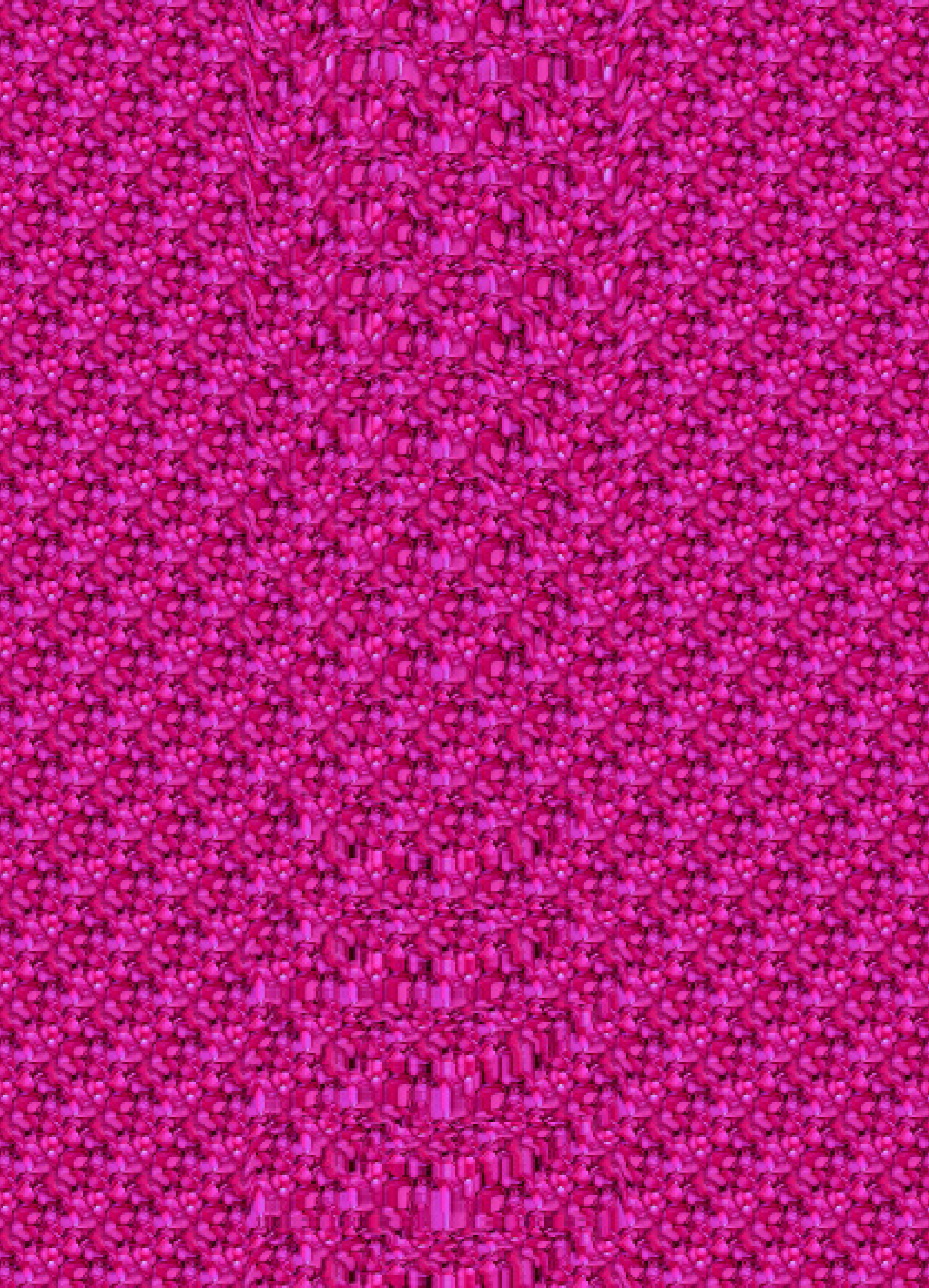




**SURREALITY**  
**NCR**  
**SURREALITY**

**2024**



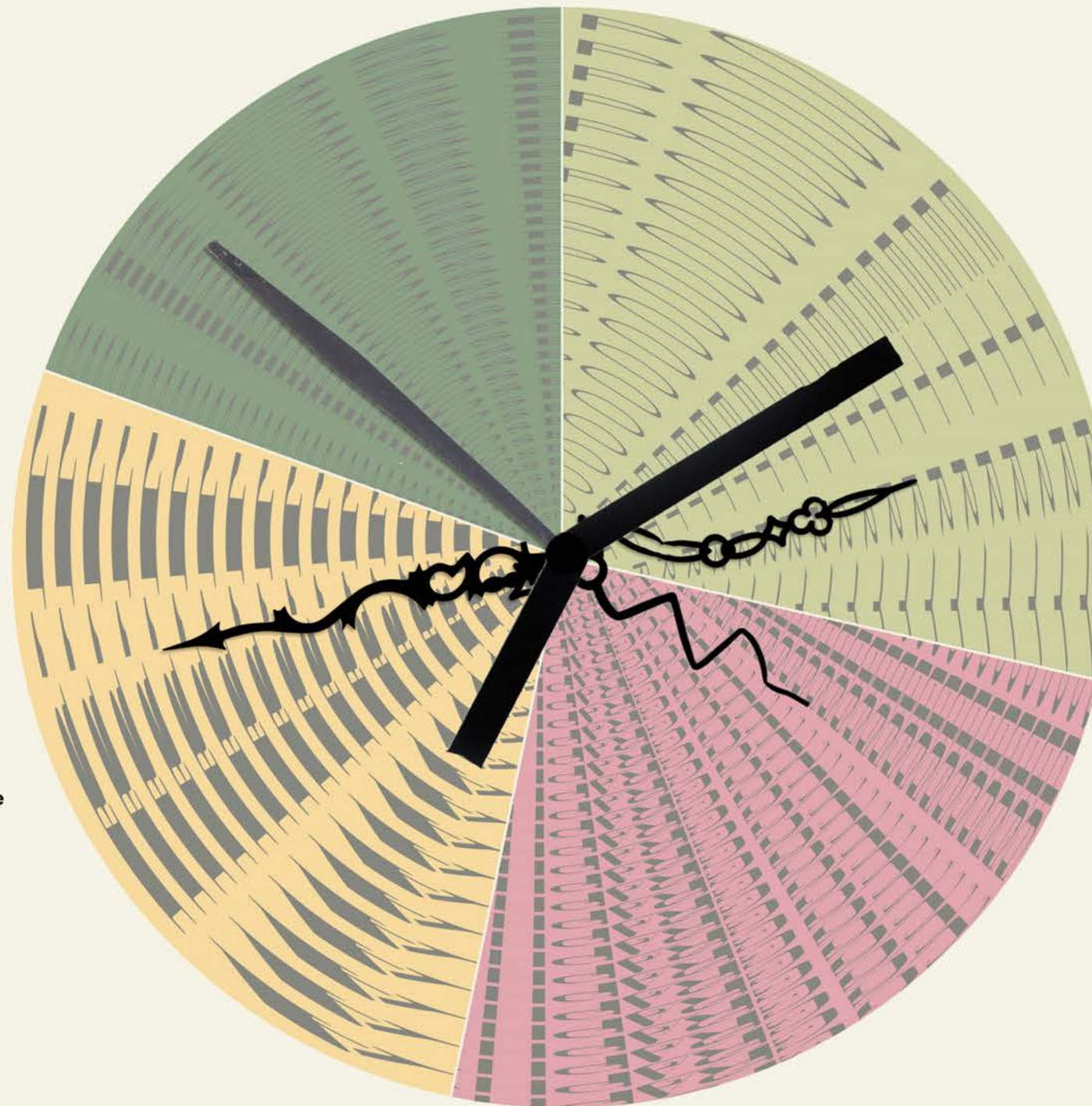
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## FREE

In realms of dreams where boundaries blur,  
Where thoughts dance wild, and visions stir,  
There lies a realm, surreal and strange,  
Where poems roam, their forms deranged.

Free Verse, the vessel, set them free,  
No rules to bind, no constraints decreed,  
A canvas vast, an open sky,  
Where imagination can truly fly.

In this realm, words twist and twine,  
Creating landscapes, both divine and malign,  
Where gravity bends and colors bleed,  
And reality's grip begins to recede.

The moon sings sonnets, the sun weeps rhyme,  
As words form shapes, transcending time,  
Metaphors bloom, surreal and bold,  
As surrealism's tale starts to unfold.

A clock melts on a twisted tree,  
While fish sprout wings and birds swim free,  
Cats converse in human tongue,  
And shadows dance, their secrets sung.

Dreams collide, surreal and absurd,  
As poems wander, unruly and blurred,  
They whisper truths, hidden from sight,  
Unveiling worlds, both day and night.

Through fractured mirrors, we catch a glimpse,  
Of surrealism's enchanting imprints,  
With each word spoken, each line unfurled,  
The poet crafts a parallel world.

So let us delve into this realm unknown,  
Where reality's shackles are overthrown,  
Where poems flourish, surreal and free,  
And the essence of life is truly set free.

— Donnetra Freeman



## The Hills Have Eyes, the Houses Have Brains

Alex Stern  
digital photography

# WINTER FORMAL

Ben Iboshi

Jenny Lewinson's date to Winter Formal was a dozen possums in a tuxedo. The possums didn't slouch on the disguise. They rented the tux from a higher-end store, purchasing nice dress shoes, bow-tie, cufflinks, a wax face mask of Bill Clinton from Party City, and a pine sprig boutonniere for the lapel. They kept the outfit folded in a clean garbage bag (how rarely possums got to work with clean garbage bags!) tucked behind their domestic dumpster.

The possums could've cheaped out. They could've gotten the tux from Goodwill, where they had a hookup. Gus (possum #9, right pant leg) had a cousin residing in the store's ceiling. They were actually all cousins—the possum bloodline didn't run that deep. So it was an acquaintance of Gus, anyway, who would leave vent doors open after hours.

**“Rodents of less conviction spring for the Goodwill tuxedo. These possums held themselves to a higher standard.”**

That was the easy route. Rodents of less conviction spring for the Goodwill tuxedo. These possums held themselves to a higher standard. For months they shirked their natural duties of scavenging for food and raising young in favor of collecting discarded perfume samples

and perfecting their three-point turn. Like developing countries dropping everything to build Olympic stadiums. It took sacrifice to reach these heights.

After all, this was Jenny Lewinson they were talking about. Tall, bipedal, friend of nature, with long frizzy hair you just want to dive into and tear up with your claws and chew up clumps of. She had a taste for the finer things—clothes without holes, clean water, intact sandwiches unbreached by garbage juice. At lunch, she would sit outdoors and share these sandwiches until mice, squirrels, birds, possums, and the odd raccoon covered every surface of the metal table. They fought for crumbs, but also, truthfully, for Jenny's affection. The crows always made an impact: streaks of white that lasted for days on end, a declaration of loyalty. In this tuxedo, the possums could rise above it all.

But no matter how hard they tried, how convincingly they dressed, or how skillfully they slow-danced, their possum nature inevitably prevailed.

“Can you grab me a drink?” was the turning point. Jenny Lewinson was thirsty after the first dance. Most possums make it through their short lives without ever needing to operate a spoon, let alone a ladle. They had never rehearsed the delicate maneuver of transferring punch from bowl to Solo Cup.

The unit didn't make it as far as to lift their right arm. Nerves overcame the right tuxedo pant leg task-force, which stopped before it was ordered. The top half jolted forward and Scurry (possum #5, maintaining the Bill Clinton face mask) violently splashed into the bowl, soaking Martha Shawnry, who hadn't even set down the ladle. Scurry paddled and scraped until the bowl rocked over the tablecloth edge. He saw the juice fall in slow motion. He looked back to Jenny, who watched from the dance floor in her green satin dress.

Scurry grasped the futility of their mission in an instant. The pack was doomed from the start, the night Arlo (possum #3, left foot) got into a few too many fermented pumpkins and suggested the idea. That was back in the alley, smothered in darkness, with wet dirt over the scratch of concrete and the comfort of moss in dank crevices. Now, pop music blared and laser lights colored the sterile gym floor. They were possums. Jenny was something else entirely.

There was hysteria from the floor of high school civilians—shrieks and shouts and fearful stomping at the collapse of an unrecognized classmate into a dozen scuttling rodents. Jenny Lewinson didn't shriek. She just stood and felt her heart sink. Deep down she always kind of knew he was possums. There were clear signs, like that time he had dinner with her parents, and Milo (possum #10, left shoulder, traitor) dove out of his collar and into the trash bin. Or the way he had words—opting not to use them, instead communicating with a series of hisses and squeals. Or the fact that, as a purported 17-year-old human, he didn't

even have a learners permit. But she had ignored it all. She missed putting her arm around his waxy fake-Bill-Clinton neck. Those were happy times.

**“There was hysteria from the floor of high school civilians—shrieks and shouts and fearful stomping at the collapse of an unrecognized classmate into a dozen scuttling rodents.”**

Scurry crawled up to Jenny moments after the incident. He got up on his hind legs and leaned his pink naked hand on her dress over her shin. His black beady eyes met Jenny's, and they stared as if to say “I'm sorry” to each other.



**Polar People**  
Gabe Mathews  
polaroids

# SQUIRM

Her speech felt like dirt between her incisors  
Then suddenly, mint  
And without warning, caramel  
As she tasted all the emotions in her head

The whiplash on her tastebuds was almost too much to bear as she ruminated on the  
whispers from her cupboard

The spider told her eightfold, “people aren’t to be trusted”  
The cockroach said they could do nothing but pest  
But the moth on her bedside drawer lightened the mood, reminding her that we are all  
just doing our best.  
The caterpillar agreed, with the sentiment “we remain works in progress”

And maybe they’re all right. But how to respond?

She gulped back her words but felt them ooze into poetry  
Bleeding onto scrap paper and torn up notes  
The echo of the sentiment “I am not alone.”

A wild racing of cursorial limbs imprinting color on a page in frenzy  
Shaky graphite spilling out of her,  
Spinning a web of prose

With these thoughts,  
With these words,  
Perhaps she will build up the courage from cabinet receipts

To put away her pencil and wipe away the bug guts,  
Silence the voices bugging her,  
And confess what love means

Quivering with delight and fear and pain and envy-  
She swallows.

— Meghan Kellem



**Ladybug Self-Portrait**  
Amelia Barilleaux  
acrylic and fabric on unstretched canvas

# OPTICAL ILLUSION

Colin Ashby

Ancient Egyptians buried their dead in the West. Egyptian priests claimed that because each day the Sun was born in the East and died in the West, the Egyptian people should follow suit. While the Ancient Egyptians' perception of the sun's journey and death seems ludicrous, it was their perceived reality for thousands of years. Perception is a powerful tool. Defined in the Cambridge dictionary as "a belief or opinion, often held by many people" ("Perception"), we use our physical senses—particularly sight—to make sense of reality. This definition naturally leads us to question the very nature of reality. How can we be sure that the Egyptians were wrong? How do we know the Sun even exists? How accurate are our physical senses in detecting illusions versus reality?

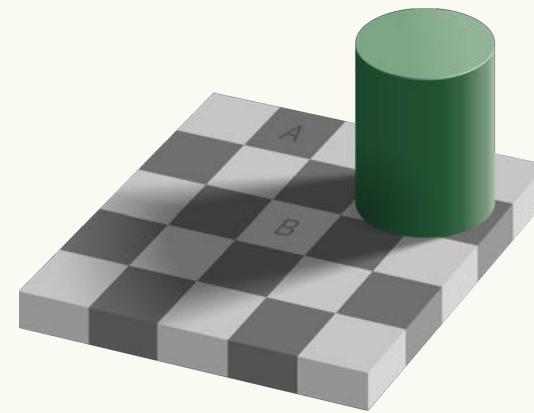
Before understanding what separates illusions from reality, let's look at an illustration that demonstrates the complexity of perception. What do you see in the drawing on the right? An old woman looking to the left with a black hat and gray hood? A young woman looking behind her with a black hat and gray veil? Take a moment to study the image. *My Wife and Mother-In-Law* provides an excellent example of perspective—although there's a single image, there are two perspectives contained in a single reality. One is the young wife, and another is the older mother-in-law. This unique photo is a systematic non-veridical perception. This effect is systematic because it's

intentional. The intended effect of this photo isn't to depict a person but rather to trick the viewer into seeing a certain part of the photo. The effect is non-veridical because we can't see the entire photo—both the wife and the mother-in-law—at the same time. Finally, the effect is a perception because we are mentally grasping the meaning of the drawing shown. In other words, we either interpret this image as a wife or a mother-in-law: both are equally valid perceptions. *My Wife and Mother-In-Law* illustrates an illusion by splitting reality into two parts. If neither perception is accurate, what truly constitutes reality? Although the true woman can't be determined, at least one can be sure that the illusion above is in black and white...right?



*My Wife and Mother-In-Law*

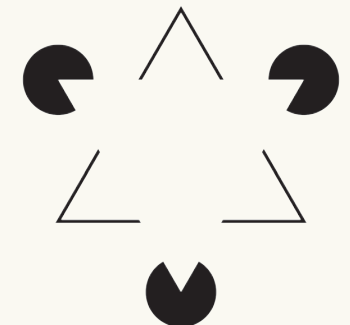
Understanding perceptions is critical to determining the nature of reality and illusions—that is, illusions are “phenomena of perception... [which] deviate from physical fact” (Schwartz). We've established that perceptions can highlight certain elements of reality (only the wife OR the mother-in-law); however, perceptions can also change reality entirely. Edward Adelson's Checker Shadow Illusion (Adelson) demonstrates how although the color of square A appears to be darker than square B, both A and B “are of identical brightness” (Adelson). How is this possible? The key is to isolate the squares from their surroundings! Our brains are wired to immediately estimate what we're viewing—in this case, a green cylinder's shadow over a checkerboard. The expectation that A should be a dark square and B should be a light square coupled with the ambiguity of the shadow creates the illusion of color contrast. A more simplistic version of Checker Shadow Illusion is included above. While the inner bar appears to be a gradient from dark gray to light gray, the bar is solid gray if we cover the outer bar with our hands!



*Checker Shadow Illusion*



Adelson's Checker Shadow Illusion illuminates the influence backgrounds have on our perception of reality. Though we've seen that colors can't be trusted, what about objects? In the 1950s, psychologist Gaetano Kanizsa challenged the scientific definition of reality with the publication of an extremely basic drawing—the Kanizsa Triangle. What do you see when you look at the picture? Most perceive a solid, bright white triangle appearing to be on top of three black disks and another triangle. Although we perceive that there is a bright white triangle, the trick is that there's no triangle anywhere in the photo. In fact, the solid white triangle has the same brightness as the rest of the image! Though they're often entertaining puzzles, perceptual illusions present a unique philosophical dilemma. If our eyes can distort reality, how do we know what's real?



*Kanizsa Triangle*



Photography undeniably dictates our perception of the world. Present in “homes, hospitals, museums, schools, and warzones alike,” (Romic) cameras and photos contain snapshots of the human experience. Our perceptions of the outside world are almost entirely based on images, while our opinions, views, and beliefs are supported by what we see in photos, videos, and social media. As an exercise, what comes to mind when you think about the word pyramids? Many of us will picture the famed Pyramids of Giza—but why? Perhaps you watched an Ancient Egyptian documentary in your middle-school history class or made a diorama of the Pyramids of Giza from looking at images online for an art class. Though few of us have physically seen the Great Pyramids, our perception of the word pyramid is an object seen only through photographs! While associating pyramid with the Great Pyramids is harmless, the ubiquitous nature of photography in the modern world has raised concerns over how photographic material mediates our perception of more controversial concepts. In the next section, we’ll discuss examples of the optical unconscious—how do photographs unconsciously shape our perceived reality?



*A Happy Couple*

A somewhat obvious implication of the optical unconscious is propaganda. Though we often think of propaganda as communist literature and Uncle Sam posters, propaganda is any material that spreads ideas “for the purpose of helping or injuring” (Gupta) an institution. A form of propaganda that has permeated society is commercials. The goal of many commercials is to “attract customers towards a product and change their views” (Gupta) of competing products. It’s no secret that companies are willing to lie and cheat to make the most profit. Thankfully, it’s illegal to lie and cheat in a commercial...right?

Direct-to-consumer drug advertisement (DTCA) is a sneaky form of pharmaceutical advertising that allows drug companies to market their product directly to the consumer rather than through a certified medical provider. DTCA is extremely controversial because it can persuade uneducated consumers to take prescription-strength medication that they don’t need. Although prescription drug broadcast ads are required to disclose major risks in “either the audio or audio and visual parts of the ad” (Stewart), customers are often instead focused on the happy, healthy people portrayed in these commercials during the voiceover. Despite the dangerous, ominous voiceovers, powerful photographs that insinuate happiness, contentment, and relief have moved consumers to purchase over \$29.9 billion (2016) in prescription drugs through DTC advertising.

Ozempic, a Type 1 diabetes prescription drug, has hooked many perfectly healthy celebrities and public figures through the

mention of weight loss as a side effect. Once customers believe that a drug can improve their lives, doctors then feel pressured to prescribe that drug for fear that a customer would claim that the doctor “wasn’t listening to their needs and [was] a horrible provider” (Stewart). The photographic material of happy and healthy people in DTC commercials has unconsciously changed people’s perception of prescription drugs. Vox’s Emily Stewart commented that “companies don’t spend billions to run ads on TV because they’re worried the public is uninformed about treatments”.

