

JUNE 2021 | ISSUE 1

perfumed pages

MADE WITH LOVE

TO: the me who has
never been in
love

my inner
beauty guru

TO:

TO: the me who
sends sticky
texts at
1am

TO: the me who is
too sensitive
for her own
good.

TO: the me who
hates public
speaking

TO: the me who's
obsessed with
the cast of
Euphoria

perfumed pages magazine

june 2021

contributors

issue 02

perfumed pages magazine

Amelia Rhett	Dafel Zaur
Sofiia Yevlaninkova	Aimee Nicole
Ola Zukowska	Katie Bowdery
Chris Mardiroussian	Sarah E. Hoffman
Anacia Sessoms	Arden Boshier
Fraser Bentlee	DeShane Short
Arikah Lynne	Arun Jeetoo
Ella Breunig	Megan KJ
Sophie Raoufi	Allison DeDecker
Gianna Santucci	Anushri Prasad
SAMO Creative	Ilsa Afzad
Dr. Manjusha Hari	Leeann
Yanitta Iew	Kat Hendrickson
Harri Wood	Reina Davis
Jimena Ramos	jeganmones
Romero Pasin	Sharone Malka
Cynthia Vaders	Irina Novikova
Udita Mukherjee	Spandan Bandyopadhyay
Caramel Mikeyato	Annapurani Vaidyanthan
Rebecca Kenny	Shivani Verma
Jane Forrester	Jess Fry
Leonie Bellini	Halin Roche
Sunanda Sharma	Emily Murman
Dark Reconstruction Art	Esther Rabe
Alexander Rhodes	Chantal Rios
Porcelain Grrl	Simran Kaur
Lemon Lord	Lauren Rapp
	Carlos Luis Sánchez

FROM THE EDITOR



When I first announced that *perfumed pages* was open for submissions, I was expecting a couple of responses to the call for creative work. But, to my surprise, days passed by, and I was honoured with the voices, perspectives, and projects of creatives from across the world. I fell in love with the way they all portrayed love. Issue one is very broad in scope—the theme covers all types of love, and contributors have approached it in special ways. In this light, I hope that the high volume of works in this issue helps every reader realise that love is not as limited to one thing.

I am so excited that we've finally arrived to this point, where you are able to read this letter while viewing a neatly packaged issue right in front of your eyes. I hope every work makes you feel something. It has been a true pleasure interacting with a community of people who trusted me with the greatest gift—their art. Each piece has been given its own special place on the following pages, with images and motifs that I feel best echo the work. No element is unintentional.

Most of all, I am thrilled by the high quality of work issue one boasts because it defeats the cliché notion that love halts the creative process. If anything, *perfumed pages* magazine's existence is proof that love does not stand in the way of creation. Rather, it is one the greatest gateways to the same.

With that, I leave you to soak in the spectacles that follow. Keep an eye on our Instagram for more about the writers, artists, and creative souls that make this issue what it is. And to our wonderful contributors, thank you, thank you, thank you.

TANEESHAA
EDITOR IN CHIEF



NEW YEAR'S DAY

BY AMELIA RHETT

I.

I ask the bitterness for forgiveness.

I should have let the curling vines that reached for me tangle her away.

Before my winter in Wisconsin, California was plagued with acid tears,
burning, morphing the brightest past into the dimmest future.

I was a hothouse flower in the coldest midwinter,
and I let the warmth of her poison ivy pity me.

II.

Newspaper flowers of blue forget-me-nots accompany me to Milwaukee.
Through the city to the misty trees, the streetcar could feel our eagerness.

Once within the coppice wallpaper, he set down my trunk and grabs shower beers,
as we wash to The Rolling Stones' "Streets of Love."

Pushing a shopping cart full of blueberry bagels, Irish butter, shrimp, and red wine,
this is not only relaxation but reawakening fairness.

Later that mellow evening, inside the frosted windows,
copper pans sear steak and green beans sizzle away on the Valentine stove.

The record needle swirls like our bodies near the garland twisted furnace;
the night and our wine bottle slip away far too quickly...

