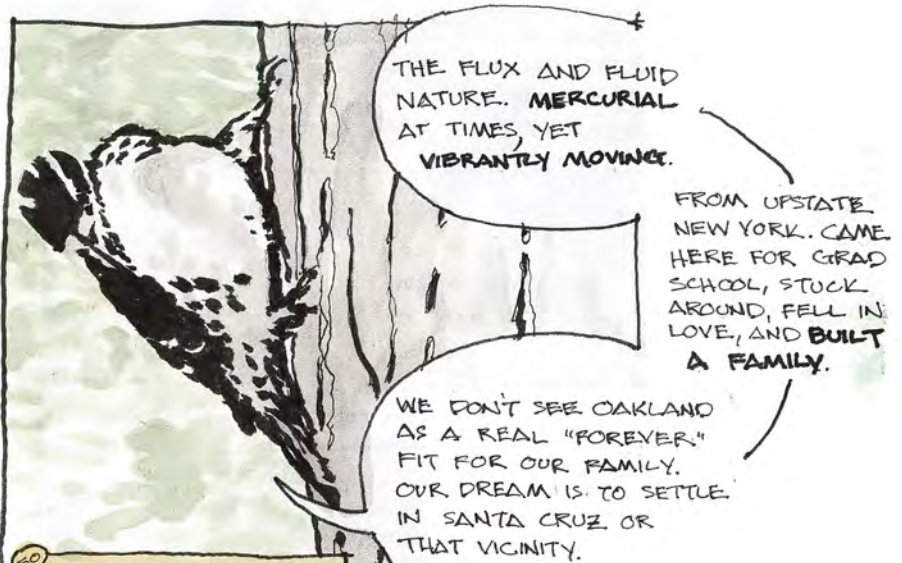
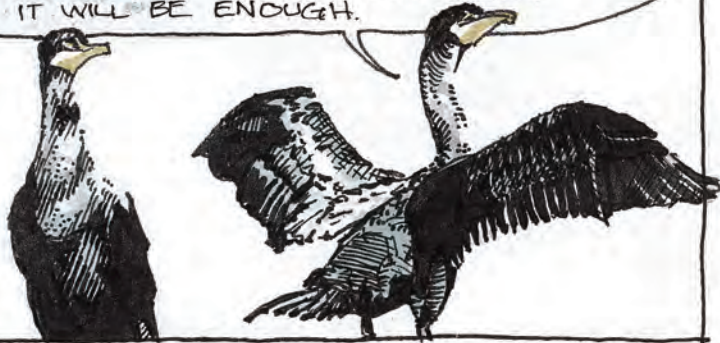


WHITE FOLKS DO NOT HIRE BLACK DESIGNERS. BLACK FOLKS MAKE 70 CENTS ON THE DOLLAR; WITH SUCH DISPARITY, HOW WILL BLACK DESIGNERS BE ABLE TO EXERCISE THEIR TALENTS?



OAKLAND NEEDS TO RAISE ITS PROPERTY TAXES. OAKLAND CAN NEVER BE ENOUGH UNTIL IT TAKES ACTION ON INCOME DISPARITY.

THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ACCESS TO COLLEGE OR GRADUATION RATES. BLACK PEOPLE HAVE BEEN GRADUATING IN NUMBERS FOR OVER 100 YEARS. WHEN OAKLAND IS READY TO LOOK RACISM SQUARELY IN THE FACE, THAT'S WHEN IT WILL BE ENOUGH.



THE FLUX AND FLUID NATURE. MERCURIAL AT TIMES, YET VIBRANTLY MOVING.

FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK. CAME HERE FOR GRAD SCHOOL, STUCK AROUND, FELL IN LOVE, AND BUILT A FAMILY.

WE DON'T SEE OAKLAND AS A REAL "FOREVER" FIT FOR OUR FAMILY. OUR DREAM IS TO SETTLE IN SANTA CRUZ OR THAT VICINITY.

