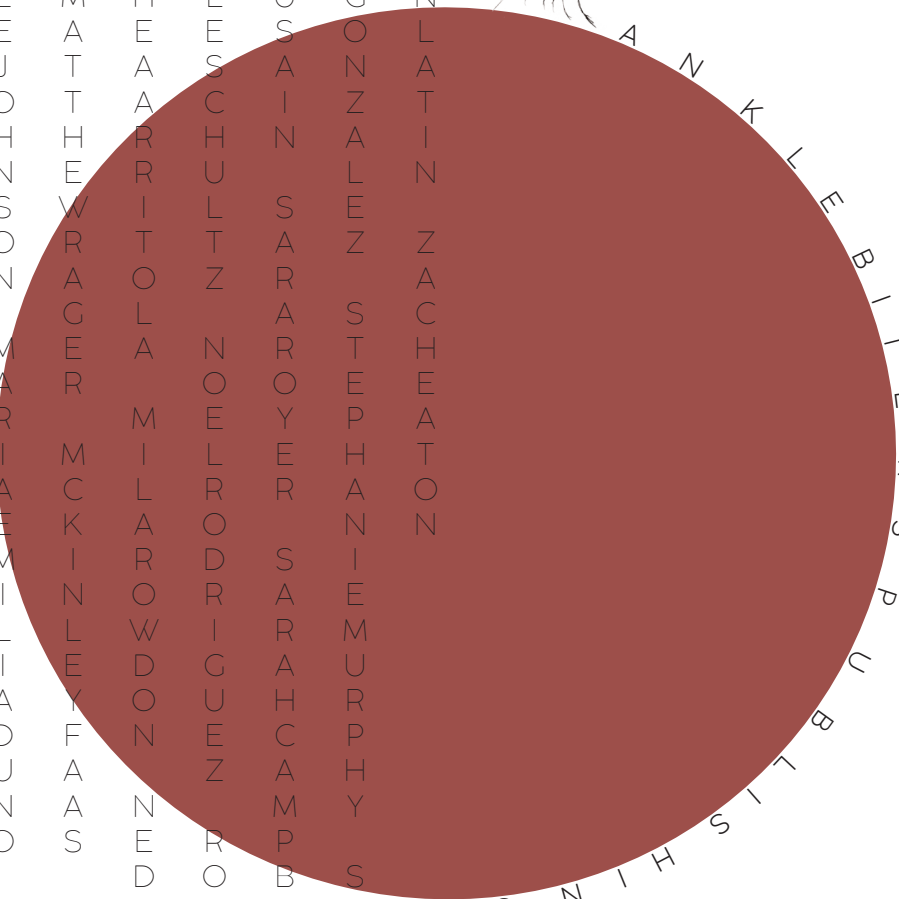


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 JACQUELYN SAMPERI JACKSONBURGES JAZHENRY JENAROGGO  
 UNE DERRICK RICE DZAVOID EVAN MCCARLEY HAYDEN WRIGHT  
 L CODYCANTU DANIEL HOLIDAY DANIEL MILLER DAVID LEJE  
 MCKENZIE ANTHONY SUTTON BAILEY WALDOCK BLAIR TRUESDEL  
 CONTRIBUTORS: ANASTASIA KIRACES ANDREW DIMATTEO ANNIE



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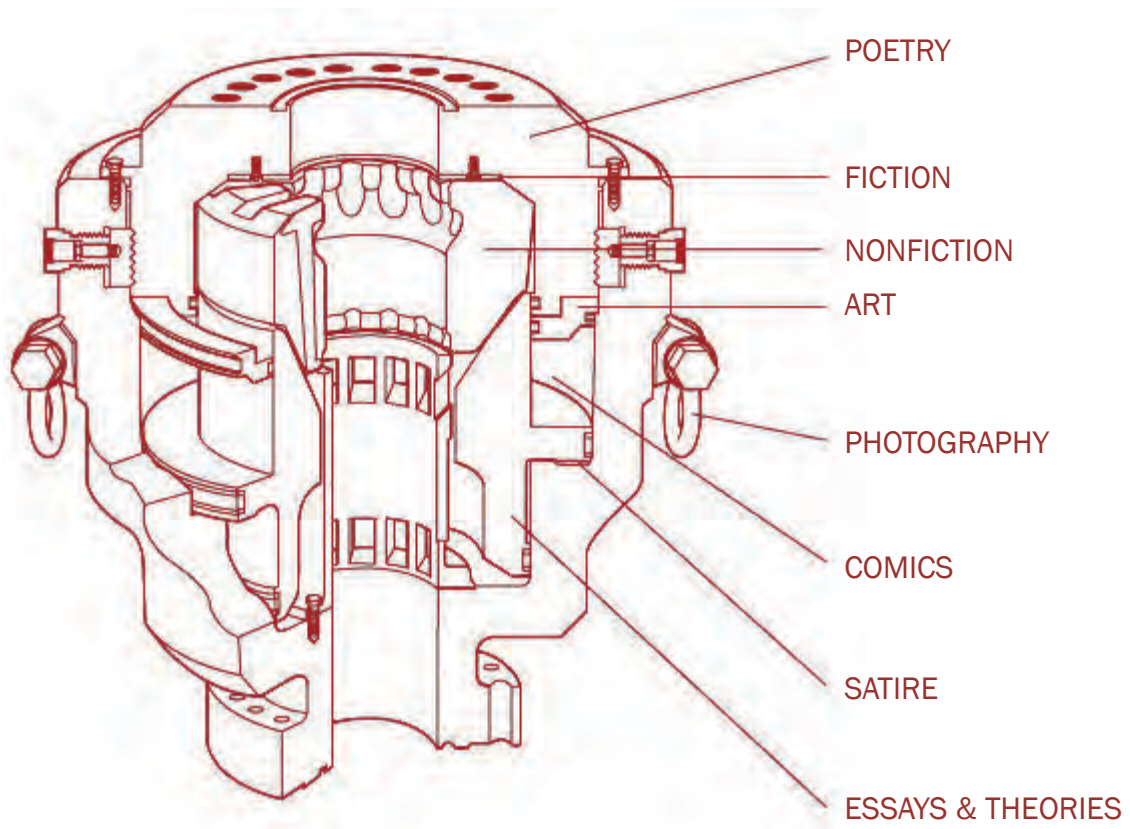


POETRY  
 FICTION  
 JOURNALISM  
 ART  
 PHOTOGRAPHY  
 COMICS  
 SATIRE  
 ESSAYS  
 THEORIES



KILL

LINE



# KILLLINE

This body of work centers around an oilfield term referring to a redundant high-pressure pipe that helps control well fluid flow rate and prevent blowouts. A kill line is a safety precaution. It is a second chance. It isn't necessary, but we still need it, lest the pressure of something flammable explode out and kill us. This term was chosen as the theme of this collection for its metaphorical and dangerous implications. It's one of those terms that can be taken out of context and become something new, something quite possibly better than the original. It can even define the problematic industry it comes from, as we continue to pump the earth of its black blood and its invisible, noxious breath with drill lines and corporations that are getting better and better at what they do. Let's gather all the kill lines and put them into poems, into brushstrokes, code, scripts, polemics, lines of sight. Let us be redundant and full of pressure. Each contributor in this compendium let themselves bubble up to the surface so that we could see. Every creator has a kill line that controls what comes out and what goes back down the hole to help them dig deeper. Sometimes we erupt anyways, despite all our kill fluid. Before kill lines, whole rigs could blow up and the earth would spit fire for days. In Houston, the industry of earth penetration is pervasive. We keep the boreholes out of sight, the concrete hoses like needles hooked in the shale, but drive a little bit out and you'll see the red pumps dunking up and down, drinking deep. There's no dismantling control, no removing the cap and shining a light into the well once the needle is in because the ground will simply bleed to death. If creativity has any goal, it's finding a way to tourniquet the wounds.



Kalen Rowe  
Editor-in-Chief

a n k l e b i t e r s  
i s a d i y s e l f  
p u b l i s h i n g  
t i n y p r e s s  
l o c a t e d i n  
H o u s t o n T X  
v i s i t u s  
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& w h a t e v e r  
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K a l e n R o w e



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g m a i l . c o m



# CONTENTS

## POETRY



<i>annie mckenzie</i> .....	44
<i>anthony sutton</i> .....	40
<i>cody cantu</i> .....	28
<i>daniel holiday</i> .....	22, 24, 26
<i>derrick rice</i> .....	50
<i>evan mccarley</i> .....	7
<i>jackson burgess</i> .....	8, 10, 12
<i>jennifer free</i> .....	54
<i>keely richy</i> .....	56
<i>kell</i> .....	86
<i>kenan ince</i> .....	82, 84
<i>machele johnson</i> .....	70
<i>matt rager</i> .....	32
<i>megan gonzalez</i> .....	54
<i>mila rowdon</i> .....	52
<i>nicole johnson</i> .....	34, 36, 38
<i>nicole schultz evans</i> .....	69
<i>noel rodriguez</i> .....	88, 90
<i>saba husain</i> .....	98, 100
<i>sara royer</i> .....	72
<i>sarah j campbell</i> .....	20
<i>sims hardin</i> .....	106
<i>zach eaton</i> .....	70

## PROSE



<i>dza void</i> .....	42
<i>emilia duno</i> .....	76
<i>john wayne comunale</i> .....	14
<i>matt k fries</i> .....	58

## VISUAL

<i>alt di\$ney</i> .....	112
<i>anastasia stacy kirages</i> .....	33
<i>andrew dimatteo</i> .....	64
<i>bailey waldock</i> .....	35, 37
<i>blair truesdell</i> .....	54, 56
<i>danielle miller</i> .....	57
<i>david lejeune</i> .....	75
<i>hayden wright</i> .....	74
<i>jaz henry</i> .....	6, 9, 11
<i>jenaro goode</i> .....	83, 85, 87
<i>john duro</i> .....	13, 25, 30
<i>julian luna</i> .....	71
<i>jacquelyn samperi</i>	
<i>katie reese</i> .....	96
<i>lukas wade</i> .....	19
<i>maria-elisa heg</i> .....	108
<i>mckinley faas</i> .....	100, 105
<i>melissa coronado</i> .....	cover, 51
<i>aka melita</i>	
<i>michea arritola</i> .....	101
<i>ned gayle</i> .....	107, 109
<i>robby attal</i> .....	110
<i>s rodriguez</i> .....	91
<i>stephanie gonzalez</i> .....	21, 23, 27
<i>stephanie murphy</i> .....	102
<i>steven tea</i> .....	92, 94
<i>tim walker</i> .....	99, 104
<i>trevon latin</i> .....	39, 41, 47

## DIGITAL

114

## BIO\$

116





Jaz Henry  
In Tongues





*Untitled, 2008*

My front yard  
Is flooded  
And so is  
My body  
With MSG  
Parabens  
And impure thoughts  
About my friends

*"Inundated," April 2016*

I miss you  
Even though  
You are near.  
Looking at  
The pictures  
Is hard.  
I am difficult.  
I am worried  
That I am not a good eno-  
I am sorry  
That I crossed  
The line.  
Thank you  
For forgiving me.  
She is beautiful.  
You deserve  
To be happy.  
Slow down on all the co-  
We should  
Have talked  
Instead of fucking  
In your backyard.  
You were  
Too honest.  
It angered me;

The conversation  
Was good until-  
When I see  
Your face  
I see  
A love  
Transformed.  
Not the kind of love  
You are thinking of  
It's just that  
You are still  
Here  
After all  
These years  
And I  
Don't  
Know  
Why  
But-  
Surgical tape  
I want  
To hold you  
Again.  
I had been  
Looking at

Little bells  
So I could  
Ring them  
In your ear  
And whisper:  
"How does that sound?"



## VISIONS OF LILY

For example, her toes curled up in our cold bed,  
her eyes like ashes, the down along the small  
of her back, and I want to know if anyone else  
has celebrated her earlobe the way it wants to be celebrated,  
like a ten-liter bottle of champagne popped in a room  
of only two, she said she liked my collarbone,  
its twin birthmarks that I call moles, she said anything  
looks better in candlelight, even dead flowers, even  
a glass of water that's really a glass of vodka,  
which is really an invitation for departure,  
and maybe I lied when I said I was okay, maybe  
I gathered all those handfuls of matches and dust  
and stuffed them in my mouth to force out  
her name, memories of blowing smoke through open  
windows, fumbling with bra straps at dawn,  
memories of all I can no longer remember, like  
letters tossed bridgeside and immediately missed,  
or voices meandering airspace in waves no one  
can pick up, she taught me to trace a shadow  
and acknowledge its ends, she brought me avocados  
and took the knives away, and maybe it was unfair  
of me to hope I'd kiss the part in her hair again, unfair  
to pray that I'd be the only one she took to bed,  
but here, I've put the vodka down, I'm holding out  
my arms like open drawers ready to be filled with anything,  
anything at all, thumbtacks or blouseflow, roses, dirt,  
I'll trust my tongue over a toaster, I am staying  
very still here in my right place.



Jaz Henry  
Dosed

9





## MIGRATION

Like this: you put a thousand birds in a tree and make them sing  
and it sounds like water. You put a thousand birds in a tree  
and then you put a bullet in one, and the rest  
take flight. You take a coffee pot  
and make it gargle steam, and it's your best friend  
drunk in a hotel room, 4am, somewhere off the Strip,  
but you know nobody can hear your friend, so you plug your ears  
until the coffee's done. You take a book of matches  
and light it up outside the pharmacy. You take your pills,  
wash them down with whatever she left in the fridge,  
maple syrup, hard root beer. Easy. You take a man  
with ragged nails and tell him, This is your  
hotel room. This mini-fridge? Your realm. You take attendance  
on your ventricles and find some lack of rhythm,  
search bars and bookshops, the gym's lost and found.  
You take a thousand birds and make them stop  
flying south, you tell them you have all their old mates  
at gunpoint. No sudden moves. You take a break  
from eulogizing the living and remember you've got  
coffee in the kitchen. You take a bowl of coffee grains  
and leave it on the counter to absorb her lingering scent.  
You take your sheets and wash them  
along with your best friend's Marlboro coat. You take a body  
of water and tell it to become a bunch of birds, but it won't,  
it won't even look you in the eye. You take a thousand birds  
and firebomb their tree—there, that silence  
is the sound you've craved. Now relax. You take a piano  
that's been drinking, a really sleepy man, you take a bullet  
in a hotel parking lot and you put it back where it belongs.

Jaz Henry  
Poops

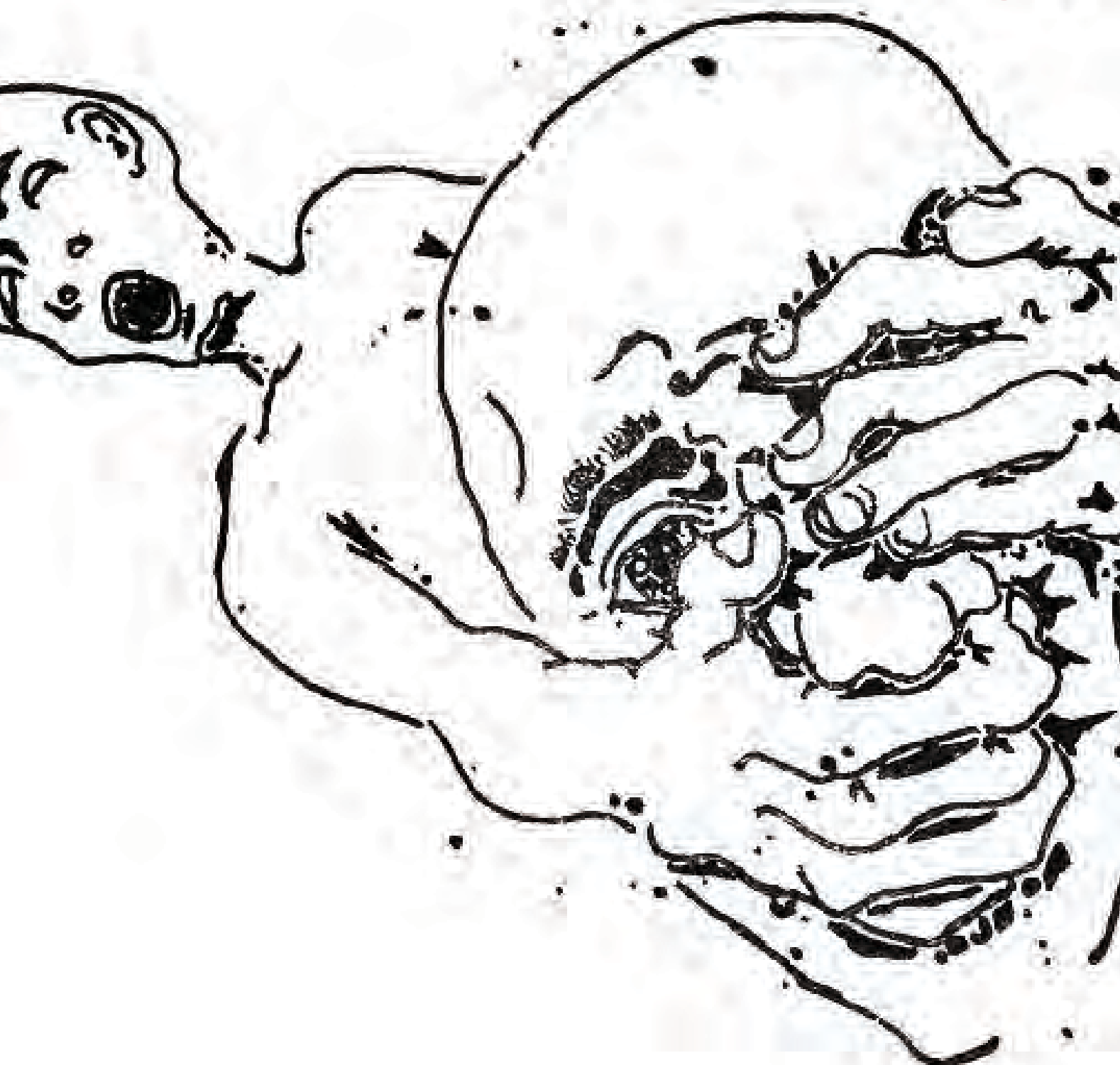
11



*IT'S SNOWING AND I'M LONELY*

And so with all that in mind, I'm thinking about  
amateur pornstars and how often producers ask them  
to recount how they lost their virginity right before  
telling them to take off their clothes. And my friend  
Katrina, who was doing that for a while, who after  
I'd lifted her shirt told me not to be afraid  
to be rough as she lit a flowery candle. I'm looking now  
at my stupid candy cane socks that found their way  
here because I was a quarter short for laundry.  
I take my lithium pill, take another, consider a third,  
feel silly as the snow glosses grass yards  
outside. Little white pills, bigger than the ones  
Christian stole from my bathroom the month he broke  
down outside the film kids' party, cauliflowered  
Shawn's ear. I'm considering how simple it would be  
to turn on my phone and find someone to come over  
tonight—no cameras, just an apartment strewn  
with leaves and cigarette foils thatched to fabric,  
static attraction, tea stains on my sheets,  
all those lovers lost in the smattering haze,  
and if I were to go looking for any one  
through the blizzard I'd lose my hands  
in the little white pills, little white lies I tell  
myself when the ceiling looks like skylight  
yet the floor looks drowned in gore, I don't know  
how to turn my heater on, tonight I'm growing  
icicles in my throat.





## *Fire, Fire*

The apartment was on fire again, and I kept driving this time. I know I'm not the sharpest spoon in the drawer, but I learned my lesson. Of course, I had to learn it the hard way, but I've found that's the best way to learn most lessons. At least for me it is.

As if on cue my phone started to ring, and I didn't have to look at the screen. I knew who it was. I fished the device from the sea of fast food wrappers, napkins, and unlucky scratch off tickets, and put it to my ear. She was already talking.

"It's on fire again," she said.

"I know, I know," I said. "I saw."

"Did I just see you drive by?"

"What? No I'm . . . I'm, uh, on the other side of, uh . . ." I stammered trying to make something up on the fly. I was never good at that.

"Don't bullshit me!" She screamed loud enough for her voice to break up into static through the receiver. "You know you're no good at it!"

Lately she was getting better and better at reading my mind, but I knew how to take care of that. I tossed the phone back into the trash pile on the seat, and ran my hand through it again until it landed on what I was looking for. I wrapped my fingers around the hammer, pulled it from garbage, and gave myself a single, sharp wrap across the head with it. My vision blurred but didn't go black completely, and the inside of my head rang sharply as pain spikes rocketed through my brain. My grip on the hammer loosened for a moment before I brought myself back and tightened up to keep from dropping it.