Like how we can only focus on either the wife or the mother-in-law in *The Wife and Mother-in-Law*, photography can draw our focus on the happy couple instead of a troubling voiceover. Similar to how we perceived different shades of gray in the Checker Shadow Illusion, DTC advertising implies differences in a marketed drug over its competitors (Tylenol vs. a generic brand). The Kanizsa Triangle demonstrates a solid white triangle that isn’t actually there, like how presenting the image of a happy couple insinuates relief, joy, and contentment that isn’t mentioned anywhere in the commercial. Photography’s power to convey emotions and knowledge lies in its ability to unconsciously change our perceptions of reality.

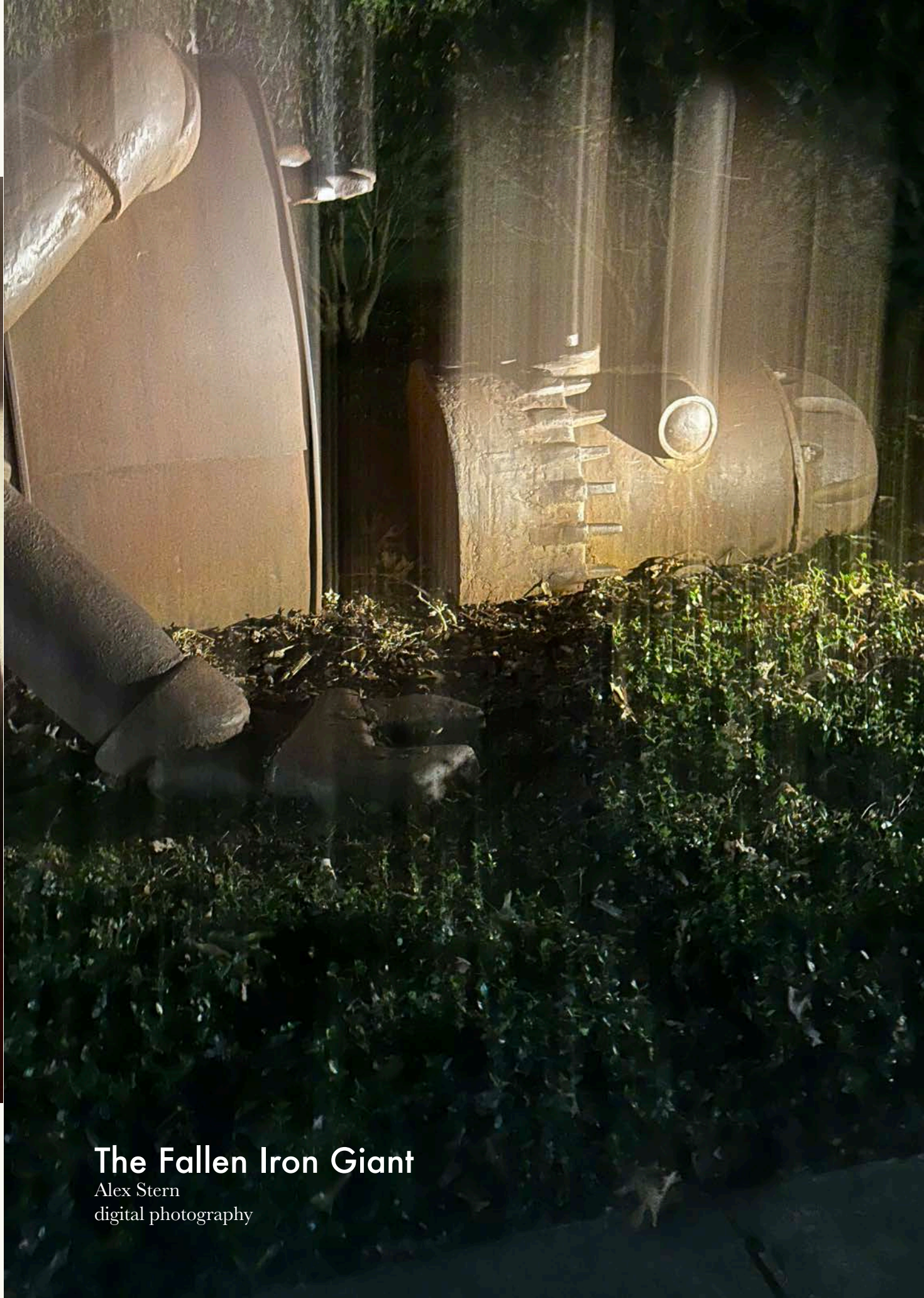
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**BUSINESS!!!**

Alex Stern  
digital photography



**The Fallen Iron Giant**

Alex Stern  
digital photography

# TEOCHT

Fire breathing down my neck.  
Soaring, leaping, reaching,  
One foot forward,  
Off the cliff.

Stepping,  
Falling,  
Heart stalling  
and stomach plummeting.

Wings beating,  
Teeth gnashing,  
Claws grasping,  
Scooped and seated on my saddle.

Air whipping across my face,  
Hair flying in the wind.  
Hands struggling for purchase on the reins,  
I try to reel her in.

But I am no match for a dragon,  
This majestic creature,  
With her deep blue scales,  
Iridescent in the late afternoon sunlight.

She is powerful and great.  
Though mighty warrior she may be,  
She is home...  
To me.

— Tatum Walker



Ship

Tatum Walker  
digital artwork

# DREAM SEQUENCE

Seaborn Chappell

Stepping over the welcome mat had always felt like walking into a warm hug, 455 Ivy Lane, a.k.a., his grandparent's house. The large, ivy-covered brick building—with its ever-climbable garden walls—had always been a place of delight in his childhood. Memories of fried chicken, cookies, Christmas, and week-long games of monopoly pervaded every panel and crack in the old home.

Yet, this time, something was off, though he couldn't put his finger on it. What had changed since his last visit? The brightly colored rugs in the kitchen were still there along with the copper pots and pans over the china cabinet. The same paintings hung on the same salmon-colored walls, and the baseboards gleamed from where he usually cleaned them.

He continued through the house, the old box television rattling on like it always had before. Was it the smell? No, that couldn't be it he thought. After all, his sense of smell had always been under par. There was a warped feeling to his grandparent's home as if all the furniture were moved an inch or something.

A slow grin turned quickly into a confident smile as he pondered the situation. A dream, he thought, this is all a dream. This was not his first rodeo in the dreamscape. In fact, he was a frequent flyer. Now that he knew he was in a dream, waking would soon follow. That, or he would warp into the next

uncanny environment his subconscious cooked up for him.

He walked assuredly down the hall past the room where they played cards and past the room with the twin beds where he used to sleep. On entering his grandparent's bedroom he was surprised the dream had not ended yet. He continued on heading for the closet, each step one of blissful ignorance. This was no mere dream.

**"A dream, he thought, this is all a dream. This was not his first rodeo in the dreamscape. In fact, he was a frequent flyer."**

Turning the knob he stepped not into racks of shoes and clothes but light. Blinding light, the kind of a setting summer sun filled his eyes. The glare slowly receded and wonder took its place. Slabs of tan stone lay tumbled like children's blocks, framed by a pale and alien sky. Like something out of a history textbook, yet more real and vivid than any waking memory. The sprawl of ruined stone continued as far as the eye could see in all directions. Past the colossal ruins of what have must been an ancient metropolis stood the hazy green of distant hills. These in turn were backed by an even hazier line of gray and forbidding mountains, rising to a

height beyond the ability of any man to climb.

He wandered deeper into the ruined city, his grandad's closet long forgotten. His eyes flitted from one ruined arch to the next, trying in vain to search out their long-forgotten purpose. Time, age, and the weather had done their work well, leaving few discernable details or signs of what might have been. Only the vague impression of patterns and carvings remained to tell their tale. Whatever civilization had stood here, not even distant memory could remember.

The sun lingered in the pale sky, in no hurry to reach its bed beyond the distant peaks. It was not long before he encountered a break from the toppled columns and shattered walls. Whether it was a courtyard or a large interior of a building, he could not tell. All that remained in the empty space were two large and square pools in the ground. They appeared deep, though he could not judge their exact depth. The water—if that's what it really was—was as clear

**"The water—if that's what it really was—was as clear and blue as a mountain brook, far more pure than any he had seen with his eyes."**

and blue as a mountain brook, far more pure than any he had seen with his eyes.

On seeing the water he was filled with a terrible thirst, it was as if the wonder of the place had driven any thought of



*Photo by Emily Will*

need from his mind. Dropping before the first pool he leaned down to quench his desperate thirst. Pausing right above the pool's calm surface he wondered if it was safe to drink. With no wind to disturb the pools, they might as well have been glass, each a window into another world.

His reflection stared back at him as he considered, but it was his thirst that

defeated his caution so he lowered down his mouth for a drink. Coolness, like a breeze, and rest as from an undisturbed sleep filled his body. If it were water, it was the best he had ever drunk.

Standing from where he knelt, he was struck by how late it was. The sun had almost reached the line of far-away mountains and a wind came upon the ruins making him shiver in the dying light. He was not sure this was a place he wanted to remain in after dark.

He moved on in search of shelter, though it looked as if there would be none. His pace quickened as the shadows of the ruins lengthened and grew stranger. Although he had seen no living thing, this place had a presence at night that made him feel as if he were not alone.

**“...this place had a presence at night that made him feel as if he were not alone.”**

Turning a corner, he was suddenly standing in front of a broad-faced and intricately carved wall. Lines stretched and curved across the rough, granite-like surface, while symbols of unknowable origin broke its knarled plane. He could not understand much by looking at the wall, yet he assumed the giant poke-ball looking circle in the center was a door of some kind.

He reached out his hand and touched the door, expecting it to open like in the movies. It, however, did not open. “Well, crap,” he said, slouching against the

cold stone. And as if “crap” had been what it was waiting to hear, the door slid open, the top and bottom halves sliding noiselessly apart despite their obvious age.

A dark-reddish hue emanated from the open portal. With hasty glance and a shiver from the wind, he stepped inside. For an instant, his body felt it was covered in warm syrup and then the feeling was gone. However, the warmth remained, opening his eyes he stood alone on a vast plain. Red rock lay strewn, tumbled, and jagged as far as he could see. The orange-brown sky did not pair nicely with the strange red rock.

He seemed to be quite far from his grandparent’s house, but at least this place was warmer than the last one.



**New Home**  
 Anna Spavronskaya  
 digital photography

## MY WALK IN SIPSEY WILDERNESS

In Sipsey

Beech trees like druids congregated  
and were sent into dancing by a musical breeze.

An Octopus King perched on stone overlooked his river kingdom,  
balanced by his soft-rooted tentacles.

The unearthly specimen, big leaf magnolias, outwitted Tolkien composition.

Their bodies;

tall

thin

pale

with blanket soft hands.

And on pine trees, animated baby needles formed extensions to weathered hands.

In Sipsey

Small white, dragon-headed queens greeted sunlight, their regal title befuddled  
wildflower encyclopedia and microbiologist.

And violets tried playing cards, showing their purple spades on a green table.

Light formed yin yang shadows on a trail.

A fictitious day, brought by light jacket wind.

In Sipsey.

— Sumlin Pate

### Sipsey Wilderness

Sumlin Pate

AI-generated art

(left)



# MA-GRITTY

Meghan Kellem

Bonnie strode into the gallery, canvas in hand. Finally, after all these years of chasing her dream, she was confident that her big break had arrived, standing near the center of the room in the form of a famous art collector.

“You’re Richie Holland, right?” Her voice echoed in the empty room, feeling magnified by the plain, white walls of the art gallery with no art to display. It was Richie’s first foray in Chicago, after numerous successes in New York, Los Angeles, and the capital, so it was anyone’s guess as to what art might show up here.

The man turned to smile at Bonnie, with a wide toothed grin. “That I am. And you are...?”

“Bonnie. Bonnie Clover.” She focused on her words, careful not to stumble over them in her excitement. “I’m the one from the signing event.”

She had first met Richie across the street from an autograph session, after she had dropped off her twin boys at daycare. She didn’t know the artist, but she knew him—he had made nobodies into somebodies, after he himself had made it big with his own paintings. Richie was an icon in the industry, with an eye for true talent. Bonnie was just hoping he’d see it in her still. After all, this was the final, true test for the art show.

“Ah yes, I remember you,” he headed

over to her. “You’re the one I’ve emailed back and forth about that...smoky painting?”

When she was younger, Bonnie had gone on a trip to Los Angeles herself, and saw a painting at an art museum on a field trip. It seemed so simple, but “The Treachery of Images”, painted by Rene Magritte, had always captured her attention—for its clear denial of the truth regarding its own existence, similarly to how many in her family had acknowledged their own smoking habits. Since then, she’d been painting and drawing with charcoal to highlight the emotional contrast and turmoil she often felt in her own life.

Bonnie turned over the canvas to show Richie what had intrigued him from so many emails and phone calls. A woman stood in the center surrounded by rainbow paint, but she was in black and white, along with the smoke trailing from her lips. It looked almost discordant, a wonder that so many unfamiliar lines and shapes could create a girl like that, but art made the impossible possible.

**“He had made nobodies into somebodies.”**

When it came to art, Richie was a man of few words. “You’ll be perfect.” He grabbed Bonnie’s hand as it gripped

onto the canvas, causing her to flinch in surprise. As they made eye contact, her head span. As pink filled her cheeks, she felt her face slowly envelope a grin as she spoke. “When’s the show?”

As it turned out, her art would be on display later that night. She rushed to get her boys ready as they fought for her attention, excited that their mom was finally getting her big break all by herself. As fussy as the kids were—it was easy for them to ask if she thought Richie Holland was “cute” or begging to see the piece she’d kept a surprise for so long-- she couldn’t imagine her family missing her very first art show.

As they piled in the car and made their way to the gallery, she felt her heart racing faster than it ever had before. This was it. Her moment, after all her hard work and thousands of scrapped canvases that “weren’t good enough”. Of course, she had to believe now that Richie saw it in her, but now it was up to the buyers to see. Her art wasn’t a “hang in my living room” style, or “something you look at while you’re on the toilet”, so she wasn’t sure what to think.

But regardless, as they approached the gallery, it was teeming with guests admiring the pieces. Now that she was able to look at everyone’s work, Bonnie recognized a theme—smoke, fire, trash. This exhibit, in the heart of an urban city, was discussing pollution. Genius.

It wasn’t long before Richie spotted her and her family, ushering her towards one side of the room. “Clove! Glad you could make it,” Richie remarked, surveying the crowd of people with

credit cards in hand. “The gallery is a smash hit!”

Bonnie was afraid to ask if her art had sold, so she held her tongue. Already, her kids were ready to run off and explore, so she had no choice but to follow them. As they explored the gallery, she made note of the pieces that had a sticker next to the artists’ names, counting how many had sold. Her kids were too focused on the pretty colors-- and feasting on the free food-- for her to enjoy every piece, but she liked what she could see.

Just as she was finishing the gallery walk, she spotted her own artwork, making eye contact with the woman in her painting. Amid the cheerful, pocket-lined crowd, she was taken aback for only a moment. She’d spent so much time laboring through legal notices, difficult trips to the divorce lawyer, and barely scraping bills together. Finally, she’d done it, defeated the odds and joined the ranks of the rich and famous. And yet...

That face looked so sad, like no matter how much she could accomplish, she would feel chained down by her addiction, nonetheless. Maybe it didn’t matter if the piece had sold if these people couldn’t understand the commentary on their own greed. But before Bonnie could linger on it anymore, she saw the stickers next to her name, and any worry was gone.

If things couldn’t get any better, she felt a tap on her shoulder. Looking around, she saw Richie, beckoning to her with one finger. “Boys, I need you to stay here, alright? How about you grab some dessert?” They were more than pleased

to oblige, and she slipped away to follow Richie. Together, the two of them made their way to the back storage room. She was expecting to discuss the details of her sale. She was not expecting to find a giant, curtained box.

**“Finally, she’d done it, defeated the odds and joined the ranks of the rich and famous. And yet...”**

“I have a surprise for the crowd tonight,” Richie explained. “I’m selling an art installation to the highest bidder, a statute of sorts. And I want you to be my partner.”

Bonnie was taken aback. “Why me? I mean, I truly admire your work, Mr. Holland, but I’m just a small piece of your gallery.”

Richie smiled gingerly. “That’s the surprise of it. You inspired this piece. That’s why I want you to help me sell it.”

She blushed with pride, nodding furiously. “Yes, of course! Anything you need.”

“Fantastic! I knew you’d help me out.” Richie pumped his fist in celebration. “There’s just one thing left to do.”

Before the boys could ask themselves where their Mommy had gone, they watched with the collectors as Richie wheeled out the box, curtained on all sides.

“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for coming to tonight’s showing. Your support helps up-and-coming artists find their start!” Richie began his showmanship, gesturing to the buyers in the audience and winking. With tonight’s show, one of the artists in particular really moved me. So, I’d like to dedicate tonight’s showcase—and this installation—to Bonnie Clover!”

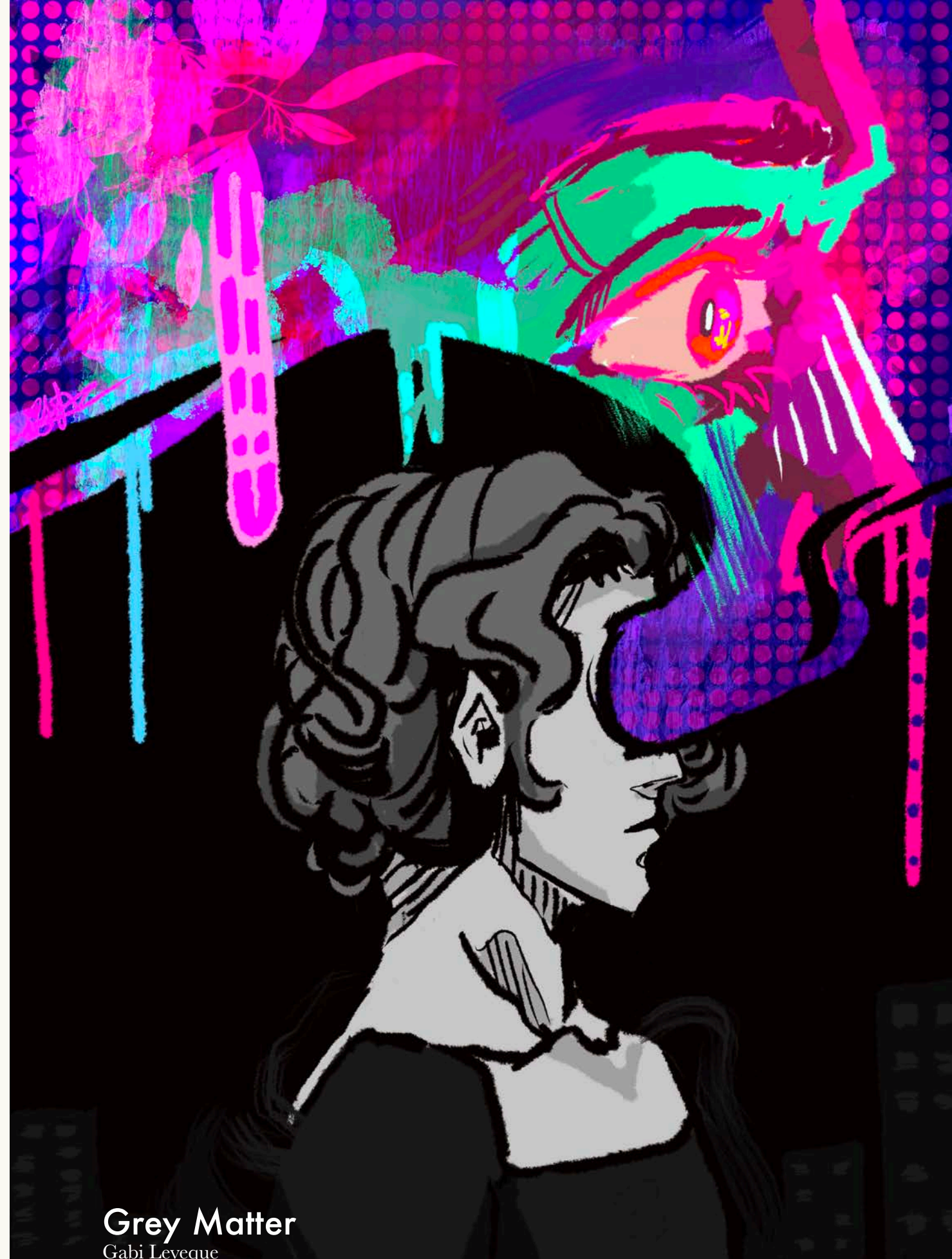
The audience began clapping widely, impressed with the impact another artist could have on the great Richie Holland. One of the boys turned to the other. “But where is she?”

With a flourish of the curtain, the barrier was pulled away, revealing a statute of a woman made entirely of plastic. It was a perfect, central statement to go with the rest of the gallery—and happened to look just like Bonnie.

As she shivered within her cocoon of plastic, trying desperately to move, to escape, to scream for help to no avail, the audience went wild with bidding. It was everything she had always wanted. Right?

Bonnie Clover was sold to the highest bidder, with a bright red sticker taken away from her family. Richie looked over at her, sensing the fear in her eyes. “Don’t worry. I make no-bodies into some-bodies, don’t I?”

