Long a Betty tradition, close reading sessions on topics of shared interest were as comforting as food prepared together. They called these conversations *dic cur hiccup* after Leibniz’s advice (*dic cur hic*) to say what’s up, what’s happening now. Fragments of feminist, queer, and decolonial theory convolved with continental philosophies and approaches to artistic practice. Often, without formally beginning, disparate banter slowly dribbled into a kind of coherence. Provocations and questions littered with anecdotes and nonsensical tangents settled into focused concentration.

The morning after Red’s bash, profuse amounts of coffee and green tea were consumed from stained jelly jars as they tried to rectify their hang-overs with caffeine. At the crack of dawn teetotaler Ochre Betty pulled Wittgenstein’s *Remarks on Colour* from the library rubble. She printed out Part I pages 2–14 for the group’s perusal. Amidst the cacophonous distraction of their “Baconing,” The Bettys struggled with the text at hand. One hour into the discussion Ludwig’s proposition 52 was generating animated argument:

52. White as a colour of substances (in the sense in which we say snow is white) is lighter than any other substance-colour; black darker.
Here colour is a darkening, and if all such is removed from the substance, white remains, and for this reason we can call it “colourless”.

Cyan Betty: What bullshit is this? What are we even talking about when we talk about substances? And a substance color? Passé dogdoo …

Violet Betty: Not so fast CB, there’s more to this. He’s challenging Newton’s optics for one.

Turquoise Betty: I dunno.

Brown Betty: Do you think he means materiality? You know, a coming to matter? And anyway … only white remains … I’m not buying that.

Yellow Betty: Light needs matter to be seen, right?

White Betty: Personally, I don’t get it either. Is he saying that white is colorless in uhh, essence? Or that essence is singularly colorless? I don’t know how to think this and I have the most at stake here since, well, you know, I am the superject White Betty … but then, aah, hmm, maybe this can help in terms of rethinking identity politics? I’m kinda confused …. Or is he saying all substance is white with variable degrees of darkening? That I could live with. Or … no … shit … it’s still confusing, objectionable.

Magenta Betty: Well, it’s easier to grasp if we think about uhmm, appearances, right, the experience of color? I don’t know, I never studied philosophy, but anyway, a rose is a rose is a rose is sometimes red. Snow, when a dog hasn’t pissed on it looks white. Isn’t that what he means?

Black Betty: Can I simply comment here that Ludwig is referencing Goethe’s theory of lightness and darkness and the perception of color.
Orange Betty: Fine. But there’s more going on here. And – just asking for some clarity – are we talkin’ primary, secondary, tertiary RYB colors like the painters some of us used to be or have we entirely marched over to the RGB camp of the media wonks or the CMY of you folks into print? I swear I cannot keep these systems straight in my head though I know I’m always in the back seat, you know, being orange.

Yellow Betty: Hey OB, you’ve always been paranoid. Think of it this way, if you’re in RYB-land your sittin’ in Blue’s sidecar. I’m riding behind you with Purple Violet over there. Red was always already fucked in this world coz she had no Green to hold her hand.

Violet Betty: (clearing throat) We’re not talking about pigments OB. We’re talking about light and photons and RGB and fucking CMY.

White Betty: Hang on darlings. Seems to me we’re not talking science. Let’s get back to the text. That’s our task here after all.

Turquoise Betty: Yeah ladies, can we stop making this about us please!

Brown Betty: (head dangling) I’m sorry, can we deal with this at another session? I can’t think straight today.

Vermillion Betty: (chuckles) I can think queer today.

Magenta Betty: Oh snap!

White Betty: OK, obviously this isn’t the right moment for serious discussion. Let’s skip that bit for now. One last try. (rifling through the book) I’m randomly pointing to a page ... (finger drops on paragraph) Bingo. (reading aloud):
When we're asked “What do the words 'red', ‘blue’, ‘black’, ‘white' mean?” we can, of course, immediately point to things which have these colours,—but our ability to explain the meanings of these words goes no further! For the rest, we have either no idea at all of their use, or a very rough and to some extent false one.

White Betty: We can all agree with that, right?

Brown Betty: (murmuring) In principle I want to question anything he says.

White Betty: But this goes straight to the heart of our problematics. Our tags, our (coughs) I know this is contentious but ... our post-identity politics. The work we make. No?

Vermillion Betty: In principle I want to scream.

Violet Betty: The limits of language. That's the point, right? And actually, I think that's a cool concept. You know, what we can't say. What we can't know.

Orange Betty: But ...

Black Betty: (excited) But ... sorry ... I'm just riffing ... backing up ... if color is a darkening like he says in 52 then he's playing his language games in the subtractive field. White is originating. He's taking a side, flipped to a specific color model, to a belief system.

Yellow Betty: Huh?

Black Betty: It's all predicated on the experience of color through a western prism. That's just too goddamn shallow. Take the Oglala Sioux for instance. Black Elk saw white, sorrel, black, and buckskin horses dancing in the
sky led by great bay horse. The wild dancing brought forth all the colors of the earth.

Cyan Betty: Beware of cultural misappropriation. Mr. BB.

Magenta Betty: (sifting through loose images on the table) Hey, check this out, a photo of lanky Ronald Reagan ripped in half. It’s hilarious. “Where’s the rest of me?” “Where’s the rest of me?”

Brown Betty: (undistracted) Betty Bob has a point. Can you say more about this?

Black Betty: You know, this theory I’m working on about different systems of color, additive and subtractive. Not to mention the RYB model I grew up with mixing tempera paint in little pots. But there’s so much more to tell. Like the Navaho, for instance, believe that color precedes light. What are we gonna do with that?

Cyan Betty: Look BB, I get the significance of this but you’re always soooo opaque.

Black Betty: Yes, yes that’s part of it you see …

Brown Betty: I’ll look for a blackboard and chalk. Must be something around here … you could draw it …

Violet Betty: (glaring at Black Betty) Can we not talk about your pet project now and focus on the text please.

Black Betty: (demurring) Yeah OK, sorry … it’s just …

White Betty: (sighing) maybe later Betty Bob. We’re interested.
Orange Betty: But hey, with Ludwig, are we really talking language games here or are we enmeshed in something other? I always think analytic perspectives carve out suffocating systems. I just, uhh, I just instinctively prefer the process thinkers, not the logicians.

Cyan Betty: And for the record, sorry I got to interject, can we also talk about Pink or Beige or Gray for fuck’s sake? Don’t y’all get sick of the primaries, secondaries, and complementaries after awhile?

Brown Betty: You got that right.

Yellow Betty: I’m always caught in a limbo between models. Not to take this personally you understand, sorry.

Mauve Betty: (screaming from the kitchen) Oh my god, you gotta see this!

And so it went...

As a coda to the loud, heated, vega-baconed discussion, Violet Betty recited a passage from Derek Jarman’s *Chroma* to sober the escalating din:

Red is a moment in time. Blue constant. Red is quickly spent. An explosion of intensity. It hums itself. Disappears like fiery sparks into the gathering shadow.

“Voilà,” she concluded.