60 NORTH OAKLAND MIDDLE AGED FEMALE

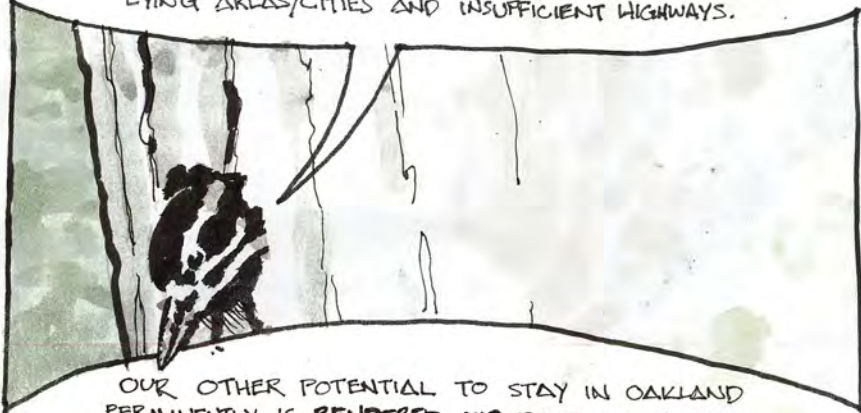
NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER



I'M LOOKING FOR MORE ACCOUNTABILITY, LESS COMIC BOOK-ESQUE CORRUPTION, A STABLE, THRIVING SCHOOL DISTRICT, ACTUAL APPLICATION OF OUR COMMUNITY'S SOCIALLY PROGRESSIVE VALUES - RATHER THAN THE EMPTY EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT I'VE WITNESSED THUS FAR WITH FAVORITISM TO THE TOP ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS. THE HIGHER YOUR MORTGAGE, THE MORE YOUR VOICE MATTERS IN OAKLAND.



OUR GOAL TO MOVE OUTSIDE OF OAKLAND, BUT REMAIN EMPLOYED IN SAN FRANCISCO, IS BLOCKED BY NONEXISTENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO OUT-LYING AREAS/CITIES AND INSUFFICIENT HIGHWAYS.



OUR OTHER POTENTIAL TO STAY IN OAKLAND PERMANENTLY IS RENDERED IMPOSSIBLE BY HOUSING PRICES, THE CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, BLIGHT THROUGH DEFUNCT PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE, THE CONSTANT THREAT OF SERIOUS/MORTALLY DANGEROUS CRIME, AND THE EXPANDING VAGRANCY AND HOUSELESS POPULATION SPILLING THE RESULTS OF INHUMAN CONDITIONS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH RISK ALL OVER THE SIDEWALKS.



THE MAJORITY OF ME BELIEVES OAKLAND <sup>REALLY</sup> MAY NEVER CHANGE. SOME OF THE NEOTISM AND CORRUPTION SPANS GENERATIONS.

THE FOOD.

HERE FROM PALM COAST, FL. I JOINED THE PEACE CORPS, CAME HOME, REALIZED I HAD NOTHING IN COMMON WITH ANYONE THERE ANYMORE AND HIGHTAILED IT TO THE BAY.

THE FOOD.



70 LONGFELLOW  
YOUNG & ADULT MALE

AMERICAN COOT

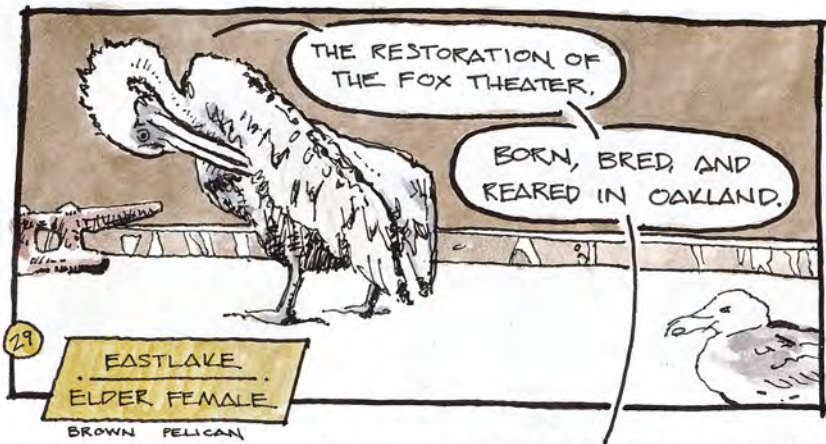
I'LL STAY HERE AS LONG AS I CAN, BUT I'M A SOCIAL WORKER AND IT'S BECOMING HARDER AND HARDER TO GET OLD IN THE BAY AREA.