Snowflakes illuminate the apartment, so he turns off the lights to dance in a darkened room, floodlit by the overdue snowfall.

We grab plaid boots and corduroy jackets and run down the stairs into the blank canvas. The snow opens my eyes, as he takes photographs of me spinning around the start of a blizzard. He blinks the snowflakes off his lashes, and they tumble down to nestle in his beard, outlining a crooked smile.

I started the new year by kissing you. Don't you forget that.

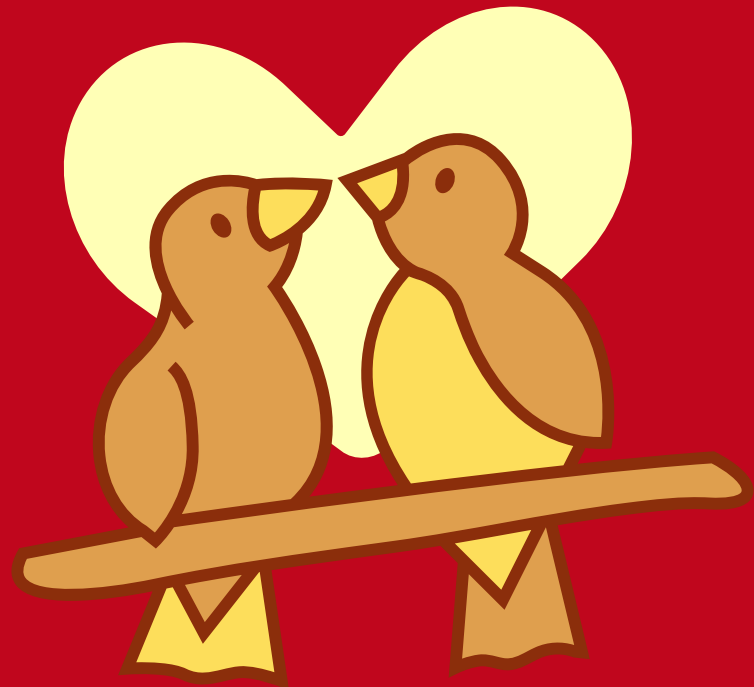
III.

The yellow typewriter keys of his name are faded, rubbed raw from pressing too hard, many times over.

I sit here with my teacup balanced on a stack of adventure books, and write about him, as he rests beneath the wreath-colored comforter.

I tip-toe toward him, the creak of the wooden floor beneath my socks. He was the fight of my life.

Like they croon in old folk songs, soulmates always find their way back.



how the world came to be once more



BY OLA ZUKOWSKA

bang. the first of the fireworks are up in the air, splashing in colourful bursts throughout the windy january sky. we stand on the bridge, catching our breaths, your arm around my shoulder and the other one awkwardly trying to fish out a lighter for one of your friends. the yelling makes my head spin, but so does the shadow of a song playing in my mind.

bang. the second round. we're standing, looking down from the railing now and underneath us cars pass by. someone throws an empty bottle at them and in my clouded state of mind i gasp because there are no words in my head, only the warmth of your jacket and the cold winter on my cheeks. i look back up instead, rest my head on your arm as my vision gets blurry once more.

bang. my feet are bruised from the running and my coat hangs off me untied and unbuttoned but you're there holding me and we're watching the sky and someone is yelling, so i smile and laugh and once i start i realise i can't stop laughing and this is the happiest i've been in years. so when you call out my name i expect a conversation to strike up and not you to hold my cheek so gently making my blood boil and my soul crumble.

bang. bang. bang. i pay them no mind. i only imagine us trapped in this moment in time that goes on forever.



SHAVING CREAM

By Chris Mardiroussian

Foam lotion,
smothered
crusted,
razor blade
slices, impales,
glides across
chubby cheeks,
grey hair
by gray layer,
in the mirror,
Little Tramp
A glance,
to CIA castrate an

untold mystery machine,
clutching the encrypted
hard drive,
bare-naked like
October's Very Own
pun,
gag-reflex the puss
in order to cusp the stress,
and
abstain me
like a pure bred
mess.

Cyclical

By Chris Mardiroussian

The phone rings
And rings
And rings
Asks
Where
I've been.