And just for her, he grinned, showing his signature toothy smile to the plaque below the statute that simply said, “This is not a woman.”



**Grey Matter**  
Gabi Leveque  
digital artwork



# MY ROOMMATE, POLLY MERR

Meghan Kellem

To my RA (my Recycling Advisor),

I'm sure you've noticed or heard about some of the obvious problems that have come with having Polly Merr as my roommate. I'm not trying to be discriminatory, but it's been pretty difficult living with someone who's totally plastic. No, literally made of plastic.

At first, I didn't tell the Housing Department about my complaints, because even with the drawbacks, there are some pluses. During the day, Polly doesn't really eat much. Well, she doesn't eat anything. She doesn't drink water, either, and doesn't go out in the rain or when it's too hot. That means she'll never steal from the fridge, and the floor is always clean. Every time she leaves the house, Polly's always super prepared for anything that might melt her resolve—or her plastic “skin”—which means we have a ton of umbrellas, raincoats, sunglasses, hats, and just about anything one would need to protect from the elements. Plus, if the weather's not too severe, Polly lets me borrow her extras.

Despite that, she's always taking up space in the dorm. She's friends with bottles of cleaning supplies, trash cans, empty bags, and saran wrap among others. I don't mind her being popular. It's just that Polly's always hanging out with someone, which means I never get to have any space or time to myself. Even when she goes to bed, I can never get a decent night's rest. I suppose Polly doesn't need to sleep for being plastic, because every time I think Polly's drifted off, she keeps tossing and turning. I have to hear her crinkling all night! I could get past it all if we were able to come to an agreement.

But when I try to talk to Polly about the issues we've been having, I've found that it's hard to have deep conversations with her. She doesn't know how to express her emotions, and I'm seriously starting to think she doesn't have any feelings or cares about the situation. Plus, she hates pressure, because she's always worried about being molded or shaped by someone else. So, she claims to be independent, and then never leaves me any independent space of my own. What a waste!

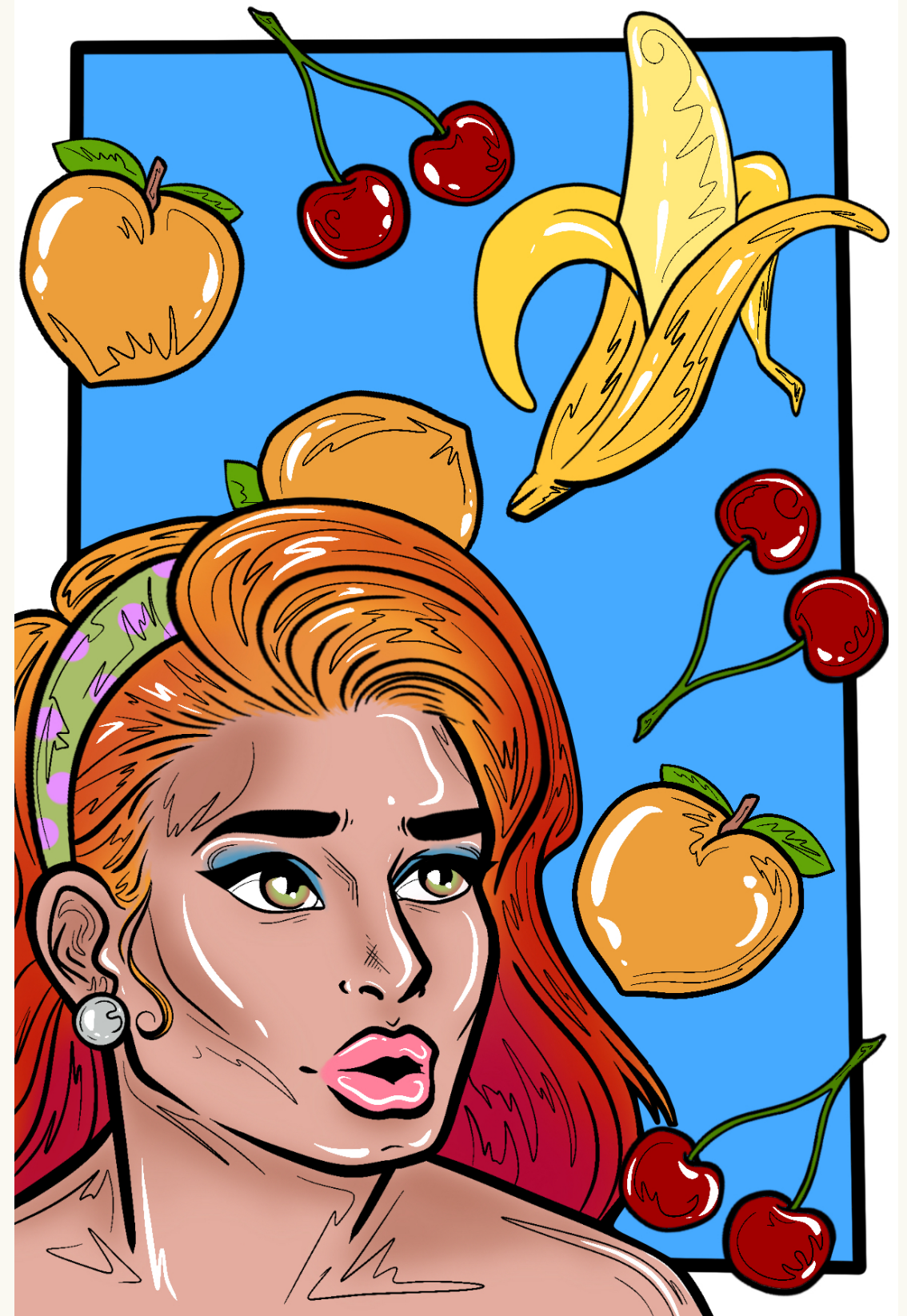
To top it off, people are starting to get upset at me for not doing anything about Polly, even when I'm trying my best! I try to talk with other people to see if they can think of any ideas, but they're pretty dismissive when it comes to the environment we share. I mean, can you really blame me struggling if I'm the only one trying to help with this plastic problem?

So, I've run out of options, and I was hoping that you could help intercede on my behalf. I'm optimistic that you can help us come to an agreement; I know Polly genuinely wants to be a good roommate, and I want to help her in her...oddly unique situation...but I can't do it all on my own. I think we need to modify our rooming agreement or have both of us meet with you to talk things through, and sooner rather than later, because it feels long overdue.

Just be careful as you work with her. Sometimes her attitude comes off as so... well, plastic!

Best regards,

Con. Tammy Nate



## Feeling Blue

Giulia Vasconcelos De Souza  
digital artwork

# FILTER

A light shines on my face,  
I cannot look away.  
Vibrant, beautiful, peaceful  
Perfect, dare I say?

All things seem to fit.  
Nothing is too big or too small.  
I take a good look around,  
the tension inside begins to fall.

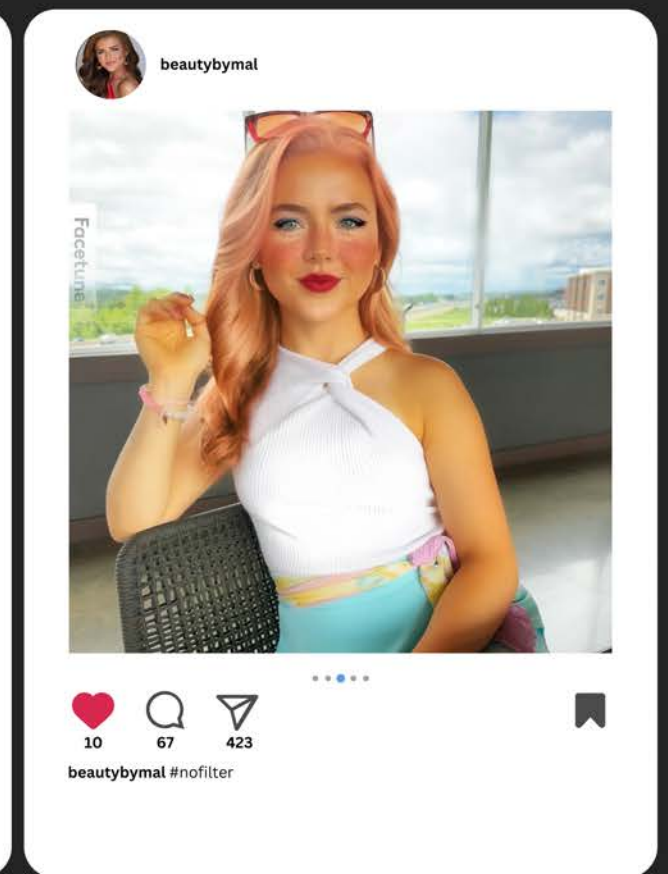
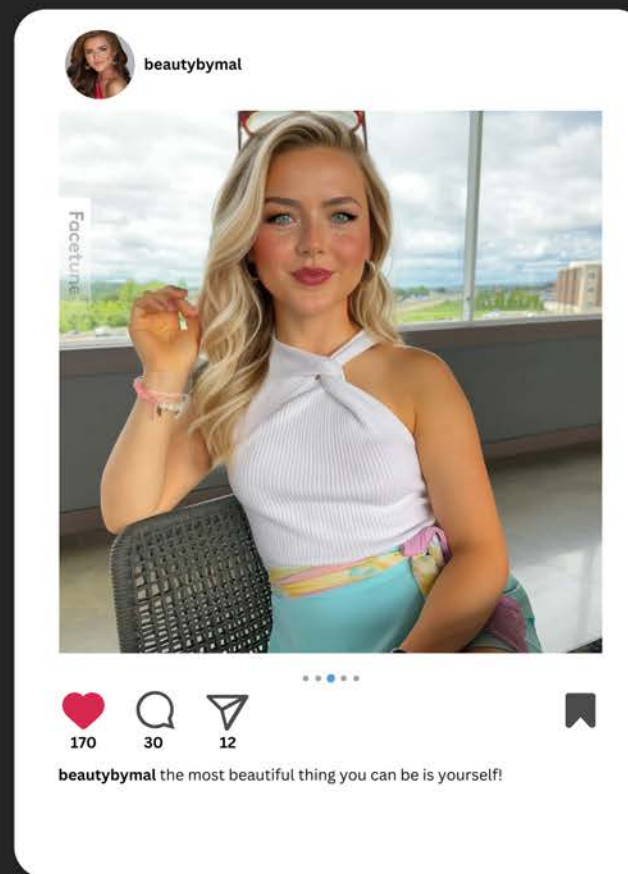
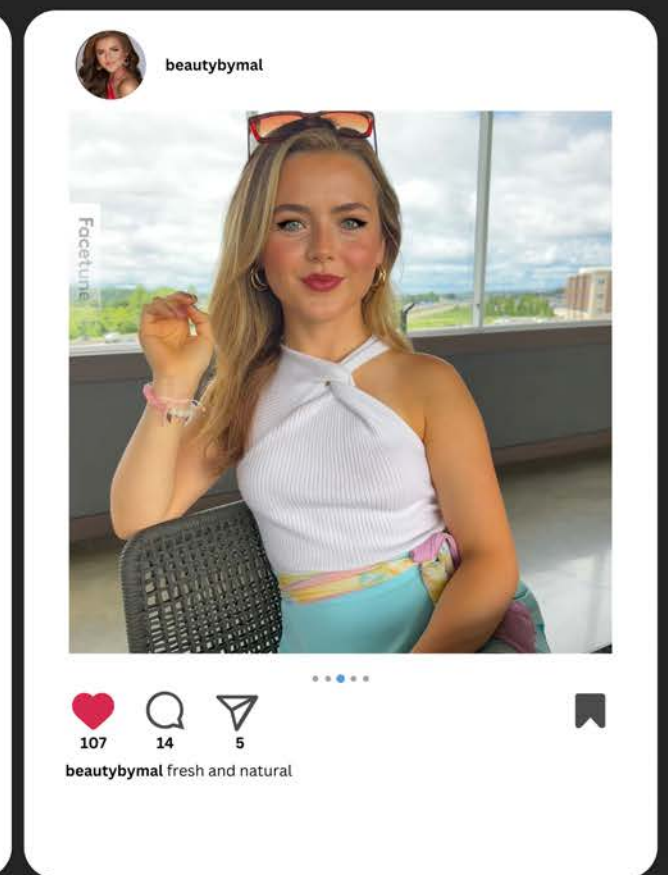
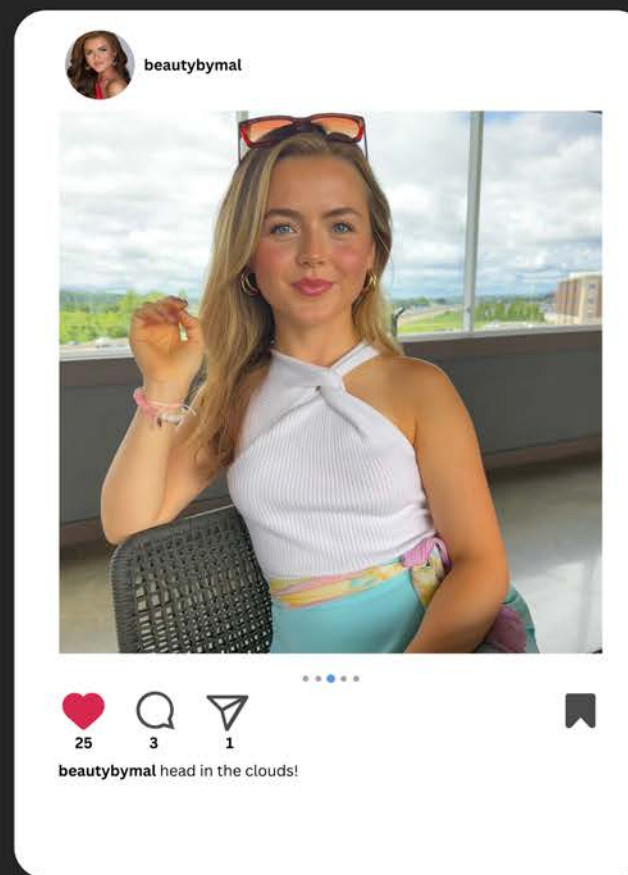
Everything has a spot,  
a time, and a place.  
I wish life would remain like this,  
but then my hands reach to my face.

Slowly they grasp,  
though I hesitate and oppose.  
I feel the grip release,  
this is how it always goes.

A gleam of hope,  
all things going my way.  
Though the light shines bright,  
it is gone at the end of the day.

What my hands bear holds power.  
For it's not just the light that grows dimmer,  
It's that I find my joy and my worth  
by seeing through a filter.

— Mallory Sublette



## #NoFilter

Mallory Sublette  
digital artwork

# SOCIAL SURREALITY

Mallory Sublette

## The Effect of Social Media on Generation Z's Self and World Perception

Scroll. Like. Follow. Post. Tag. Unfollow. Edit. Filter. Delete. What a cycle our society has fallen into. Social media apps are used constantly by a majority of people in the United States. News of current events, posts of life milestones, and advertisements flood our media feeds and as a result, our brains every single day. Many who are part of Generation Z have never lived a life without technology being present.

With that fact lingering, one very complex yet important question arose. How much of an impact has social media had on Generation Z's view of the world? To explore and research this question, a survey of 150 students of all demographics was conducted on the University of Alabama's campus. Students were asked questions about their daily screen time, app usage, posting trends, and purchasing habits, as well as their eating and fitness routines and use of editing apps and filters. The full list of questions can be found on the previous page.

### Predictions

Before conducting the survey, I made some predictions of what I believed the survey data would reveal. Based on the age group being surveyed I predicted

that the majority of the individuals would:

- Use more than 3 social media apps each day.
- Spend over 4 hours each day on social media.
- Admit to deleting or not posting a photo because it was imperfect.
- Admit that their shopping, exercise, and eating habits are impacted by social media to some degree.

Though these predictions were heavily generalized, they served as a basis to build upon when data was collected.

## "How much of an impact has social media had on Generation Z's view of the world?"

### Results

The online survey of 150 students ages 18 and older found:

- The average number of social media apps used each day is 3-4
- Nearly 90% have refrained from posting a photo on social because they were unhappy with their appearance.
- 83% have posted a photo that was completely unfiltered and unedited.
- Over 75% have used an editing app to change the appearance of a photo before posting.

- 51% admitted to having edited a photo to improve their appearance before posting it on social media.
- The average screentime falls between 2 and 6 hours each day.
- 47% believe that social media has a neutral (a balance of both positive and negative) effect on society.
- 43% believe that social media has an exclusively negative effect on our society.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being no effect at all, 5 being very strong effect),
- 85% said that the number of followers and likes their account gets has a 1-3 effect on them.
- 92% of the data was distributed quite evenly between 1 and 4 when asked about the influence of social media on eating and fitness habits.
- The data was distributed quite evenly between 1 and 4 social media affecting self-worth.
- People believe social media affects their perception of reality at a level of 3 or 4.

### Conclusions

From the data collection, general conclusions can be made about the impact of social media on Generation Z's perception of reality. The correlation between screentime, social media use, and the perceived impact of social media on society are related. Of those who were in the higher range of screentime, and the number of social media apps used each day, the general belief about the impact of social media leaned more toward the negative end of the spectrum. In addition to that, of the population that admitted to using an editing app

on a photo, nearly all of them were also included in the population that admitted to editing a photo because they were unhappy with their appearance.

Social media is interwoven into our lives and has had a profound impact on the way that many people live their lives by influencing their purchases, forming their opinions of current events, and changing how they view the world around them. I believe that many people have withheld posting or altered their content due to their awareness of digital footprints. When a post is published to the internet it is, whether we choose to believe it or not, accessible to anyone. Social media has shown people that our pasts cannot be erased or forgotten and that alone is enough to result in the hyper fixation on a "perfect" appearance.

The question, "How much of an impact has social media had on Generation Z's view of the world?" was explored and one general idea can be drawn as a conclusion. The exact degree of impact that social media has had on Generation Z is immeasurable because its chronic presence has created effects that are unique to each individual's life circumstances. However, one idea does hold as proven by this study—our generation will never know a reality that has not been tainted by the digital world.

## WHY DO WE TAKE PICTURES OF SUNSETS AND SUNRISES?

Why do we take pictures of sunsets and sunrises?

Are we always trying to capture beauty, put it in a bottle, and label it as, “once beautiful?”

Are we really appreciating it, then?

Perhaps, capturing a sunset, making it eternal, is appreciating it.

But why the sunset?

What makes the sunset so beautiful that we stop, we pull out our phone, and we take a picture of it?

Maybe because it makes us stand in awe.

Do we love to be in awe?

Maybe we long to see something, feel something, and say

“now that, that is greater than me.”

The sunset always makes me feel small.

— Sumlin Pate



### Infinity Mirror of Hell

Alex Stern  
digital photography

# JUST THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

Sumlin Pate

## How College is Just Thousands of Student's Personal Realities.

There are almost 40,000 students at the University of Alabama. 57.9% of said 40,000 students hail from states and countries outside of Alabama. This number does not include the faculty and staff that work at the university, which would greatly increase the number of people connected to the school. In short, the university engages with such a huge number of backgrounds and cultures that one could assume it is known for being a conscious and forward-thinking school.

Yet the school has received negative national and international attention over the years. For instance, in 2020, the front page of BBC news read “COVID-19: Alabama crowds ignore coronavirus to celebrate championship.” A headline like this demonstrates a clear lack of concern from the student body and the school. This news only affirmed what people already believed about the school: that it was a nonacademic school, where students went if they wanted to “experience college life,” i.e. the party life.

Three years later, and a new phenomenon has swept the nation. Not surprisingly, Alabama has been the center focus. RushTok, a social media trend where girls document

their experience rushing for Sororities, became a new outside narrative for the University of Alabama.

BamaRush is the official TikTok trend following girls rushing for Alabama sororities. It has become so famous within the past two years that it has made the news all over the nation and even became the topic of a documentary made for HBO Max. Though the ‘outfit of the days’ and the ‘day in the life’ clips were enjoyable to watch, the national reaction to these videos was judgmental. People openly expressed disbelief that there was a culture, like Greek life, that still existed in the U.S.

## “COVID-19: Alabama crowds ignore coronavirus to celebrate championship”

As a student here, I was unaware that many people's outside perspectives of me would be dependent on their interaction with RushTok. RushTok didn't affect my decision to attend the university, since it hadn't become popular until after I became a student. I was curious—since Alabama had become an even greater point of controversy with BamaTok—to know how freshman engaged with the outside perspective, as well as their own perspectives on the school. I interviewed five freshmen, and here's what I discovered...

Shelf

Tatum Walker  
digital artwork

But before I begin relaying what I gained from speaking with these students, I think it's important to consider what might dictate each student's understanding of the University. Possible factors can be: their home state and culture, their education, their desires for college, and their own personal views on what a college should provide (should it be a full "well-rounded" experience or simply a good education?). While interviewing each student, I simply became more aware of how these factors affect their view of Alabama.

**"RushTok, a social media trend where girls document their experience rushing for Sororities, became a new outside narrative for the University of Alabama."**

#### **Freshman A**

The first freshman I spoke to was from Missouri. She grew up in a small town, where most of her peers and family stayed close to home. Though for some Alabama is in no way "an adventure far from home" given her community growing up, it could easily be in another country. Most of her community and relatives view Alabama as completely culturally different from their home. She said that they would mention Alabama's lack of diversity, lack of care for education, and the student body culture of partying.