<sup>BUT</sup> MOVING SOMEWHERE WITH COMPARABLE WEATHER, POLITICS, ARTS, AND FOOD IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE.



OAKLAND IS ALIVE WHICH IS THE GREATEST THING ABOUT IT - FOLKS AREN'T HAPPY JUST LIVING A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL LIFE. EACH PERSON DIGS OUT THEIR LITTLE CORNER OF TRUTH AND A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GOOD AT IT. PEOPLE ARE FERVENTLY PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT THEY DO, WHETHER IT BE STREET ART, ACTIVISM, OR PASTRIES. I GUESS WHAT IT IS IS ALSO WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.





29  
EASTLAKE  
ELDER FEMALE

BROWN PELICAN

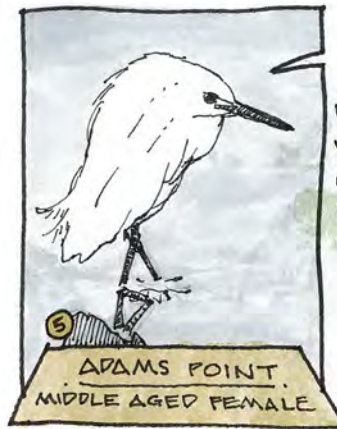
I PLAN TO DIE IN OAKLAND— THERE'S NO OTHER CITY LIKE OAKLAND; ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT AS CHARMING AS IN THE 50'S AND 60'S.

IT'S A SHAME THAT RECREATIONAL EVENTS ARE NOT MORE PROMINENT AS IN THE DAYS GONE BY— NOTHING FOR YOUTH TO DO.

RECREATIONAL CENTERS AT OUR PARKS (DEFEMERY, MOSSWOOD, ETC.) WERE OPEN, HAD DANCES, OUTINGS, SPORTING EQUIPMENT FOR LOAN... I EVEN RAN TRACK AND WAS SPONSORED BY THE POLICE DEPT.

I'M LOOKING FOR SHOPS WHERE YOU CAN BUY SHOES, DRESSES, SUITS, ETC. ENOUGH OF RESTAURANTS.

NOTHING IS BLOCKING ME. I MADE IT TO SENIOR CITIZEN.



5  
ADAMS POINT  
MIDDLE AGED FEMALE

SNOWY EGRET

DIVERSITY.

FROM CHICAGO. MY PARTNER WANTED TO COME HOME TO CALIFORNIA AND START A BUSINESS. I SAID, "I'M IN."

I EXPECT TO BE HERE A LONG TIME. WE OWN A BRICK & MORTAR STORE PLUS I JUST BECAME A PROFESSOR AT A LOCAL COLLEGE.



I'M LOOKING FOR A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND SHOWING THAT WE CAN SUCCEED AT BASIC FUNCTIONS (EDUCATION, HOUSING, POTHOLE-FILLING) WHILE ALSO BEING A PROGRESSIVE BEACON.

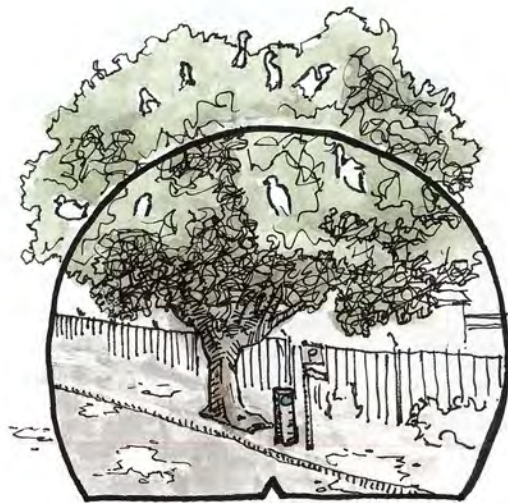


THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IS A CONSTANT STRESS— EVEN THOUGH WE OWN OUR HOUSE. AS BUSINESS OWNERS, WE SEE IT AFFECTING ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE, THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE, AND THEIR SPENDING DECISIONS.