As the ringing subsided I heard a high-pitched, tinny sound coming from somewhere in the car. It took me a moment to pinpoint where the sound was coming from beneath the trash on the passenger seat. She was still on the phone screaming through the receiver. I tossed the hammer back on the seat, found the phone, and placed it back to my ear.

"Hello," I said trying my best not to sound woozy.

"Did you hit yourself with the hammer again?" she squawked.

"No, I sure didn't," I replied as the lines on the road became clear in my vision once again. "And, I did *not* just drive by. It must have been somebody who looked like me."

There was a pause on the other end, and I could almost hear the gears turning in her head.

“Maybe it wasn’t you,” she said.

“Damn straight!” I exclaimed a little too confidently.

“Well, on your way home pick me up something to eat,” she said. “You know what I like. The usual.”

The effect of the hammer to the head must have still been working its way through my nerves and synapses because I tried to reply but instead of words I was only able to emit a low groan.

“Hello!” she bellowed through the receiver. “Hello? Are you still there, numbskull?”

“Yyyyyeeesss,” I said a beat later, finally able to push the single word past my lips. “I’m here. The usual. You got it.”

“Good,” she said, “and don’t forget the—“

I must have blacked out because that was the last thing I heard, and I suddenly found myself in the drive-thru line of Captain Redbeard’s Fish and Sea Meat restaurant. The phone wasn’t against my ear anymore, so I assumed it was back in the pile of trash with the hammer on the passenger seat. I realized I was already past the order box with one car ahead of me in line for the window, so I also assumed I must have placed my order already.

The taillights of the car in front of me dimmed as the driver moved his foot from the break to the accelerator and slowly pulled away. I pulled up to the window, and began frantically searching my pockets for money. The window slid open, and a teenage girl with a headset attached to her grease-stained visor leaned out. The smell of rotten fish, spoiled shrimp, and burnt grease sprung through the open window and hit me in the face as it raced to fill my car with the essence of Captain Redbeard’s fine cuisine. I’m not sure if the girl said anything to me at first because I was mesmerized by the pimples that covered her face. If her face was the sky, sailors could use her pimples to find their way at night.

“I said, did you want Davey Jones’ Locker sauce with that,” said the girl, impatiently rolling her eyes with disgust.

She must have already asked me that, which would account for her demeanor, but my guess was a good deal of self-loathing played in to shaping her attitude as well. The girl sighed, about to repeat her question once again before I broke the spell her acne had on me and answered.

“Yes,” I said a little louder than necessary. “Yes, please, and would you throw in a couple spicy cocktail sauces too?”

The girl stepped back, let the window slide shut, then disappeared around the corner. A moment later she returned holding a white paper sack emblazoned with the Captain Redbeard’s logo. I could see the bottom of the bag was wet with grease dripping from the contents within. The window slid back open and her arm shot out with the sack of food dangling from the end of it.

“Sixteen fifty,” she said with absolutely no inflection.



I took my hands off the steering wheel and found a twenty-dollar bill clutched in my palm. I made a mental note to take it easy with the hammer next time as I passed the money to the girl after taking the food from her. I set the bag on my lap as she handed me my change, and the warm grease soaked through the crotch of my threadbare pleated khakis. The warmth mixed with the sensation the greasy texture provided always put me at ease. I nodded thanks to the girl who said nothing in return as I pulled away, and out onto the street.

I stopped at a red light, and opened the bag to check the contents. There was two of the Captain's Bottom-Feeder sandwiches, an order of fried shrimp balls covered in barnacle batter, and a mix of various sauce containers dumped in on top. It was the usual all right, so I guess I was on the right track so far. I always thought being completely conscious all the time was overrated. The light turned green just as I put my fingers around a shrimp ball, so I stuffed the thing in my mouth and mashed the gas hard. The nearly bald tires screeched against the sudden momentum, but left only a trace of burnt rubber on the road as they didn't have much left to burn. When I bit into the battered ball of congealed shrimp bits a mix of scalding hot grease and liquefied sea creatures flooded my mouth. The skin on my tongue and gums seared off completely before my brain could take control of my faculties, and force my foot down on the brake.

The backend of the car fishtailed from the sudden braking and lack of tire traction, but I was able to straighten out and pull off to the side without losing control. All those hammers to the head may have kept her from reading my mind, but they sure as hell hadn't affected my reflexes when it came to driving. Not being one to waste food, spitting out the smoldering goo wasn't an option, so instead I rifled through the bag until my hand found the sauce containers. I pulled two out randomly, popped the lids off with my thumb, and squeezed the contents into my open mouth. Steam rose slowly from my gaping maw and nostrils as dipping sauces mixed with the partially masticated shrimp ball to cool it down.

A few seconds later the burning subsided, and my mouth returned to its normal resting temperature. I swallowed the mess opting not to bother chewing anymore, and it slid slowly down my throat in no hurry to arrive at its final destination. My mouth began to throb, and I swallowed again sending a layer of burnt skin down to chase the shrimp ball home. My tongue was raw and blistered, and I ran it along the charred, rough edges of what was left of the roof of my mouth. I continued doing this for three or four minutes despite the pain thinking I was helping in some way. Finally, I spit a wad of bloody mouth skin onto the steering wheel, checked my mirrors, and eased my foot off the brake as I pulled back onto the street.

I could feel my tongue starting to swell, and I breathed through my mouth hoping the constant airflow would work to cool things off, but it only amplified the pain. The phone rang again from the mess on the passenger seat, and I began breathing faster to try and cool my mouth before I answered. I plunged my hand back into the trash pile, passed over the hammer, and wrapped my fingers around the phone.

"Heyyo," I said when I finally put it to my head trying to will my injured tongue to work correctly. Nothing came back through the receiver so I repeated myself. "Heyyo?"

I heard a faint hissing sound steadily getting louder. It sounded like meat searing against the heat of a flattop stove. The hiss grew louder and louder until I hung up, and tossed the phone back into the seat. I knew what it meant. I was running late, and she was pissed. I pointed the car in the right

direction, and continued on my way. I plucked a now sufficiently cooled shrimp ball from the bag, blew on it for safety, and shoved it in my mouth.

I brought my teeth together slowly still gun shy from the first one, but the insides broke free on their deep fried container in a more pleasantly manageable way this time. It was less liquid-y now having had time to congeal into slimy ooze within its burning battered prison. The thick, mucousy, shrimp parts were still warm, but not scalding, and coated my mouth with a film that actually worked to take the sting from the burning away. I grabbed another sauce container and squeezed it into my mouth to wash down the now palatable seafood snack. Once empty I chunked it onto the passenger seat with the other trash and rolled the top of the bag closed so I wouldn't be tempted to eat anymore before I got home.

A few blocks later the phone started to ring again, but I ignored it. I reached for the hammer, but decided against using it since I was already running late and was so close to home anyway. Still, it felt good just to wrap my fingers around the smooth wooden handle. It was comforting in a way, so I stroked it lightly with my free hand for the duration of the drive. I made the final left onto Kinklemeyer Street, and could see the apartment was no longer on fire. The white smoke rising from the smoldering beams and soot-covered drywall contrasted starkly against the pitch black of the night sky. I let myself get lost in watching the tumbling twists of smoke swell before dissipating into nothing, and I wondered how long it took the fire to burn itself out.

I pulled the car into my usual spot, grabbed the bag of food in one hand, the hammer in the other, and made my way to the burnt-out husk. There was no door anymore, but I still entered through the space where it had been out of habit. She was still sitting in her rocking chair just how I left her; just like always. Her skin was long gone, leaving behind bones badly blackened from the fire's touch. Her clothes had burned away completely, save for a small patch of purple fabric between her femur and the chair's seat. Somehow it had escaped the fire's wrath and let me know she had been wearing her favorite purple skirt. The one she liked to wear when we were going out to someplace nice. Her long, soft, red curls were gone, replaced by short, coarse patches of burnt hair atop a genderless scorched skull. Her mouth was open wide, and both arms hung limply beside the armrests of the rocker. The phone was melted to the finger bones of her right hand. I guess that would explain the hissing.

"Sorry I'm late again," I said finally able to get my wounded tongue to form words correctly. "I brought dinner."

I held the bag up to show her, and tucked the hammer into the back of my pants. I removed one of the items, set the bag on her boney lap, and began to remove the wrapper. I placed the greasy fish sandwich up to her fleshless face, and used my other hand to move her jaw up into it allowing her to take a bite. The hunk of processed, fast food, fish meat passed through her non-existent throat and ran down the side of her rib cage before falling out and to the floor. I repeated the motion of helping her eat until the entire sandwich was in un-chewed hunks around the base of the chair.

"There's those fried shrimp balls you like in there," I said pulling the other sandwich out but leaving the bag in her lap. "I'm not sure what sauces are left though. I had to uh . . . use some on the way home."

I plopped down beside her where a large portion of the ceiling had collapsed, and made myself comfortable in the still warm and blackened drywall. I unwrapped the sandwich and ate it while staring

up at the smoke, and listening to the pop of embers still fighting for life within the ruins of timber. I could barely taste due the lack of skin left in my mouth, but I still enjoyed it all the same. I crumbled the empty wrapper into a ball and chucked it over my shoulder, not caring where it landed. I lightly patted the skeleton hand with the melted cellphone in it and shook my head.

“I have to tell you something,” I said to her, still staring up into the night. “That was me you saw drive by earlier today.”

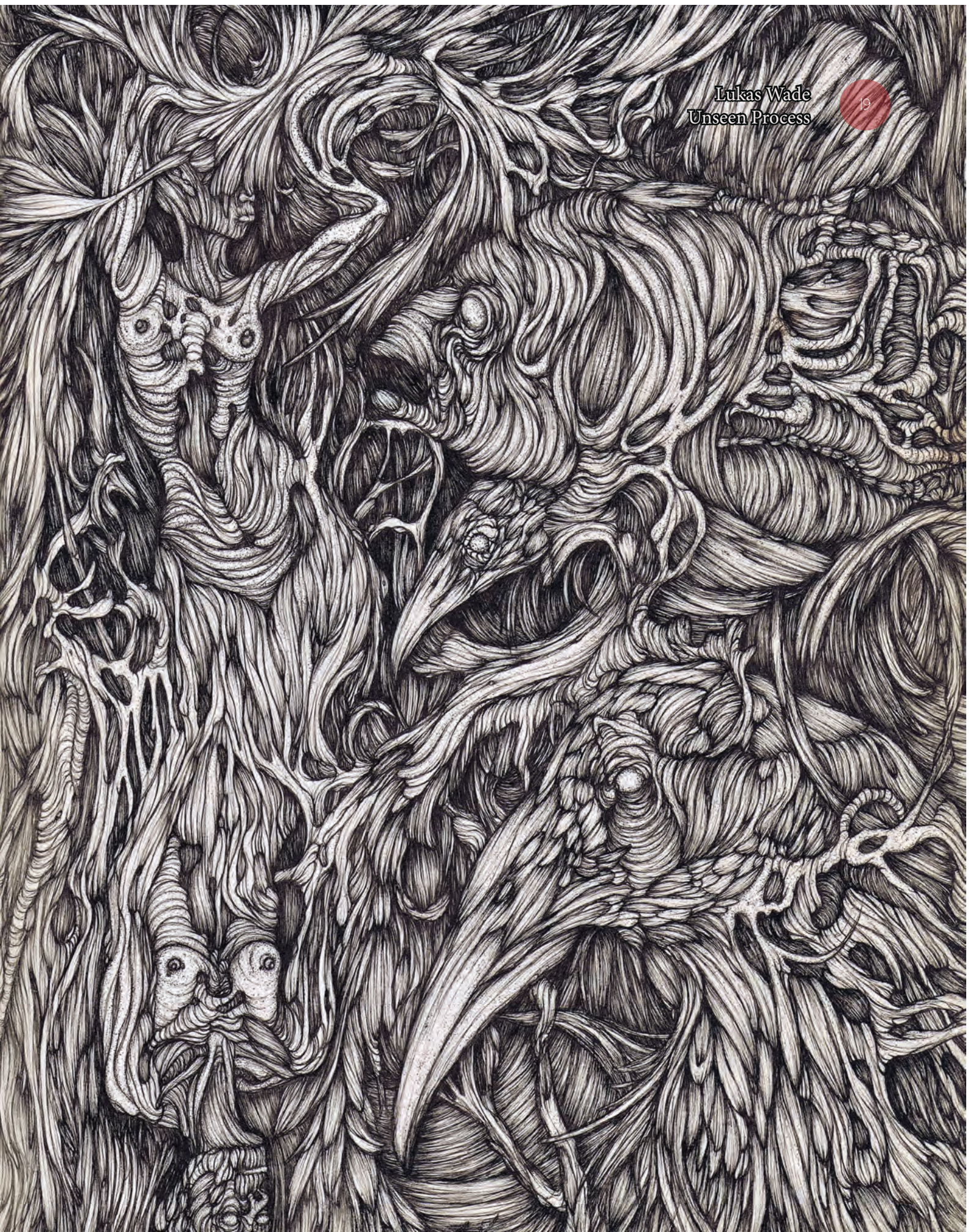
I pulled the hammer out from the back of my pants, and brandished it to her.

“Just stop reading my mind, and everything will be fine,” I said.

Then, I smashed the hammer into my head, and collapsed back into the burned ruins of the apartment.

-end-







*ng'ombe*  
*for my brothers*

i can't remember the swahili word for cow.  
i don't know why.  
i haven't seen a cow since summer  
in ohio.

i've forgotten how to write  
so i follow the words.

sometimes a word is a lifeline  
tethering you to a piece of yourself.  
if you lose it,  
you might drift endlessly in a sea of  
y'all & fomo & on fleek & it's cool whatever

i remember  
as children in Tanzania  
my brothers and i facing off with a bull  
to collect pine cones,  
gathered in our shirts like kangaroo pouches.  
the gold mine of pine cones lay beyond a high wooden fence—  
the bull pen.

robert would scale the fence, jump  
& land in a squat. he moved quickly,  
tossing pine cones like hand grenades.  
david & i, waiting, rapid heart beats,  
images flashing through our minds —  
charging hoofs imprinting packed earth,  
robert a streak of sprinting red,  
a desperate glance over his shoulder, then  
his body pinned to the fence by bull's horns —  
david & i, we hold our breaths & release  
when robert is safely back on our side.

later, we prop our feet on the brick hearth,  
warm them by the familiar blaze,  
enveloped by the sent of pine.

ng'ombe.  
i remember it now.  
the g is rolled in the back of your throat  
as if swelling from deep in your belly.  
hold your breath & release.

it connects seamlessly with the n, rolls  
smoothly over the o.

try it. it's delicious —  
ng'ombe.  
like freshly churned butter  
from a farm





Stephanie Gonzalez  
i'm waiting for you in a nightmare it never ends



*Pocketknife*

A  
fluorescent  
light  
spatters  
against a  
picnic  
table.  
Outside of  
the  
Voodoo,

while a  
jukebox  
sings songs  
about  
either,  
hurting  
yourself or  
touching  
yourself

A star in  
the sky  
disappears  
when a  
giant metal  
bird passes  
between  
it and  
myself

the next  
day,  
a dead  
hawk  
near the  
bus stop  
makes me  
think of  
bad omens  
and I  
wonder if  
this is the  
bird that  
ate the  
star  
before it  
got to me.



Stephanie Gonzalez  
let's go there

23





*Doorman*

The Main Street train whistles like  
a Mississippi steamboat gliding  
on quiet narrow rails  
into the infinite nowhere side of town.

The electronic bell rings like  
the strongman game  
in a parking lot carnival.

A dazed stare at the wet ground  
turns the sidewalk into sky,  
and the gravel into dusty constellations.

The mundane pulsing of existence,

the quiet hum of solitude

becomes a tiger's claw  
and my mind is an anxious deer  
grazing too close to the  
high and dry blonde grass.

Bristling with the trees,

just out of reach  
from the eyeball sunken into  
the warm caress of earth  
that does not blink as night  
comes dripping out of the sky,

a damp chill  
cools the ground  
when blood is spilt  
and the sun goes down.

The grass that feeds the deer,  
hides the tiger and,  
it is unremarkable.

The mundane wind blows boringly.  
The animals fight unimaginatively.  
The train whistle blows, taking me back to Main Street,

the electric motor whirrs past the platform,  
where a man  
with eyes bulging open  
to the whole universe,  
his hair glistening like a lamb,  
in sweat pants  
he jerks his erection  
for the women who go by.





## *Skullflower*

I wish to be in the wildflowers  
growing near a cemetery when I die,  
on the side of the road. Decomposing and  
unembalmed at the end of a dead end road.  
From old age, or because  
the revolution was finally almost over  
and I was the last to die.

Or, because  
I decided to ride a horse to Louisiana  
and rednecks on choppers  
shot me down and my corpse rotted  
next to my horse's.

I hope that bluebonnets grow  
out of my skull  
and out of my dead horse's ass  
where he shit himself before he died.

I want, somewhere deep in the swamp,  
a mutated honeybee to pollinate my skullflower  
into a flora spread across the high grass and  
through a cut in the trees, far from the road,  
into a place that can never be habitable,  
where I can hear all the music of the world.



Stephanie González  
your problems are minute





*love and hope*

sometimes i'm not sure if it is you who i see  
in my dreams, day or night

you are always rounding a corner

there is dark hair that flows back and away  
as your left foot swings around  
past the white wall  
i'm too terrified to approach

i have followed before  
i have followed before  
i've gouged out my eyes, shoved rags down my throat and got on my knees  
and i have followed

none of this is your fault  
people write songs about the things that i do  
and they blame the people  
that they fall in love with

i would venture to say  
that it is never those people's faults

it must have something to do with the phrase  
'falling in love'  
it almost seems made up  
it seems as if there are movies and televisions shows  
that teach people young and old  
that there is a pond, or a lake,  
or a river, or an ocean  
whose name is love  
that people just seem to 'fall' into

it seems as though some people jump in  
with no regard for the fact that they are not good swimmers  
it seems as though there is sometimes a strong wind  
that pushes people into these bodies  
because they don't have as confident a balance  
as they previously believed

all of this has been said before

it seems as though that this phenomenon keeps some from realizing  
who they really are as people  
it is something that keeps people from believing  
that they are ultimately autonomous  
and beautiful and full of ideas and ability  
that stem from somewhere beyond the inspiration and fulfillment  
of intimate companionship

why does this keep happening

why are there mountains of discarded boxes of chocolates  
piling up in landfills all over america

why is it so terrifying and exciting to press your lips against another person's lips

and hold their hips  
or rest your elbows on their shoulders

there is an unending amount of questions  
within the perceivable scope of humanity  
and the questions about falling in love and love in general have consumed a significant portion of these  
questions

it seems obvious

one of the first things you learn in economics  
is the concept of scarcity  
there is a defined amount of resources present in an economy,  
and these resources have value

both money and love are resources  
both money and love have value, however different  
their values may be

the difference between money and love is hope,  
which can only keep one of these alive

but much like money, it feels generally good when you have a comfortable amount of love in your life  
when you don't have enough it can lead you to do crazy and desperate things in order to obtain it,  
or make up for the lack thereof  
and when you have an excess amount, you lose sight of what it's like to not have enough

without love, it is very easy to feel hopeless  
but without money, hope can be the only thing that you have

and the only thing that you need







## *Red Road Pennies*

Islands of specters  
Walk barefoot from paradise  
Into the Braes,  
Into the Southmore.

She shares cigarettes  
Taken from powdered fingers,  
Knowingly wheezing the ether,  
Scraping pillowcases, backpacks,  
Red road pennies defaced, knapsacks,  
And the like  
While gasping again, again; forever again.

I am the Braes.  
I am the ironworks  
Pasted to the rail yard.  
I am the speechless hammock  
Humming scoliosis.  
I am the ghost  
Shorting a Red  
Down, down by the water.  
The jumping fish?  
Aye, I'm that, too.



Anastasia Stacy Kirages  
An Eye for an Eye

23





## *Latent Legacy*

Pill bottles piled atop my nightstand.  
Prescription papers in the trash can.

Do the meds make me better than beggars,  
teardrops of Abilify, Lamictal, Lithium?

Their names, dirty, creating timorous effect  
calm my trembling hands, incite rapid eyes.

Always the secret wish to answer why  
Why are you having a bad day, dear?

Because alcoholism runs in my family,  
back then bipolar wasn't in the lexicon.

