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This book was written during a tumultuous period, including sudden uprootings from family and friends in the service of cross-country moves, the daily psychological toll of the US political scene, and the outbreak of a global pandemic. Although some of these shifts seemed strangely appropriate (such as writing about Chapter 5’s “cabin fever” films during the COVID-19 lockdown), others are indicative of the ever-growing precarity both within and beyond academia. In that regard, Erika Vause’s McSweeney’s Internet Tendency piece “Critically Acclaimed Horror Film of the 2010s or Your Ph.D. Program?” (see Selected Bibliography) has proven a recurring source of pleasure, since so many of its trenchantly humorous observations apply as well to life on the non-tenure track. If this book’s overall tone contains a soupçon of cynicism and despair, then there you are. Hugs to Stephanie and my family for their constant love from afar.

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