However, this Missourian had let

Alabama's own recruiters influence her view of the university. From this influence, she thought Alabama was a highly competitive school, in sports especially, but also in academics and opportunities. Upon arriving to the school, this view has not changed. For her, Alabama is a place where you can strive for excellence. In the face of opposition to coming here, she has stood by the belief that Alabama is taking the steps to becoming a recognized and respected school.

What I was curious to know was how RushTok affected her perspective. She said it made her excited to see what the school was really like. As someone who is active on social media, she knew that a TikTok trend is entertainment, and as such, it can never be a wholly truthful version of what it portrays. She would laugh and have fun with the videos, enjoying looking at the girl's "fits" but choosing not to judge another's lifestyle. RushTok was probably not the entire culture at Alabama.

Since coming here, her experience has been full of fun opportunities within and outside of academics. She stressed how she saw the University taking intentional steps towards greater inclusion and diversity. Their efforts to provide fun, culturally educational events for freshmen to engage in has been impressive. Upon asking her what the university's culture is to her, she said it is a universal investment in your success. This includes the student body and the institution itself. The southern hospitality of taking pride in the success of every member of the community has been her biggest takeaway.

#### **Freshman B**

A freshman I spoke to from Ohio had grown up in a predominantly white city. Her education had been her focus, yet when it came to choosing where to study, she needed somewhere that was affordable. Living close to a state school, she knew that they had a strong party culture. So, for the same culture to be at Alabama didn't seem surprising to her, or unsettling.

She expressed that this culture really hasn't affected her own time at Alabama. When she has been in contact with things like Greek life, she has only realized that the stereotypes are often exaggerated. What has influenced her the most, has been the small pockets of culture and diversity around campus. In many ways, she said, coming down to the university has felt like stepping into a more diverse place than back home in Midwest Ohio. The university has provided her with the opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and places. If she had gone to a state school back home, she claims that she would have been in an even more homogenous student body than she is here. As for the education at Alabama, her classes have felt both challenging and engaging.

When asked about her perspective on the "culture" at Alabama, she said that it was an interesting mix. There is the progressive leanings that is part of most higher education schools. At the same time, there is a conservative, tradition that ties to the geographic place the university is in. Somehow, both seem to work together.

#### **Freshman C**

The student I spoke to from Chicago had a very different perspective to share. Before coming here, he thought the school was very homogenous, racist, and provided a poor education. While none of what he experienced has been to that extreme, he has still felt isolated as a Hispanic student. To him, it seemed like there is very little engagement between different cultures. If there are different ethnicities in one room, they stick to each other. He thought that there was a lot of ignorance about other people groups among the student body. Like the other students, he noticed a strong sense of pride within the student body, as well as rowdy behavior. Though his ideas about the school were heavily exaggerated before coming, he said that most of them were true.

#### **Freshman D**

A student from Louisiana said that choosing to come here had been influenced by her desire to stay within a similar southern culture. She had known Alabama had a reputation for being a party school, but it wasn't a worry for her because that was a culture she was used to growing up near Louisiana State University. Since coming, she said she has been struck by how different the University is. There is a party atmosphere in the student body, and one that ties to the importance of southern traditions, which include Greek life. However, that is not the only culture prevalent at the University.

She mentioned that the academic opportunities were plentiful, and the

programs of study provided here were much more catered to the students' interests than other schools she visited. "It's its own universe here," she claimed. She thought that the people here made up their own unique culture, one that was separate from Tuscaloosa or even cultural and societal norms of the south. When asked what the "culture" of Alabama is, she responded that "it's not 100% what it seems;" though some of her expectations for the school had proved to be true, there were others that had not.

**"The people here made up their own unique culture, one that was separate from Tuscaloosa or even cultural and societal norms of the south."**

**Freshman E**

One final student from Tennessee admitted that her first pick had never been Alabama. She thought the school was just what everyone else said: a party school with big Greek life, big football culture, and mediocre academics. These were aspects of the culture, she agreed, but not the complete picture. For her, she had found that there can be a place for anyone. With so many different opportunities to get involved in, and fulfilling academics, the school has provided her with a community much more supportive than what she imagined. She said that RushTok had negatively affected her belief that she could find a community in Alabama.

However, after being here a semester, she said that RushTok is not the only version of the student body.

**Conclusion**

After talking with each of these students, I found that their stories, though similar at first glance, were not similar at all. They all perceived the University to be one way, then found it to be like that perception and different to it. However, each student's final perception of the University, after having experienced it, all differed. Some found the current diversity to be disheartening, while others were excited by it. Some thought the southern culture was based on pride and tradition, while others saw more hospitality and drive for the success of the community.

Each student had encountered similar realities at Alabama: a drive from the institution to utilize your education through making use of the opportunities provided, a deep love and pride for traditions and community, an institutional vision for a more diverse, equitable school, and a student body influenced by Greek life. However, even though the students now all share these experiences and understandings, their individual perceptions remain separated. So in answer to our predicament as a nationally known school: the outside judgment cannot see the whole picture of what this school is, but even those who have experienced the school have their own little realities of what the University of Alabama is.

**University of Alabama responds to 'COVID parties' being thrown in Tuscaloosa**

by Jack Helean | Thu, July 2nd 2020 at 3:35 PM  
Updated Fri, July 3rd 2020 at 12:27 PM

**Covid-19: Alabama crowds ignore coronavirus to celebrate championship**

Fans of the University of Alabama football team gathered in the streets of Tuscaloosa in Alabama, ignoring social distancing. They were celebrating the university's third national championship in the past six years.



**'Bama Rush' takes us into the world of sorority fashion and hierarchies**

Scottie Andrew, CNN  
7 minute read · Updated 1:39 PM EDT, Tue May 23, 2023



**Past: The Machine's Political History at the University of Alabama Makes News Once Again**

**Research looks at the history of enslaved people at the University of Alabama**



**Where Legends...**

Sumlin Pate  
digital collage

**WHERE LEGENDS...**

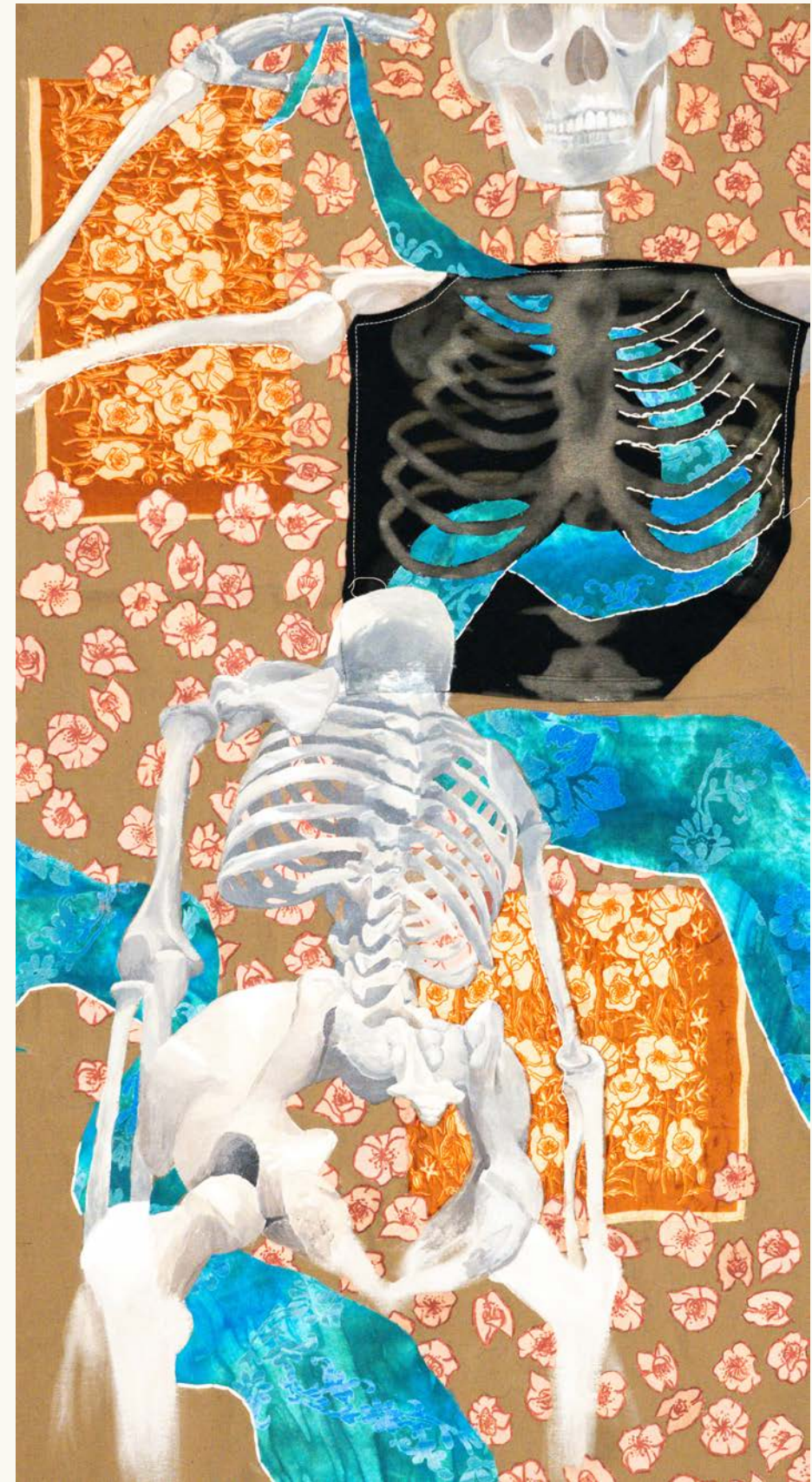
# WATCHED

At nightfall I will see her,  
divine's woeful eyes —  
Mold sprouts in the corner of my bedroom door  
and her wails echo when I'm alone —  
Our fiberglass tub is stained with her mascara tears  
and I am eight and scared of the dark.

At midnight I will drink her,  
summer's swarming thunderstorm —  
Roaches have bred generations beneath the floorboards of our house  
and her bloody saliva has mixed with the wellwater —  
Our food is metallic  
and I am seventeen and in love with a boy.

At daybreak I will touch her,  
jewel of shame —  
Lotuses root in the box spring of my mattress  
and a bouquet sprouts from her wilted irises as she lies still in the sticky sheets —  
When I caress her arm to stop her cries  
her skin is thin and full of maggots  
and I am twenty and burned by the sun.

— Carson Silas



## Funky Skeletons

Amelia Barilleaux

acrylic and fabric on unstretched canvas



# KNACKER'S YARD

Samantha Mattison

“All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream.”

— Edgar Allan Poe

Oonagh awoke to blue moonbeams bathing her comforter and spilling onto the dusty floor. The biting air needled at her ears and cheeks, and she sucked in a sharp breath. Rubbing sleep from her eyes, she padded over to the window and reached for the sun-bleached curtains. Before she could close them, she spotted something rather curious. A stream of fifteen or twenty girls were walking, in a line, to the center of Knacker's Yard.

Standing on her tiptoes, Oonagh pressed her nose to the cold glass. The girls were all clearly students, same as her. Night rendered their navy uniforms deep black, and Oonagh thought they looked like oversized ants. She watched as the girl in front shuffled her way through the ankle-deep snow and approached the well in the courtyard's center.

Gripping the stone, the girl stood up on the wall of the well, facing straight ahead. To Oonagh's horror, she stepped forward, falling out of sight. The next girl moved up.

She whipped the curtains across the window and stepped back. She had heard of sleepwalking before, but she never imagined that so many people could be doing it at once. And what was with jumping into the well?

Oonagh's tutor, Aoife, had mentioned once that Knacker's Yard was riddled with ghosts, but the woman's sputtering had made it hard for Oonagh to properly read her lips. She had taken the words with a grain of salt, but she didn't have any other explanations.

Oonagh risked another look, just catching another girl disappearing down into the well. Panic flushed her, and her neck felt hot. The smell of smoke tickled her nose, and she felt her eyes fill with tears. It always smelled like smoke in the boardinghouse, but the stench was worse than usual.

Coughing, Oonagh turned away from the window. The candle on her bedside table was unlit, but she didn't know what else could produce this kind of smell. She may have to sleep with her mouth open, but she would go back to bed, and she would forget about this. The sleeping crystals she took each night would help her drift off. She shouldn't have even woken up.

**“She had heard of sleepwalking before, but she never imagined that so many people could be doing it at once.”**

Just as she climbed back into bed, her head whipped to the door as it inched

open. She pulled her legs up to her chin and peered through the crack. It was too dark to see into the hallway, but Oonagh knew something was there.

Two white pinpricks lit up near the floor, and Oonagh relaxed. The silhouette of a cat padded across the room and sat at her bedside. Its round eyes stared up at her.

**“He was vibrating. She was told that this was called purring.”**

She grinned. It was only Puisin. She hadn't seen him since the day before. He must have been exploring somewhere on the school grounds. She patted the bed.

Puisin slowly blinked, ignoring the gesture. His gaze turned to the window, and his head cocked. Oonagh patted the bed again, not wanting the cat to disturb the curtains, and this time Puisin conceded. His mouth stretched open in a yawn as he walked up the bed and curled up against the crook of her neck. He was vibrating. She was told that this was called purring.

Pressing her ear to Puisin's fur, Oonagh closed her eyes as the soft skin of her cheeks engulfed the cat's little tremors. She wondered if purring made any sound.

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The morning sun did nothing to warm the boardinghouse. The January chill crept underneath the floorboards and windowsills, and it had crawled under Oonagh's comforter. Puisin was gone.

The smoke's stink lingered in the room, and she crinkled her nose. It was a smell that was impossible to get used to, and something about it upset her. Ignoring the air that nipped at her face, Oonagh got out of bed to open her window. She exhaled, watching with amusement as her breath tumbled upwards, towards the pale sky, and dissipated into wisps. The chilled breeze gently blew the shredded clouds along, and Oonagh snickered at one that resembled a misshapen duck.

Knacker's Yard was empty, as it usually was this time of year. Snow clung to the leaves of the massive pine tree that grew just a few feet from the well. The three wooden benches situated around the yard were coated with a thick slush that spilled off onto the ground.

Oonagh decided that she had time to look at the well before Aoife's lessons began. The other girls in the boardinghouse ignored her, as they usually did, so she didn't sit around and chat like the rest of them. Aoife had told her that the girls just didn't know how to talk to a deaf kid. Oonagh knew it was the fact that they didn't want to learn.

She felt strange as she descended the peeling staircase. The boardinghouse didn't feel as full of life as it usually did. She didn't have to step around the two girls who played jacks at the bottom of the stairs.

To Oonagh's confusion, the well was empty. She looked again to make sure, even leaning over the wall to peer inside. Around ten feet down, she could see a layer of ice. Oonagh half-expected to see

faces frozen underneath, and she turned away.

\*\*\*

The room that Aoife taught in was just as frigid as the rest of the boardinghouse. It was the smallest classroom, as there was no need for anything larger, and Oonagh liked that the windows faced the woods that hugged the south side of the building.

Aoife greeted her with a sad smile, and she looked down at her clasped hands as Oonagh sat down. Aoife had already set out paper and a fountain pen, and Oonagh scrawled ‘Are you feeling any better today?’

**“Around ten feet down, she could see a layer of ice. Oonagh half-expected to see faces frozen underneath, and she turned away.”**

Aoife faced her and spoke slowly so she could read her lips. ‘Don’t worry about me, dear. How are you?’

Oonagh smiled up at her, taking in every aspect of her face. Aoife was the most interesting looking woman she had ever seen. She had the nose of a bird, but her eyes were like a doe’s: large and brown. Beads of sweat dotted her forehead and neck, even with the cold outside, and her hands shook.

Their conversation was slow-going, but Oonagh always looked forward to this

part of the day. Aoife ended lessons early, so she used the extra time to ask her about the smoke smell that didn’t seem to go away.

Aoife looked sad at this, but she answered: ‘Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.’

This felt cryptic to Oonagh, but she spent the next few hours trying to follow the smell. There didn’t seem to be anywhere in the boardinghouse that the smoke hadn’t spread to, but she couldn’t find anything that would’ve caused it.

This was all so strange to her, and it made her angry that she didn’t understand it. If Aoife was right and Knacker’s Yard was haunted, did that have anything to do with the smoke? She had more to ask her, but it would’ve been obvious even for a blind girl to see that Aoife was sick as a dog. But she could wait.

\*\*\*

Only three girls threw themselves into the well that night. Oonagh had tried to bang on the glass of her window, clap her hands, even smack the outside of the boardinghouse. The girls either hadn’t heard, or they had ignored her.

Between her failure to get their attention and the persisting smell of smoke, Oonagh was in a sour mood and couldn’t sleep. Puisin was asleep on her pillow, and she absentmindedly pet him until exhaustion started to set in.

‘I’m sorry, little guy,’ she thought as she scooped her hands underneath his body.

The cat startled awake and scratched at her arms before darting off down the hallway. Instinctively, Oonagh pulled away, but her eyebrows furrowed. She hadn’t felt anything.

The smell of smoke suddenly worsened, and her vision blurred as tears filled her eyes. Oonagh wiped at her face, but the smell was permeating from her skin. The thickness of it choked her, and she gagged at the taste.

Stumbling from her room, she sobbed as she rubbed at her arms, praying that the smell couldn’t catch up with her. She didn’t know where Aoife slept at night, but she would knock on every door if she had to.

It turned out that she didn’t. Aoife found her in the hallway, and she pulled Oonagh into a hug as the two slid to the floor. It took a few minutes for Oonagh to calm down, but once she had, she looked up at Aoife.

Her bangs were plastered across her forehead, and there was a frenzied look in her face. Oonagh reached for Aoife’s cheek, and it was wet with tears and sweat.

‘I am okay,’ Aoife mouthed. It was obvious to Oonagh that she was not, and she looked away. She hated when people lied to her.

Aoife walked Oonagh back to her room, all the while keeping a hand on her shoulder. The woman froze once Oonagh had climbed back into bed, her gaze fixated on the window. Aoife’s eyes were huge, like they were trying to

escape from her skull. Her hands shook with such ferocity that her entire upper body tremored.

Oonagh crawled down the bed towards her. Her little fingers wove between Aoife’s skeletal ones, and the trembling stopped. Aoife turned away from the window, her expression softening. ‘Get some sleep,’ she said.

Oonagh did as she was told, but she couldn’t stop thinking about how Aoife’s breath smelled like smoke.

\*\*\*

Oonagh welcomed the cold as she walked around the school grounds. She couldn’t bring herself to attend Aoife’s lessons after last night, and her head swam from how confused she was.

All of the other girls were in class, so the grounds were empty, as Oonagh liked them. The front of the boardinghouse opened up to a winding dirt road that disappeared over a hill and through a grove of silver birch trees. The morning sun glistened against the ice crystals that tipped the brown grass blades.

As she danced around, she spotted something approaching the boardinghouse. Squinting her eyes, Oonagh could make out two large horses pulling a coach. No one had visited their school in a long time, and she grinned as excitement welled up within her. Even from a distance, she could tell that the coach was shiny and clean, as were the horses.

The coach came to a halt at the front of

the boardinghouse, and two well-dressed men exited, donning pristine white gloves and black rimmed hats. One had blonde hair that curled out from behind his ears, and he said something to the other man, who stepped back to look up at the building.

She moved closer so she could read their lips. Neither would face her or even glance in her direction, but she found a position where she could see both of their faces.

‘It’s much worse off than you described,’ the blonde one said, casting a judgmental look to the other man, whose thick mustache bounced as he pursed his lips.

‘I do recall telling you that it was a pretty nasty fire that did this place in,’ the mustached man retorted. ‘Not my fault you expected different.’

She couldn’t tell what the blonde man said, but the other laughed at his comment. The two looked up at the boardinghouse.

‘No survivors? Not even the girl who did it?’ the blonde asked.

The mustached man shook his head.

‘Damn, how sad,’ the blonde man said.

Oonagh’s head spun. The smell of smoke infiltrated every pore in her body, and she felt herself wheezing. Her chest ached as her breathing quickened and dismay enveloped her. She didn’t understand what they were saying. The boardinghouse was old, and as such,

the rooms were dusty and the wallpaper peeled, but it wasn’t that bad.

She ran up to them, trying to figure out how she would ask them all her questions. They looked over her head, still discussing the state of the boardinghouse. She lifted her arms, trying to block their vision. They didn’t acknowledge her.

Her breath caught in her throat, and she could feel tears threatening to spill from her eyes. She hit the blonde man in the arm, refusing to accept that they didn’t see her, and she fell back at the look of fear in his eyes. He said something to the other, but she didn’t look at them anymore.

She cried so hard that her throat burned and her eyes throbbed. She staggered over to the coach, using it to hold herself up. Did she even exist?

**“Her chest ached as her breathing quickened, and dismay enveloped her. She didn’t understand what they were saying.”**

Oonagh lifted her gaze to her reflection, and she froze. Her bald head was covered in blisters and chunks of torn skin, and the curve of her skull peeked through a hole in the side of her temple. The tip of her nose was gone, revealing the inner workings of her nasal cavities, which were full of ash and charred skin. Her lack of eyelids made one of her eyes protrude from her head, while the

other had burst and dripped down her cheeks, mixing with her tears. Yellow fat and teeth were exposed in her peeling face, and there were so many splits in her forehead and chin that she could barely recognize herself.