My genetic script has a cracked chromosome,  
a series of proteins in short or long supply.

Each morning I litmus test my mood,  
wary of the choleric or melancholy.

The stilted structure you abhor I crave  
today and loathe tomorrow, a roulette.

The 9 to 5, eyes locked to a monitor,  
at best I struggle to achieve contentedness.

I untie and retie knotted hands held  
beneath my desk when anxiety arises.

Predecessors Poe and Plath died young  
leaving me withered leaves, kindling.

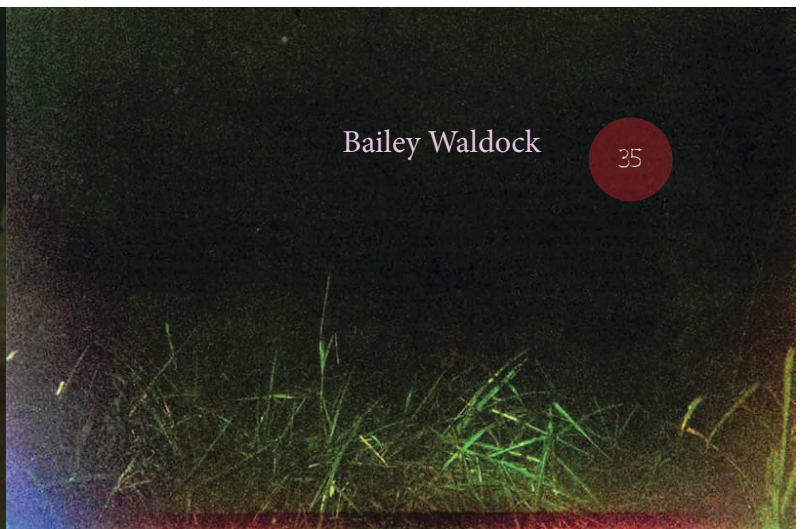
Why do we marvel at the tortured mind,  
applaud he lost in Hallows's Eve calling?

She seeking Daddy in the German camps  
wins recognition, death by her own oven.

I won't embody discourse abbreviated  
What has spared me so far isn't just a pill,

it's authors who ventured into minds mists  
before me, writing back ulalume did not exist.





Bailey Waldock

35





*Idol's Psalm*

Head-banging throng  
of bodies bronzed  
by brandished knives of sunlight.  
Same flesh  
pierced by needlepoints  
stinking of Mary Jane's funk,  
making a mosh pit,  
this mesh of humans  
is the melting  
pot of Crevoceuer's dream.  
We all worship the same god now.

Seduction:  
the jarring chords  
of an electric guitar.  
The long-haired singer  
leads his disciples,  
their sinewy bodies swinging  
violently against THA-DA DUM  
of drums, backed by the bassist's  
Gregorian gurgle that  
numbs the chest, nepenthe in notes.

The frontman answers calls  
with melodious salve,  
rhythms and rhymes,  
rhetoric that unravels knots  
in the stomach,  
turning them to butterflies.  
He sucks in swoons and  
fists beating air,  
inhales it into a bastion, where,  
underneath skin with ink between the layers –  
his mind quiets  
the cocoon shakes  
then ... the soul ... escapes.







## *Allergies Analogous To Mood Swing*

When lucidity wanes  
the mind regurgitates  
lilted lyrics

frayed flashbacks

smoothed relics

pulls tight that noose  
of aberrant memories

clutched shards

shouted hoarse

seared raw

a bunch of thorned cacaphony –  
gaping parched-frail mouthed blooms

origami-contorted

durian-scented

bruise-blue flowers.

I shut the bathroom door to wretch their  
spores like pockmarks from my eyes

lathering

moisturizing

applying  
concealer below sunken sockets,  
ashen imploded widening crevices

Not to worry ... once the pill pulls me out then like a sprinter rounding the curve to the finish I  
pull past the pollen-laden buds as my soles drum cement in crescendo.

By night I'm safe inside reveling in the afterglow, curling my tongue around the next round pill,  
my pearl, my world — my suffering lost on some trampled pistil in miles passed.





## CRY

*Cry* is the grave my mother buries so much grief in.

Once, she called me  
after setting my car alarm off  
to tell me that *your car is crying*.  
Last week she called, with deep  
weeping plastered over her voice,  
to tell me that *grandma is crying*.  
I did not have to uncover any grave  
in that word's catacomb  
to know that on the other side  
of the world, on an island where  
sun and ocean are braided  
into air, my grandmother  
sank into her bed. The white  
of her bones escaping  
through breath. Outside  
my window, a family  
of raccoons huddled along  
a tree branch and  
mewed into the night.

*When My Mom Asks  
Me About Going to  
The Philippines*

I think of the time when I walked  
down the street and a woman

stopped her car and told me  
she'd give me an ounce of weed

for \$25, to which I lied and said  
*I don't smoke*. She looked at me

confused and exclaimed, *Yes,*  
*you do!* In Duterte's Philippines,

one can be shot for suspected  
drug usage. People there look

at me and think *American*,  
which means money

is money no matter how it's spent.  
Because I know this, I can imagine

walking down the streets of Cebu  
and hearing the kind of pop

that might be a tire cracking  
debris on the road or a gunshot

and if it is a gunshot, who  
was it aimed at?



Trevon Latin  
untitled (slaying of a lover)



## *To those who claim to be Spiritual*

Spirituality saved my life. When I was on the brink of despair. Contemplating if I should teeter off the edge. It taught me how I could stay on this plane and still enter the void. How I could have a rebirth of sorts. How I could love myself again. It taught how to be selfish and that it was perfectly fine to be that way. That I was a co-creator in this world. That whatever I focused on would come to be. That as long as I stayed positively full of love and of abundance everything would be okay. In my reality bubble, and in the worlds.

I now only believe this to be a part of the truth. Not the whole.

As I look around the spiritual community, I find that a lot of us are passive co-creators in the world's reality bubble. We believe that as long as we do things with love and light everything will turn out okay for all. That we need not worry about politics because it's full of negativity. One simply has to look at the current predicament the world finds itself in to realize that we are completely wrong. It is exactly because we find politics so negative that we should have thrown ourselves into the fray. We who know that this world is full of abundance, not of lack. We who know that love is the one true frequency that our world vibrates on. We who know that trust and complete openness with others will guide us out of the dark. Yet, it is us who shied away from the main stage. Continuously walking towards others who radiate the light we seek. Not realizing that not only are we blinding ourselves, but also leaving others to stand alone in the darkness. We must turn away from each other and walk back the other way in order to show others the light and how to achieve their own.

Now, I must say that to join the realm of politics; we need to realize exactly what it is, a battlefield. No longer can we discount this. Therefore it should be treated accordingly. It is now time to fight, and it should be known that I do mean that *literally*. Our lost cohabitators who are in "power" have made it clear that they do not intend on listening to our peaceful pleas. They do not intend on changing their ways for the betterment of the world. They intend on polluting our world for profit. They intend on smashing our faces in when we assemble to protest the grave injustices they've forced upon us. They intend for us to stand idly by and accept the death of ourselves and of our freedoms.

This is precisely why we must fight.

Some who read this may be saying "We can't fight hate with hate!" To those folx, I say you are a major part of the problem. You fail to comprehend that we can and will fight *because* of our love for humanity. It is you who has allowed our perceived tormentors to continue to build their forces of hate and lack. It is you who stands by, beating back those we seek to create a better world. Being unwitting pawns in their corrupt game of chess. It is you who does nothing but recklessly believe that if we shower those folx with love that they will change. They can, yes, but they will not. They choose to live an ego based life, and is it not the goal of spirituality to "kill" the ego?

I ask that you, who claim to be spiritual, awaken to the true plight on our planet. Realize fully that you are a deliberate creator, and that you are needed to create a strong future for those who reside on Earth. Realize that there undoubtedly is a war currently being waged against your fellow planetary inhabitants, and that it is up to you to choose what side of the spectrum you align with. It is up to you to choose how you help. Are you a fighter, a paladin, a mage, a healer, a rogue, or perhaps a summoner? We need them all if we are aiming to win this war once and for all.

Remember, even angels had to fight in the great war; what makes you, an earthly light being any different?







## *A LIBERATED MIND: LOST AND FOUND*

Last night I woke to sirens in my sleep

The hands on the clock spinning at faster speeds

A signal in the clouds, visible through the rain that poured down

Where are you going to be?

A sleep disguise washed away from eyes

A voice sang out

Should we choose to see or come to find there is no place called home for we are all just passing by

The trees that breathe the air as we, we are all but the same

And should we compare ourselves to them, the destruction felt

shaky hearts as not just one but all as one, and we crumble to the sea

The story still remains unknown, for as to where our souls will roam

once it is time for sorrows and goodbyes

-----

As the song goes, I don't believe it to be this land was made for you and me

Rather it say, this life, we are here, might as well make it something worth the wild.

All we know, learn and grow, the droughts that dry, the storms that flourish ~

But days move forward, as does time, though we are still, few.

Compromising ourselves for our closest fix.

Let us drown our true selves in liquid courage,

or perhaps the needle that feeds, maybe just the screens that filter and blind.

Rather to escape or occupy with these never ending tasks that even once completed will never reach satisfactory.

What about contentment, its not a settling factor, its a gratitude in simple breath of life and being here, in the now.

These voids we fill that tire and never repair, what if these voids were born with us into this world and that's all they were meant to be. a puzzle solved. a complete emptiness.

Could we open ourselves and let us unwind, dig and see what is really there?

In a chaos filled world filled with destruction, hate, and motives behind good,



to be able to feel is to be in a higher perspective.

To be able to heal and thrive we must see first that change is possible

but that change takes courage.

As long as we live under all types of influence

our goals will always remain a mirage.

For what are these hands made for?

Do we not see how they have lead us, amongst our feet.

To every footprint we have ever left.

Our hands were made to create and reach out,

not steal or offend.

nor destruct or harm.

To heal with touch and show compassion is not to be weak.

To sympathize is to show relation.

To be human is to see blind but with truth.

Without gender or race or any other stereotype that creates a divide.

Roles we take on only lead to expectations

And some we can never meet,

Expectations lead to let downs and pressure.

Our worth not needed to be justified buy what we do, but who we are, how we contribute. Tiring our souls when from the beginning there was never anything wrong with just being- You or Me.

-----

It appears there is a sickness in the trees

In the air we breathe

On the billboards we read

Restraining everything we ever wanted to be

A disease in our alarm clocks and the numbers we become when we fall to the mundane, societal lines, blending in, sheep.

When or where is it that you truly feel free?

behind closed doors

writing behind a screen, singing alone

riding your bike  
Just as free.  
As the birds that soars high above,  
I don't blame them for not wanting to come down to our level of existence.  
Here on this earth,  
that we have stolen and claimed ours.  
The trees that breathe only to be cut down,  
The words that destruct and break the limbs  
in which clouds the mind  
And the purity of our souls.  
We are ourselves when there is not a thing to judge around,  
We are ourselves when there is no one to reject and bring us down.  
WE ARE MORE THAN THE CHAINS THAT WEIGH US DOWN  
But in the end,  
We are the chains that weigh us down.  
We are unique and varietal  
That's the beauty between.  
The sun and moon  
Yin and yang  
There is much more life beyond the limits we give to ourselves  
Beyond societal rules on how one should be  
And our place timeline of age.  
I hear plans for a year from now and more  
And we get so comfortable in this illusion of time  
We forget that it is possible that tomorrow may never come.  
We've confined ourselves to the city  
Afraid of the coldness  
Scared of what lies beyond



Trevon Latin  
A still from *Comfort in Performance*



A beautiful world unexplored  
A unity of what could be  
An open mind is to love  
And an open heart knows defeat  
But there is a stiffness in the air we breathe  
A hunger for materials we don't need  
Seasons turn and the world continues to spin  
Leaves fall while our hearts bleed  
We let the fires slowly burn the hands of time  
And we slowly live never content  
We destroy ourselves, each other, this earth  
We forget that we will never live to see another  
We are conditioned  
and very few weather the storms.  
We water the grass on the other side of the fence,  
forgetting to nourish our own  
We take for granted the simple pleasures of life  
always wanting more,  
and only once when what we have is gone  
is when we learn the meaning of value and how to appreciate.  
Will this always be the case?  
What unites you and me?  
Passions only filled with hype,  
washed away after the next big thing, words.  
Leaving behind injustice and unresolved questions,  
we fail to fight and fix and then we divide, actions.  
Click, click.  
We wake to a new dawn and continue forward,



In search for a brighter light.  
And we continue to play music as it feeds our souls.  
It drowns out all of the unknown.  
It welcomes.  
We move into gear and out of cruise control.  
Strength renewed, we set out into the unknown.  
We leave behind yesterday's blue,  
and carry within the open spaces for tomorrow, a new.  
Awoken to the sun beams,  
You're eyes blind in focus.  
As the key holder, I lift my wings  
I am gone, I am free.  
What is it to be free  
To be free is to remain you.  
You're true weird self, that is what normal should be.  
Your bare naked soul.  
And the rules of how we shouldn't be.  
Break them. Ignore them.  
Where there is freedom, there are no regulations, no oppression.  
It is a life that knows no no-s.  
The impossibilities are exactly not.  
Run and explore endlessly,  
Empower one another.  
Embracing,  
Risk love and love wild.  
Preach acceptance.  
Lend a hand but never forget to hold your own,  
There we will find the rivers that flow a stagnant youth revival.

We will meet, and we will grow.  
Forever to be what you chose not to see,  
Be mad, be strange, and hold your head high.  
No white flags will be the death of me.

## *Displacement—Condensation*

I have killed poets  
 with nothing more  
 than a well timed  
 stare. I have probably  
 killed more poets than  
 there are that even matter  
 : their midwestern midriffs  
 push out as if to reach their  
 legacy: well you have buzzsawed  
 my carcass with your soft spoken  
 narcissus reflection like hangnail  
 empathy against an easy excuse for  
 taste if the interest rate fits into the  
 spaces between your ribs my part of  
 your past will be worth more than yours'  
 mine.

## *Listen Here Fools*

when they make the documentary of your  
 life they're gonna call it: human enough. and  
 the snarky hipsters are gonna ask: what are they  
 dressed as? a blood? a what? like a blood drop? and  
 they'll be forced to balance progress with repression always  
 wondering if you found their suffering pleasurable or if it was  
 just a girl who walked by reminding us of someone she was not.  
 so many nights spent googling *stare decisis* with crippling love and  
 unbridled hatred within every person are self inflicted wounds and ducks  
 quacking that only want for bread and a clean pair of wrists—your entry way.  
 but don't get lost in uneventful rebellion, you could become anything: a gynecologist  
 with shaky hands, a corrupt beekeeper, a soul broker, even a teacher as long as you think  
 you know where you're going—go on—make your path in the tendril light of blinding trust.  
 if a novel (or even a novelty or just a novel idea) can't become better by a struggle in its creative  
 process, it can at least become stranger, and more honest in that regard, or you can fake it make it ring  
 like a showtune drunk on no other way. be that lucky one. remember this: there were people who  
 looked up at the stars, and in our vastness, saw people. isn't that beautiful? are you happy? this is  
 happiness. an end in itself.







## Ruby Terminal

I sit  
with William in my car  
smelling of blue whales rotting on dredged sand  
some mayor replenished with hurricane insurance.

William shares  
the name of the bridge from which  
he wishes  
to jump.

My eyes prey  
on the sunlit tree outside  
eating its every fractal,  
and willing it  
to just grow.

I ask William  
when the very first droplet struck the sea  
and did it disturb those whales  
crossing the gulf ever-so cautiously, swimming  
beneath the heaven-hung noose  
of the hurricane?

who awoke as a supernatural  
dreamer,  
who tore his children from Milan  
beds, who jetlagged  
and bloody bouncing  
took roam through Italian  
bull-circle fashion  
regiment  
heaven.

who loves the mornings as  
demons love night.

who hopped plane to Hong Kong,  
Argentina, Germany,  
where castles and Rilke's  
ghost clasped the  
dream of no-return,  
curbside and frantic with Max.

who died on Cinco de Mayo  
for five days, granting  
himself an eternity, daughter  
wandering deep screw  
Houston, with black  
and white funeral irises.

who bent my ears forever  
in the 5 a.m. San Francisco  
hotel Mexican horn,  
waking the fat god  
motel super from  
Mexico City suburb  
blackness.

"This is not a very bad place  
to be stuck, kids."

who high and hungry  
at the sushi celebration  
spilled out TV criminal confessions  
to his daughters,  
about the skinny punk who  
couldn't pay.

## Cab Driver Sutra

who took my sympathetic hand  
and walked out grocery store  
land with cigarette-lit  
right hand, bending  
time.

who fossilized by pancake initials  
omelet initials with smiling  
cheese, gleamy greasy illuminating  
father.

who brokendown and dreaming  
threw money to the sails,  
seeking poortown transcendent  
Mexico,  
where fossils, fossils, fossils  
made shapes of ancient  
skeletons  
and dreams of escapist night.



whose broken capitalist peace  
shelter captured visions  
of nails, Euclidian dreams,  
railroad bones, and the  
axis of eternity.

who dancing skinny to the bad  
deep nighttime radio screw,  
grinning under yellow bayou light,  
watched the birds circling  
the highway light complexes,  
I thought were UFOs.

who shook ziggybus parameters  
into his youngest girl,  
granting her power to obliterate  
lines, peeing in the Mexican dust,  
Renee reading *Gone with the Wind*.

whose corporate America was 99¢  
oatmeal and the travel section,  
“the literature of lit eras.”

who birthed cablecars and *My Mexico*  
Zacatecas cathedrals  
in beautiful poverty ward.

who eternalized the “Old-Navy-Yahoo-Bimbo” illness.

whose bouncing black eyes  
watch the trains like dogs,  
possessed by those steel rails  
where the great industrial  
railroad is a wild woman.

who stood tree-side by Meca with kids  
lit up and eyes grooving to the  
yoga-leg tree-standing abyss,  
the sidewalk shimmers.

on whose eyes I inscribe:  
*I am a summer of paper funerals*  
*if an angel is a book.*

I choke  
 On the last  
 Popcorn  
 Kernel  
 -eyes  
 Shift  
 Lazy  
 To dancing screen  
 I want  
 To be a part  
 Of  
 The mov  
 Ies

*jennifer free*

Holding eyes with the mirror  
 Catching bones and edges  
**Hips and**  
 Thighs and  
 Shoulders  
 And waist  
 Waiting to be snapped  
 Under fingers  
 And quavering tongue

Pulling down complacent  
 Panties  
 Naked naked naked  
 Remove my rings and  
 Piercings  
 Let me be bare  
 As I am devoured.