OAKLAND COULD BE ENOUGH IF THE PEOPLE WITH DISPOSABLE INCOME DECIDED TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES. UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE CONSTANTLY UNDER THREAT FROM THE 'AMAZONIFICATION' OF OUR ECONOMY.



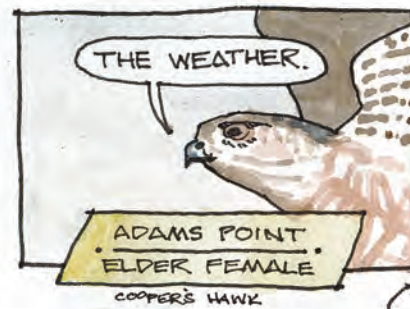




**GET OUT AND SHOP!**

**APPRECIATE THE EXPERTISE  
OF YOUR LOCAL STORES!**

**DON'T SIT AT HOME WAITING FOR  
MASS-MARKET CRAP TO GET  
DELIVERED TO YOU!**



THIS WAS IN 1974, AND I  
HAVE LIVED IN OR WITHIN  
A BLOCK OR SO OF ADAMS  
POINT SINCE THEN. I LOVED THE  
**DOWN-TO-EARTH, FRIENDLY, AND  
DIVERSE** PEOPLE HERE AND EASY  
COMMUTE TO SF FOR WORK, AND  
THE BETTER WEATHER IN OAKLAND.

I WAS BORN AND LIVED IN  
PHOENIX, AZ, UNTIL I WAS  
24 YEARS OLD. I ALWAYS  
WANTED TO LIVE IN CALIF.  
AND I HAD A FRIEND IN  
SF AND MY SISTER HAD  
MOVED TO OAKLAND, SO  
I CAME HERE. I GOT A  
JOB & THEN AN APARTM'T.



I WOULD LOVE TO STAY FOREVER,  
BUT NOW I ONLY HAVE MY SON  
AND MY NIECE HERE AND I MAY  
NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD IT  
IF I RETIRE.

I ALSO **DETEST** THE **CULTURE  
CHANGE** HAPPENING DUE TO  
RICH PEOPLE TAKING OVER  
THIS CITY.

I **WEEP** FOR THE **OLD OAKLAND.**

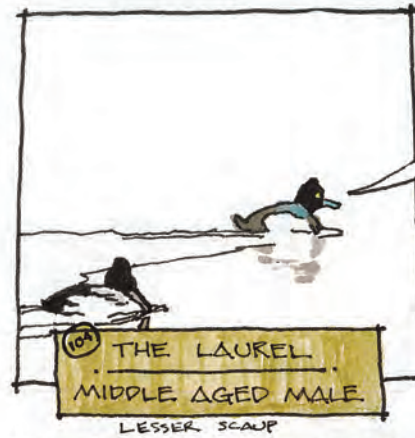


I DON'T EXPECT MUCH FROM THE CITY PER SE, I JUST WISH THE DEMOGRAPHICS WERE THE SAME NOW AS THEY WERE THE FIRST 40 YEARS I LIVED HERE.



I REGRET ALL MY YEARS OF TALKING UP HOW GREAT OAKLAND WAS, DESPITE ALL THE STEREOTYPING ABOUT CRIME, ETC. I REALIZED TOO LATE THAT IT WAS A MISTAKE TO ENCOURAGE SUCH PEOPLE TO CHECK IT OUT.

I DON'T WANT THEM TO LIVE HERE WITH ME. I FEEL IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO SAVE OAKLAND FROM THEM.



IT'S EASY TO EXPERIENCE THE MESH OF DIFFERENT CULTURES, AND I FEEL WELCOME IN MOST SITUATIONS.