She stepped backwards, unable to take her eyes off the hideous thing before her. She felt arms wrap around her, and she wailed and kicked, scratched and bit. The arms turned her around.

A corpse stood before her. Swollen skin clung in clumps as it peeled off their body. Smooth red flesh peeked from behind charred strips, and black crusted their head and arms. Their hands were shaking. Oonagh’s sobs had turned into hiccups, and she began to violently shake her head.

**“She stepped backwards, unable to take her eyes off the hideous thing before her.”**

Aoife pulled her close, swaddling her in leather-skinned arms. Oonagh had fallen silent. She stared straight ahead, noting that the men had disappeared inside.

A hand on her chin tilted her face upwards. Aoife’s burnt lips slowly mouthed something to her. ‘It will be okay.’

She was led through the boardinghouse, and everything hit her at once. The building was a husk. The walls were stained black, and pieces of the ceiling

fell into each room, coating the floor in ash and splinters. Remnants of chairs and bookshelves littered the ground, and all former rugs and curtains were gone. The smell of smoke followed them as they headed into the courtyard. The grass was black and ugly, patches of it burnt to the point where dirt peeked through.

**“It will be okay.”**

They stood in Knacker’s Yard, holding each other’s hand. Puisin was weaving himself between their legs, and he rubbed his cheek against her blackened calves. The cat looked uninjured.

Oonagh felt a strange pull towards the well, like a string attached to it had wrapped itself around her chest and tugged at her. She took a step forward.

Aoife squeezed her hand, walking up with her. They stood at the wall of the well, and she motioned for Oonagh to look at her.

‘Are you ready?’ she mouthed, her scorched tongue licking at her dry lips. Oonagh nodded.

Puisin jumped up next to them as they climbed up onto the wall. He sat down with his paws together, his tail resting atop them.

Still holding hands, the two stepped forward, falling down into the dark. Wind whipped against her singed skin, and she smiled.



## The Cat Speaks Death

Zoë Boudreaux  
clay



## Survival of the Fittest

Zoë Boudreaux  
clay and acrylic

# MUSIC OF SURREALISM

Colin Ashby

Take a break from flipping through the magazine and listen to some Surrealist music! After scanning the QR code, feel free to either read a short commentary about the piece and/or flip to the pages listed below each song.

**Gymnopedie No. 1, Lent et douloureux, Erik Satie**  
pages 71, 74, 20



Satie's Gymnopedie No. 1 is easily the Surrealist period's most notable piece. Originally composed in 1889, Satie uses

a simple, restrained melody that makes us feel emotional. What do you feel when you listen? Nostalgia, sadness, and gloom are common feelings. The piece is scored for solo piano – this allows the performer to have complete control over the sound (or silence), rather than having multiple musicians contribute to a single performance. Satie also marks the tempo as Lent et douloureux – “slow and painful” in English. Do you hear pain in this work? If you like this piece, keep listening while you flip to pages 71, 74, and 20!

**In a Landscape, John Cage**  
pages 85, 79, 5

Many Surrealists, including founder

Andre Breton, considered music a barrier to unlocking one's unconscious. Despite this, Breton viewed John Cage as one of the few musicians to be a true Surrealist. Cage's In a Landscape is anchored in a complete desire to return to peace and tranquility. Composed in 1947, In a Landscape's simplicity evokes the subconscious inner contemplation that so many desired to return to following The Great Depression and World War II. As you'll likely notice while listening, Cage was fascinated with Satie's adherence to music which “behaves as if it did not exist”. Cage's decision to exclude dynamics and compose for solo piano (or harp) elicit a sense of profound serenity – a dreamlike emotion. I highly recommend listening to all eight minutes of In A Landscape, so check out the pages listed above!

**Etudes Instrumentales: Flute Mexiciane, Pierre Schaeffer**  
pages 80, 23, 37

In contrast to the works above, French composer Pierre Schaeffer used his extensive



influence over French radio companies to create and broadcast compositions which undoubtedly provoke uneasiness (to say the least). Part of a larger experimental music group known as “musique concrète”, Flute Mexiciane was developed by warping the sounds of raw footage of a flute. Though it's not obvious when listening, the piece was almost entirely developed by playing footage backwards, slicing/extending footage, and tweaking the reverb of the tape. Schaeffer's Flute Mexiciane feels both otherworldly and realistic – why? Is this piece strange, or more sinister in nature? I encourage you to view the suggested works while listening to decide for yourself.

## MY DAILY OBLIGATIONS AND FEAR OF GHOSTS

As I walk my daily commute between my daily obligations, I pass by a young girl who looks to be about 13. She's crying. I would ask her what she is crying about, but is that ever really important? She's crying. Everyone else walks right past her without pause, confirming every anxiety she has ever had. She's crying, and I am here, watching her, hearing her begging the familiar paradox to both be seen and to disappear. I feel helpless. I feel like my parents did when I was 13.

With shaking hands, and the weight of both her world and mine in them, I approach her. She looks up at me, and my heart sinks. My heart sinks. The tear-stained mirror looks back at me in desperation, even knowing that I once, in some sort of a past life, called her a monster. Knowing that I both recognize her immediately and that she no longer recognizes herself. That she doesn't want to.

Her look is one of desperation, and I've never loved anyone more. I've never been more overwhelmed with compassion. I've never been more overwhelmed with guilt. She is desperate for compassion from someone who once called her a monster.

I am at a loss for words, so I give her a hug. I am drawn in by the loneliness radiating off of her. She hugs me back, in desperation, and I feel overwhelmed with guilt. She deserves someone better than me. I do not make a good home for her. I blame it on my fear of monsters.

I hug her just long enough to feel guilty. She disappears. Suddenly, the girl is gone, but her loneliness lingers to this day. Suddenly, my arms are wrapped tightly—desperately—around myself, and there are fingernail marks tattooed on my mind, body, and soul.

When you think of ghosts, do you ever picture a crying seventh grader? When you think of monsters, do you ever picture a crying seventh grader? I am not afraid of ghosts; I am afraid of the reasons they haunt me. I am afraid of myself for being afraid of a crying seventh grader. For calling her a monster.

Irrational fears are only irrational in hindsight, hours spent journaling, and hugs.

Maybe she was never a monster. Maybe she was just 13. Maybe I was just 13.

— Riley Goff

### The Leaning Chimes of Denny

Alex Stern  
digital photography

# HEARTSICK HERO

A silent hallway outside  
Of a bleak dark night  
Crushed petals  
From flowers long forgotten

Tentative steps  
On desperate feet  
Step step step

Tick tock tick  
The clock strikes twelve  
Steps quicken  
Heart beats

Climbing  
Reaching  
Grasping  
But you float just out of reach

Try try try  
No matter how hard  
But I...  
Just can't quite touch you

Always out of reach  
Just barely too far  
Never within my clutches  
You rise higher and higher  
Leaving me down here with the pieces of my broken heart

— Tatum Walker





# I AM WHAT I AM



## Self Portrait Trio

Zoë Boudreaux  
acrylic on unstretched canvas

I am what I am.

I listen to happy music every Friday because it became a tradition with a friend of mine in my junior year of high school.

I wear hats because of a Young Life leader who now spends Christmas at my family dining table.

I love to sing because my grandmother has perfect pitch and won't let anyone forget it.

I take endless amounts of photos and videos of my life because I fear my memory will escape me like it did for my grandfather.

I don't often open up unless asked because I was once told that I was "just noise" by someone closest to me.

I have difficulty believing people genuinely like me because my two childhood best friends ignored me for weeks during fifth grade.

I feel lonely in January because my closest friends made me feel like I wasn't broken enough to be close with them anymore.

I prayed to be broken.

I am what I am.

I say "I love you" twice when I mean it a little bit extra because I couldn't bring the words to leave my mouth even once for years.

I appear annoyingly optimistic because I used to find comfort in pessimism.

I cry every time I hear my favorite song live because it is the only part of myself I kept around from seventh grade.

I mourn the girl I was in seventh grade because I wish so badly I could apologize for how I treated her.

I am empathetic to a fault because I have to list five things I can see, four things I can touch, three things I can hear, two things I can smell, and one thing I can taste.

I write letters to people who will never receive them because I fear scaring people away with how big and loud I love and I feel.

I wish I was smart enough to study the stars and space because I love and I hate to think there is something bigger than me out there.

I am outwardly "yellow" because I once prayed to be broken.

I saved myself, so I can save others.

I am what I am.

I feel the world so deeply, and

I wonder how loud I have to beg for it to feel me back.

I am stars and space and bigger than myself,

But my reality is my own.

I am what I am because of the people and things I live and I love.

I am what I am because of my mind, my body, my soul.

I am deeply human and imperfectly myself.

I am what I am.

— Riley Goff

# PARASOCIAL

## William Zamudio

Click. Finally, Bartholomew had finished and uploaded his report on Hal, the man who went mad, and he could relax. He glanced at the bottom right corner of his desktop: eleven forty-eight PM. He had made the deadline, and now he could finally wipe the sweat off his forehead and head to bed.

### The Report

The fatal shooting of the 41-year-old influential political activist Bernard Berenstain occurred just six weeks ago at the Chicago Hyatt Regency Hotel. The incident occurred on June 14th between 7:48 and 7:53 PM. Bernard was the head of a fringe political movement, American Millennials Opposed to Nepotism, Government, Unions, and Socialists.

The masked assailant, 37-year-old Hal Hernandez, was apprehended shortly after and charged with second-degree murder, burglary, and three counts of battery. Hal pleaded guilty and surrendered all evidence, including a letter written by Hal to explain his actions. The letter below contains his message, including his motives for the crime and his encounter with Bernard in his hotel room on that fateful night.

### My Message

It was not my intention to kill Bernard; we were quite good friends you see. It all started on the rainy day of August 23rd last year in my home. As the rain tapped

upon my window, I spent another day alone in my room, waiting and hoping for something to change, for me to find a purpose in my dull life.

As I tapped my blue fountain pen on the desk, something popped up in a discord server I had joined for my amusement. It was a video of someone who had things to say, a man who stood for the common people, and someone working hard to fight for me. That person was Bernard, and I soon began to admire him greatly as a figure who was an outsider, a hardworking average person just like me.

**“It was not my intention to kill Bernard; we were quite good friends.”**

I began to follow all of his pages and listened to any content he made that I could put in my brain. If anyone was his number one fan it had to have been me. I eventually got in contact with him through social media and we began to exchange messages regularly. I would tell him how great his messages were and he would always respond within a few hours about his enthusiasm for my support. I was even personally invited to join a mailing list to keep me updated. I would always get emails from him before his events and even requests about how he needed my support.

It was a wonderful friendship and I even started talking to him about my hobbies.

After a donation or two, he would always respond with how great it was to have someone like me. To him, his viewers were like family, and I could only agree as I could always be there rooting for him and that must have made him appreciate me.

I realized over the course of six months that he was just like me. People even began to bring up the similarities in mannerisms as time went on for me. Well, I guess great minds do think alike though I have no idea who started that, it just popped into my head as I'm writing this so ignore me.

Anyway, it turns out he had a live event, as I discovered by email, which happened to only be thirty minutes from me. It was a grand event, with plenty of chocolate confections which melted warmly into my mouth as I indulged myself. The scattered event rooms were quite confusing initially, but not impossible for someone like me.

After attending some of the smaller break-out sessions, I headed to the main hall to hear myself, or rather Bernard speak. Sorry, we're just so similar it's hard to differentiate him from me. After a fiery, rousing, and empowering speech, the audience clapped and celebrated; it was almost too much energy for me. I had gotten him a gift and after following him to his hotel room I knocked on the door expecting him to open it for me. He didn't, so I invited myself in seeing how close we had gotten and how well he knew me.

He exited his bathroom, was promptly shocked, and for some reason didn't even

recognize me. After his initial dismay, I explained myself but somehow he didn't seem happy to see me. All he did was shout at me.

### Bernard

“What are you doing here, that was my social media manager talking to you. I'm sorry, but I have no idea who you are and I would appreciate it if you could leave me alone. How did you even break in? I'm going to call the cops on you, so get out NOW!”

The present I wanted to give him just so happened to be a knife, but for some reason when I pulled it out his face only turned to fear. I then gave him almost the exact account that you lovely people have read so far, but it only enraged him further. He seemed to only mention something about how I was so blind and selfish. He mentioned something about me thinking the world revolves around me based on how I end every thought but I have no idea what he was talking about.

**“After a donation or two, he would always respond.”**

Regardless, I came closer to give him his gift, but it only put him further on edge. He swung at me and landed a couple of hits, and in self-defense I stabbed him. I realized the horror of my mistake and called the cops immediately. I did not want to kill him, but I was left with absolutely no choice. In reality, he lied to me, to his last breath where he claimed I was only lying to myself.

The media won't tell you this so I must, it is my obligation as a free citizen of the United States. I lost my friend that day, and myself as well. He was confused and insane at that moment, and for that, I am truly saddened. From his speeches, I assumed he would have had the cognitive capacity to have been able to recognize me, but it seems something must have gone wrong. As one of his biggest supporters, I feel it is important to continue the mission and spread the word, so I will do my best to carry the mantle as the next face of the movement.

### **In Conclusion**

Hal was sentenced to four years of probation, leading many of Bernard's followers to voice their frustrations online, with vulgar comments and death threats being common among them. The vast majority of the movement sees Hal as nothing more than a deranged parasocial menace, and the remnants of the organization have stripped him of his membership and have barred him from attending any events.

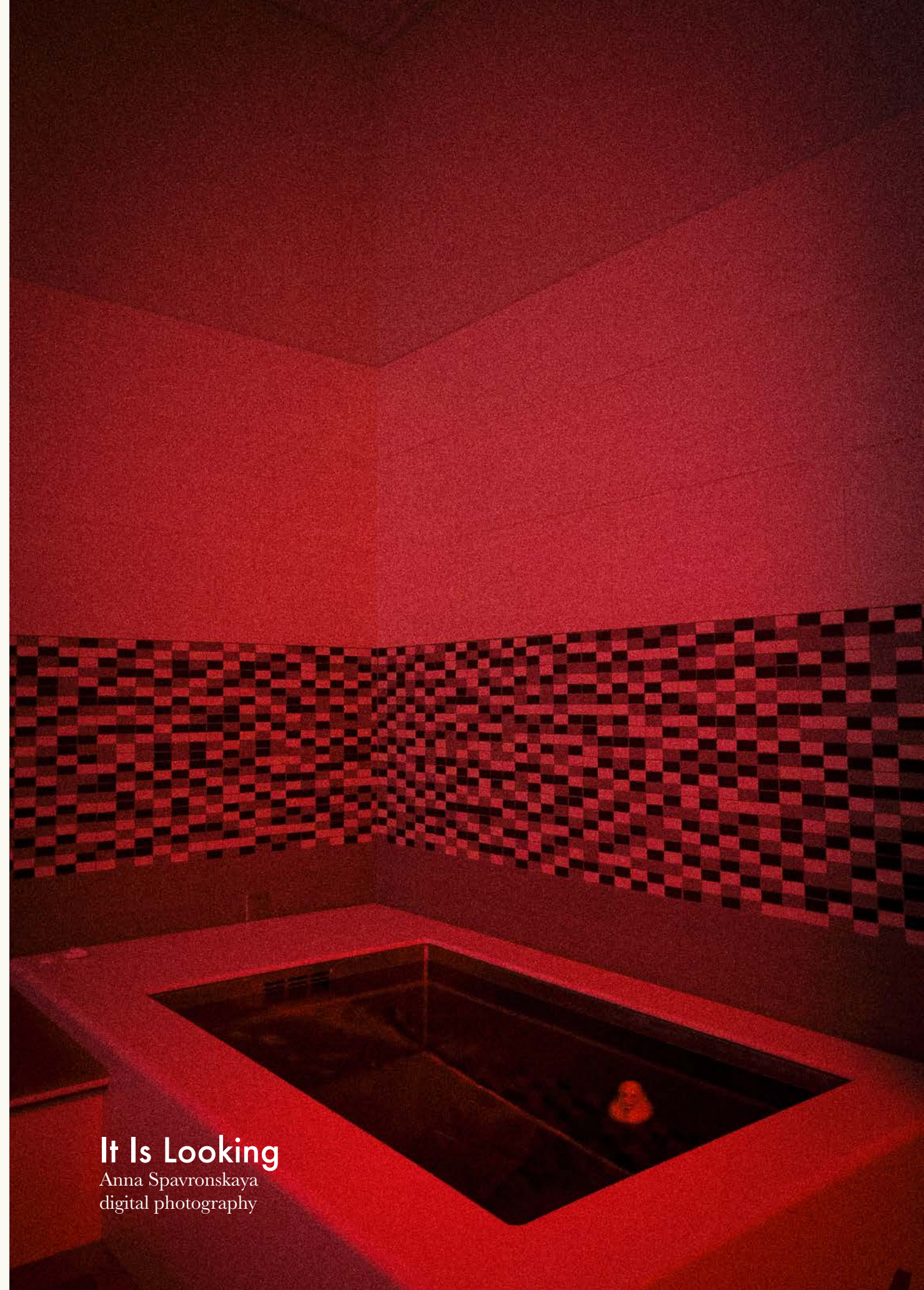
Hal's wife commented "It's going to be hard these next two years. Being twenty has its own challenges but I know that as long as I have our kids Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark I'll be fine. Matt will be almost eight years old when his father is able to call himself a free man again, but we have received plenty of outside support, and for that I feel incredibly blessed."

### **Other stories**

[Why have all of the local Home Depot's run out of stump remover and threaded pipes?](#)

[Coca-Cola unveils a new campaign "A Blast To The Past" with their 1899 original recipe](#)

[Spam recalls 20,000 cans after discovering they accidentally used real meat](#)



**It Is Looking**  
Anna Spavronskaya  
digital photography

# TIME OCCURS NO MORE IN HERE

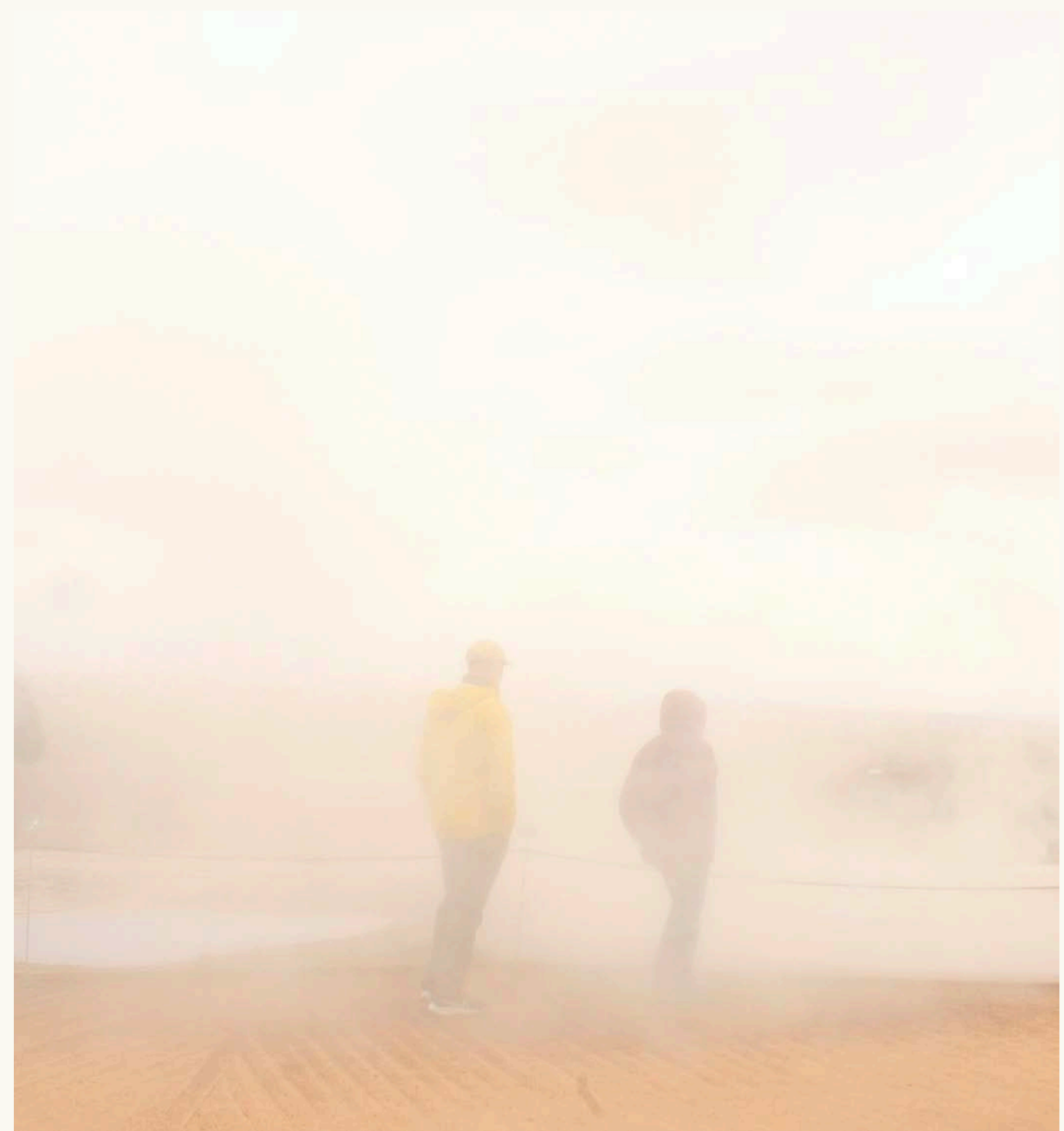
time occurs no more in here  
 no clock to tick or sense to feel  
 idas steps keep time as she  
     tap  
         tap  
             tap  
                 through  
                 eschers  
                 halls

her steps keep no time  
 for there is none to keep  
 around the penrose stairs  
     up  
         up  
             up  
                 or  
                 down  
                 down  
                 down

her steps maintain a constant pace  
 no need for speed velocity  
 no time no time to keep the pace  
     just  
         tap  
             tap  
                 tap  
                 tap  
                 tap

through  
 timeless  
 halls

— Noah Quinn



## Shrouded Union

Ellie King  
 digital photography

# A SPHINX FOUND ME

What greedy power convinces Hope  
that it has authority over Grief and Despair,  
and that their elusive, untethered states can be seized  
by its iron grip, or its strength and shape  
unable to be corroded by their presences;