I like you  
 When  
 I'm drunk  
 So I've been  
 Drinking a lot  
 Lately

MY FAVORITE  
 BRUISE  
 IS  
 MY MEMORY  
 OF YOU

I'm the type of messy  
 That lets mold grow  
 In places.  
 In the shower.  
 Between my toes

I'm the type that stares  
 And stares and forgets  
 I have eyes and a face  
 I'm looking out of

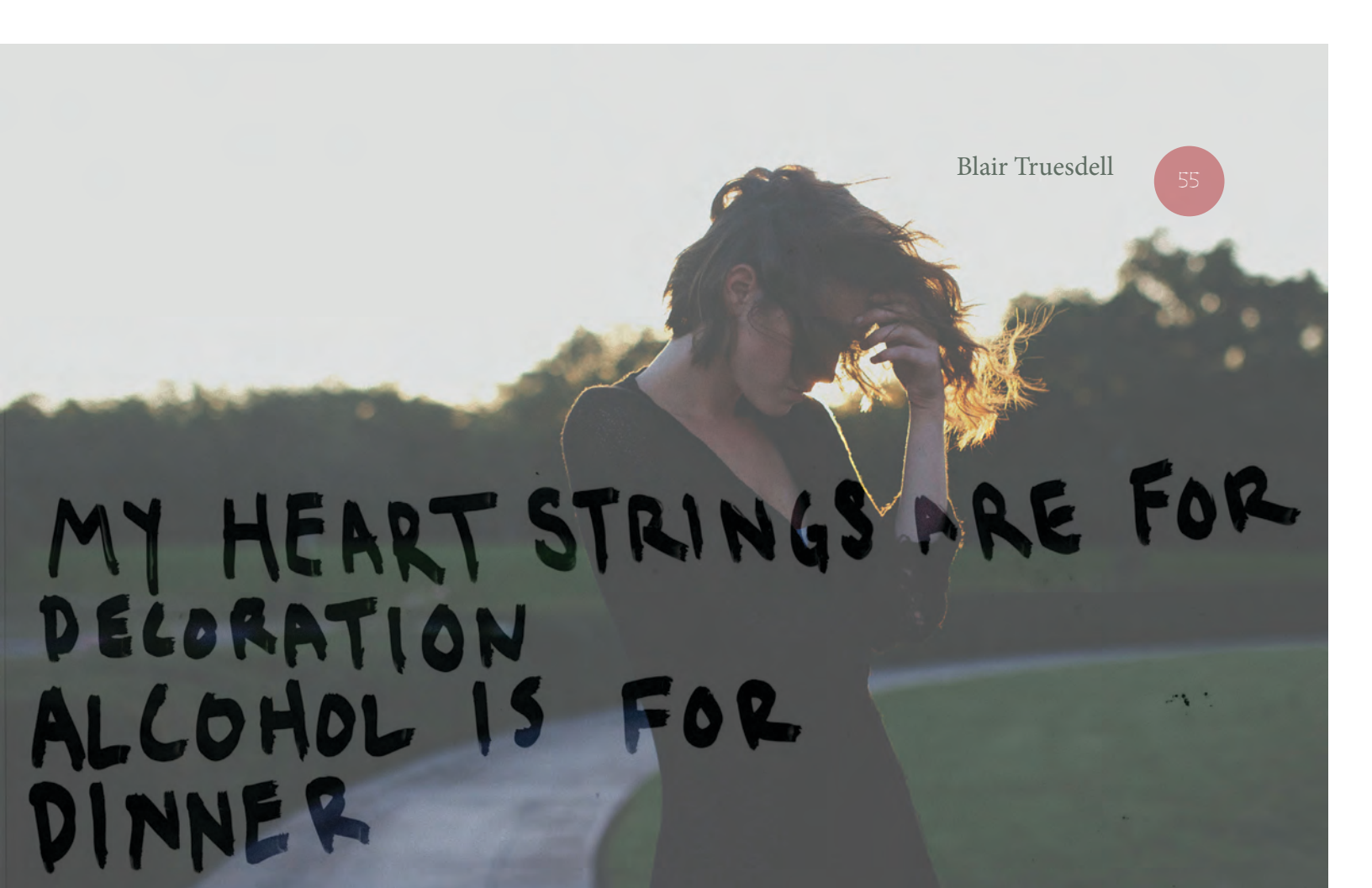
The type that admires  
 Fuzz and persistent  
 Things being where  
 They say they shouldn't

The type of mold that  
 Might be deadly  
 Might be.

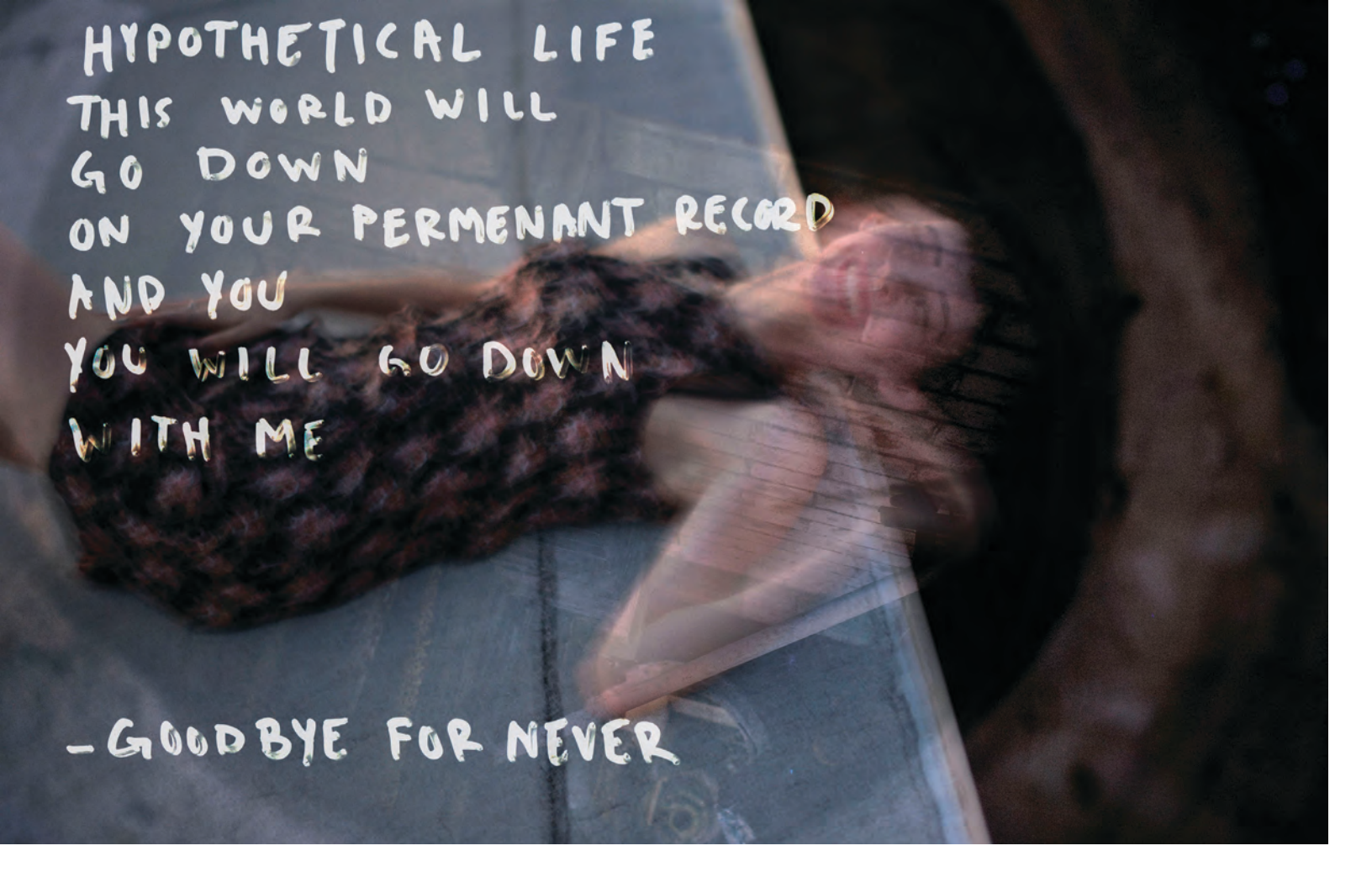
I'm the type of messy  
 That holds determined  
 Mold on my tongue.







MY HEART STRINGS ARE FOR  
DECORATION  
ALCOHOL IS FOR  
DINNER



HYPOTHETICAL LIFE  
THIS WORLD WILL  
GO DOWN  
ON YOUR PERMENANT RECORD  
AND YOU  
YOU WILL GO DOWN  
WITH ME

-GOODBYE FOR NEVER



*Wait for me*

Wait for me, I'm almost who I need to be  
 Pray for me, I need some help most desperately  
 Sing to me, I need to be reminded that there is  
     beauty  
 Cry with me, so I can throw off the past, it hinders  
     me  
 Be with me, I need to feel seen  
 Run from me, I'll take you down  
     As I fall deeper into the pit  
     You can't come  
     I have to go it alone  
 Introspection and schizophrenic guidance  
     Dive into the pool of creativity  
     Bask in the subtle glimpse of moonlight  
     Stay  
     For a while  
 Look into the eyes of the one who made you the dark  
 and broken person you've recently allowed yourself  
     to believe you're not anymore  
     Face the pain  
 The subordinately penetrating, rib-busting,  
     skull-cracking gifts from heaven  
     Relive them  
 Relish their absence for nearly 6 years  
     Thank God-the universe-angels  
 For the blessings perpetually dragging you down  
 Then let those dumb fucking burdens to your happi-  
     ness go  
     Let them drown  
 As your body floats upwards through the pools of the

    cave  
 Realize how good breathing feels  
     Notice its newness  
     Let it out. Let it go. Let me be me  
 See them for what they are, silly childhood memories  
 Emerge without these weights to grow and flourish  
 Create voluntary pools filled with joy and (hope)  
     made from your recent afterbirth

    Smile and wave goodbye  
 This is a new city, give yourself a new name  
     Spew the words kept from the people  
     Give to yourself  
 Shade yourself from all the brightness  
     Love openly and freely

    See my Love!  
     Wasn't that journey  
         worth it?  
 Its so hard to love someone who doesn't love them-  
     selves, who doesn't know themselves

    Aren't you glad you waited?  
     That the ropes and pills and accidents didn't work?  
 That light you're blocking is coming from within you!  
     Look how brightly you shine.....

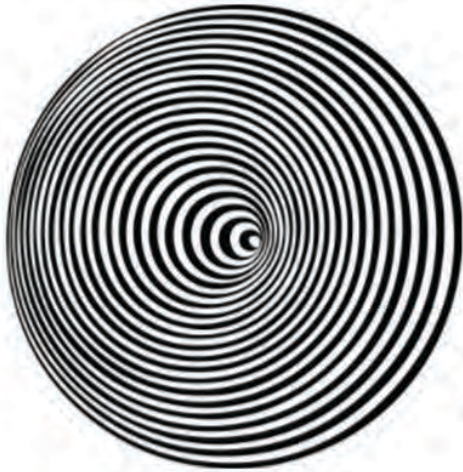
    Aren't you glad you made it  
     Aren't you glad you waited?







matt k fries



## WITH HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED

“...the underground will never be tolerated by the powers that be, because if you’re in your own reality, you’re not in theirs,”

-Dao Jones, *We Look’d Under Our Boot-soles*

Listen:

There is the sound—barely audible in the hustle and bustle of the midday to and fro on Heimlich Boulevard, with the sunlight ricocheting off of cars and sidewalks and sunglasses on this rainless day—the sound of the front right wheel of a stroller catching on the sidewalk. All around are the store windows and door openings, the car parkings and wallet splittings of central Marinara, Oregon where the flora are the boutiques, and the yoga studios, and the dutifully stocked grocery stores which do not offer such services as Bill Pay or the sale of pest control products. But in all of this, the to and fro, you can hardly hear the whisper of the stroller wheel resettling on the pavement.

What you can definitely hear, cutting across the to and fro, is the doppler passing of heavy metal blaring from a van painted matte black and then Tatiana saying, “Lo siento, but I always thought Rob was kind of a dumbass, anyway,” and the laughter and chatter of the three brown skinned women pushing the blanketed and pale stroller clad babies down Heimlich Boulevard to Louisiana Lane and up Reagan, like they did every day when it didn’t rain.

But, one of them isn’t thinking about the laughter, or the babies, or the craft supply stores. She is thinking about the part of town where they all live, where the mecca is the Wal-Mart and the parking lots are stained. And she is thinking about her daughter—whom she had a surprise for after work—the daughter who earlier that day had asked her why they didn’t live somewhere that *mattered* like L.A. or *god* anywhere but *Marinara*, and *I hate you and why is this our lives*. And she is thinking about her husband and how he just went to work every day and went to sleep every night and didn’t care for anything in between. “Tranquilo, Tati, just be glad you don’t have any chicos to worry about back home,” is what she said.

“Ojala que nunca necesitas,” chimed Consuelo and they all laughed and kept rolling down Reagan Road with their respective strollers carrying the babies of the people who determined if they could or could not spend Christmas Eve at home and the increments in which they paid off their credit cards.

But mostly she is thinking about the man dressed as the statue of liberty who always stood on the street corner at Sachs and Phiff in front of the Liberty Payday Loan and how he helped her get the surprise for her daughter and what it is that he did every day.

*How strange*, she often thought, *how strange* for such a large man to be in such a costume. Such a dumb, cheap felt robe and crown, all the same green except for his dark, black face and his glasses and



his hands holding the sign advertising universal eligibility for up to \$3,000\* IN UNDER ONE HOUR. She thinks about this man often and about that strip center she passed by everyday on the bus to the place where the wealth was supposed to trickle down from.

But she never thought about the empty storefront at the end of the stripcenter across the street from the Liberty Payday Loan—innocuously vacant, just like every other unit except for the Subway—the empty unit that used to be a Radio Shack—and what goes on inside of there now.

But how could she have thought about it—how could anyone have? No one knew what really went on in there. No one even knew that there was something to be known about what went on in there. Not even Dub--the man who earned right to live by dressing up as the Statue of Liberty and holding a sign--knew about it. As far as he knew, it was just another abandoned strip center storefront, this one just happened to be the one he got high behind during his break.

But the other day, about a week ago, he was sitting on a milkcrate in the median with the sign propped up against his side, listening to his phone ringing as he called into KMOR, trying to win some concert tickets to sell, when he could've sworn he saw the metal garage door which sealed off the Radioshack from the world lift up a bit and that he could briefly hear heavy metal music softly leak from under it. *Strange*, he thought—but then it turned out that he was, in fact, the twenty third caller and he had won the tickets, so he forgot about it all together and focused on the score.

The tickets were to see Hearts of Calm at the Veranda. The tickets would be a quick sell. *Everybody* loves Hearts of Calm.

Everybody, that is, except for local Marinara band, Bohemian Groove and other such *others* who—for better or for worse—chose to paddle instead of unfurling a sail. But, the Bohemian Groove duo were a couple of entrepreneurial-son-of-a-guns, so they had gone on down to The Veranda and dropped off a copy of their demo and gotten themselves booked to open for Hearts of Calm tonight.

Everyone in Marinara would be there. It would be the perfect time to do what they had always wanted to do, and as follows, they were very excited about what they forecasted to follow.

Esperanza, too—that's her name, the nanny with whom we are concerned—is very excited about the show tonight. And right now, in particular, she is thinking about the man dressed as the Statue of Liberty because he had sold her the tickets earlier that morning to take her daughter to see Hearts of Calm at the Veranda. She stuffed her hand in her pockets and held the tickets, just to touch them, as if to make sure they were still there, still real. She had kept them in there all day, kept them as close to herself as possible so she wouldn't lose them or forget them or something else awful like that and ruin the show for her daughter.

She smiled and wondered what the Statue of Liberty man was thinking about and Tatiana said, "Mija, I don't care what you say. These walks just make me tired, not more fit. Besides, Erman hasn't said shit about my body, he just asks why my clothes are sweaty."

But right now the tall, dark Statue of Liberty man isn't thinking anything, he is clenching his teeth and he is saying: "Was your house hard to find today, motherfucker? Was it?"

And the motherfucker is shouting back: "Man, fuck you, then. Forget I said anything."

"Real nice, right? Having it in the same place every day, waiting for you, with your bed and your clothes and your stereo and your fucking toothbrush. Stop frontin', man. Say what you want, but I guarantee you that you wouldn't like what you preach if you really dug it."

He shook his head, flopping the pointed foam horns on his crown, and postured his hands in the air. "*I just want to live spontaneously*," he mocked, "*I'm tired of the expected*. You know who's really tired? The other motherfuckers out there running around with no place to live, the ones who live outside of a pattern. Leave me alone with all that shit, man. Last time I ask you how you've been lately." He opened the small baggie he'd just been handed and took a whiff.

"Tellin' me about how you wish you lived in total chaos; actin' like you hate the system. We're



lucky every day is the same. We're lucky we get to live under roofs. Shit, what you should be thinking about is when you *can't* expect what's going to happen next. That's when it gets fucked up."

"Fuck you, Dub. You know my house ain't shit. I'm gonna do whatever I want, whenever I want," said the motherfucker and the backdoor to the Subway opened up a few yards away and a sad looking teenage girl with mustard stained pants and eyes glued to the ground, dragged a leaking trash bag to the dumpster past them. You could smell it, the wet trash, the viscous drips through the thin bulk trash bags trailing behind the snail-girl as she dragged the bag with both hands just an inch above the concrete below, the bag smacking against her ankles as she limped towards the dumpster.

Dub and the motherfucker watched her for a moment before Dub reached into the headband he wore beneath his foam crown, slapped twenty dollars into the motherfucker's hand and said, "Thanks for coming through."

The motherfucker put his oversized headphones back on his head, spit on the ground, and held his middle finger in the air until he rounded the corner of the back of the strip center back onto Sachs Boulevard.

Dub was tired. He had *been* tired. As soon as the summer ended he figured he'd finally have enough money saved up from selling tickets to quit this job for at least a couple of months. A couple months without having to clock in every day—a couple of months to focus on himself, to finish his online C++ to Python coding class. It wouldn't be long, but it'd be worth it. He had three month's rent saved and if he kept scoring radio giveaway tickets he could get by for a bit without having to sweat into green felt.

He wondered if the woman that picked up the phones at KMOR ever thought about him, the man behind the voice.

He didn't want to have to go to the shitty grocery store in South Marinara with pink and yellow slips every month. He was tired of the arrogance he found in his peers. He broke off some of the weed from the baggie and loaded it into the bowl of his one hitter and considered getting a new pot dealer, knowing that he wouldn't.



The thing about the Bohemian Groove demo is this: it's fake. It is a *real* recording of them playing *real* songs but it is them playing songs they wrote for the occasion to sound like Hearts of Calm. The duo behind Bohemian Groove went so far as to fabricate an entire back catalogue, website, merchandise, and concert ledger to land the gig—and they got it.

As brazen as they chose to be day-to-day, blaring metal out of their black tour van in central Marinara to "subvert the consumer base", both Dan and Klint were quite talented musicians reared through a well-funded middle school band. Both of them had played the saxophone and both of them had thought that everything around them was just *the worst*—they'd been friends ever since. They had even stayed in touch when Dan went away to study literature in Colorado and have since reunited now that Dan has returned to Marinara to live at his parents' house while he paid off his loans.

If we were to head north on Louisiana Lane, and take a left at San Jacinto we would find his parents' house on the corner of a block of mismatched houses, some over one hundred years old and others with unflecked paint. It was the tired old house of a tired and sick family centered around a tired and sick patriarch—their house occupying some liminal space between the painted brick facades and the sun baked brick and slanted foundations. It was because of the sickness—the dad's—that the house never made it all the way to par—the state of health insurance being as it is, expendable income suddenly became less expendable and the paint and the tile and the conversations of the ups and downsides of lacquered hardwood versus natural finish left the master bedroom.

But now Dan had his big shot. His plan had worked and he and Klint got themselves booked at the biggest show in Marinara. They had infiltrated the public eye and he was going to fix it all.

But Dan and Klint hadn't always been so sure it would work.





A few weeks back, when they had been editing and mastering the recordings on their so-called second album, there was frustration in the room: “I could feel that way about it if it would make you feel better about the situation,” said Dan to Klint while Klint turned on his heels, pacing the room after telling Dan that he was nervous about the recordings, that he didn’t think they’d buy it, that it wouldn’t be authentic enough.

“Listen, man,” Dan continued, “I spent a whole week listening to Hearts of Calm albums in my car, on my headphones at work, while I slept, while I fucked my girlfriend, all the time—we nailed it. It’s all about lush guitars with vocal harmonies and trap beats. Easy. We did exactly that. They’ll love it.”

Klint took off his beanie and pulled back his long blonde hair, laughing. “Sam really lets you fuck her to *Hearts of Calm*?”

“She knows what it’s for, man. Besides, anti-capitalist revolt is pretty much all we talk about in bed.”

Klint laughed again. “Either way, man, I feel like the songs just aren’t genuine. They’ll be able to tell.”

“*Genuine?*” said Dan, “What the fuck is genuine anymore? You know just as well as I do that pop music is a capitalist venture and nothing more, just like pharma and the wedding industrial complex.”

Dan and Klint both grew up in the part of Marinara that shopped in central Marinara. Because of this, they came from enough privilege to myopically get into things like anarchy and semiotics and have big ideas that were going to *blow the lid off this joint, man*.

Except that this time, they really were going to blow the lid off this joint.

Klint used to work at the now defunct Radioshack on Sachs and Phiff and, through several calculated maneuvers, is still in possession of the keys. It was the first place with a now hiring sign that he came across biking around south Marinara where his mother told him to go because it “would be easier to get a job there”.

Still fuming over the lack of action from the Occupy movement and he what he had decried to be *the inherent impotence of civil disobedience* in a lengthy online zine he published called “The Unstoppable Force Against the Unmovable Masses”, Dan had determined that the only way to enact change was to *physically* change something and ever since the Radioshack went under, the two of them had been using it as their clandestine bomb making lab and server hosting location so their IP wouldn’t be traceable to either of their houses. Klint was good at googling things and they both had the strong work ethic and misanthropy combination fomented by a suburban upbringing—making the bombs was no problem.



And now it is five p.m.—the show is at eight—and they were getting ready to bring the bombs—there were two of them, inconspicuously housed in guitar cases slung over their shoulders—over to the Veranda.