I DON'T FEEL LIKE I HAVE A COMMUNITY. I WORK IN TECH AND ALTHOUGH I'VE LIVED IN OAKLAND FOR 6 YEARS, I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO HIDE THAT FACT IN FEAR OF SHAME OR VIOLENCE. I'M LUCKY NOT TO BE A CAUCASIAN MALE SO I CAN BLEND IN A LOT EASIER.




I WAS LIVING IN SAN DIEGO BEFORE, DATING SOMEONE FROM THE BAY AREA - I WANTED TO MOVE UP TO BE CLOSER TO HER AND ENDED UP GETTING A JOB IN TECH.



WE WOULD LIKE TO BUILD A FAMILY AND START BUILDING ROOTS IN OAKLAND. I DON'T FEEL LIKE WE'RE WELCOME, AND HERE THERE WOULD BE OPEN HOSTILITY AND POTENTIALLY VIOLENCE. I WORRY ABOUT MY SAFETY AND MY WIFE'S SAFETY CONSTANTLY.





I CAN USE MY ASIAN ETHNICITY TO HIDE MY FEELING OF BEING AN OTHER, BUT I'VE BEEN MADE TO FEEL THERE IS DEEP-SEEDED HATRED TOWARDS NEWCOMERS.

AS A CHILD OF AN IMMIGRANT, I FEEL LIKE MY PARENTS WORKED SUPER HARD FOR ME TO HAVE THE BEST OPPORTUNITY POSSIBLE. I'VE WORKED REALLY HARD TO GET WHERE I AM BUT I'VE NEVER FELT SO UNWELCOME.

I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ARE REALLY WILLING TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND WORK TOGETHER.

IT SEEMS MOST PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED WITH BEING RIGHT AND WILL IMMEDIATELY SHOOT DOWN OPPOSING IDEAS INSTEAD OF CRITICALLY EVALUATING THEM AND ADJUSTING THEIR VIEWS BASED ON NEW INFORMATION OR DATA.

OAKLAND IS NOT ENOUGH WITH THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE.



I GRADUATED FROM OAKLAND TECH IN 2017 AND WE HAVE ACADEMIES THAT FOCUS ON SPECIALTIES LIKE COMPUTER SCIENCE OR ENGINEERING. THIS IS WHY IT'S THE BEST PUBLIC SCHOOL IN OAKLAND.

HOWEVER, ALL THESE WHITE PEOPLE ARE SCAMMING THEIR WAY INTO TECH, USING OTHER PEOPLE'S ADDRESSES, AND EVEN GOING AS FAR AS MAKING SECRET FACEBOOK GROUPS ON HOW TO GET IN.



ONCE THERE THESE ADVANTAGED KIDS TAKE SPACE IN ALL THE ACADEMIES, LEAVING THE REST OF US BLACK AND BROWN KIDS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION POOL.



WHAT'S EVEN MORE TERRIBLE IS THAT THE ACADEMIES HAVE PRIVATE FUNDING FROM PARENTS OF ITS STUDENTS. COINCIDENTALLY, ALL THE RICH PRIVATE SCHOOL KIDS' PARENTS SHOVEL MONEY DIRECTLY INTO THE ENGINEERING PROGRAM. THEIR CLASSES ARE LOCATED IN A SEPARATE BUILDING.

THEY HAVE MACS WHILE THE REST OF THE SCHOOL RELIES ON DELL COMPUTERS FROM THE EARLY 2000S. THEY EVEN HAVE THEIR OWN BIKE CAGE.



MEANWHILE ALL THE FLOATING GEN'ED KIDS DEAL WITH UNDERQUALIFIED AND FIRST YEAR TEACHERS WHO DON'T HAVE THE MONEY FOR BETTER SUPPLIES.





OAKLAND IS EVERYTHING I LOVE,  
AND ALSO A LOT OF THINGS I HATE.  
I LOVE OUR **SENSE OF COMMUNITY**,  
HOW BEAUTIFUL OUR **ART** IS, FROM  
GRAFFITI AND MURALS TO THE  
**HYPHY** MOVEMENT, AND POETRY  
SLAMS. IT JUST FRUSTRATES ME  
TO SEE THE CITY GET **WATERED DOWN**.