"Well, I'm long gone," I said.

"What do you mean?"

"You'll see."

They'll come home to
A vacuumed carpet,
rinsed-washed dishes,
six-pack of scattered
aluminum cans,
folded bedsheets,
only to...
...relapse back
to you,
and
talk it over
in bed,
with a
sloppy,
saucy,
schmuck.



King & Queen by Silvana Smith

Lack thereof

By Chris Mardiroussian

The human mind,
deformed,
sound,
hounds,
like the world,
is a cyclical cycle
of sight or spite
of fight or flight
past, present, and future
encrypted to replicate existence
in its many,
egregious ecstasies.

Believe me

By Chris Mardiroussian

I'm the kind of angelic monstrosity
you can take home to
your family,
get tighter
to them
like glue,
and we will
slowly,
but diligently
phase you out.

That, you have
my word...



Fruits of Fertility by Anacia Sessoms

NOTHING, BUT A HOUND DOG

I was on both knees,
 pressed against the wooden
 ledge of the bed,
 ass out,
 shirt on,
 shorts off,
 undies on the floor,
 as I was working on
 getting a hard-on,
 I couldn't help but
 overhear the geezers
 bickering about whether
 or not we should get
 a dog.

"We don't have the space!"
 the geezer belched.

"We can leave it in the living room."

"None of us are home for ten-hours!"

They went on.
 And on.
 And on.

The old geezer was very adamant
 we need not get a dog.
 Argument, justifiable.

As with most things uncanny,
 I ignored it.
 Paid no attention.
 Therefore, falling asleep.

A week later, I strolled up
 to the driveway, used the
 key to open the garage,
 and suddenly, a Pitbull
 came bolting out
 like an Olympic sprinter.

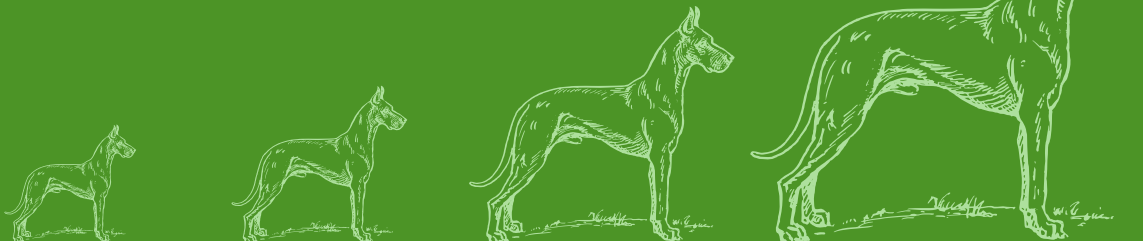
"So, we have a dog..." I said.

"There's a lesson to be learned,"
 the geezer said, scratching
 his flaky scalp.

"Yeah, what's that?"

"Once you
 get a *taste*,
 a *feel*,
 you're a
goner..."

By Chris Mardiroussian





the exact middle of an orange is white and inedible

my sister asked me today how i am so okay with what you're doing.
because i told her i am okay, and i really believe that.
it got me thinking how you can kiss me on the forehead/tell me you love arguing
with me/gently lay your head on mine
then
get up/get dressed/fix your hair/leave/not look back.
my sister decided she'll trust you, which is
a promise/a threat for sure; she said she's proud of me for branching out.
you're similar to a first lukewarm day of spring or
a nighttime conversation with a hedgehog on the side of the road or
a fresh orange sitting on the counter saying please. dig your fingers into my flesh.
i need to feel you.
my sister says she doesn't understand why i would decide to hold on to someone
who doesn't have time for me; but
we only know each other in the middle of the night, when the last bit of warmth
comes from your lighter and my thighs.

by Ola Zukowska



By Fraser Bentlee

Andy's Bath
[silkscreen]
By Arikah Lynne





By Ella Breunig

"This piece was created during the summer of 2020, when the pandemic had forced my boyfriend and I to quarantine in separate states. Our daily exchanges were hopeful and loving, constantly reminding each other of what was to come when we were finally reunited, and though only virtual, those FaceTimes, texts and made the space between us feel smaller, and that frightening time survivable. This piece is a visual representation of one of those conversations, a plethora of thought-threads flowing between us through the cloud, every so often getting tangled up before they reached their recipient."