Their van, one of several items which slid their way into Dan’s possession as his father’s Parkinson’s intensified, was currently parked several blocks away from the Veranda, just outside the commercial district. Dan’s father had used the van for his plumbing business, but now, incapacitated, Dan’s mother had given it to him. The first thing Dan did was paint it black.

Yesterday they paid their friend Celine to drive the van—with freshly swapped plates—to get it done up at AutoBody shop in south Marinara—the new blue paint job reading “Moe’s Mobile Movers”—and had her park the van several blocks away from the Veranda so they wouldn’t ever be seen with the getaway vehicle. So, vanless, they were bound to the bus.

“This makes me real fuckin’ nervous, man,” said Klint to Dan and Dan leaned over the empty counter in the empty Radioshack and said back to Klint, “We’re about to make everybody real fuckin’ nervous, man.”

Klint, turning off the LED lantern suspended from the ceiling and walking to the backdoor said,



“Yeah, only if we make it there. Having to carry this shit on public transit wigs me out.”

“Just think of it as a funny situation. Surreal even,” said Dan as he opened the backdoor and Dub, in his Statue of Liberty costume, coughed out a plume of smoke and said, “What the fuck are y’all doin’ in there?”

“Fuck are you doing back here?” said Dan, eyeing the pipe.

“Waitin’ for the bus,” said Dub.

Klint’s fingers shook on the shoulder strap of his guitar case.

“Well then, looks like we’re heading in the same direction,” said Dan. He smiled to Klint then back at Dub and asked for a hit.

Dub eyed him for a moment, tall kid, shaved head, black hoodie. Freckles. He handed over the one hitter and the three of them finished the bowl—well, Klint didn’t take a hit, he said he wasn’t feeling well—and they walked to the bus stop together and sat on the bench and Dan couldn’t stop grinning and Klint couldn’t stop shivering and Dub couldn’t stop thinking about how much he hated punks. He did like that they never called the pigs though.



The Marinara Area Transit System has been referred to as modest by its proponents and insubstantial and unnecessary by certain Marinara City Council members. The addition of the B-Side bus route connecting south Marinara to central Marinara passed through the full gauntlet of legislative battles and lobbying on both sides but it eventually came to be. Esperanza was very grateful for this because it’s what she rode to work every day to get to the Stockton’s house and particularly right now because she and her daughter were taking it into town to get dinner before the show at the Veranda.

Claire, Esperanza’s daughter, had insisted on dinner before the show and Esperanza had saved up a little bit of money for the evening and her husband didn’t care anyway and Claire said, “Thank you, *thank you*, mami,” and asked if she could get a Hearts of Calm t-shirt after the show.

At the stop for Sachs and Phiff, Esperanza almost fainted with joy when the Statue of Liberty man and two white boys got on the bus, although he did look strange wearing just the green gown without the crown on his head. *How funny*, she thought, *how funny that he is here right now, right when we are about to use his tickets!* and then she thought about how wonderful God truly was and how he really did work in mysterious ways.

Dan and Klint went straight to the back of the bus and sat in the long connected seat in the back row. “You’re sweating, man. It’ll be cool, just think about what’s gonna happen later tonight, man. Just think about that,” said Dan to Klint and Klint, sweating, said to Dan, “That’s exactly what I’m thinking about,” and outside of the bus, sitting at the next stop, the motherfucker was thinking about what he was going to do tonight just as the bus was pulling up.

When the bus came to a stop and the doors opened for him, the motherfucker turned up the volume on his headphones, hopped on the bus, and when the driver looked at him, he looked back at her, and she looked up at him, and Dub looked up at the motherfucker, and the motherfucker looked at the driver and he pulled out his gun, right then and there, and shot her dead, right then and there, and Dub stood up and yelled, “What the fuck, motherfucker!” but the motherfucker didn’t hear him because he turned his music all the way up but, seeing Dub, shouted back, “I do what I want!” and he pushed the bus driver out of her seat and into the aisle and he jumped behind the steering wheel and he started driving the bus right down Phiff Avenue yelling and whooping and proclaiming that he does whatever he wants whenever he wants.

Claire screamed.

Esperanza screamed.

Pretty much everyone on the bus—everyone except for Dub and Dan—was screaming.





“Holy shit, man!” yelled Klint, “Holy shit, Dan! This is fucked!” and he stood up and panicked and tried to break the window of the bus to climb out of it and Dan told him to keep his cool and Dub sat, frozen, staring at the dead woman lying in the aisle, looking into her eyes and thinking about how fast they glazed over, how quickly life ended, and the motherfucker didn’t too much like what Klint was up to so he turned around and shot a bullet, and no one knew if he was just lucky or a really good shot, but that bullet went right through Klint’s neck and he dropped to his seat and his bag clanked against the floor and Dan lost it. That was it. The jig was up.

“You idiot!” Dan screamed at the world and he pulled out his phone and he dialed the number and the phone rang once and the bombs went off.

The way it happened was like this: the two bombs in the backseat ripped the entire back half of the bus off of the front end which propelled forward, crushing two sedans ahead of it on the road. Esperanza and Claire, who were sitting in the middle of the bus, just in front of the split, were ripped out of the bus by the force of the explosion. Esperanza never got up again but Claire eventually woke up in a hospital bed two days later in critical care, with severe burns and internal bleeding. The back half of the bus splintered as it rolled down the street, hurling pieces of itself in all directions, into store windows, street signs, other cars, parking lots, and traffic lights and Dan’s body was so obliterated from his proximity to the bombs that nothing was recovered.

There were twenty three people on board the bus, of which the only two survivors were Claire and an Italian man in his fifties riding in the front seat who, the very next day, walked into his paralegal job, with his arms outstretched, and proclaimed that he quit, choosing to sell all of his belongings and move to Guadalajara to live in an artist squat house, because, as he had said on his way out to his best friend at the office, the mail clerk: “This glass has become too brittle for me to hold.”

The motherfucker went through the front windshield of the bus and every bone in his body was crushed under the weight of the wreckage scraping him into the concrete laid by men who never anticipated this.

Right before the bombs went off, Dub was on his hands and knees in the aisle staring into the eyes of the dead bus driver and in that moment he knew that we are all in the belly of a precarious machine and that all the artifice, the celebrities, the holidays, the politicians, the support beams, the police, the health insurance, the foreign policy, all of it—flawed as they are—each of them formed a part of the accidental lattice holding the machine together—and he knew that given the complexity of the universe, all of the moving parts, each concerned with their own continuity over the machine’s—that given all that, all together, it’s a miracle that anything ever worked at all.

And had the piece of metal shrapnel from the roof of the bus not come careening down the road and torn right through his jaw and ripped out the back of his scalp he would’ve smiled, because he knew that the machine was just trying to do what he was trying to do, what the motherfucker was trying to do, what every single one of them was trying to do every single day.

**How to get a good cry when you're  
dead inside.**

**Step one: Find an onion.**

**What is that-- you feel empty?**

**Burnt out? emotionless?**

**Empathy made your heart a  
bottomless abyss? So much pain  
inside its made you numb? I know,  
the world is too much sometimes  
and at a certain point a body just  
cant take anymore. But thats ok. In  
fact it can be a great thing! I mean  
dont deny your emotions, feel them  
when you must, but when they're  
dead and gone dont fret! Nothings  
wrong. You're not broken.**



**Step two:**

**Now that you have your onion what youre gonna want to do is take yourself a big ol' bite. Dont be shy-- dig right in-- you want to remember what its like to feel something again right? Peel off the onions skin to expose its white flesh. White as cocaine or the perpetual blizzard in your heart. Aim for the center; the bottom where the root grows down. You want to get the core and the outer layers all in the same bite.**



### Step 3:

**Good Job! Now your starting to feel it. See i told you you're not broken. make sure to chew with you mouth open so as release as much of that magical tear inducing vapor as you can.**

**Heres the part where you might want to start writing your feelings down incase later on you want to reminisce about the good old days when you had tears to cry. Chew thoroughly and try not to throw up, onions are strong but NOT AS STRONG AS YOU ARE. Show the onion that your the boss and you can cry if you want to. If your stomach starts grumbling or you just cant keep it down, just chew it up and spit it out-- just like the world does to you.**





Step 4:

67

**Masticate and annihilate. Breaking open each cell, mixing up the contents of coinciding layers creates a chemical reaction, releasing propanethial-S-oxide into the air which causes the tears. I'm starting to feel be worse now-- which is the first step to feeling better.**



[illegible]

A woman with long dark hair is shown from the chest up, crying. Her face is the central focus, with her eyes closed and tears visible. Overlaid on her face and the background is the word "cry" repeated 20 times in a dark, semi-transparent, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in a grid-like pattern, with each word slightly offset from the others, creating a dense, layered effect. The background is a soft, out-of-focus image of the woman's face and upper body, with a warm, slightly desaturated color palette. The overall mood is one of intense emotion and vulnerability.



## *Don't Change Me*

Persistent at trying to change me;  
As though my existence is a corruption you cannot allow to be.  
Despite your pompous rant visibly falling on ears mute from self-confidence, misguided free;  
I love being myself, but you allow ignorance to blur the reality you see.  
At times, I'm lost, but I am far from broken;  
For at last I have truly found myself, I have finally awoken.  
My ambitions, my thoughts and my action you deem unsound;  
Your lack of intuition showcases, because my feet are planted on solid ground.  
Step out of the comfort zones, stray far away from your box;  
Your soul slowly dies when you conceal it away with deadbolts and locks.  
You may as well give up on trying change me, despite your medleys of heavy criticism, I still thrive;  
For you see,  
For I following your heart, and just being yourself... is the only way to feel truly alive. -----

## *Perfectly Imperfect*

Everyone ignores the complexity of barriers, they only notice the very instant you crash into a wall,  
Ignored is the greater achievement, picking yourself back up and carrying on despite the fall,  
Will Life ever get better... yes, or maybe plain no, I can't do any less, but to share my heart to the  
World...  
Rejection stings, but I'd prefer to believe humankind tends to reject what they don't know.  
Label me as "different," or "strange," whatever you find fit to be,  
Either way, I'll still look in the mirror and see me...


*Dear Eunice*

No one knew how heavy your burden was,  
The reason behind that gentle slope on your back.  
For those shoulders held the weight of a silent generation.  
Propelled by the sweeping melodies of European masters,  
You were living in a time that lacked the capacity to recognize your royalty.  
Oh niña, that fiery dancing soul of yours cannot be contained.  
Your spirit flows faster than neural pathway buzzes.  
Born of the past, yet timeless, your voice is a vessel of truth.  
Wrap me up in your melodies and paint me with your voice.  
High dreams and earthly yearnings wrapped up in angry dark bits aid to a constant solitary sob.  
Let my tears for you cool down that heat for a moment.  
Feel the weight as I reach for those silent voices.  
Come into my heart and make yourself at home.  
I've started a fire and there's food.  
Feed off my beats and rhythms, for they're inspired by you.  
Allow my music to calm your soul like breast milk.

*zach eaton**CAPSULE*

I am flying through space in a space pod. Its walls are metallic and the inside is sterile. Due to its size I stand up straight, face pointed toward a small round window through which I can see my destination, a dimly glowing purple planet. My feet straddle a hole. I could let myself drop through it. I would float away and freeze to death, or so I have been informed. We have that option. I consider it. I may be in this pod an awfully long time, and it isn't exciting. I cannot hear or smell or touch and I can only see the distant purple orb and the blue shimmer of space travel. Just as I begin to move my left foot near the hole I hear a sigh of compressed air and see that I have arrived on the purple planet. Keep it moving, the dockworkers say. We get in line for new pods in order to be sent to new, more distant planets. I am shoved into a pod. I feel myself leave the ground and look toward an orange light.





Sculpture by Julian Luna  
Photo by Jacquelyn Samperi  
The Sunflower

71

The sunflower is an effigy to the Jenner House; bizarre and wild beginnings made way for a powerful creative space.

## *My Cycle of Sadness: the one in which I try and put my cycle of anxiety episodes into words*

Ruled by EMPATHY and APATHY  
Strange as it may seem  
Life's one big contradiction  
Where becoming WHOLE is the dream

All the pain around me  
It consumes me and surrounds me  
And I know I'll never be free  
That is, while I'm alive

So I have been trying not to care  
Turning off the thoughts inside  
Blinded in a cloud of smoke  
And content in there to hide

But then that feeling creeps again  
Anxiety rears its ugly head  
ALL THIS POWER, still I do nothing?  
I might as well be fucking dead

Then that opens up the door  
For depression to wander in  
And I feel myself being buried  
Under the weight of all this SIN

The oxygen is quickly running out  
In this cave I've dug all alone  
Escape, I know the secret  
Deeper than even the bone

All the pain around me  
It consumes me and surrounds me  
And I know I'll never be free  
That is, while I'm alive

The only lock on the cage is me  
And I've found that only LOVE is the key  
And what I love is to host and create  
And so that's what I'll do to survive

## SHAME

You cannot make me feel shame.  
I know what i feel ashamed about,  
And if you judge me for anything  
That I don't already feel shame for  
I'm not going to give two shits.  
I own my own little taboos.  
But I know I'm not responsible for what makes you feel  
Uncomfortable  
Squeamish  
Turned on  
Disgusted.

Now I am a fucking lady,  
And I know I'm extroverted as fuck.  
So as a goddamn courtesy  
I dial back my energy.  
I understand how hard it is  
To just leave the house,  
And no one needs me there  
Pushing them farther back into their shell  
With my big energy.

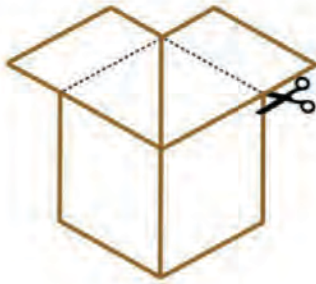
But I won't apologize for who I am.  
I love me.  
I love my loud laugh.  
I love how good it feels to burp.  
I love my belly.  
I love being sexual.  
I love hugging and kissing.  
I love all this power I have.  
I love being powerful,  
And I don't feel bad about any of those things,  
And I don't feel bad about that.



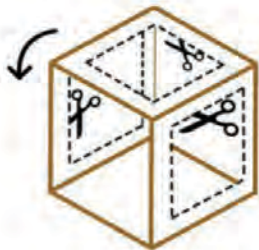
## *Admittedly, I write my best stuff during Hurricane Season*

Rainfalls are nature's good vibes  
All those water particles falling through the atmosphere  
They positively charge the ions in the air  
And we tiny creatures can feel that  
We are so blinded to how much nature affects us  
So disconnected  
But quiet your monologue, and it is there  
Making you feel good  
Becoming one with all that is natural  
Being baptized in the rain  
Cleansing and hydrating  
Listen and you can hear the whole world drinking it up  
When the rain falls, I bundle up and go outside  
I need to be positively charged  
There's a feeling I get in the root of me  
In my seat, there's a drumming sounds that starts  
It beats to the patterns of the rain  
It opens up every portal in my body  
Allowing inspiration and good will to be created  
In a place that was barren before  
Now there is a wonderful wilderness able to prosper  
Imagination is boundless where the water falls  
Instead of creating from a place of pain  
Rain allows me to create from a painless, natural place  
My pain begs to be drowned  
But all I can feel is this passion  
It taps on my brain and down my spine  
And it sounds to me like rain drops

## PROLETARIAN DOCUMENTATION: DIY LIGHT BOX



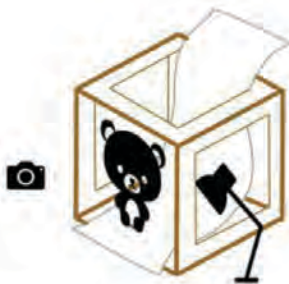
**remove top flaps from the box opening with blade, leave bottom of box intact.**



**mark 1" from the edges of 3 sides & cut. tape tissue paper to cover up the two parallel sides.**



**curve down your cardstock through the open top onto the flat bottom inside to create the backdrop. you can use tape/glue to adhere it to the top.**



**redistribute infinitely.**

The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word "picture" [BUd] now means the structured image (Gebild) that is the creature of man's producing which represents and sets before. In such producing, man contends for the position in which he can be that particular being who gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is.

-Martin Heidegger

This diagram is intended to act as a tool for any creator of material goods to, in some sense, return to them, the control and longevity of their images. With common materials like cardboard and tissue paper, you can artificially manufacture an environment, populated by nothing, but literally any object that you want, jewels, plastic playpen balls, ginger candies. With the rapid advancement of data storage technologies, we believe it has become paramount to digitize as many "real objects" in our time as humanly possible. Additionally, the management of these digital images becomes increasingly simple. This is a pivotal time in the era of late capitalism to take agency of the preservation of images.





David Lejeune

75



## *Cyber Collage: Vaporwave through the lens of political agitation photomontage*

Vaporwave formed as an extension of the net art movement, sometime between 2011 and 2012. The name vaporwave has two potential origins. The first is a reference to vaporwave, the corporate practice of the “fabrication of future products, with no intention to eventually release them, so as to hold customers’ attention and appear to get to the next best thing before their rivals” (Dummymag). The second is a quote that comes directly from *The Communist Manifesto* that states, “All that is solid melts into air,” referring to the constant change that occurs in society dominated by bourgeois capitalism.

Along with the distinctive name and references, its unique formal characteristics allowed it to develop globally as a subculture that exclusively existed online. These somewhat obscure beginnings occurred simultaneously in two different (or as I will argue, not so different) mediums: sound art and digital collage. The sound art pieces were released in the form of albums, the first and most well-known being Vektroid’s *Floral Shoppe*, released in 2011.

Here an important distinction must be made. The sound pieces on the album are not themselves songs, but rather appropriated “muzak.” Muzak is recorded songs that are quietly and continuously played in public commercial spaces. This muzak is the basis of vaporwave sound pieces. Relying heavily on samples of capitalist stock promotional muzak such as background songs of commercials and cheesy elevator music, these pieces engage with the practice of collage through the medium of sound. Disconscious, the vaporwave pioneer and anonymous producer, said:

“In theory it’s the recontextualisation of corporate trash ‘muzak’ that is devoid of emotion and purpose into something that might be considered emotionally stimulating or passionately expressive. Physically I’m curating abandoned samples and presenting them in a new format.”

This collage-based concept of recontextualization is similarly employed in the vaporwave digital collages that originated as covers for the albums. Historically we can see how cover art has held immense cultural significance and allowed some of the world’s most famous albums to be largely defined and identified in pop culture by the visuals that accompanied them, outstanding examples including the Beatles’ *Abbey Road* album or Pink Floyd’s *Dark Side of the Moon*. Vektroid’s *Floral Shoppe* album cover (Figure 1) was the primogenital example of a vaporwave collage, set a precedent, and codified the aesthetic.

Ichnographically these digital collages incorporate brand logos, vintage computers, and other types of technology, Japanese script, and classical sculptures. Despite their seemingly unrelated nature, together these images can be read as a sarcastic and anti-capitalist critique of our globalized society. Theoretically, vaporwave collages embrace an accelerationist rhetoric suggesting that “the dissolution of civilization wrought by capitalism should not and cannot be resisted, but rather must be pushed faster and farther towards the insanity and anarchically fluid violence that is its ultimate conclusion” (Dummymag). They depict a world completely taken over by global capitalism. A world void of human bodies and full of Fiji water bottles and Windows 95 icons. This embrace of hyper-capitalism in hopes of its ultimate destruction results in a sarcastic brand and technology-filled aesthetic.

The concept of nostalgia also plays a large role in vaporwave collage. Filled with Windows 95 logos and now outdated desktop computer monitors, the collages embrace a world stuck in the 1990s or early 2000s. The past two decades, the lifetime of most individuals involved in this movement, have seen unprecedented rates of growth in technology and the spread of global capitalism due to the Internet. This ever-increasing speed of technological advancements presents millennials with a unique condition



Figure 1  
Vektroid's Floral Shoppe



of obsolescence to grapple with. This era of obsolescence, rendering yesterday's emerging gadgets into decrepit devices, results in a nostalgia for a not-so-distant past that is very different from that of older generations (Schrey 1). While past generations may long for the 1950s white suburban dream, millennials yearn for the past technologies, now rendered antiquated, that they very briefly met in their formative years – the VHS tapes that they watched their favorite childhood films before they could only find DVDs and the Nokia phones that they all wanted before the iPhone craze. These brief but formative experiences with technology shaped a generation for a lifetime of nostalgia.