MY GOVERNMENT TEACHER ALWAYS  
REASSURED THE CLASS, SAYING THAT  
GENTRIFICATION IS A **CYCLE** THAT  
HAPPENS **EVERY 40 YEARS** OR SO,  
AND THE BEST THING WE CAN DO  
IS **WAIT IT OUT**.



IT BOTHERS ME THAT NOW THAT  
ALL THESE WHITE PEOPLE MOVE  
HERE, **THINGS ARE GETTING DONE**  
THAT WE WAITED ON FOR YEARS.  
STREETS GETTING REPAVED.  
STOP LIGHTS GETTING REPLACED.  
IT FEELS LIKE THE CITY DOESN'T  
CARE ABOUT ITS RESIDENTS  
UNTIL ITS **TIME TO SHOW OFF**.  
THE ONLY GOOD THING IS THERE  
ARE IMPROVEMENTS HAPPENING.



I JUST HONESTLY CAN'T WAIT FOR THE  
WHITE PEOPLE TO GET TIRED OF OAK-  
LAND, HOW THEY ALWAYS DO, AND GO  
**BACK TO THE SUBURBS** SO THAT I CAN  
**RECLAIM MY HOME**. UNTIL THEN I  
JUST HAVE TO **WAIT AND PRAY** TO  
KEEP THE CONNECTIONS I HAVE.