*Mine / the strength of my will / the insistence from the parts of me unloved*

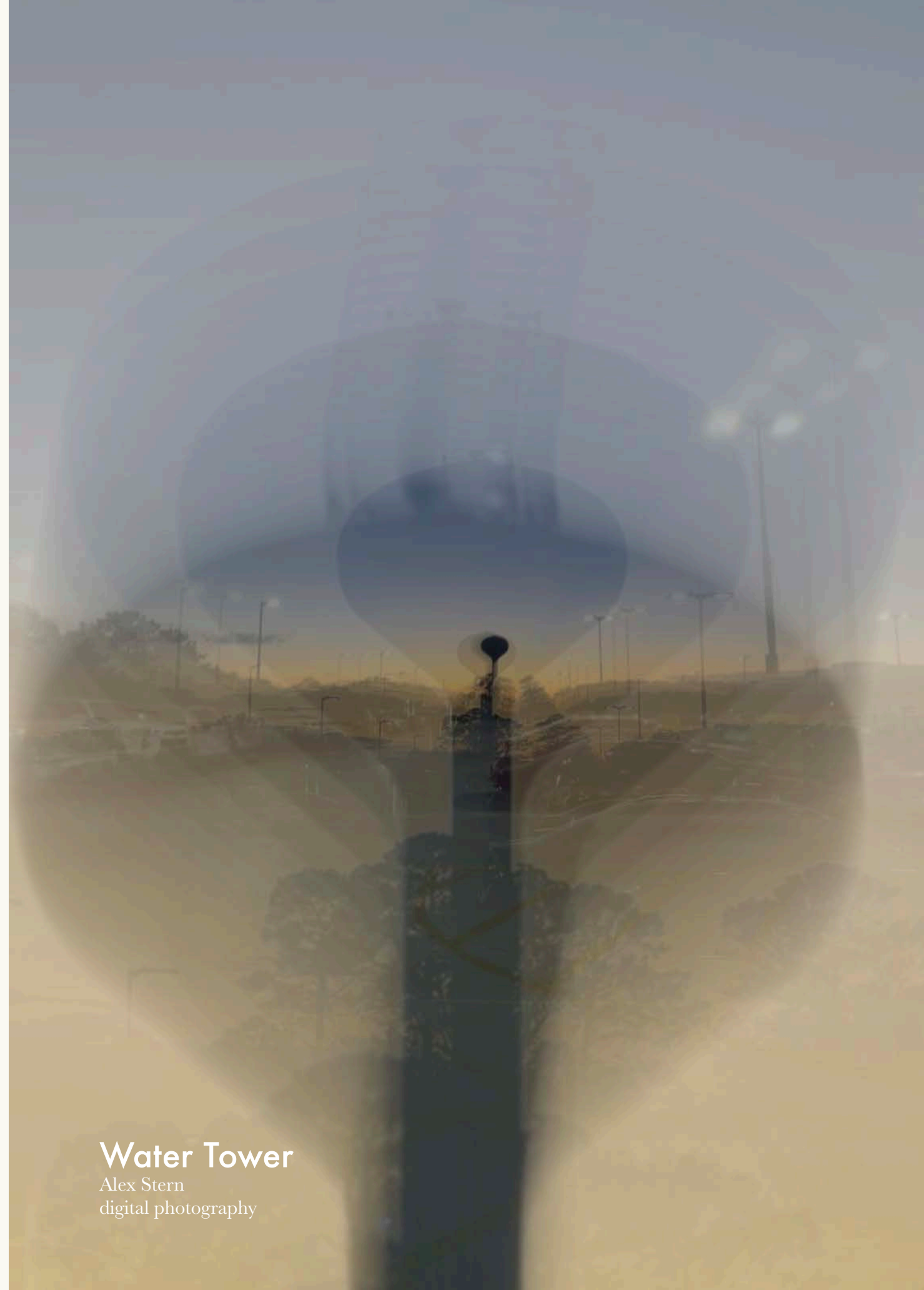
Where spoke the arrogant voice that makes a dream  
so contrived and presumptuous into that of a prophetic vision,  
forging from some vehement plea  
a Delphic cry that turns a fateful thread into a silver wire that chips the sisters' scissors  
and grounds the clouds where peering eyes above preside;

*Here / under my breath when I feel alone / draped by lamplight in a still room on a troubled night*

Who has the impudence to know themselves —  
the man-made monster,  
only to return their dismembered parts  
to the families whose loved ones had them stolen,  
bidding peace to their creator  
and seeking life and passage in an ethereal state,  
unconcerned in razing the earth and imparting pain on their enemies,  
choosing to move as the ground and trees do,  
bearing the pain of their transgressors who are bound to their own parts  
as an amalgam of stitched souls instead,  
each weighed down by the dead dreams of their generations past,  
weakened and corrupted by Grief and Despair;

*Me / my ego and pride / the persona I've made to see to my wounds and guide the forgotten, lost child*

— Tanner Jones



Water Tower

Alex Stern  
digital photography

# CAVE DARK

Abby McCreary

The lights had been off for only a few seconds when Melody's voice cut through the nothingness.

"Cave dark, and the bottom of the ocean—those are the darkest places on Earth," Melody whispered, but her voice bounced off the cave and filled all the space light used to grace.

Katherine waved her hand in front of her face, but there was no outline, no silhouette, no shadow of where her fingers should be. Instead, just the memory that there were five fingers a minute ago.

Two minutes into cave dark, and memory started to fail her. Katherine felt for all ten of her fingers, stretched her tongue to touch the tip of her nose, and scratched her left calf with her right foot, all to make sure that her body wasn't melting into the dark.

She felt her nose start shifting up and to the left, but a frantic hand discovered that it hadn't traveled around her face after the lights went out. Katherine had a sinking suspicion that her hair had become five inches shorter in the cave, too, but her nervous fingers found that it still fell to her shoulders.

It took everything within her to not second guess that the frantic hand and nervous fingers still belonged to her and not just some entity in the dark with her.

Katherine took a deep breath.

*It's all in your head,* she thought.

*Of course it's all in your head. Everything else disappeared,* a new voice thought.

Katherine begged and begged the new voice to ruin cave dark for everyone and turn on a headlamp, but it didn't listen. Instead, deep in the cave, in the absence of light and time, Katherine started to remember when she was young.

She couldn't sleep when she was young. She'd lay in bed for hours, just thinking, until eventually she tired of thinking, but not to the point of actually being tired. She'd climb out of bed and cross over to the window where the neighbor's lights illuminated the trees gently swaying in the wind, a cat on the prowl, a leaf blowing down the road. Eventually, though, she'd tire of that, too, and she'd finally answer the mirror that had been calling to her all night.

Night after night, Katherine would find herself cross-legged in front of her mirror, and only some of the neighbor's lights reached far enough to show her the cross-legged Katherine on the other side.

Call it an absence of light, a trick of the mind, a lapse in memory, but Katherine would begin to change. She'd look in the mirror, and her eyes were deeper than

they were that morning. Her hair darker, her nose larger, her cheekbones higher, her mouth smiling a smile that seemed a little more lonely and maybe the tiniest bit mean.

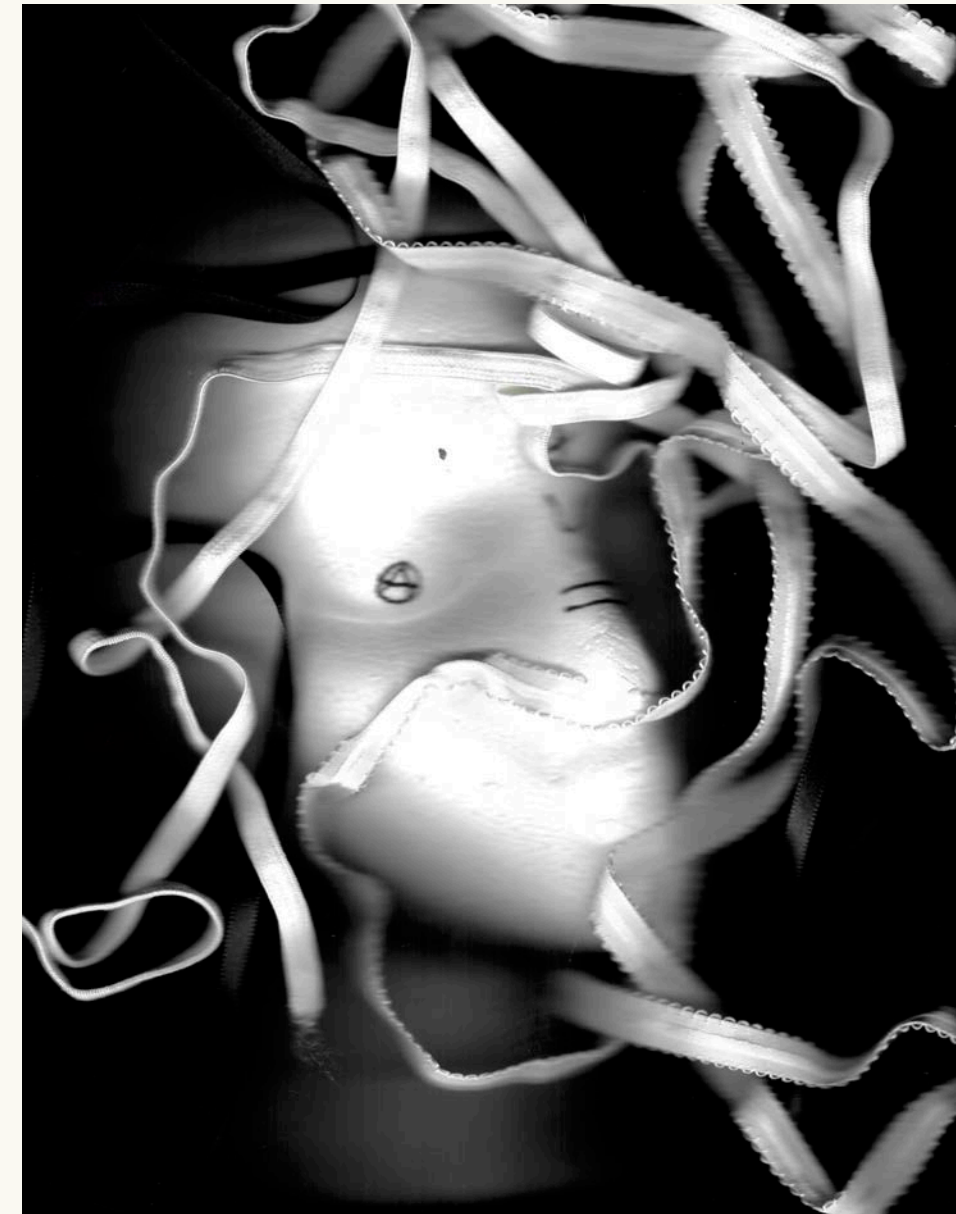
Sufficiently creeped out, she'd crawl back into bed and eventually fall asleep.

In the cave, there was no bed, no sleep, and still no light. Katherine's heart beat fast, then faster, faster until her heart became the only part of her that she was sure had not melted into the dark yet. Her heartbeat echoed in the nothingness until Katherine forgot the rock she used to be able to feel beneath her, her friends she used to know were in the cave, and even the light she used to take for granted.

Three minutes into cave dark, and Melody's light switched on, a beam of reality cutting through the nothing and exposing the group sitting in a circle.

"You okay, Katherine?" she asked.

"Absolutely," Katherine answered.



**Anarchy**  
Gabe Mathews  
digital photography

# Phantom Refuge

Ellie King  
digital photography



# LA BIBLIOTECA ES ROJA

My friend, or so I once called you before  
 Back then when brotherhood was all you swore  
 At a time before your Snapchat, Twitter, or TikTok  
 We used to roam the streets and play outside with white chalk  
 But soon you became diseased with your accursed affliction  
 And you began to idolize those whose lives were fiction  
 Feeding into the attention and fame that led you astray  
 Yet your actions showed that on the inside you were not okay  
 But to square the blame solely on your shoulders is dereliction  
 For I saw you fall and did not help, as I lacked in conviction  
 To watch your black beanie go away as time passed on the clock  
 With a message inscribed I never saw as we walked the block  
 I failed to stop you from losing yourself in that war  
 That was waged inside your mind, shaking you to your core

I watched the tears stream down your cheek  
 As you thought yourself to be bleak  
 Your red scarf was tightly wrapped up, covering up your face  
 Absorbing the salty wetness in a cold embrace  
 It violently shook as much as your soul  
 Y voy a decir lo en espanol (and in Spanish it can only be told)  
 Tu estaba mi amigo mas importante (and you were my most important friend)  
 Pero necesito a seguir adelante (but I need to move on in the end)  
 Y yo quiero aprender mas de Roma (our friendship agonizingly collapsed like Rome)

Voy a practicar mas mi idioma. (with only my idiotic thoughts left to roam)  
 For those who care about you, you cannot replace  
 So I pleaded to you to end this lonely chase  
 Because being yourself does not make you weak  
 Your blue hoodie and torn joggers make you unique

You have four eyes and yet you still somehow remain blind  
 Because your priorities are as warped as your mind  
 Your impact on me was immeasurable, I cannot lie  
 So for that reason I cannot just watch your social life die  
 So I must force you to stop looking at your phone  
 You've become paralyzed, just like a mindless drone  
 An intervention this has become  
 Go outside, you've turned out oh so glum  
 I will not allow you to stay alone

You should touch the grass outside that has grown  
 So I tell you that ignoring me will just make me cry  
 And yet I feel that you will only leave me out to dry  
 So I hope that in your own heart, you can find  
 Room for me if you would only be so kind

Now after reading this fantastic poem, I  
 hope you have had a change of heart. You  
 see, without me, it must be lonely in your  
 room. I prefer the presence of another  
 person, but perhaps I pander too much with  
 this poem to persuade you to play with me.  
 Anyway, I'll be coming over on the 30th, I  
 would say when that is concerning the  
 delivery of this mail but we all know USPS.  
 I have missed your mother's cookies for far  
 too long and I WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

P.S. I taught your parents how to disable  
 social media on your Wi-Fi network. I know  
 you are an adult who can make your own  
 choices, but you have taken it too far by  
 taking away those cookies. No man can live  
 without them, for can you even call that  
 living?

— William Zamudio



# A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Seaborn Chappell

I'm so cold, trapped in this rectangle of frozen existence. I stare out into the bright, tiled room. Cream-colored cabinets line the walls, keeping watch over the black-and-white speckled countertops.

My gaze is drawn across the stable island with its walnut surface, the three oranges clustered atop, a stark contrast to its earthy grain. Across the rumpled dog bed—now empty—and up the bone-white walls. Up past the Live, Laugh, Love sign that neighbors the light switch. Up past the calendar with its picturesque images of national parks. Up to the round plastic clock is my gaze drawn.

Yes. Yes, I breathe. The hands draw near to the six. It is almost time. Soon I hear the unmistakable thud of feet coming down the stairs which is greeted by the pitter patter of Romeo's paws. My heart beats within me and soon I know I will feel alive again.

My feeder, yet also my jailer, walks into the room. He walks past the island, with its oranges, up to the giant black prison. That large black rectangle wherein resides the things that bring me nourishment. He reaches for the handle. I would tremble in anticipation if I could.

As he reaches in, I catch a rare glimpse of the wondrous sight within. Bottles and boxes of all sizes, bags, and things I know not the name of. All of them are

deliciously out of reach. The door is closed with a snap and my detainer sets an opaque, rectangular box on the island next to the oranges. He takes off the red lid; if only he would hurry up. It is time!

He takes the container and comes my way. Opening my chamber, he sets the container inside. I do not have the strength to do it myself—this accursed form. I close my eyes and await the thrill, the rush, the warmth of life I so rarely receive.

He pushes me in several spots, and I can't help but beep in response. With the press of one final button, I hum to life. Warmth seeps through my being; a sudden rush of light that blossoms in a vortex of heat within me. I bask in its glory, enveloped in its warm embrace. What is life without—

—Gone. It was over as soon as it began. Thirty seconds of life is all I will get today. I remain still in shock, not as if I had a choice. The deceiver opens me once again, the fleeting warmth flees as I am greeted by the cold air of the tiled room. He closes me, the sound of it final and sudden.

As the seconds draw into minutes I begin to forget the warmth I just had. How brief was its stay, how sudden its departure. I, LG model 359A17OH with Satin Finish, do not know the next time I will feel alive. Why, I wonder, is it so cold?



## Relief

Kaitlyn Lin  
acrylic

# TEETH

Attalea Rose

Janie Sue watched how Toby's lips flexed and puckered as he talked, two slugs writhing in summer heat as they dehydrated. Janie Sue's mouth was dry. She swallowed the meager spit lolling around her tongue and tried to focus on the words drifting between Toby's lips.

They were standing between two overcrowded bookshelves in the public library. The books were packed tightly together, like bulbous teeth in the mouth of a child that needed braces. Janie Sue was leaning against the shelf behind her, her hands clasped daintily behind her back. Toby held a copy of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen in his hand prattled on, "—just no plot. It doesn't mean anything."

"Mmm hmm," Janie Sue hummed between pressed lips. "Mmm hmm." She unclasped her hands and pinched the fabric of her long, boxy skirt between tepid fingertips. Her bulky sweater sleeves slunk down past her wrists.

"Darcy this, Darcy that!" Toby mocked. He flapped his head back and forth, a horse bucking blinders. His hair bounced, tawny curls founcing, a porcelain doll toted around by a doting little girl, and Janie Sue wanted to weave her fingers between them.

"Mmm hmm, mmm hmm."

Toby had doll eyes, like two ebony buttons stitched on canvas with onyx thread. "Classics have no merit. They're outdated. It's stuffy people in stuffy clothes."

"Mmm hmm."

Toby sighed, a sound like the whistling of

wind through Swiss cheese, and he shoved the book back onto the shelf, using both hands, crinkling the covers of the books beside it. "We should read something *modern* in class. Like *Normal People* by Sally Rooney. Then we could watch the TV show. That'd be best for everyone, watching TV show adaptations, far more modern."

"*Pride and Prejudice* has a TV adaptation, too," Janie Sue whispered. "And a movie."

Toby's forehead creased and he huffed, "What, one made in the 1900s? A silent film?"

Janie Sue tapped the tip of her Doc Martens against the floor. "Oh, yea, probably. Mmm hmm."

"We should petition Mrs. Warsaw. She'll change the curriculum, maybe." Toby turned, began to walk away, his back to Janie Sue.

"Mmm hmm."

Janie Sue's mouth dried further, her tongue simply parched. She cleared her throat, and as she did, her teeth bucked outward, tilting as if on a hinge. Janie Sue gasped and cupped a palm around her lips, an octopus tentacle suction-cupping to her skin. Then her pearly teeth fell, one by one, out of her mouth and into her hands.

"Come on, Janie Sue," Toby called behind him, not turning around, his shirttail untucked and shoulders squared. Janie Sue pressed her lips together and her dry mouth filled with blood, as she cradled the fallen bits of her skull in her clammy palms and watched Toby's receding back.



## Friends

Kaitlyn Lin  
mixed media art



## Gay Rodeo

Reagan Christian  
digital artwork

# UNICORN

## Attalea Rose

“Come one, come all!” bellowed the ringmaster, his top hat askew. The stuffy heat of the circus tent melted his once-curved mustache down the corners of his face into a frown above his lips. “A unicorn! A real unicorn!” he shouted. Families milled about the circus grounds like goldfish drowning in a glass tank. The ringmaster stared into the crowd and sought out the little girls, their wide eyes and butterfly face paint, until they tugged on their parents’ hands and begged to see the unicorn! A real unicorn! Into the tent they shuffled, the little girls, their older brothers—just as intrigued as their sisters, if not more—to see the unicorn.

There was the unicorn indeed, standing in the center of a corral, elegant, surreal, with a smooth, cream coat and a pointed horn jutting from between molasses eyes. A harness of wilted cherry blossoms looped around the droopy unicorn’s neck, tethered to the center of the corral. “A unicorn!” the believers cried. “A stripeless zebra with a goat horn strapped to its head,” the critics grumbled.