Return to Sender

SOPHIE RAOUFI

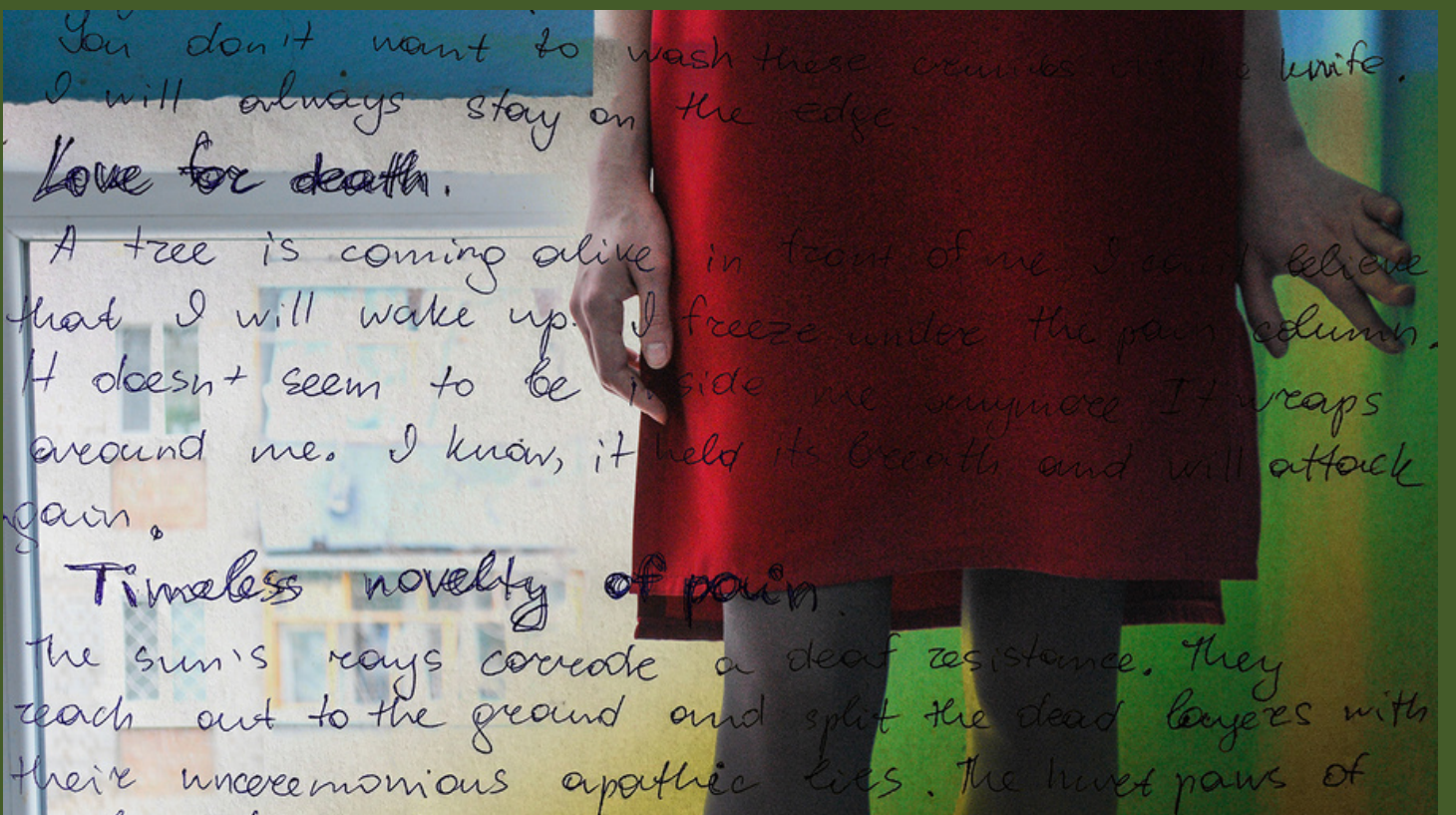
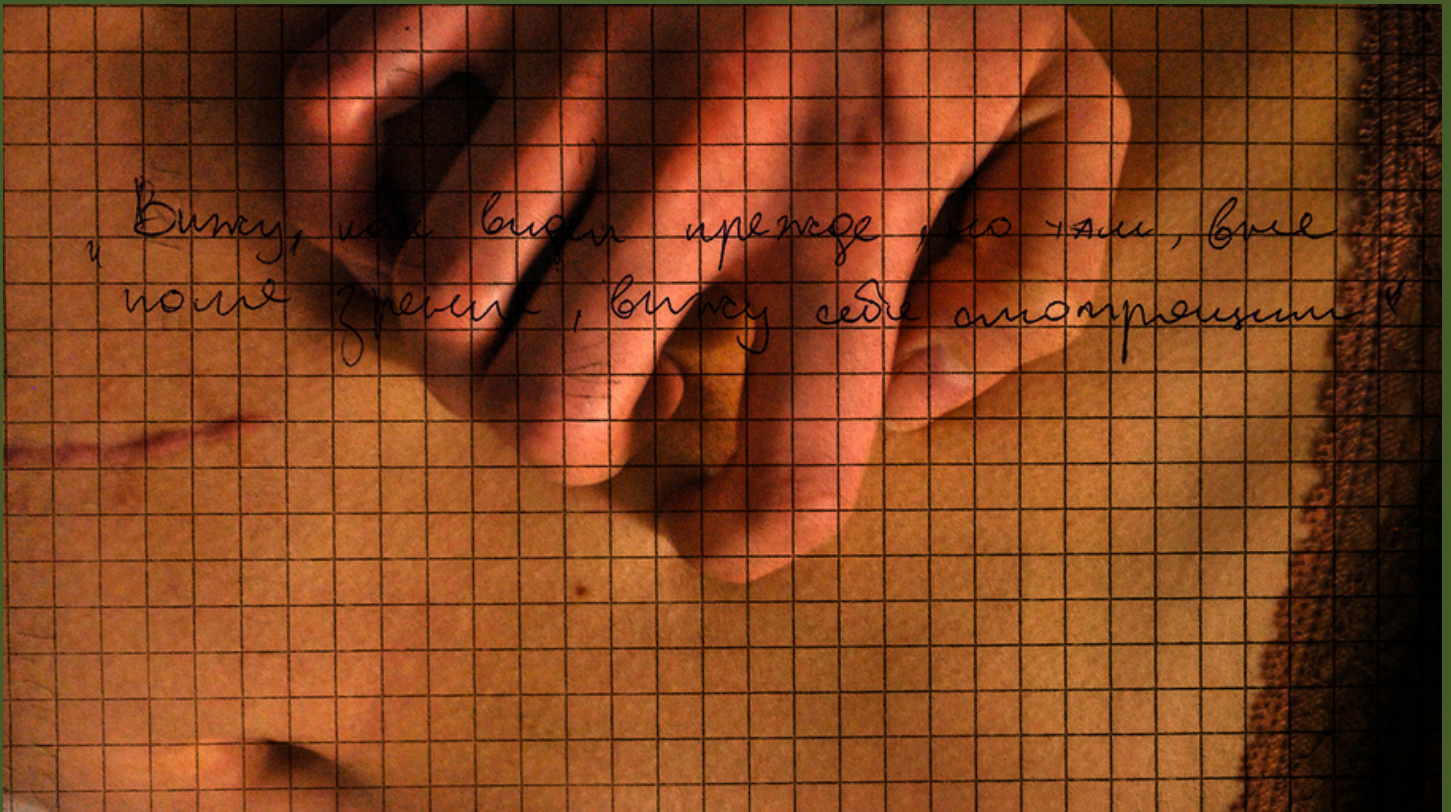
Hello, darling. I got your message.
You know I can't pick up.
Now, now. You'll only make me cry.
Taking your love has always cost me too much.