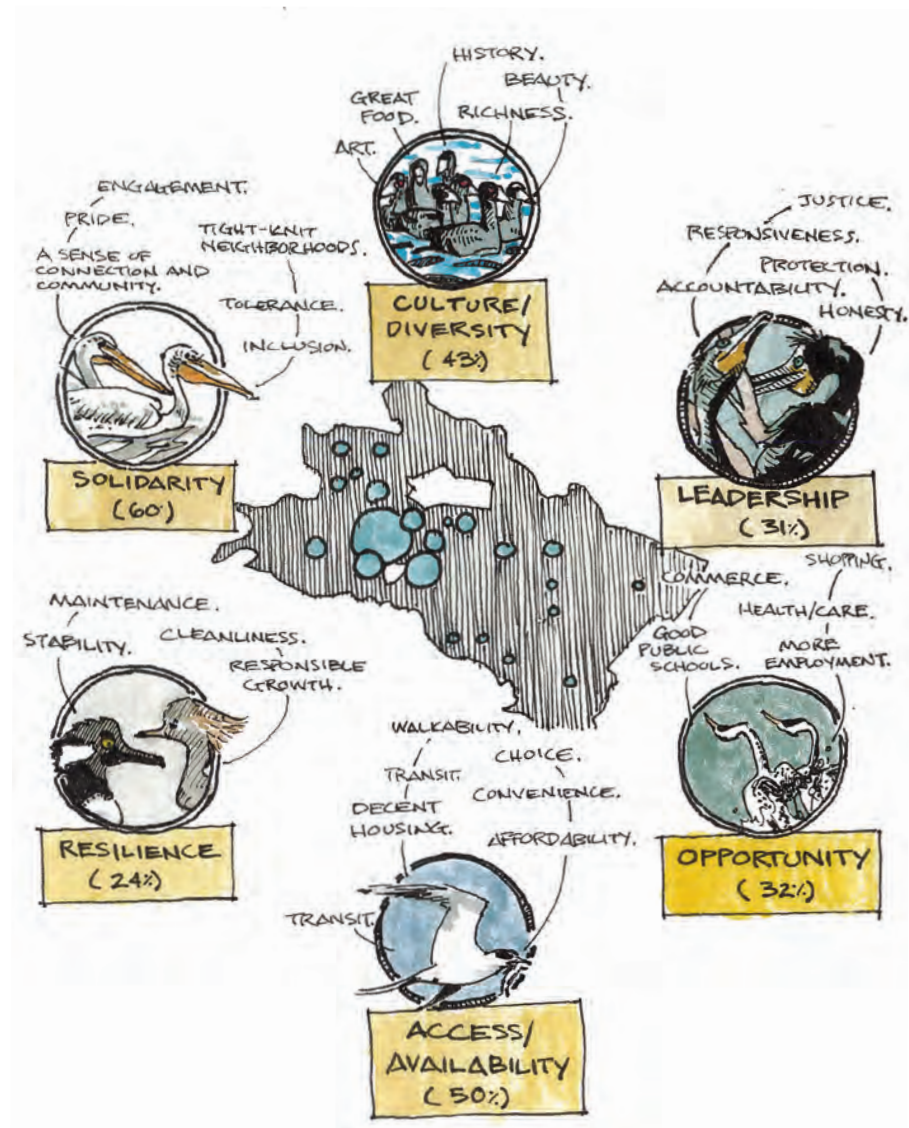


Despite the broad range of voices, a web of common needs, values, concerns, aspirations, and pride can be seen woven through each Oaklander's appraisal of their town. Qualitative analysis of 100 Oaklander stories identified grassroots mandates for six broad civic attributes....

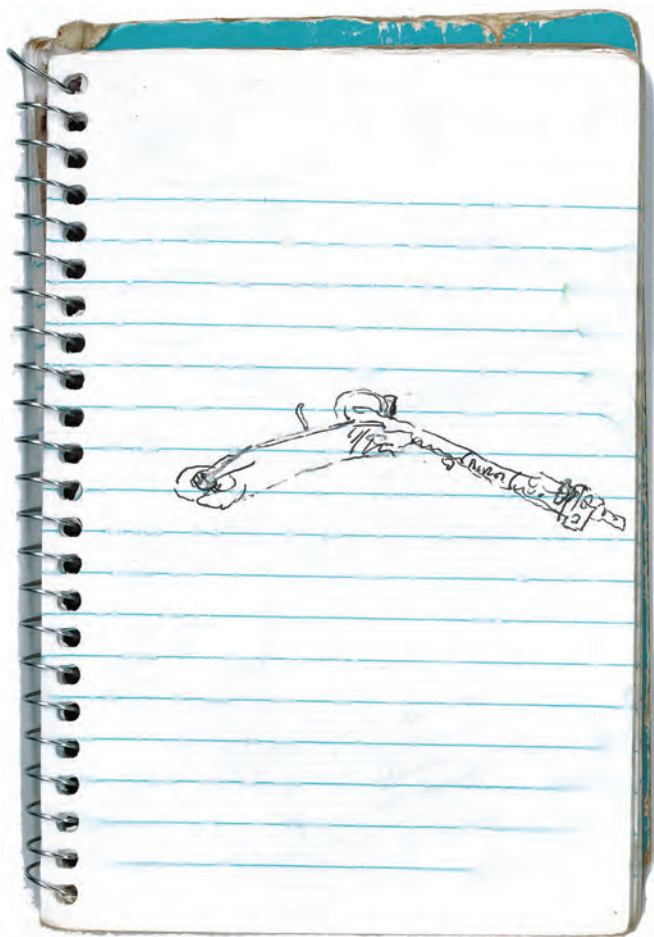
### Q8: What are you looking for from your city?

- **Solidarity.** A sense of close-knit communities whose residents stand up for one another, are engaged, and promote tolerance, warmth, healing, and respect.
- **Availability/Access.** Capacity to provide resources sought: housing, jobs, shopping/commerce, open space, services - all that we need to thrive, accommodating those long here and those newly drawn to Oakland values.
- **Culture/Diversity.** Oakland's signature offerings of diversity, food, art, creativity, that create an environment conducive to exploration and expression of ourselves and our heritage.
- **Opportunity.** Access for all to education, housing, health/care, connection to one another, variety, and enriching experiences.
- **Leadership.** The structured policies and decision-making that affect our lives must be responsive, fair, just, and act in our best interest and well-being.
- **Resilience.** The ability for stability – communities, housing, environment, infrastructure, etc. – and preserve Oakland's cherished identity.

Coincidentally, earlier in the year, Oakland Public Library announced their values of Diversity, Equity, Community, Responsive service, Adaptability, Empowerment, and Joy. These seem to echo closely the Oakland Interpreter's six grassroots attributes, suggesting OPL's strong community alignment and preparedness to address the most prevalent issues facing the community today.









Concept and art by @kbobbo  
Oakland ↔ SSF, 2018-2019  
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