**“A stripeless zebra with a goat horn strapped to its head,”**

The crowd pressed closer, and the ringmaster kept shouting, “Come one, come all, a unicorn!” as he stood at the

tent entrance. He stuffed his pockets with cash, a Lincoln, a Jackson, some Hamiltons, the admittance fees from pandering parents. “A real unicorn!” The unicorn watched the families file into the tent. Pudgy child hands reached between the slats of the corral fence, fingers flexing as they tried to touch the unicorn’s soft fur. The unicorn hung its head, and the harness around its neck slumped.

**“Into the tent they shuffled, the little girls, their older brothers...”**

“Mommy, why is the unicorn sad?” a little girl asked her mother, pointing at the unicorn.

“Oh, that poor animal,” the parents murmured to one another.

The ringmaster’s ears pricked, and he shuffled into the tent. “Oh, the unicorn is just hungry!” He picked up a pail beside the corral and opened the lid to reveal browning apple slices. “Who wants to feed the unicorn?”

The ringmaster plucked quarters and dimes from shrieking children’s hands in exchange for the apple slices, which the children chucked into the corral, between the fence slats or in an arch over the fence. The unicorn ate a few of the slices from the floor, corral dust and

all, then raised its head to stare at the ringmaster. More apple slices were tossed into the corral, like white rose petals a flower girl tosses to serenade a bride. The unicorn continued to stare at the ringmaster as the food piled up around its hooves.

**“Pudgy child hands... flexing as they tried to touch the unicorn’s soft fur.”**

The ringmaster didn’t pay attention to the unicorn. He kept lining his pockets with fistfuls of quarters, his bucket of apple slices depleting as the slices now littered the corral floor like settled ash from a bomb. The ringmaster backed further into the tent, mustache drooping further, his voice drowned out by the burgeoning crowd and ecstatic squeals of the children.

“Sorry, folks,” the ringmaster said, flipping the apple slice pail upside down. “Unicorn is full!” he chortled.

The ringmaster tried to weave his way through the tent, back to the outside, to entice more families to come see the unicorn, the real unicorn. But, suddenly, the crowd pressed closer and closer, and the ringmaster could not move. “Now, excuse me, folks,” he said, but they did not hear him. They were watching the unicorn, who was trampling the apple slices beneath its hooves and tugging against its harness.

The crowd closed ranks, pressed tightly together, a mass of face paint and sweat

and fleshy limbs. “Excuse me, folks,” the ringmaster tried to say again, but the crowd did not listen. The ringmaster plopped his empty apple slice pail upside down in the dirt and clambered atop it, now shouting over everyone’s heads, out of the flap of the tent, into the growing crowd outside, “Come one, come all! A unicorn! A real—”

The apple slice pail wobbled. The ringmaster lost his balance and toppled backward into the corral, over the fence, onto the floor in a puff of dust, in with the unicorn. “No, back away!” the ringmaster shouted, but the unicorn took its chance. The ringmaster’s head squashed beneath the unicorn’s hooves like a watermelon.



**Look Up**  
Anna Spivronskaya  
digital photography

# MADLY YOURS, ALICE

Today I feel like Alice,  
a woman grown enormous.  
In a garden of roses,  
I appear ridiculous.

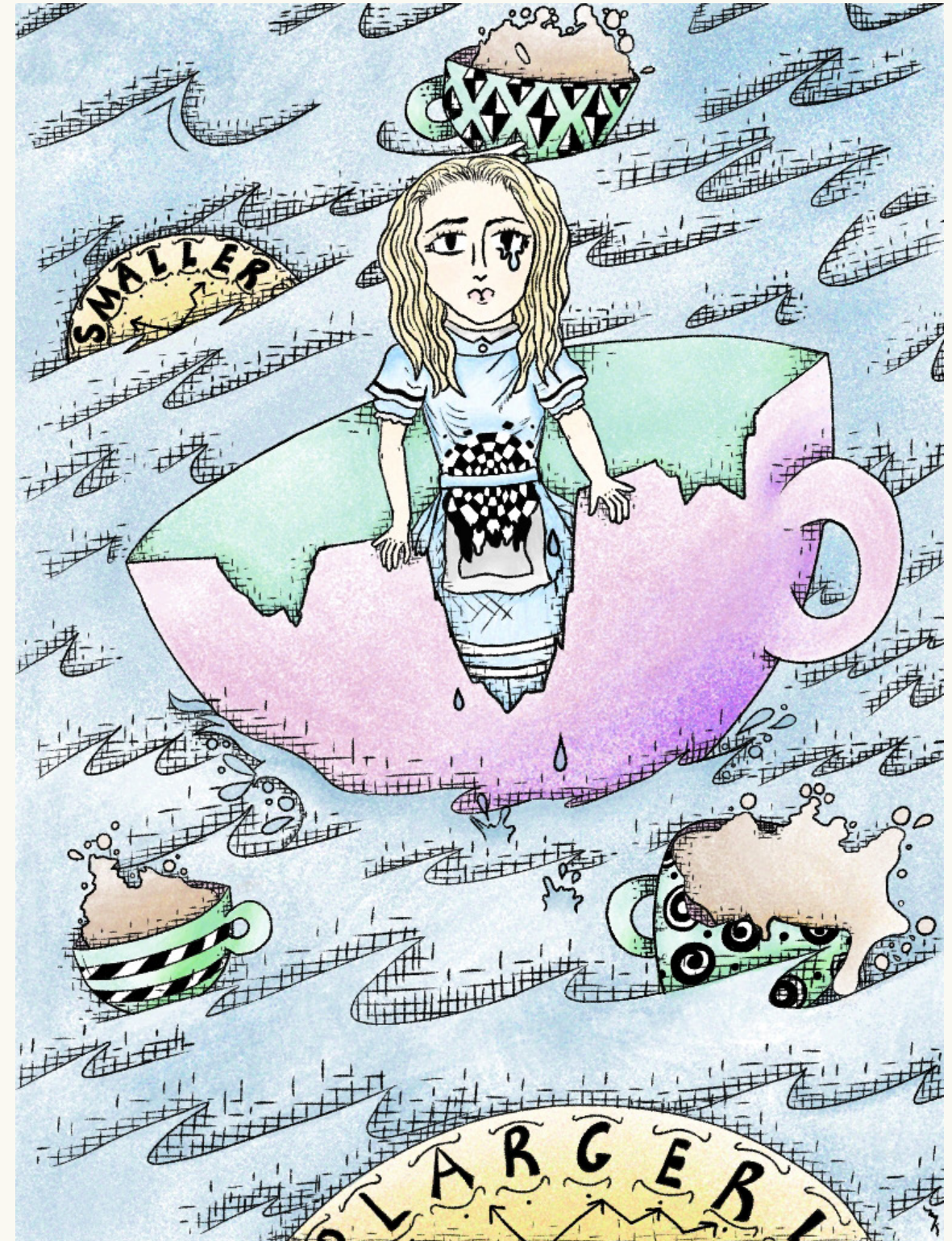
Yesterday, I was sugar  
fitting inside a teacup.  
Dissolving in the steaming drink  
until teatime is up.

Today I yearn to shrink down  
until I cannot be seen.  
I'm tired of playing games  
like croquet with the Queen.

She stands immaculate,  
shouting firm orders at us.  
To shrink too small, or grow too large,  
the Queen decrees is perilous.

And so, we follow blindly,  
so as not to seem amiss.  
I wouldn't want to lose my head.  
Today, I feel like Alice.

— Meghan Kellem



## Staying Afloat

Meghan Kellem  
digital artwork

## MAD LIBS: BEGINNER

Two Mad Libbers walk into a poem  
and wait for a \_\_\_\_\_ to fill in.  
(noun)

Unbeknown to them the poem is finished;  
there is not a \_\_\_\_\_ to be found.  
(noun)

Just stanzas, some \_\_\_\_\_,  
(plural noun)

concrete nouns and intentional adjectives.  
They are shocked when the \_\_\_\_\_ poem ends  
(adjective)

without any improvisational wordplay.

After standing silently on the sidelines,  
never a \_\_\_\_\_ to interject at,  
(noun)

they realize they have no place here.  
Instead of a \_\_\_\_\_ they are faced with a choice:  
(noun)

To leave the poem,  
shuffle out along the margins amid \_\_\_\_\_ stares,  
(adjective)

careful not to slip on a semicolon  
and avoiding the ascenders of an all-too-serious typeface.

Or to rewrite the poem,  
Unsheath their quick-witted swords  
and carve each \_\_\_\_\_ into a number,  
(noun)  
an exclamation, or \_\_\_\_\_ adjective.  
(adjective)

They \_\_\_\_\_ only for a moment,  
(verb)

Leaving their mark with immature impulse—  
smudging a line on the journey to the next page.

— Quade Mainzer

## MAD LIBS: ADVANCED

A friend just told me over text that he has thyroid cancer.  
That can't be right.  
I've never known anyone with thyroid cancer.  
Let me try again.

A friend just told me over text that he has a mint edition Barry Bonds baseball card.  
That's better.  
I've known people with a mint edition Barry Bonds baseball card.  
My dad traded away a mint edition Barry Bonds baseball card.

But I hate baseball.  
So does my friend.  
That can't be right.  
Try again.

A friend just told me over text that he has a new chicken stir-fry recipe.  
That's better.  
I've known people with a new chicken stir-fry recipe.  
My mom recently found a new chicken stir-fry recipe.

But I hate stir-fry.  
And my friend is a vegetarian.  
That can't be right.  
Again.

A friend just told me over text that he has flannel pajama bottoms.  
That's better.  
I've known people with flannel pajama bottoms.  
I used to have flannel pajama bottoms.

But who would text something like that?

I am shaking now.  
Maybe I am cold?  
Maybe I need flannel pajama bottoms.  
Maybe I need help coping with bad news.

— Quade Mainzer



City Puddle

Emily Will  
digital photography

WHAT IS THAT THING?

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.

— Emily Dickinson

the thing

never stops -

we hear

a little  
man

in the hill -

he s  
n Ext ,

It s

m y son

— Quade Mainzer

“Dreams” are the things that have no bound  
By walls or gravity -  
In nighttime solace, I have found  
A new reality -

Eyemask, white noise, twice-washed cotton -  
Enveloped sensory -  
Stressful days I want forgotten  
Now short-term memory -

I’ve had some in familiar lands,  
And others plain absurd -  
Yet all the same, I understand -  
I’ll wake up in my world.

— Quade Mainzer

the thing bound

h im , I found

Eye s , no se, as cot -  
ope n

s or e r otten -

I a m a liar

in

the under  
world

Ma ze

— Quade Mainzer



## Wide City Reflection

Emily Will  
digital photography

# SURREAL DESIGNS

Jack Seubert

Surreality can be described as dreamlike, and is exhibited when things seem real, but are so illogical they can't possibly be. Globally, there are many instances of notable architects applying this concept to their designs. This often leads to a building that seems to defy logic and leaves a lasting impression. While surreality may appear simple to identify, it is often more difficult to methodically articulate what makes specific architecture surreal.

A unique example of surreality applied to architecture is the Museum Garage in Miami, Florida. Terrence Riley, the brainchild behind this concept, was inspired by the surreal game, *Exquisite Corpse* (Frew). Riley chose a group of practices to design different sections of the seven-story parking garage's exterior, without knowing what the others had created (Tosone). The resulting product is a composite image of five unique facades that create the whole.

Perhaps the most surreal feature of this design is the portion that contains forty-five interlocking car bodies arranged on a vertical wall of the garage. Unlike the bleak exterior of most parking garages, these vehicles' gold and silver coatings reflect the sun, while the concept reflects the traffic that Miami natives have grown accustomed to.

The twelve-story Inntel Hotel in Amsterdam is another prime example of surreal architecture (Glancey). Designed

by Wilfried van Winden, the structure's exterior face is an amalgamation of five distinctive housing designs, from row homes to laborer's cottages, all of which are coated with a shade of traditional Zaandam green (Frew). The one exception to this layout is the blue corner piece, stemming from Claude Monet's 1871 impressionist painting, "The Blue House at Zaandam", which he painted in Amsterdam.

The inclusion of numerous housing designs, along with the addition of the inconsistent blue component, perplexes the viewer at first glance. Wilfried van Winden, the chief architect of the project, says his intent was not to shock, but he acknowledges this is an outspoken building (Glancey). Despite its large statement, he asserts that the building belongs here. The facades are based on traditional Zaastad houses, and the colors are historically relevant to the area. The idea was spurred while Van Winden was considering the nature of hotels in town centers. He concluded that these should be more like a 'home from home' rather than a structure that resembles a concrete box (Glancey). In his design, all 160 bedrooms reside within a little house, rather than anonymous, geographically-irrelevant spaces, as depicted by the majority of hotels.

Surreal architecture is often synonymous with unique or distinguishable designs. The architects who choose to apply





*Museum Garage, photographed by Imagen Subliminal in Miami, FL. The lead architect was Terence Riley- but he selected WORKac, J. Mayer H., Clavel Arquitectos, and Nicolas Buffe to also work on facades.*

these concepts inevitably showcase the possibilities enabled by modern design and construction methods. With these methods, firms can create buildings that defy logic, appear dreamlike, and maintain a high level of identifiability on a global scale.

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# THE SECOND KISS

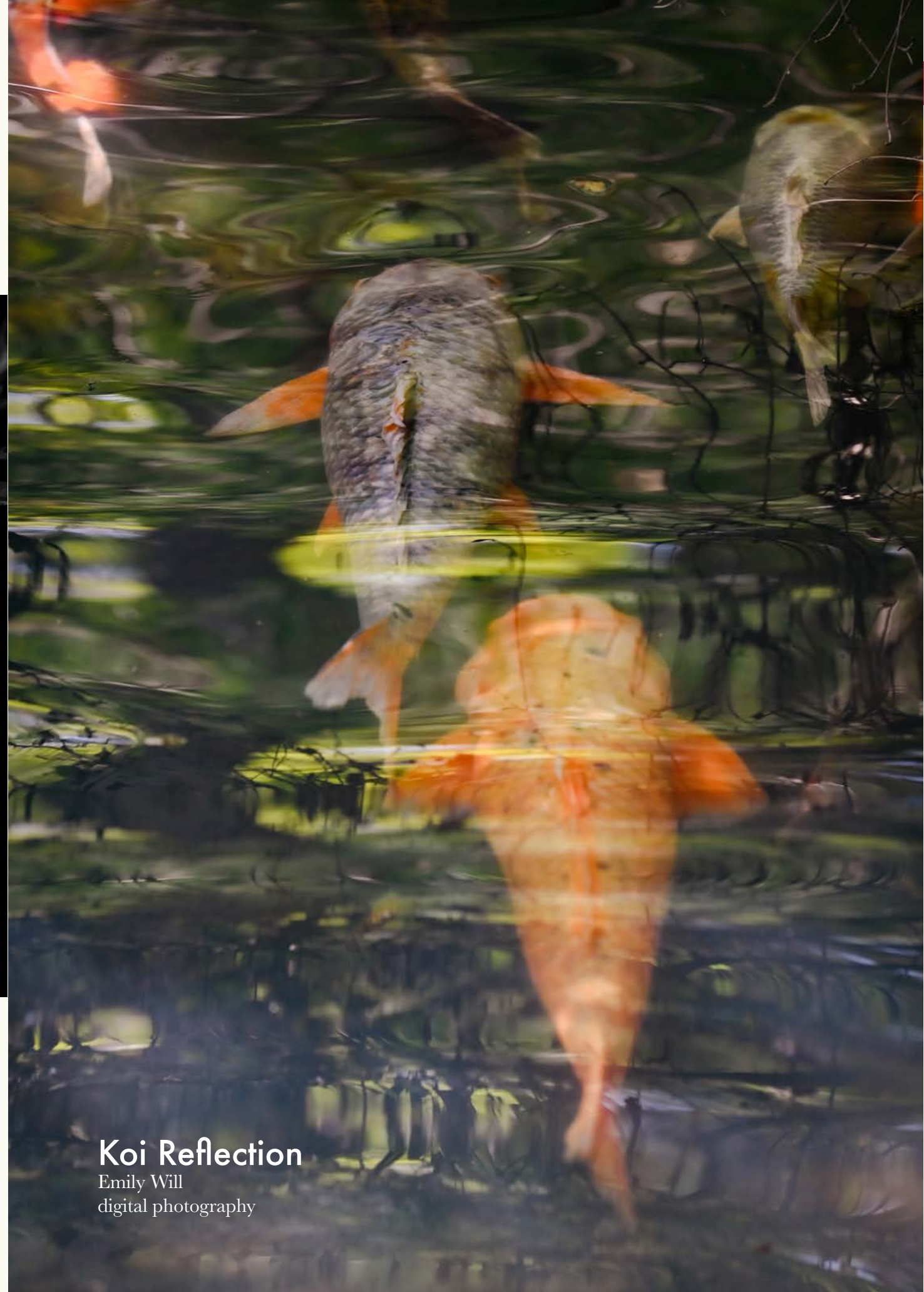
Pine  
 Old Spice  
 Whispering spearmint  
 Churning engine  
 Low stereo  
 Coin (the band)  
 Sweet rain  
 Symphony breeze  
 Lazy sun  
 Creamsicle clouds  
 One thought  
 Wishful lashes  
 Longing gaze  
 Candy lips  
 Uncoiled hands  
 Golden curls  
 Feverous heat  
 Velvet face  
 Canvas warmth  
 Thrumming heartbeat  
 Crystalline eyes  
 Hesitant door  
 Brimming smile  
 Promising wave  
 Remembrance drive  
 Reluctant home  
 Dizzy thoughts  
 Dream  
 Again

— Gabriella Puccio-Johnson



## Rainbow River

Emily Will  
digital photography



## Koi Reflection

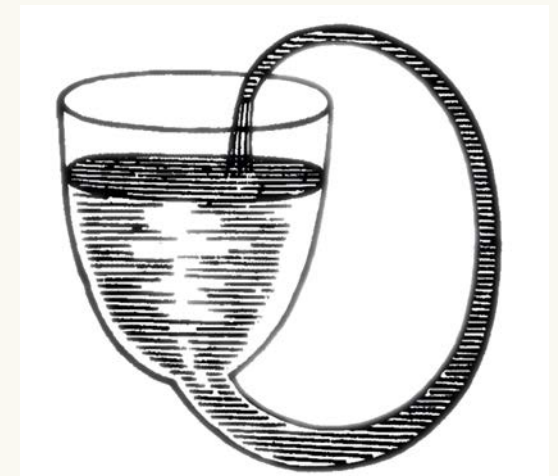
Emily Will  
digital photography

# THE POTENTIAL FOR PERPETUAL MOTION

## Quade Mainzer

Here's a gadget you can make with common materials in a garage. Get a container with a small hole in the bottom, or just make the hole yourself. Attach one end of a flexible tube to this hole, and wrap the rest so the other end of the tube sits over the top of the container. Now add water that would fill more than half of the container's volume. The kinetic energy from pouring the water, as well as some siphon fluid dynamics, will propel the water through the tube, depositing it back into the container. The energy from this flow of water continues the cycle, as water moves to the bottom of the container, through the tube, and back into the basin. Congratulations—you've made an at-home version of Boyle's Flask, a perpetual motion machine proposed by physicist and chemist Robert Boyle in the 17th century (Pomeroy). But you've also violated some of the universal laws of physics in the process.

loop of converting potential energy to kinetic energy and back again must give off heat. This heat must exit the cycle of energy conversion and eventually deplete the cycle of potential and kinetic energy (Rao). Once this happens, the machine must stop, contradicting the namesake of the machines in question.



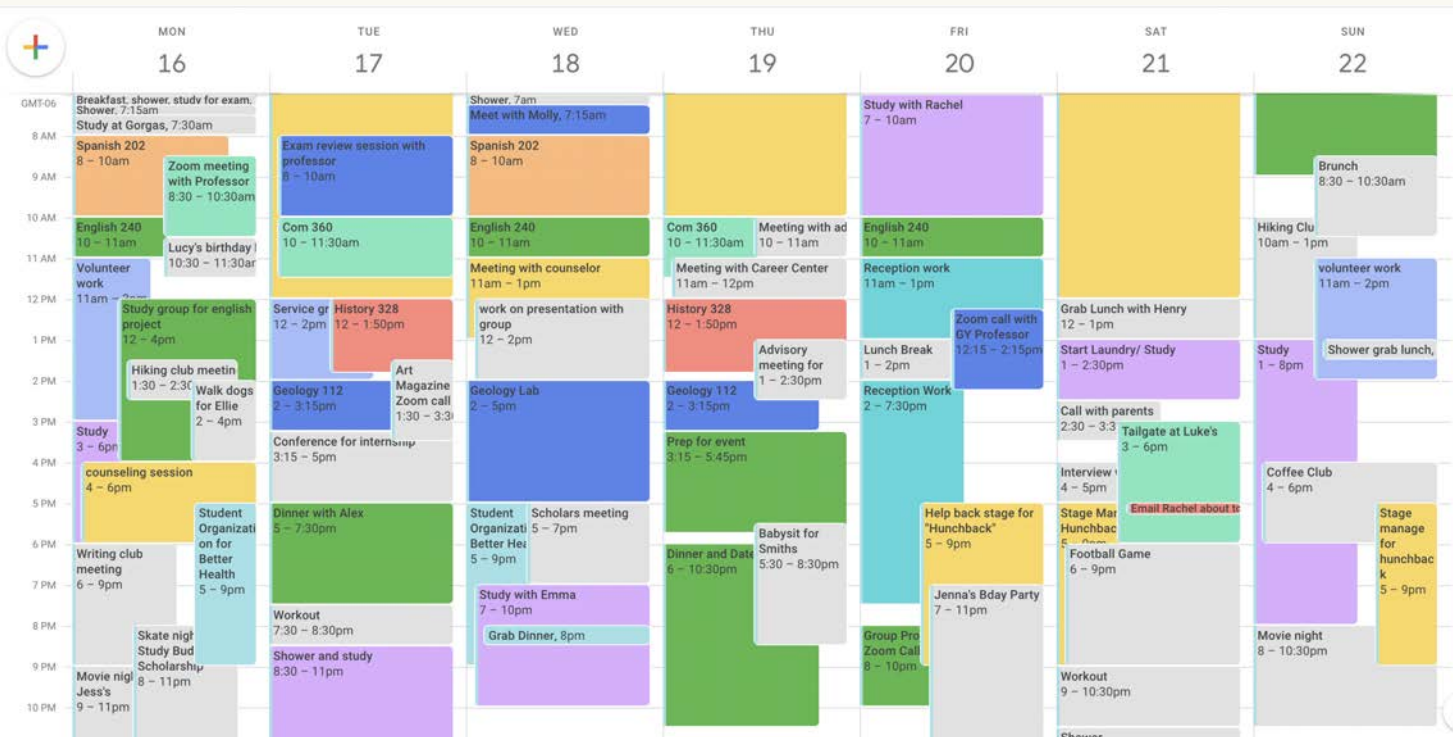
Boyle's Flask

Unfortunately for the human race, but fortunately for the fabric of space-time, inventions like Boyle's Flask are impossible to create. The most obvious infraction has to do with the first law of thermodynamics: thou cannot create or destroy energy, only alter its form. A perpetual motion machine purports to produce more energy than it is given, which isn't allowed (Britannica).