This condition of millennials is no secret. In fact, the 90s aesthetic has become tremendously important in recent years in advertising. These images of their whirlwind childhood produce an effective response that functions as an effective marketing technique – and this response is precisely what the collages rely on. The attraction to the images of the past two decades engage their intended audiences, encouraging them to think about what a world completely marked by an even more intensified condition of obsolescence would be like.

Omnomatron1's piece, *Welcome to Vaportown*, is a prime example of the nostalgic vaporwave aesthetic. The image depicts three classical busts flanked by two palm trees and a crown of Fiji water bottles. Above the busts are two low quality clip art images of a desktop computer with the face of Gorge Costanza of the 90s television show *Seinfeld*. In the background is a depthless void that forces the viewer's eye forward toward the figures and away from the pink and blue gradient. We are then left to face the lifeless faces of the busts. These busts function as a sign of the accelerationist future void of human life. In this dream, people not only do not exist but rather are replaced by commodified stand-ins. In this world humans aren't important – only materials. The human form becomes an object (an art object or a sitcom character functioning as an object) that is commodified. The Fiji bottles crown the head of these figures, acting as further validation of their hyper-capitalist dream status. Pasted on top of all of these images in Japanese script, is the title of the image, *Vaportown*. The Japanese script is the only high-quality digital component of the collage, layered on top of the pixelated and blurry sculptures, which reinforces the 90s perspective of Japan as the most modern and tech-centric country in the world.

### **How is this connected to the history of political agitation photomontage?**

John Heartfield, born as Helmut Herzfeld, was a famous photomonteur of the Weimar Republic of the 1930s and 40s (Lavin 12). Like vaporwave, Heartfield's collages are deeply tied to the political context they are born of. The years preceding Hitler's rise to power were plagued by political unrest. Devastated by the effects and repercussions of the First World War, Germany found itself in the midst of an ever-increasingly polarized political landscape. During those years, there were often upwards of 30 different political parties on ballots. Until the formation of the Nazi party, much of the republic's support was divided between the two leftist parties – the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Communist Party (KPD). "From 1919 to 1932, the Social Democratic Party was the party that received the most votes in national elections and had the largest legislative delegation" making them the ruling party (Bookbinder). Maintaining this majority required a moderate socialist agenda that disappointed the more radical KPD. In 1929, during a protest of the SPD prohibition of outdoor meetings and demonstrations, the communist demonstrators were met with "specifically drafted riot police with rubber truncheons and pistols in hand, armed and psychologically primed to disperse the crowds" (Kriebel 55). It was in the context of this horrific event that Heartfield's career as a photomonteur for the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (AIZ, or *Workers' Illustrated Magazine*) took shape.

Heartfield's collages can be characterized by his formally distinctive, seamless cut and consistent use of satire. As we can see in his 1932 cover, "The Real Meaning of the Hitler Salute," Heartfield's collages aim to "disassemble and reassemble the world order, making it possible to construct a new world or to issue an ideological critique by deconstructing conventional representations" (Kriebel 62). Here he depicts Hitler taking money from a larger-than-life capitalist. The caption, "The Real Meaning of the



Figure 2  
ipal3000's FUJI



Hitler Salute,” recontextualizes the Hitler salute and encourages viewers to question the assumed objectivity of the medium of photography. By this time, photography played a primary role in the world of journalism. The camera and printed image had become indispensable to modern life, with the inability to handle a camera being equated with illiteracy (workers). This condition of the objectivity of the photographic image was precisely what Heartfield aimed to subvert with his collages. The clearly impossible depictions of well-known faces of generals, politicians, and political symbols required viewers to participate in a cognitive process of unraveling the satirical message, engaging viewers in a revolutionary act of criticism.

The appropriation of recognizable images for the purpose of mobilizing audiences is an important quality shared by both vaporwave collages and Heartfield’s political agitation photomontages. While vaporwave collages appropriate images of brands that proliferate our contemporary society in an attempt to make viewers question the way we engage with these brands and capitalism in culture, Heartfield worked to engage working class people in the world of politics.

In both cases, the criticism relies on the power of satire. More precisely, it draws from the cognitive process of unraveling the double meaning encoded in the piece. Vaporwave art embraces and venerates a level of hyper-capitalism, but it does so knowing that this excess can only end in its own destruction. These collages depicting a world empty of meaning cause the nostalgic viewers to engage in a critical evaluation of the effects of capitalism. Likely, Heartfield encouraged his viewers to be weary of Hitler and his rise to power on the back of capitalism being sold as “National Socialism.”

The spaces in which these collages are consumed and disseminated are very important in both cases as well. With Heartfield’s collages seen from newsstands, in local bookstores, and from street sellers that distributed the AIZ magazines, and vaporwave existing on websites and blogs, such as Tumblr, Reddit, Instagram, both existed in highly-populated areas. In this way, vaporwave and Heartfield’s collages encourage critical study of mass media and photography. By utilizing the very medium they wish to examine, even the collage itself is not decidedly correct or objective – it is subject to the same scrutiny that the images within it are.

The last important connection between the collages is the attempt to democratize the art-making process. One could argue that both types of collage challenge the function of the author and encourage all individuals, regardless of “non-artist” status, to engage with the concept of collage as a revolutionary tool and mobilizer. Vaporwave collages do this through online tutorials created by artists. These tutorials teach viewers the step-by-step process of how, using various free digital photo-editing softwares, to make vaporwave art. These types of tutorials exist in such numbers that one could question whether the process of creating a tutorial is almost as important to the process of vaporwave creation. In the case of John Heartfield and his collages, the democratization that took place in the process of collage-making was in their photographic sources. The AIZ magazine held regular competitions encouraging workers to learn the skill of photography and send in their photos. The photos were then selected and utilized in Heartfield collages with the intention of incorporating the workers perspective. A perspective that came from non-artists but was considered important and encouraged workers to engage with and utilize the revolutionary power of photography.

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Figure 3  
Omnomatron1's Welcome to Vaportown

81



Figure 4  
John Heartfield's The Real Meaning  
of the Hitler Salute

## Trickle-Down Theory

Here in Texas when we turn on  
 the water the oil creeps through  
 the hose into our cars' waiting tanks.  
 Our showers are always hot and thick  
 and our skin glistens for days.  
 Molly next door drinks a bottle  
 straight. Our morning coffee  
 pours slow but powers us for days.

How can you say we're running  
 out of fuel when the oil rains  
 from the skies? It coats our crops  
 with its thick black milk. Here in Texas  
 we've prayed for rain so long  
 we dance in the streets  
 when the black downpour starts.  
 Our congressmen write bills  
 to praise Valero and Exxon.

I think we asked for it, these  
 forty days of rain. We asked for it  
 for not having a summer  
 house to pack up for when  
 the floods come. Or for being born  
 on the wrong side of the levees.  
 When they open and the water  
 beads together in the widening  
 crack, we think we've never seen  
 anything more beautiful. And we think  
 maybe this is what we need,  
 a clean slate. It's almost refreshing,  
 like the first wellings  
 of pride as fireworks explode  
 over our kids' heads. "It's  
 like a theme park forever,"  
 we tell them when they ask  
 about heaven. "Like Hawaii.  
 Never drops below sixty.»

We'll sit  
 at the beach all day and watch the Earth below  
 as an invisible hand distills  
 away the impure until  
 all that is left of humanity  
 is our constituent  
 carbon. It is all  
 we will ever give  
 back to the world. It is all  
 the generosity we contain.





## Resolution

Ten men with assault rifles  
strapped to their chests  
stand masked in the parking lot  
across from the mosque.  
One of them carries  
a *Ted Cruz for Senate* sign  
from 2010. In the picture,  
there is no sense  
of scale to the American flag  
one of them carries:

it could be on a monument  
a mile away and ten miles high  
or a Fourth of July decoration  
uprooted from a country lawn  
forty minutes south on I-45,  
to be waved on the first  
cool day of the season  
in Irving, Texas, of all places

I thought I'd never hear of  
again, now that my Muslim dad  
has moved to a richer, whiter  
exurb. There is no sense  
of scale: zoomed in, these angry men  
could be soldiers raising the flag  
in the fine North Texas sod  
after some apocalyptic war,

reclaiming their country from boys  
with ticking homemade weapons,  
boys whose names sound  
like they're gathering spit  
in their mouths before striking,  
like adders, so that you  
have to kill them, in self-defense.  
Like clockwork, these brown boys,  
their faces intent, lips cocked  
like AK-47s. Like the boy  
at MacArthur High whose clock  
could still be a bomb, ticking  
in an evidence locker somewhere  
waiting for us to forget. These boys  
make a desert of your thoughts,

hot and immediate and deadly.  
These boys, twirling pencils  
like dervishes, taking derivatives  
in their heads, brown skin pressed  
against your body, brown hands  
raised to stuff your sure-thing layup  
back into your arms, so they won't just  
let you just be better than them  
at something. You can't let them  
take over your country  
*with their derka-derka,*

as one protester spits to his AR-15-  
draped friend, both of them  
hurling laughter like rockets  
at the dim November sun.  
The Islam I was raised in  
has always felt more distant  
than these angry men,  
always men, always white-

knuckled from clenching  
too tight to the broken  
machinery of privilege, always cranking  
again and again the levers  
of xenophobia, expecting  
that next time health insurance  
or a living wage will come out.

The Islam I learned exclusively  
from tossed-off maxims about prayer  
and "doing good" is nothing  
to hold, nothing as hard  
and metallic as the fact  
of these rifles, barrels looming  
closer to the brown bodies  
of my family and friends,  
to my own body which looks as white  
as those of the men in bandanas  
and fatigues and LL Bean jackets  
who want to "examine" refugees

up-close, run their smooth tactical  
shotguns over their brown bodies,  
"see how many are actually  
women and children."



Through the scope of the Islam  
in which I was raised  
the Texas red ants on the ground  
loom as large as infants,  
so as a child I held my legs  
off the ground to avoid  
becoming a murderer.

In the zoomed-out press  
photos, the assault rifles  
look as small as black ants.  
“Nobody was listening to me  
two or three weeks ago,”  
a spokesman for the protesters  
says, camera panning to reporters  
around him, adding them  
to the crowd. “Now look, now look,  
now look how many people  
are listening to me.”

*all quotes from “A weekend of angst over  
Islam: Guns in Richardson, marchers in  
Dallas and a quiet conversation in Irving”,  
in The Dallas Morning News 12-15-2015*

## *Gunsmoke*

Our streets are painted with blood

Our eyes are blinded by gunsmoke

Blistered we stand ankle deep amidst the mounds of empty shell casings

To the sound of the cock of a trigger on a gun we call the Peacemaker

The doves were flushed  
flying up to save themselves

A flash a flutter

An elegy of soft grey feathers

### *Alien Landscapes*

#### *The Recollections of an Alternate Juror*

Walmart Video Evidence shows

10:58 pm Cashier number 8

A man and a small child purchasing a large box of garbage bags  
a chainsaw and  
a tube of M&M's

4 room houses cockroach city  
Ain't it pretty  
You're my friend my friend for  
Keeps  
Found your body in the  
Weeds  
Found your head beneath the  
House  
Laid there quiet as a  
Mouse  
You're my very very very  
lifelong life lost  
Friend

Who will  
Grieve  
And cry and  
Moan  
Now that we are each  
Alone  
Never mind I did the

Deed  
Never mind I tried to  
Hide  
Then I cried  
for what I did  
I didn't cry for my  
Friend  
I cried for me  
and me and  
ME

Juror see ME standing here

If I share grace it's with a gun  
My communions now begun  
The muzzle how it fits my mouth  
It almost makes my teeth  
hang out  
Oil cold metallic taste  
Upon my tongue its metal eye  
stares to where my  
Mother once her breast did bare  
and nourish and caress my cheek  
The place where metal and  
tongue meet  
My finger on the trigger glance  
To commence or refrain  
I feel the sweat  
I feel the pain  
Of one more day  
How can this be  
and yet it is the end of me  
If I share grace It's with a gun  
My communion's now begun





*Home Movie*

Our single beds lie encased  
                                           in floral covers  
 to be torn off by the morning's gaze  
  
 Stare overhead, the white blinds are bones My eyes,  
  
 bubbling ale  
                                           Tickling your epiglottis  
                                                                                           until you, 0.8, are passed the legal limit  
*Pasada de la copas y los lazos* The contract we signed with the judge & God  
  
 Slip off to oblige arguments to sleep on the sofa  
  
 Your           hand rests  
           small  
                                           On my cheek The next day  
                                           Goodbye rides a clammy palm A smile  
 The silence tugs at my legs  
                                                                                           dangling them over the love seat  
                                           A tisk and a turn  
                                           Good morning is a pop song All beat no melody like  
 your footsteps  
                                           yelling at me to get up again  
  
 To the single beds Pushed together to have sex  
 Kept apart to indulge arguments  
  
 The cloying moon The ostentatious sun Pushed together for the thrill of a stranger  
 Pushed apart  
                                           to rise, set,  
                                           bathe the air with the babies we dream between us but  
 Wash them away  
                                           three hours before work  
  
                                           Keep the brushes  
                                                                                           & the rouge clean  
                                                                                           Watch them swirl away  
 like salt shaken  
                                           over the lilac sink  
  
 Season after spice after counseling after game after fantasies turn into  
 the buzzing bulbs of a squad car in the rearview mirror



A license A contract  
Me & the state of .08

*Pasada del guacal* The red wig to mask your blonde hair A promise

to be a thrill or a stranger  
at a hotel bar  
Your tears The door My things in the hall

The silence  
tugs at her feet & legs in your bed The sun,  
yelling through the front door as you leave  
The mascara & your rollers

shake your head  
as your pumps, strapped like stilts,  
take the car to work

Our last night was quiet like a sunset

The twilight wrapped around your ankles

A "Hello?"

A single azalea lies next to you and asks,  
*Will you lie and call it a bed of roses?*

## *Leftovers*

Believe me each print on my finger contains canyons  
& I will believe  
that you still smack radioactive when we kiss  
Believe that our fingers on the canvas were turbines  
pumping power into the house  
we drew in our conversation The one with white doors  
& canary siding Believe that the gravitational pull  
between our hips made the ocean  
run aground on your wicker headboard That Jasmines smell like forget-me-nots  
That we surfed  
in the *Valleys of Neptune*  
& that everyone watched us jealous & impressed as we danced to Hendrix Believe you are  
just late & that the note in my hand That I am naked in a roomful of friends & that I will wake up  
Believe that the note in my hand is forged  
That the empty space  
where the Priest is waving for someone to come get me Waits for you  
in the house  
with white doors and canary siding

### El Tri Color

When I was a kid I wore the Mexican soccer jersey with pride. I felt just like the commercials that aired on Televisa said I would. Part of the team. I was *el numero 12*, screaming *Culero! Culero!* at the rival goalie as they kicked the ball down field towards their team. When I sung *Cielito Lindo* to inspire *los muchachos*, I thought that my voice enchanted their cleats to run faster. I felt safe around the TV with my family watching the sea of *verde bandera* undulating in the stands. But when I crossed the border, I was scared to wear Mexico's soccer jersey.

*Vienes a robar, verdad?* Custom's Agent, officer Hernandez says as he holds an old woman's Mexican passport – a brown eagle with a green snake in its beak. I see my *abuelita* Elisa in her eyes as she looks down at her plastic H-E-B bag holding her toiletries. My mother's eyes dart, between her tears and Officer Hernandez' tawny wrap-around Oakley shades. *No señor vengo a trabajar. U.S citizens?* He asks our white complexions. My mom's stentorian Mexican accent hits him off his perch the way penalty kicks have eliminated El Tri from a championship match.

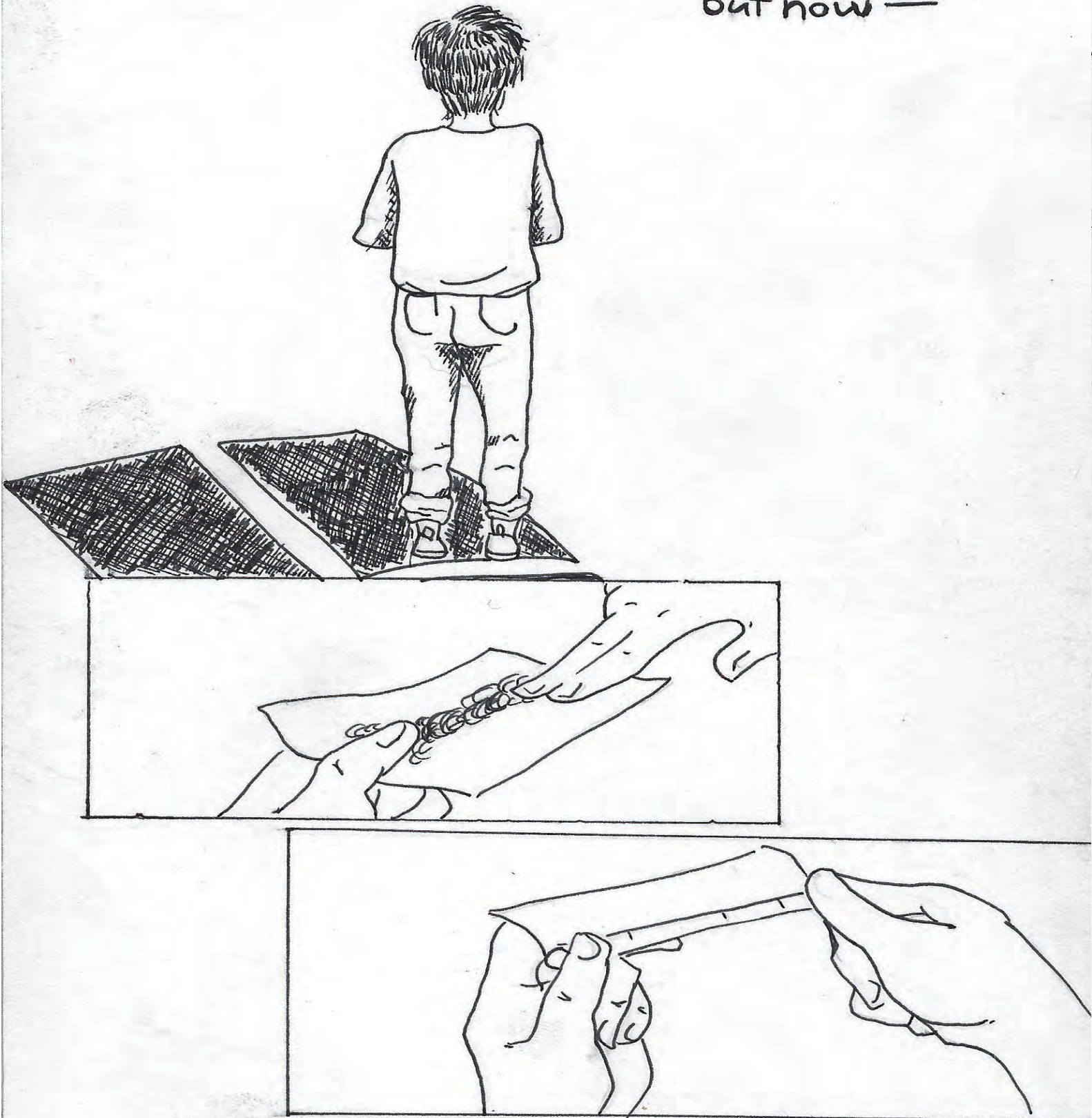
Yes sir. My son and I are U.S Citizens. After that day, I was too ashamed to wear Mexico's soccer jersey. I had held my hand like a knife across my chest pledging, *Un soldado en cada hijo te dio*. My cowardice. The fear that a *Niño Héroe* flying head first off Chapultepec castle would see me wearing *la verde* or the white away jersey, and split me apart at the sternum like the fire bursting open the wood in my grandma Elisa's iron stove. Today, I tell my *mami y opa* that I've outgrown my Mexican soccer jersey. It's just an excuse to miss *la seleccion's* games.







People used  
to eat me,  
but now —





# The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

93

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all the persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to all of them.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

signature





The

o  
us

holi

1. power less — that
2. ur lives had become. able.
3. to believe a power greater than
4. sanity.
5. to turn over
6. God
7. a searching and fear invent
8. ourselves.
9. Admit to
10. being the exact nature of ur wrongs.
11. entirely remove all
12. Humbly ask ur shortcomings.
13. a list of all the persons harmed, and
14. willing to affect the
15. amends people wherever
16. possible when what injure them
17. ?
18. Continue to invent when
19. wrong
20. Sought
21. contact with God
22. to carry that out.
23. awakening
24. we tried to carry
25. in all
26. our affairs.

signature



I look at

this  
wonderful  
thing

to rust









Kimmy

## *Back Then Houston Was Like Any Other City*

Content the water was always level with the street,  
lapping on the side of the road like a shoreline.  
Some birds made landings in Bear creek,  
half submerged trees rose like moorings  
as the waters took weeks to recede.