I just want to hold you, and not have it hurt.
It's such a charming agony, don't you find?
We all suffer for our art, baby.
You're my little masterpiece.

So now you want this butter blonde?
Honey, I don't live here anymore.
Come and find me at love's end,
break my lonely peace one more time.

I wish I'd met you before I was ruined.
You're my cause and my cure, darling.
Now there's only one thing for it:
Shall we begin again?





Spry Rye

Spry rye prances across the fluorescent horizon
while its twin scurries away from it,
where the scent of bourbon clogs the cataracts but the twin
stumbles across late-night fucks.

Spry rye exposes the world for what it is—twisted, tangled, tainted
yet, its twin's retina reeks of severed, somber scars, tongue-tied in a mausoleum with shackles on the windows and doors which stain of midnight hour smacks.

Spry rye stumbles on kneecaps to see words crafted by castrated, chapped palms bound by solipsistic sermons poised to inflict nascent nomenclature with embryonic use of containment.

Spry rye twitches with a creek of hindsight frolicking around at midnight, where its twin revives the royals wrapping bedazzled, blubbery forearms giving each other butterfly kisses and exchanging solemn vows
I love you.

After reciting bedtime stories, spry rye nimbly retires while its twin hears echoes of erratic derivatives wincing tenacious tears from fists and lighters
Please stop.

Spry rye prays for dehydrated purple patches, while its twin wants all those paraplegic aptitudes to be vacuumed from that unsung, litterbug, tongue.

By Chris Mardiroussian.

My poems represent stretch marks, scars, and calluses; a spiraling staircase into a cantankerous abyss; a capricious relationship confronting the obscurities of identity, sexuality, and/or absurd realities of American heteronormativity in the twenty-first century. These poems combine the comedic timing of Hunter S. Thompson, the sharp dialogue of David Mamet, and the brutal realism of John Fante.



Gianna Santucci

My work is concerned with the representation of gay experiences through homoerotic reinterpretations of Bible stories using the evocative visual language and symbolism of the Renaissance. The purpose of this is to associate the positive elements of Christian ideological tenants with commonalities among LGBT people. The Bible stories chosen for each work correlate thematically the experience depicted, and in doing so, the negativity normally associated with such occasions is inverted. In particular, I work to give gay women a narrative voice that has historically been denied them in religious, academic paintings. I seek to create a history from the ground up where women can love each other and have complex and autonomous lives independent of men.







By **SAMO Creative**: "We are a Brazilian art collective that has just started some photo shoots. Our mission is to represent all kinds of bodies, especially of Black and LGBTQ+ people."

the fetters of lameness

The heathers
in the bayou
bloomed without a reason!
It wasn't a spring season
but she bloomed.
The bay colour tried to
reflect a piece of sky
in the puddles of mud.
But it was as obdurate as you!
The heather flower petals
now, shattering over our lives..
Here, full of answers
but no questions
The silence is gyrating between us,
like a lame gypsy!
The orchards of my desirous soul
astonished about your presence!
The ravens in the deep sky
hovering over my imaginations!
My muses are the solace
of hell, now!



By Dr. Manjusha Hari





I KNOW YOU FROM THE *INTERNET*



when i say i know you from the internet
what i mean by this is i know you so well

by spending hundreds of hours, rubbing
a screen, reading into every word your

chubby thumbs have typed into every
instagram caption while being wary of

my own chubby thumbs and their
inadvertent double tap, or my palms

that threaten to react to your daily
stories that display your eyebrows

every little black strand painted
with emotion; the tiny red dots

on your cheeks, battle scars, nobody
will notice except for those who squint

and those who know how adolescence is
a battle between your heart and your head

and your gut and how it has gutted your
feelings out into a poem; raw and rich

but it's just a poem, written for an audience
for the public for other adolescents to devour

it's not dedicated to you or to your
beautiful soul; the internet is a vast ocean

and you are one of its fish, and i am too
just to remind you and i that the things

we share are not for ourselves but
for the general public and those

delicate messages you craft will never
reach the address, if it's not written

By Yanitta Iew

"During the pandemic, people have been spending a lot of time on the internet and social media, and they share so many aspects of their lives there. However, I started to wonder who their posts or Instagram stories were addressed/directed to. And I've spent so much time stalking other people on the internet that I feel like I know them personally. There's a distance between the "poster" and their followers, and I explore that relationship in this poem."



