

J is an *I* that has swooped down and over to the left, trying to get away from itself. But it can't: “J,” or “je,” means “I” in French. The translational turn. A single letter standing in for the self.

The *J* descended from the *I*—Roman scribes adding a little hook to the *I* to make it stand out. A flourish. Something to recognize it by. This is why the *J* as lowercase *j* also retains the little dot hovering above it, which we know from the *i*.

“Or was it a typo? A happy accident? Ink slipped onto the page?”

A single letter that becomes a word. A single letter that, with an apostrophe added, sutures the self to an action, a state, or a feeling when the action or state or feeling begins with a vowel. The apostrophe warns of a breath.

Je aime
J'aime

Photos by @billytaang, @gourdtimes, @alexserres, @maodaaa, and @shanzhai_lyric. All photos courtesy of Shanzhai Lyric and reprinted with permission of the photographers.

From *J* we get *Jersey*, a word for a knitted cloth or a t-shirt, a t-shirt full of words, a textile of text. It is said that the word *jersey* is named after the island of Jersey



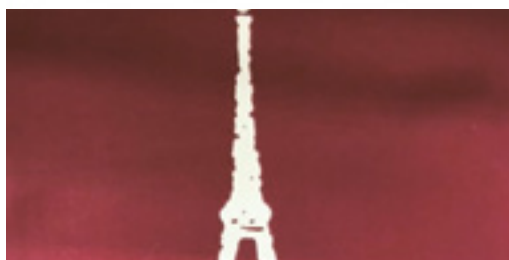
Liked by [u_have_nobusiness_doinwutudoin](#) and others
JUNE 28, 2021

[shanzhai_lyric](#) · Follow



Liked by [commiemierda](#) and others
JUNE 6, 2021

[shanzhai_lyric](#) · Follow



Liked by [ratsmakearts](#) and others
MARCH 6, 2020

[shanzhai_lyric](#) · Follow



Liked by [babyrattlesnake](#) and others
JANUARY 12, 2020

[shanzhai_lyric](#) · Follow



Liked by [\\$nrvie](#) and others
SEPTEMBER 4, 2019



shantchal_lyric • Follow

...



Liked by paravirtualized and others

JULY 27, 2018



shantchal_lyric • Follow

...



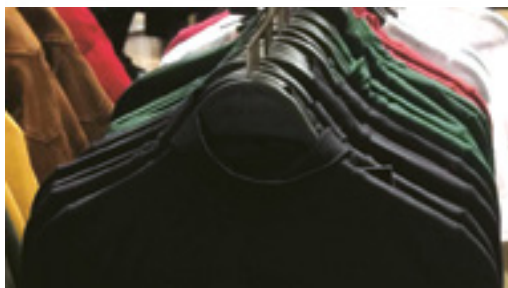
Liked by gameboypunk and others

MAY 22, 2018



shantchal_lyric • Follow

...



J'arrive



Liked by kristian_henson and others

NOVEMBER 21, 2017



shantchal_lyric • Follow

...



Liked by unseptropvlt and others

NOVEMBER 12, 2017



shantchal_lyric • Follow

...



Liked by vvvvhgbcftwx and others

APRIL 23, 2017

in the Channel Islands, presumably where the cloth was made, and that the word jersey itself comes from the Old English *ey*, meaning island.

An island is a thing on water, a piece of land on sea, a bit of ground that rises out of the ocean just enough to be a place to live. And yet islands are prone to flooding, a reminder that land and sea are not as separable as we'd like to believe. Waters flow around and through our island cities even as developers attempt to cover and conceal them, to parcel the land into tidy and saleable dry bits.

We live on one such island: the island of Manhattan. And we gather garments from Canal Street, named for the channel that still runs beneath it. If you lay on the ground and press your ear to a manhole, you can still hear the creek that never stopped moving.

The marsh beneath the neighbourhood never went away either, and its untidy swampiness threatens the foundations of buildings, especially those that like to pretend it isn't there (namely, the courthouse and the jail).

Along with overflows of sewage and runoff, the block channels all manner of contraband goods, collecting and concealing the waste of the world. Even still, on the shanzhai T-shirts that flow through Canal Street, French is still the language of luxury—Dior, Dior, Dior, *Doir*—but broken and broken open.

A *j* is an *i* that curves off elsewhere; a jersey is a t-shirt is an island. Their creole tongues point to the churning and mixing of languages otherwise thought to be as separate as land and sea.

Je suis allée