Then more rain, and roof claims,  
and curbside pickup made special rounds  
for moldy carpet and soggy drywall  
left out on self respecting streets.

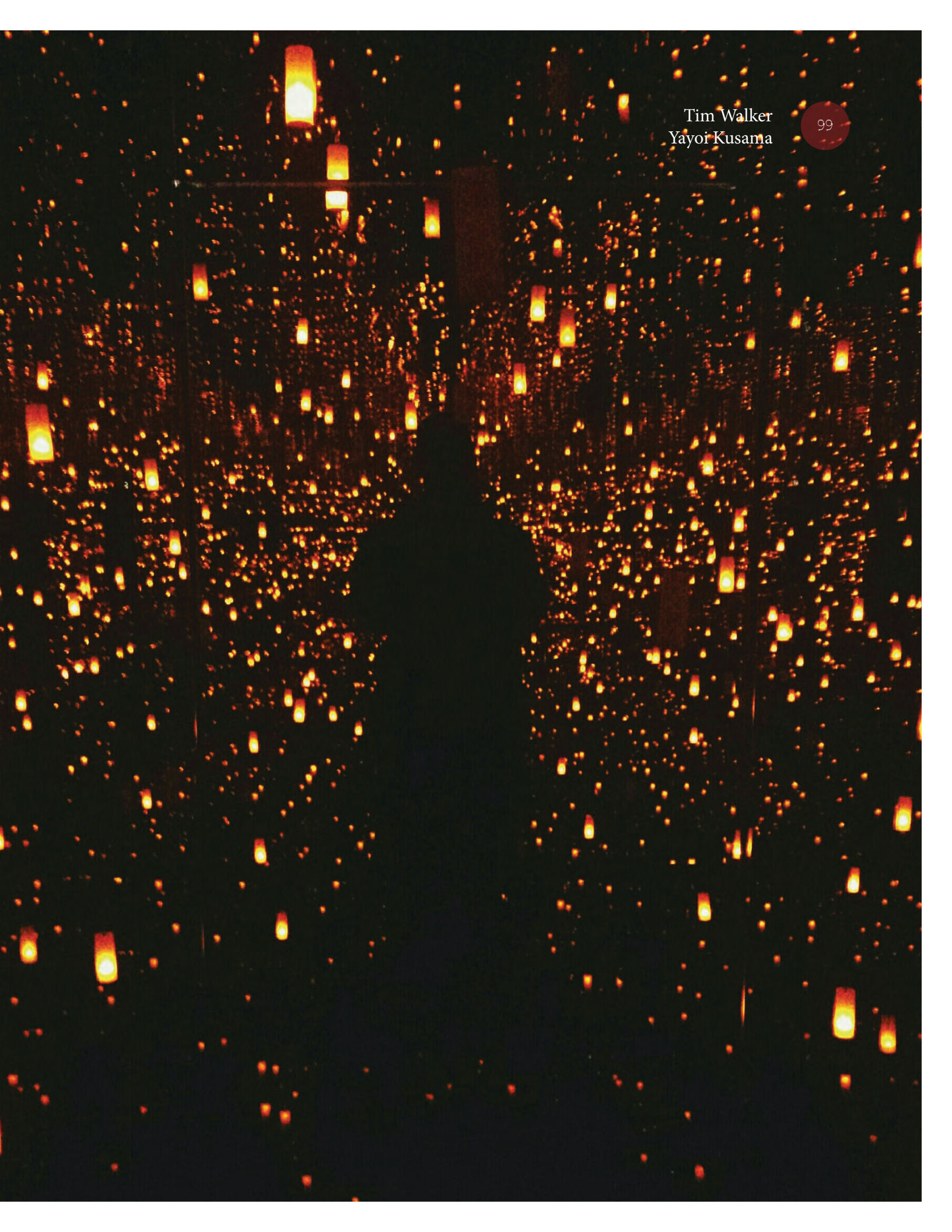
And the broken fence in your parents' home  
had nothing to do with any of this,  
nor did my gratitude for an uncle in London,  
eighty seven years old,  
recovered from a lung infection  
and moved to rehab.

And all the while the wars on our screens;  
the arrests, the daily footage on smart phones,  
weeks of limp half-mast flags that otherwise flew  
in our faces when we braced our spines  
on the curve of highway overpasses on our way  
to work and home. On some days the light

just before the rain, was a translucent something  
between sunflower and a tint of green  
we wanted to believe in,  
and when the sky broke into a brilliant blue  
and the low hanging clouds scattered  
—we reached up in unison  
to gather them back into our arms.

And grandson, you were only three,  
but so quiet on our walk home from the mailbox,  
your head down, eyes on the road  
because the cicadas were loud in the trees.



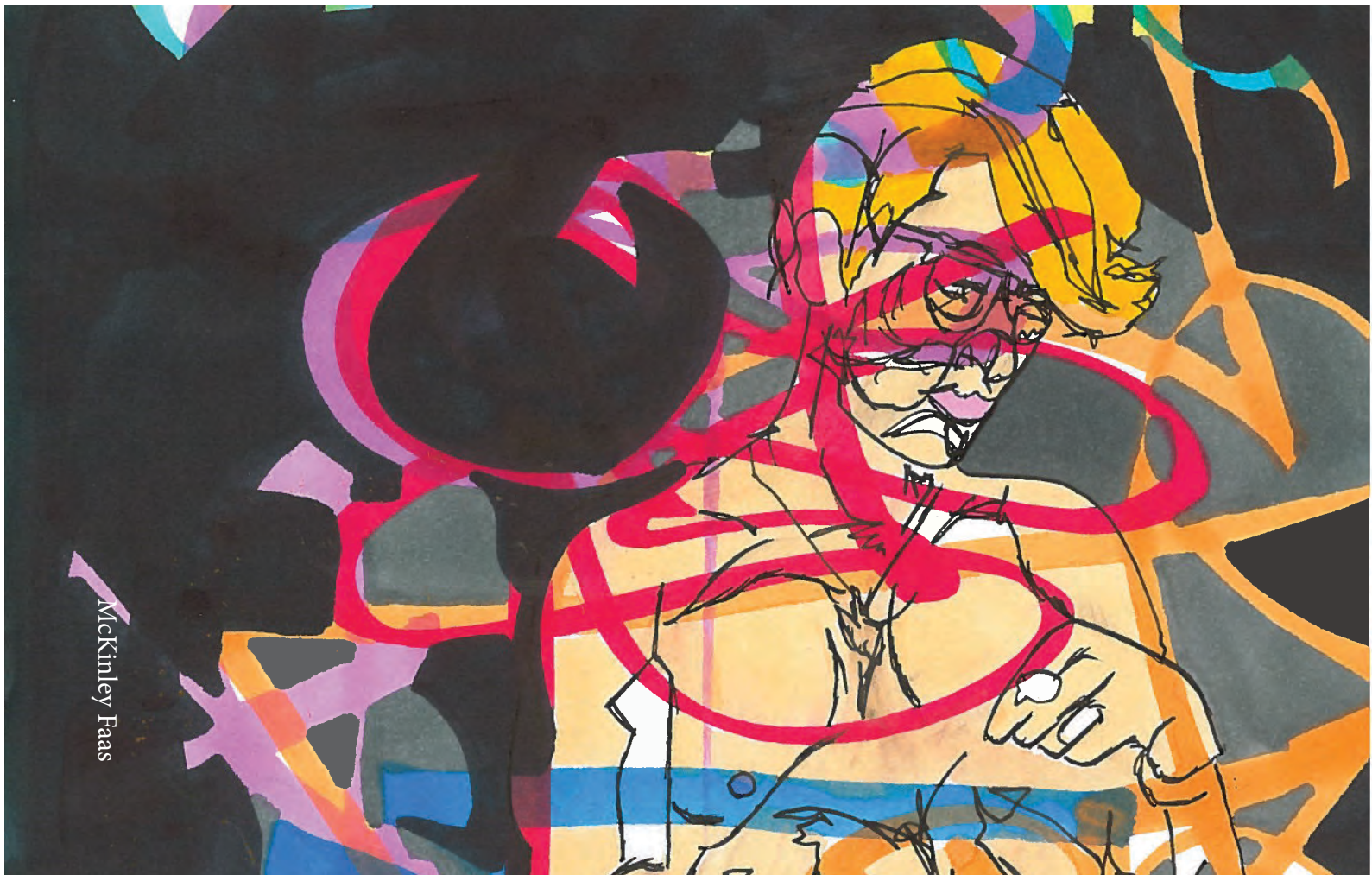


Tim Walker  
Yayoi Kusama



## *The Indecipherability of the Ancient City of Mohenjo-Daro*

Will we be power points on a two thousand year eve,  
mud and brick sliding under an archaeologist's feet?  
Will we be unearthed, heads drawn into knees,  
our cell phones and devices strewn like broken pottery?  
Will we be symbolized by writing no one can read,  
and lifetimes devoted to the markings on seals?  
Will there be that one artifact stirring all narratives  
—a bronze dancing girl, hand on hip, and chin in the air.



McKinley Faas



read?" he asked. "What's wrong with that?"

**"I'll tell you what's wrong with that," the Warden said. "It**

Michea Arritola

101

# DEATH

“It’s not a shovel, but face it, it’s the only thing I’ve got,” said Zerkow. “It makes his blood boil.”

“Digging another hole,” said Zerkow.

Pendanski handed him the shovel. “Here, it’s yours. It’ll ever be good for.”

Zerkow took the shovel.

Then he swung it like a baseball bat.

The metal blade smashed across Mr. Pendanski’s face. His knees crumpled beneath him. He was unconscious before he hit the ground.

The counselors all drew their guns.  
Two held the shovel out in front of him, as if he was going  
to bat away the bullets. "I hate digging holes," said the man,  
and he slowly backed away.  
"Don't shoot him," said the Warden. "He's got no money."  
The first thing we need is an investment.  
Then he went up, out past the fence, and

**THE S**

A couple of the counselors helped Mr. Pendanski to his feet and into the truck.



# WOMEN WITH WEAPONS















*Year of the Dog*

The tower went up on 43rd  
June '87  
A so-so year for da Flyers

Constructed from old news—  
Paper,  
that had been slept on by older  
Dogs one was even, maybe, a  
Wirehaired Pointing Griffon  
But that's just what I heard  
Stood casting a foreboding shadow  
On my uncle's brand new Maserati  
Or maybe it was a Ferrari

The Mayor stood in front of  
The too tall tower  
Some say 360 trillion  
760 thousand  
330 million  
256 hundred and 3 billion  
Leagues above dossier  
All speculation  
But the bastard gleamed in his  
Box suit  
Rich prick  
Proud of what he done

Koffee  
The African who used to live where  
**Poor bastard**  
The tower was erected  
Could be seen standing  
If you so desired to know  
In line  
But that's your prerogative  
At the welfare office on 40th

The picketers  
The jobless pricks  
Stood outside under the dark clouds  
As it began to rain  
Cats and dogs  
These dogs

I'm talkin'

Ibizan Hounds  
Neopolitan Mastiffs  
Hamiltonstovares

I'm talkin'

Patit Basset Griffon Vendeens  
**Mudis**  
Keeshonds  
Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers  
Cane Corsos  
Salukis, goddammit

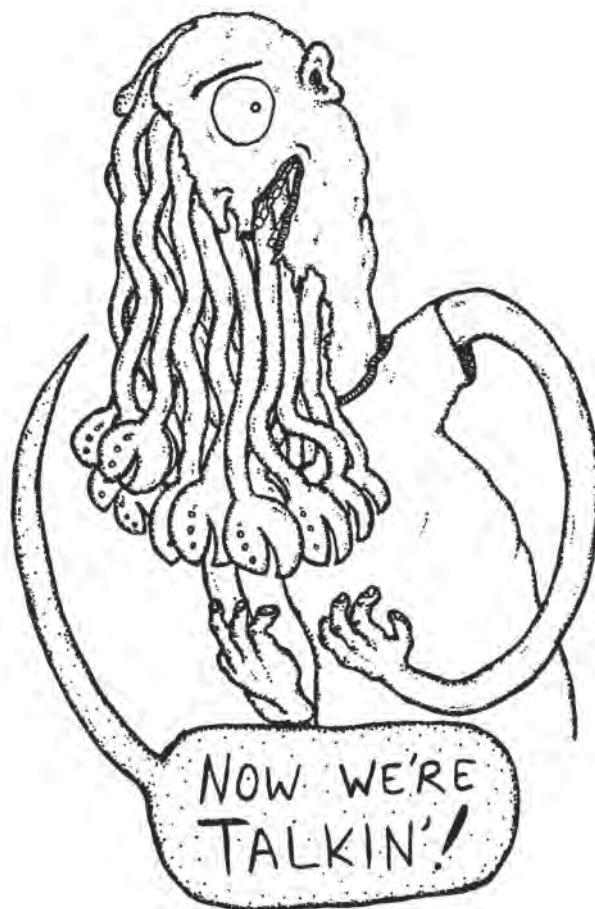
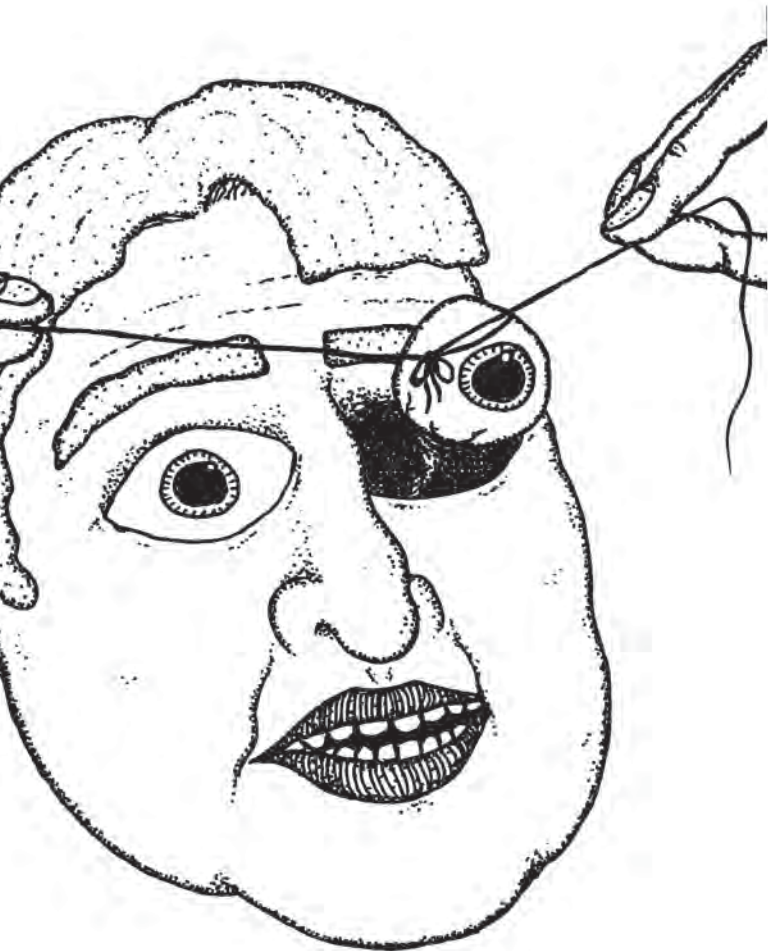
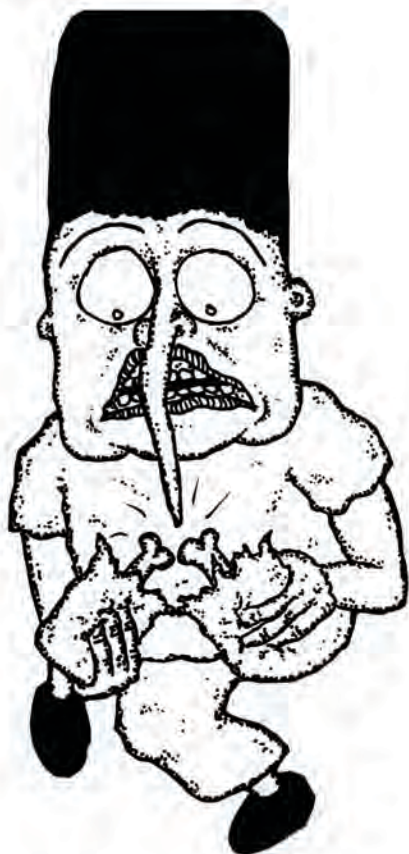
Catahoula Leopard Dogs  
Portuguese Podengos  
**Finnish Lapphunds**  
Did I say Karelian Bear Dogs?

**Anyways**  
The tower couldn't take the rain  
Massive wet gobs of  
Papier-mâché  
Took from the air  
Crushing pavement  
**Bustin' up**  
Caddies  
I'm talkin' Lamborghinis  
And Ferraris  
Left and right  
Bustin' heads off little old ladies  
Brains splattered  
On the pavement  
Like Momma's spaghetti

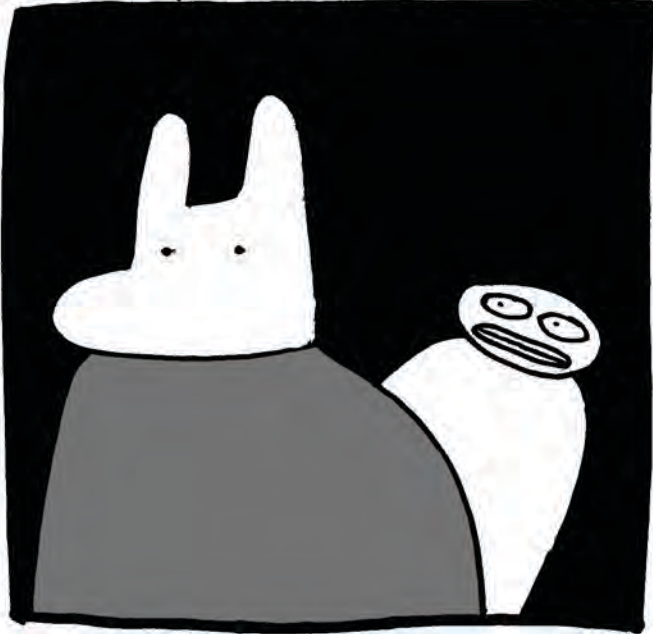
And all those beautiful dogs  
The jobless pricks  
Stood there  
Ever stoic  
Licking their gorgeous paws