The only fathomable way to completely eradicate heat loss is by reducing electrical resistance in an electrical system to zero. Superconductors have this capacity, with no detectable electrical resistance at temperatures upwards of 20K. Where these methods fail, however, is in the acknowledgment that it takes ample energy just to maintain a superconductor at this temperature (Britannica).

The second law of thermodynamics also prevents the mechanisms of perpetual motion. This law dictates that entropy, a measure of heat and energy transfer, increases in a system over time. As applied to a perpetual motion machine, the infinite

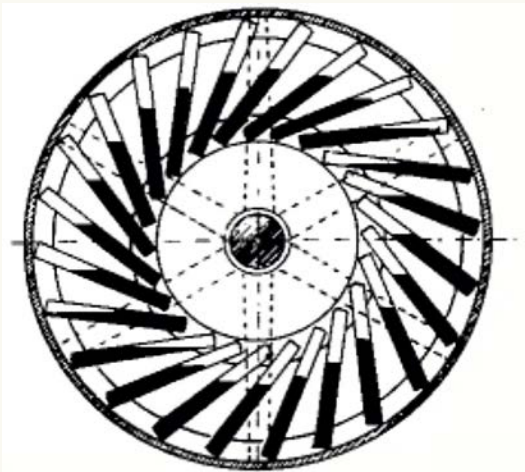
So heat loss is an inevitable buzzkill in the hunt for viable perpetual motion. But this hasn't stopped eccentrics across centuries from whipping up diagrams of various potential perpetual motion



## Perpetual Motion Machine

Sumlin Pate  
digital art

machines. One of the earliest documented attempts comes from 12th-century mathematician Bhaskara II. His idea revolved (literally) around a wheel with vials of mercury as the spokes. Once the wheel was put into motion, the slow sloshing of dense liquid mercury from one end of each vial to the other would be enough to continue turning the wheel along its near-frictionless axle.



*Bhaskara II Overbalanced Wheel*

This “overbalanced wheel” design inspired many similar machines, such as one with pendulums, but the root problem of practicality remained. Because two or more connected moving parts cannot completely mitigate heat loss due to friction, the wheel slows with each revolution and eventually comes to a complete stop (Pomeroy). Apply the most basic detective work and deductive reasoning steps to realize why this is the case: if the wheel requires an initial push to get it going, then it must have an equilibrium state without movement.

Other famous pseudo-perpetual motion machines exist in theory besides Bhaskara’s Wheel and Boyle’s Flask. The “Float Belt” is a chain of buoys that float in water and aims to use buoyancy forces

for infinite movement. The buoys enter a water basin from the bottom through a water-tight seal. Once submerged, the upward force on the buoy as it floats to the surface should pull the chain along, bringing the next buoy on the belt into the water and perpetuating movement.

However, it requires ample energy to squeeze a buoy that wants to float into a water basin. This energy requirement is magnified since water pressure acting against the buoyant force is the strongest at the bottom of the basin, where the buoys are supposed to enter in this model. It turns out this required energy is more than what is generated once a ball is submerged (Pomeroy).

The centuries-long search for a credible perpetual motion machine remains active in part due to the impact a working machine would have on the renewable energy sector. Solar panels and wind turbines are some of the many examples of renewable and efficient ways to generate power. However, they rely on external energy from the sun, and even the most advanced panels haven’t surpassed 48% efficiency in near-perfect lab conditions (Blok).

Wind turbines haven’t fared much better, as the Betz limit, or the theoretical maximum kinetic energy production by a turbine, stands at around 59%. Even though wind turbines have been shown to reach 58% efficiency, these turbines are about as efficient as they can physically be (Wind Energy Factsheet). On the other hand, a perpetual motion machine is 100% efficient—and then some. Machines that continue moving forever without the need for an external energy source would allow free harvesting of energy, eliminate non-renewable energy, and probably achieve world peace.

The most recent breakthrough in perpetual motion technology came in 2012 with the discovery of time crystals. Time crystals are a new kind of matter that remain in motion even when in a ground state, or a state with no energy. Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley equate this movement to the jiggle of Jell-O on a plate when the table it sits on is bumped...but without the bump (Weiner). Or the artificial key-lime flavor. So never-ending oscillating movement can exist without energy.

**“Machines that continue moving forever would probably achieve world peace.”**

But physics as a science exists primarily by the observations of objects in states of equilibrium. Practical parallels must be drawn to understand more about these objects. Since 2012, researchers have only been able to induce the paradoxical movement of time crystals “under the influence of a periodic external parametric force” (Fadelli) in a highly controlled lab. Further studies revealed another restriction: only in an open system is this motion possible. However, scientists at the University of Southampton in England have simulated that a “classical metamaterial nanostructure can be driven to a state that exhibits the same key characteristics of a continuous time crystal” (Fadelli).

In easier terms, these are materials on the nanometer scale that are supported by extremely small, flexible wires. When illuminated, this material causes a spontaneous and continuous phase transition, essentially trapping motion (Liu et al.). The external force used to kick-start

time crystals is also growing significantly smaller, and the type of stimulant is shifting to more efficient methods. While the initial force has not yet been reduced to zero, the door is open for major scientific developments (Fadelli).

Classic perpetual motion machines, like a wheel that spins forever or a self-filling water basin, are currently science fiction. While deeply fascinating, what is known about perpetual motion keeps these machines from becoming the ultimate renewable energy source—for now.

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# UNTITLED PLAYLISTS AND THE WAY I TREAT OTHERS

I wish I wrote the quote in my Instagram bio instead of a stranger on TikTok.  
Or else I'm certain my brain would've come up with it.  
At least it could've.

How could I not be my own creator?  
How could I not be responsible for my own definition?

You are defined by how  
you treat others.  
I am defined by others.

My reality is contained within  
Untitled Playlists  
and the way I treat others.

Surely I have some sort of grasp—  
Some sort of agency  
over my own reality.

How am I not my creator?  
How am I not of my own definition?

I am borrowing.  
I am stealing.  
I am stealing the words of strangers

because I'm certain  
my brain would've come up with them;  
I'm certain it could've.

Because how could a stranger—  
how would countless strangers  
know myself more intimately than myself?

How could they—  
how would they define  
my entire being?

Of which I have  
spent countless nights and  
restless years longing—

grasping to attach definition to  
and begging to be the  
creator of.

— Riley Goff



## Grasping

Riley Goff  
collage

# A LIFE POEM

*(dedicated to the people  
who made it possible—  
including you)*

my favorite collection is  
my collection of favorites

people, letters, photographs—  
snapshots of who i've been and who i might become

i've been told before:  
remember why you started—

loving (the way her hair  
falls slightly in her face as she jots notes  
in a worn copy of *A Tale of Two Cities*)

working (thankless minimum wage hours  
through the middle of Valentine's night,  
earning just enough to keep doing it)

learning (German, to commune  
with famous philosophers  
and unknown ancestors)

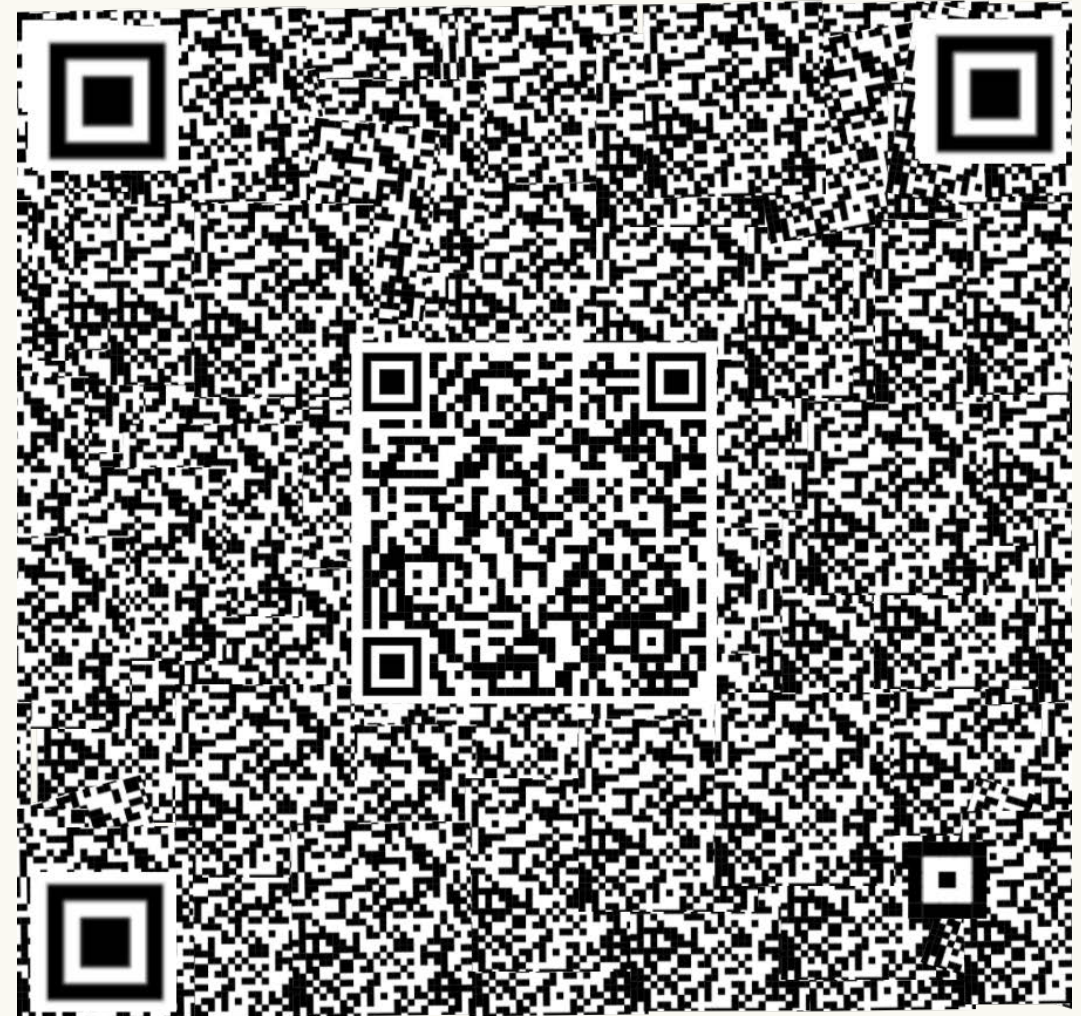
why so much focus on why  
i started down this road?

i do not believe that i  
am the only one who sees that

remembering  
why i started  
cannot matter half as much as

realizing  
why i choose to stay.

— Cas Lisko



## Perfect Cataclysm

Jack Lewis  
solo piano  
scan QR code to listen

## THE INFLATION OF KNOWLEDGE

as of late, expansion vast & swift  
of currency precious to obtain  
exchanging tender care w/ careless thrift  
in ignorant want we yet remain.

within our mere pockets, carrying all  
more than ere before, & yet worth naught  
backed not by gold, silver, precious metal  
a value only by human bought.

— Elizabeth King



**Walter**  
Aaron Silvis  
ceramic pot

# UNUSUAL APPEARANCES: Scenes from the Staff

"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because you're on camera."



## QUADE MAINZER

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

running time 268 MONTHS

as seen in MURDER MYSTERY DINNER PARTIES, UNICYCLISTS WEEKLY, THE WORLD SERIES OF POKER, AKRON ZOO GIRAFFE ENCLOSURE

starring THE NINJA, THE YOGI, THE TWIN SPIES

"You have nothing to fear, it is the courage to continue that counts"



## SUMLIN PATE

CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

running time 254 MONTHS

as seen in DANCES WITH THREE YEAR OLDS, BACK TO THE LIBRARY, THE GREAT OUTDOORS

starring THE CRITIQUE, THE ENTERTAINER, THE AUDIENCE, THE PLOT TWIST

"It's fine. I'm fine. Everything is going to be fine in the end- if it's not fine, it's not the end!"



## MEGHAN KELLEM

SUBMISSIONS COORDINATOR

running time 228 MONTHS

as seen in RED ROCK PRESS, CHURCH OF THE OAKS

starring THE ACADEMIC, THE EXTROVERT, THE OPTIMIST

"I once had everything on a bagel... everything."



## ZOË BOUDREAUX

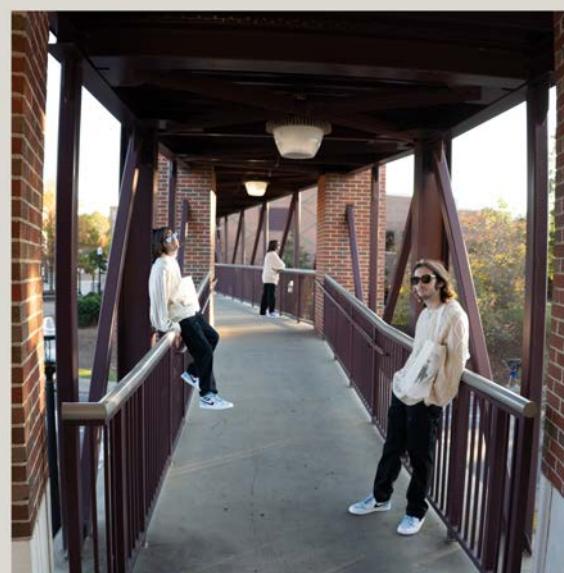
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

running time 227 MONTHS

as seen in MARY HARMON BRYANT MUSEUM COLLECTIONS, PAINT CLUB, SIDE WALKS...

starring THE COLLECTOR, THE OBSERVER, THE IDEALIST

"Don't you know the first law of physics? You gotta trust your gut!"



## ALEX STERN

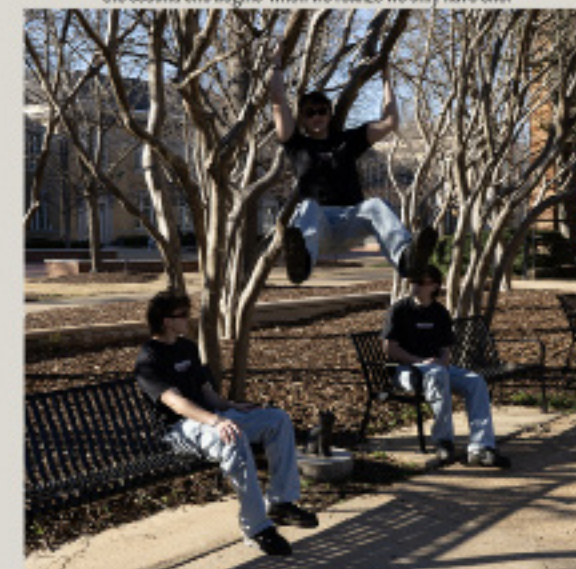
GRAPHIC DESIGNER & PHOTOGRAPHER

running time 234 MONTHS

as seen in EMERGING SCHOLARS, JLCS, THE QUAD PLAYING VOLLEYBALL, LATE NIGHT COOK OUT RUNS

starring THE DREAMER, THE TOP OF ARASAKA TOWER, THE DEREK ZOOLANDER

"We have two lives; the second one begins when we realize we only have one."



## GABE MATHEWS

PHOTOGRAPHER

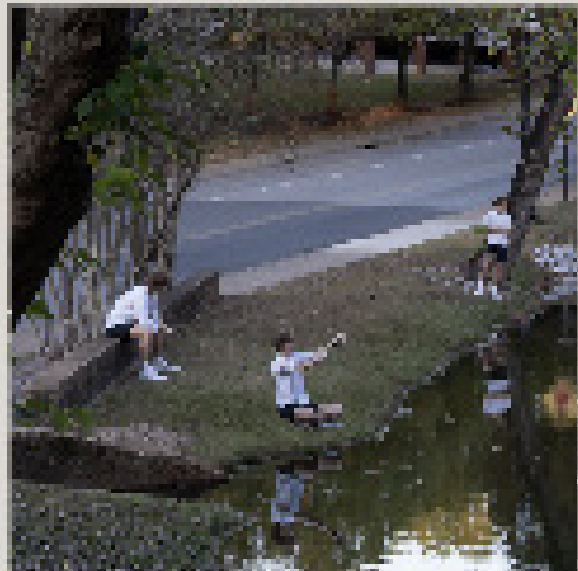
running time 263 MONTHS

as seen in ANY BOARD SPORT, DOING PHOTOGRAPHY, CARS, LIVING BY THE WATER

starring THE PAW PATROL, COURAGE THE COWARDLY DOG, THE DANNY PHANTOM



"The best thing about a picture is that it never changes, even when the people in it do."



# COLIN ASHBY

LEAD MANAGER  
running time 269 MONTHS  
as seen in THE CHICK-FIL-A LINE  
starring THE OVERTHINKER, THE INTROVERTED EXTROVERT, THE SCHOLAR

"Rub your eyes, be surprised, keep hungry. Stay alive, live with passion, live musical.ly."



# RILEY GOFF

GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
running time 232 MONTHS  
as seen in THE CROWD OF ANY CONCERT, GOING FOR A DRIVE, PROBABLY WOODS QUAD  
starring THE LIVE, THE LAUGH, THE LOVER

"Frankly, my dear, I'm lovin' it."



# ABBY MCCREARY

COPY EDITOR  
running time 269 MONTHS  
as seen in PYROS, THE CRIMSON WHITE, THE RIVERWALK  
starring PUT ME IN COACH, JUST HAPPY TO BE HERE, SIT STILL & LOOK PRETTY

"The best thing about a picture is that it never changes, even when the people in it do."



# EMILY WILL

PHOTOGRAPHER  
running time 269 MONTHS  
as seen in LOADING FILM: EVERYTHING AND EVERYWHERE  
starring THE TRAVELER, THE VISIONARY, THE MERMAID

"If you can dream it, you can, you should, and if you're brave enough to start, you will."



# MALLORY SUBLETTE

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR / GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
running time 234 MONTHS  
as seen in MISS AMERICA, PI BETA PHI, BEAT ALBURN BEAT HUNGER, SPECIAL OLYMPICS BUDDIES, STUDENT DIETETIC ASSOCIATION  
starring THE DIRECTRESS, THE INDIVIDUALIST, THE FANTAST

"Don't worry when you are not recognized, you have feet in your shoes."



# JACK SEUBERT

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR  
running time 263 MONTHS  
as seen in THE CHICK-FIL-A LINE  
starring THE OVERTHINKER, THE INTROVERTED EXTROVERT, THE SCHOLAR

"I'd rather be lucky than good, now watch this drive."



# WILLIAM ZAMUDIO

STAFF WRITER

running time 229 MONTHS

as seen in NORTH RIVER CHURCH, CAMPUS BAPTIST MINISTRIES

starring THE NINJA, THE ASSASSIN, THE SPY

"Real knowledge is to know life is like a box of chocolates."



# TATUM WALKER

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

running time 230 MONTHS

as seen in READER'S ANONYMOUS, ADIRONDACK CHAIRS, MIDDLE OF NOWHERE LOUISIANA

starring THE WATCHER, THE WANDERER, THE THINKER



# WALTER

MASCOT

running time UNTIL TIME IMMENSORUM

as seen in DREAMS, THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE ALL OVER THE GLOBE, EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE

starring THE ONE, THE ONLY, THE WALTER

"One does not simply outpizza the hut"



# SEABORN CHAPPELL

STAFF WRITER

running time 272 MONTHS

as seen in HERITAGE HOUSE, TAKING A NAP ON THE QUAD, CHICK-FIL-A, THE ROCK WALL

starring THE STANDER, THE SITTER, THE LEANER

"Pretty as a peach that didn't fall far from the tree."



# AMY PIRKLE

FACULTY ADVISOR

running time 523 MONTHS

as seen in PERKOLATOR PRESS FLIPBOOKS

starring THE FRIEND, THE PROFESSOR, THE DREAMER

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