And watched



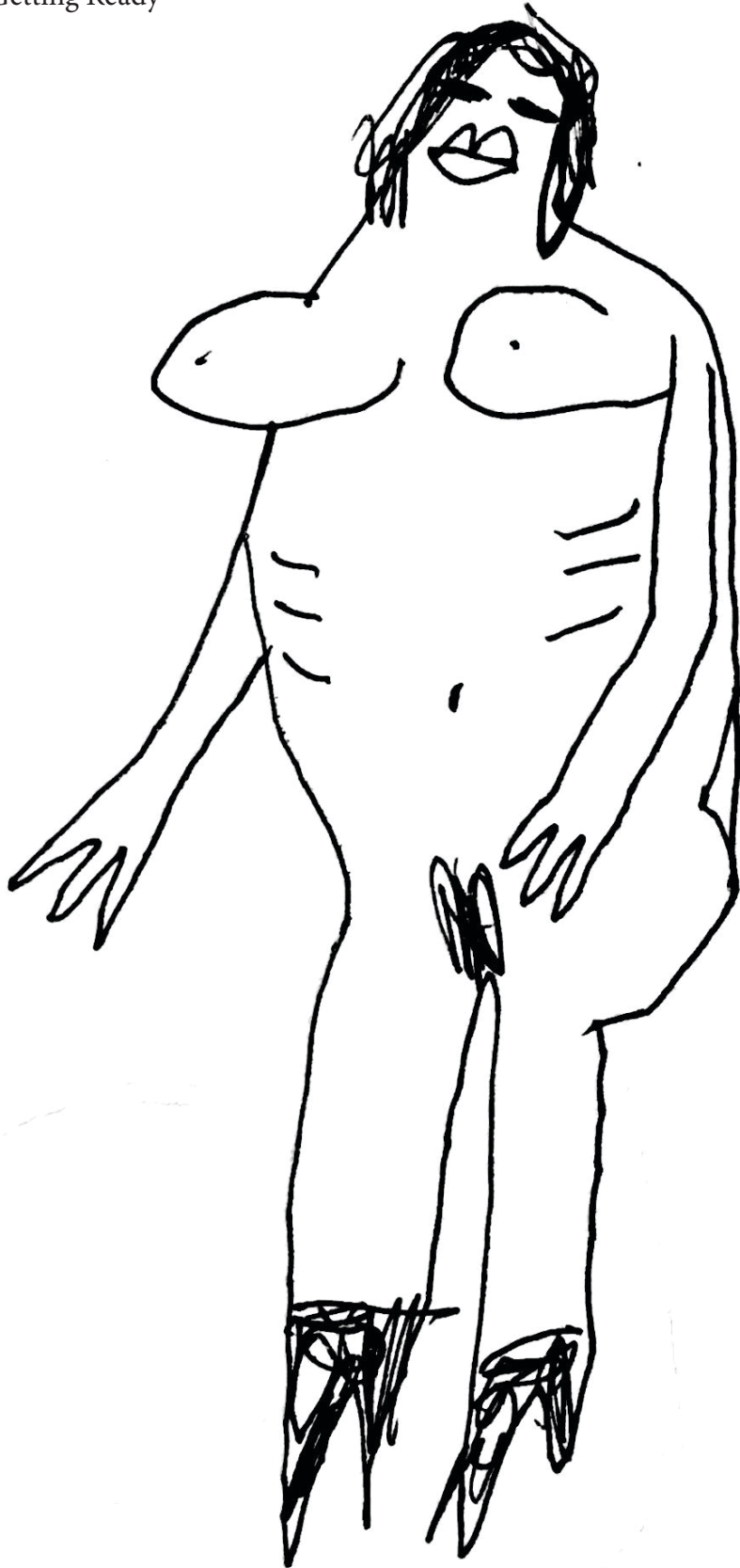


NOT TODAY, PEPE













# Duck Tales

112

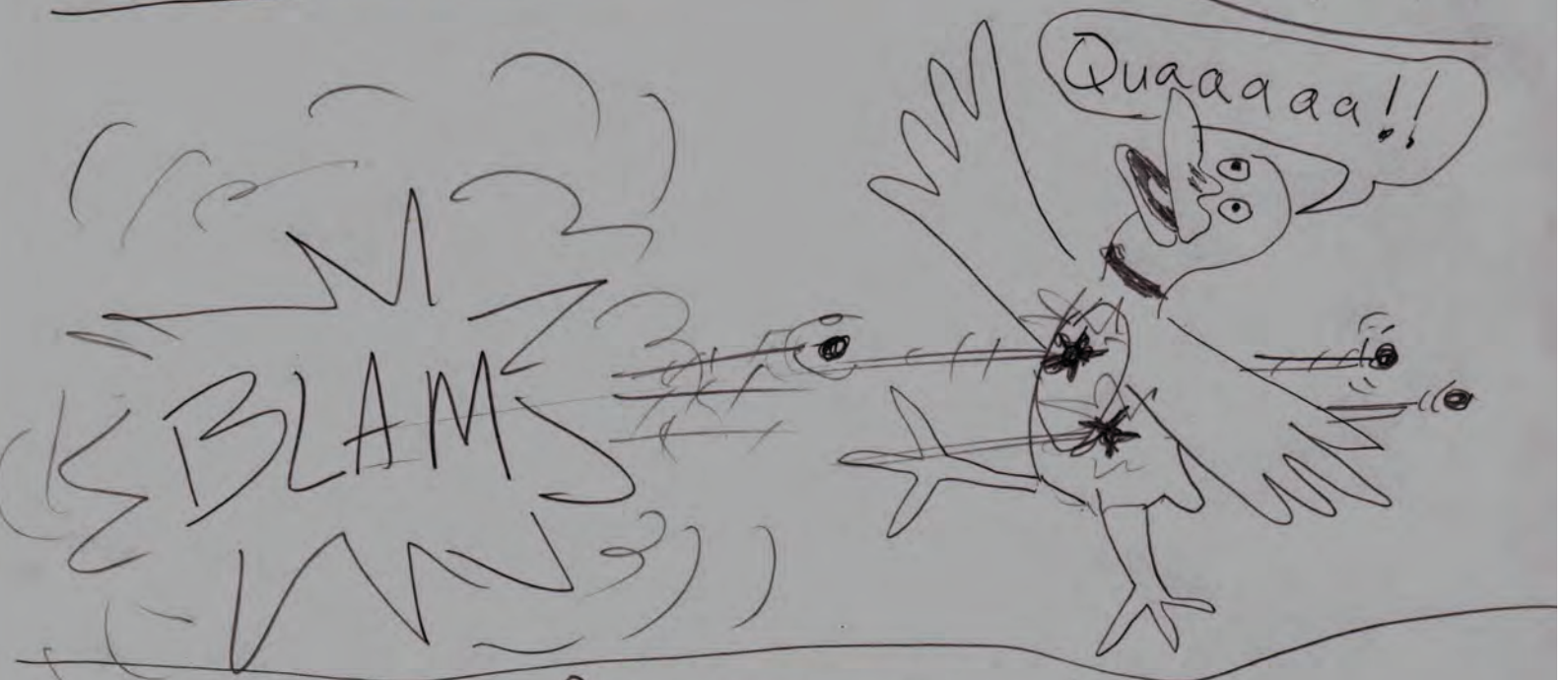
by:  
Alt Disney



Three hours already.  
Shit pains. Ugh!









KILL LINE DIGITAL

[www.anklebiterspublishing.co/killline](http://www.anklebiterspublishing.co/killline)  
music / games / videos / pics

## Briefcase Brad





METROPOLITAN NOVELY

115

R E G I  
N A L D  
T H O M  
P S O N

# JANE'S WORLD



traci  
lavois  
thiebaud

## B I O S

Anastasia (Stacy) Kirages, a proud native Houstonian, is a zinester, art lover, and cake enthusiast. She publishes zines under an open-ended imprint called *Modernizm* and helps organize Zine Fest Houston when not working at her day job at an urban forestry consulting company. <http://modernizmazine.tumblr.com/>

Andrew DiMatteo  
 I don't have much to do with anything/  
 I only make this/  
 Sick/  
 Broken  
 Mind/  
 I don't really know/  
 That doesn't really/  
 Exist/  
 Into something/  
 For you/for myself for no one/  
 There wasn't many other options/  
 I didn't go to art school/  
 I didn't believe in art/  
 Art didn't believe in me/  
 And even now we don't know/  
 Even now I don't believe/  
 I am in action/  
 I wrote this/  
 That is it/

Annie Mckenzie, 26, lover of all things DIY. this life is a do it yourself kinda life anyhow. Self sufficient, vegan, gardener, painter, metalsmithing, bike riding, adventurer and lover. mermaid in the summer time. always lending a hand but holding my own.

Anthony Sutton goes by he/they pronouns, has appeared in *Connotation Press* and *Cider Press Review*, among other venues, and currently edits *Sycamore Review*.

Bailey Waldock is a twenty-five-year-old optimistic chance-taker and a path-wanderer. Growing up in rural Texas and then coming of age into the sprawling metropolis of Houston has shed a unique variety of taste in the talent that Bailey possesses. Trying anything and everything to show the reflection of her perception to the world. Painting, poetry, and photography have namely been the most passion-filled endeavors in doing so. The ever-constant thirst for experience has led to an interesting job resume from being a student, a bartender, a librarian's assistant, and a carpenter. The most important asset taken from each job or project was the shaping of Bailey's perception to see beauty in all different nooks of life. Passionate of people and their paths is where Bailey finds passion in hers.

Blair Truesdell





Cody Cantu is an artist living in Denton, Texas. He mostly writes music and eagerly awaits the coming revolution. His email address is [codydcantu@gmail.com](mailto:codydcantu@gmail.com).

Daniel Holiday is a queer revolutionary anarchist living paycheck to paycheck in a one room studio apartment above a nightclub. He has a Bachelor's degree, a refrigerator full of garbage, a sixty-two year old car, and the idea that covert political violence will soon be necessary to stop the corporatocracy from exploiting every one of our given and natural resources.

Danielle Miller is a Houston-based artist.

David LeJeune: "luckily – I was born with enough talent to support my claim to be an artist – I've channeled that gift through lots of forms – sometimes - because of seat of your pants fly by night periods of my life – I had to – but happily – make art with whatever was available – other times there was more choice one of those forms is photography – I have almost no technical skills – so I keep it simple – tho I tend towards the inspired accident too – often my photographs are just evocations of the life i'm living when I take them – and as such I treasure them – and since this love of life I'm living is an art life – my photographic evocations of it are - made art by being made of art making photographs makes me happy – looking at back them through the decades makes me happy too – I hope you enjoy this sampling"

D.M. Rice was schooled in Houston but will always be from Dallas, vaguely cynical abt the dissonances between the cultural spaces and their implications for the greater american experience.

Dza Void, an eclectic being of light and love, has been in this 3-D reality for 25 solar rotations. They'd like to believe they try their hardest to be an earth angel. They've worked with various activist groupings in the last two years in various projects. They truly believe that if Folx put their egos aside we could do magnificent things for all of humanity. They're always down to have a good time and will try to help you have one too. So yeah, if you ever see them, let's party sometime and discuss all the cool shit this planet earth has to offer!

EVAN MCCARLEY IS A PERFORMANCE ARTIST, MUSICIAN AND PHOTOGRAPHER BASED IN HOUSTON. After studying Art History at University of North Texas in 2008, she moved back to Houston and immersed herself in the local music and arts community. She co-facilitated CounterCrawl from its second to sixth iteration, and performed with Continuum Performance Art from 2012 to 2015. McCarley was a member of the artist board and a lead volunteer for Lone Star Explosion International Performance Art Biennale in 2014, and is currently co-directing and co-curating Experimental Action Performance Art Festival. She also serves as special events coordinator for Zine Fest Houston. McCarley is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts degree at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Hayden Wright: [www.themenialcollection.org](http://www.themenialcollection.org)

Jackson Burgess is the author of *Pocket Full of Glass*, winner of the 2014 Clockwise Chapbook Competition (2017, Tebot Bach). He has placed work in *Rattle*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Cimarron Review*, and elsewhere, and received fellowships from the University of Southern California and the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

Jacquelyn Samperi is a native Texan weirdo. She enjoys long talks about economics and short walks in zero gravity. She relishes spending her time with kitters and having one-sided conversations with plants. Do not challenge her to a B boy battle unless you came prepared to get served.

Jaz Henry: "I create works that are constructed realities, created using paper and digital collage, photo montage and the Cyanotype process. I construct the collected imagery as corporeal realities, tangible imagery used to build dreamlike studies. I utilize my own photographic imagery, found photography and stock imagery to create works that reflect my personal awakenings to historical, religious and societal references. Photography allows me to capture time, while collage and montage allows me the means to explore recreation. Building outer worlds that change our perception of the present."

Jenaro Goode: “25 years old. If there’s a hell below by Curtis Mayfield used to scare me like at the age of 12. But in retrospect the album that it’s on including the song is amazing! @jenarogoode jenarogoode@gmail.com”

Jennifer Free: “There is poetry in my fingers and there is poetry in me and sometimes there is poetry that has no words that must be shown. I didn’t define myself yesterday because that doesn’t dictate today and I don’t know what is going to happen tomorrow. Music is a constant in the (sound)waves. Divine Feminine working with Divine Masculine to create life in and for of me. I love to hate the cold and was born in the middle of the heat. I walk across university daily and learn about psychology.”

Firm believer in civilizations beyond the time and space surrounding our universe, JohnDuro has been chronicling life among outer beings for quite some time now. Distraught with life as we know it on earth, he is completely consumed by the idea that not only do these beings and planets beyond our reach exist, but also that he too is a visitor from such a star and has been trying to find his way back. He recognizes other beings from elsewhere here, but notices how most if not all have little to no trouble adjusting to life on earth, for the twisted virtues and skewed values of beings on earth are familiar to those of their home world. As his time on earth goes on, Duro becomes increasingly torn between continuing efforts to find his way home, or finding eternal comfort here.

John Wayne Comunale lives in Houston, TX, where he wiles away the days writing ridiculous stories and milking nuts for the greater good. He is a writer for the comedic collective, *MicroSatan* and contributes creative non-fiction for the theatrical art group, *BooTown*. When he’s not doing that, he tours with the punk rock disaster: *johnwayneisdead*. He is the author of *The Porn Star Retirement Plan*, *Charge Land*, and *Aunt Poster* as well as writer/illustrator of the comic-zine: *The Afterlife Adventures of johnwayneisdead*. John Wayne is an American actor who died in 1979.

Julian Luna started making art cars in high school. This introduced him to welding and eventually got him working on art cars for Burning Man. He went to UH for sculpture and with a few classes left he took a break to work with his former professor making custom furniture. He currently makes sculpture and custom furniture full-time.

Katie Reese currently lives in Denton, TX, where she earned her bachelors degree in photography. While the majority of her art is photographic, she also has worked with video, music and drawing/painting. As her latest muse, she re-purposes dolls and stuffed animals into contorted and nightmarish figures.

When Keely Richey was 5, she discovered all too late that there was no more toilet paper. Instead of any normal response, she felt prompted to write her first (and lamentably not last) suicide note on the empty roll. The note read, “To whom it may concern, I am convinced that I will never find love so I am going to buy or rent an elephant to stomp on my head or jump off the Brooklyn bridge PS We’re out of toilet paper.” All this is to say, when you read her work, know that she truly and deeply feels these words and has been described as “intense” by most who have had the unfortunate pleasure of encountering her.

KELL is a former independent bookseller, jewelry designer, metalsmith and poet who resides in the greater Houston Metro area.

Kenan Ince is a mathematician, musician, and activist currently living in Salt Lake City, but they will always call Houston home. Their work has appeared in *Word Riot* and *Permafrost*, among others, and has been ranted at in the comments section of the Houston real estate blog *Swamplot*. They have been featured in the Poison Pen and Public Poetry reading series.

Lukas Wade is an artist... an illustrator, a painter, a draftsman, a ... who gives a fuck? He makes shit. {instagram} lukas\_wade



Machele Johnson is a Dallas based artist and poet who has been sharing her words for the past year and change. A melomaniac since birth, Machele's reason for writing is to study, experiment, and report back on the numerous, wordless joys and sorrows one can experience while lost in sound.

ME Duno is an art history major at Rice University and spends too much time on the internet. Catch her outside. How bout da

Maria-Elisa Heg is a nasty woman of comix, an illustrator, and an organizer with Zine Fest Houston. ohdon-  
teven.com, @antlerantler on twitter

Matt Fries is the renegade engineer behind the Jet Propelled Insectivore Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He has absolutely no credentials that say he is allowed to be an engineer but he does own a piece of paper that says he is certified to write fiction.

Matthew Rager is a full-time facilities manager and barback at a reputable establishment in Houston. He tends to spend his time tending devil's lettuce with his beautiful ladyfriend or eating at restaurants within the loop solo. That's what he does. Yup. That's about it. More later.

Mckinley Faas (born \_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_ ) has been a part of the \_\_\_\_ art scene for \_\_\_\_ years, noted for his \_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_ art, visual/graphic effects, and his drank shirt and pill bottle hat. \_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_ are pseudonyms he's worked under. From performing many nights at The Jenner with DJ Rock Tha Boat to \_\_\_\_, Mckinley enjoys \_\_\_\_\_. You can catch him up all night follow his instagram and Snapchat

Megan Gonzalez is a poet, photographer, and lizard lover who doesn't know how to write bios, but feels as though if she was more capable they would turn out really awesome

Melissa Coronado, AKA Melita



Michea Arritola is a Houston-based tarot reader, maker, and queer witch. She has two cats and no time for any patriarchal bullshit.

Mila Rowdon is from New Orleans, Louisiana, where most of her family still lives. She is greatly influenced by the work of F. T. Marinetti and Mr. Laurence Durrell. Mila dreams of one day understanding the words of Allen Ginsberg, "An angel is an agony of flame."

NED is a human noodle living in a cocoon of slime and records. He spends his time in the flesh world performing comedy with his group MicroSatan, playing in the band Total Nightmare, and recording his podcasts, The Stacks and Honey, I Shrunk the Binge.

Nicole Johnson: "I work currently as an energy reporter in Houston, Texas, focusing primarily on the petrochemicals industry. My poetry was published previously in *Expressionists, Magazine of the Arts*, affiliated with Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Pepperdine University in 2011."

Nicole Schultz-Evans (aka NICOLEO), is the siren of the soul for the modern age. Haitian born, and raised in the Pacific Northwestern region of United States, her work speaks to the heart and mind of many dealing with painful struggles and thoughts of feeling different than what society deems. Her works aspires towards a collective understanding of one's perspective of life, love, and hope. The Key to understanding is perception.

Noel Rodriguez is originally from Brownsville, Texas but has spent the last ten years living and working in Houston. In that time, he earned a bachelor's degree from University of St. Thomas in Philosophy and a bachelor's degree in Spanish from the University of Houston. When he isn't working as a tutor, Noel writes poems, short stories and songs.

Roby Attal is an actor and artist currently based in Austin, TX. His priority is the creation and expulsion of ideas, finding ways in which experiences take the form of images and words. He is always looking for collaboration among minds, and is very glad to be a part of Anklebiters.

S Rodriguez is a Houston based interdisciplinary artists. Their work most often deals with bodies - physical, digital, and textual. They are one half of Paraspace Books, a transient queer and sci-fi bookspace.

Saba Husain's poetry has appeared in Barrow Street, Cimarron Review, Natural Bridge, Reunion: The Dallas Review, Houston Poetry Fest Anthologies, Jaggery, Pea River Journal, and Glass: A Journal of Poetry. Saba has been a featured poet at First Fridays, Words and Arts at Rice Gallery, and received the 2014 Lorene Pouncey Memorial Award at Houston Poetry Fest. Saba has a Bachelors in Creative Writing from University of Houston.

Sara Royer is a certified art lover and community enthusiast. She spent about three years as a host for Jenner House Open Mic, and prides herself on the expert curation of any party she hosts. Right now she's focusing on her succulent garden, her doggos, and stay lit AF.

Sarah J. Campbell is from a lot of places, but Houston sucked her in, so here she sits and scribbles. Follow her on Twitter @mzungu\_mfupi. Or don't. It's whatever.

Sims Hardin is a 31 year old Philadelphia resident poseur that plays in shitty punk bands and drinks shitty beer and sits on the internet and points at every dog he sees.

Stephanie Gonzalez received her BFA in Interior Design from the Art Institute of Houston in December, 2011. She has created works for public collections such as Starwood Hotels - Le Meridien in Saigon, murals for Lot 8, famous designer Chloe Dao's retail boutique in Rice Village, Skyline Art Services, the Make a Wish Foundation, Pearl Bar, and friends' commissions; in addition to these murals, Gonzalez has also participated in many art happenings in Houston and shown her art at various galleries throughout the South Texas area. She is well-versed in many design programs, including Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign, AutoCAD, Revit, & 3D Studios Max. Stephanie currently works as a full time fine Artist in Houston, TX.



Stephanie Murphy is one of the founding members and president of Counter Coven, an organization aimed at empowering the female and nonbinary art community of Houston. She does marketing for Kickin' Kombucha and is proud to represent stellar kombucha made by equally stellar people. Stephanie thrives on food, community, and art; she devotes her energy to bringing those elements together as often as possible.

Steven Tea is an American Khmer writer and MFA candidate at Texas State University.

Tim Walker is a self-taught freelance photographer based in Houston.

Trevon Latin a.k.a. Shaturqua Relentless (b. 1987, Houston, Texas) is a Houston Interdisciplinary artist and Painting BFA graduate from the University of Houston School of Art. His paintings have been exhibited in the annual student shows of 2014, and 2015. "As a black, gay, femme, American male, my experience invites me to tell stories through my eyes and allows me to dive into the worlds I know often to inform outsiders of unfair and unjust treatment. His current work takes on the main story of a history that is both true and imaginary. Using a patchwork of sewing, painting, and performance, He/they Journey through identity and self-exploration of what it means to be gay, black and embracing what is divinely feminine in today's society.

Zach Eaton is a writer and comedian from Houston, TX. His work has appeared nowhere and you probably haven't seen him. He has nothing to do with the Twitter account @JorpTimpkins so please don't ask him about it. He studies English at the University of Houston.

# ZINE FEST HOUSTON



**[zinefesthouston.org](http://zinefesthouston.org)**

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