TEMPORARY

I think it's absolutely heart-breaking to look at something knowing it will end. Sure, I could have left before it hurt me, but I was too afraid of drowning in a sea of regret if I didn't give it the chance to let it break me. If anything, I was being selfish. I wanted all the good bits even though I knew it would bring me so much pain. I believe that something temporary is something that cannot sustain itself, but why weren't we sustainable?

I fell in love for the first time and it might be the worst thing that's ever happened to me. I started dating someone last June, and the next nine months taught me more about myself than I've learned in the twenty-two years of my life.

We met online, and he was the first guy to genuinely make me laugh. I'd previously been single for two years, after coming out of a rather toxic and manipulative five-year relationship. Because of this, I thought I knew what a red flag looked like. Spoiler: I did not.

It was exactly four months in to dating him that I knew I loved him. We were on the phone for hours and he finally told me about his traumatic past which he was uneasy about, and I could tell it was difficult for him to open up. Normally, if I'd heard a story like that from someone else, I would have run in the opposite direction. But with him, I honestly didn't care, and that's when I knew.

Unlike every single fucking movie aimed at my generation, I don't believe you should always tell someone you love them. I don't think it's smart or practical – it's usually always a self-involved thing, because you want to hear it back, right? You have no idea how it's going to affect their life or your relationship, and you could ruin it all. In my case, I knew it was unrequited. I was never under any impression that he had feelings for me at all or that it was ever a possibility. My

hopes may be unrealistic, but I myself am not a dreamer.

It wasn't until he told me he didn't want to commit to anyone or have a relationship that I realised that was actually what I wanted. He told me this after talking on the phone every night until we fell asleep, after telling me he was deleting the dating app we met on since he didn't want to speak to anyone else. I should have been upfront and told him I wasn't okay with this but after he said "I don't want a relationship with you", my pride was hurt. I immediately spat out "Yes, I'm well aware of that?" to which he replied "Good". We barely even talked it over.

Honestly, it was hard to believe he didn't fancy himself a commitment kind of guy since he had also been in a relationship for five years, two years prior to us meeting. But, he said he'd been there done that – it wasn't for him anymore. We did once talk about his ex (I asked about her – I think I might be a masochist) and he told me both good and bad about her, finishing with "I was so in love with her". That made me die inside when I realised he would never feel that way about me.

Despite knowing that he didn't want a relationship, I think a part of my brain was still hoping for more. I kept replaying all the sweet things he'd said to me, about how I was the embodiment of what he looked for in a person, how perfect I was and all the things he liked about me. He said he couldn't get enough of me. Any time that I've vaguely brought this up with him, he said it was all true and that's never lied to me. I believed him, because I believe that he's a good person, but there was always a part of me that couldn't understand why his words didn't line up with his actions.

After five months, I told him I had feelings for him – downplaying it as much as possible. I did this with the intent of ending things since I

knew it wasn't what he wanted or what he signed up for. He surprised me by saying he felt guilty, as though he led me on. I completely disagreed and told him that wasn't the case (I don't know why I did that since it was unequivocally true). He also said he still wanted to see me again. I was so shocked by this and elated at the thought of seeing him again that I went along with it. I missed yet another chance to stand up for myself and tell him what was really going on, all because the selfish love-hungry part of my brain clouded all judgement.

There was a night when we were lying next to each other in the dark, and we started talking about mental health. He said he'd never been romantically involved with a girl that hadn't suffered with depression or self-harmed. I knew it wasn't a pointed comment, but I couldn't help but feel hurt. I felt like just another sad girl in a line for his affections. *I wanted to be different.* Dating anyone whilst suffering with mental health issues is always going to be a challenge, but not knowing where I stood with this guy for nine months definitely didn't help me. I felt like I had too many layers of negative feelings that I couldn't explain. I tried to tell him that I felt like a burden despite him always encouraging me to talk to him about what I was feeling. I expected it to make me feel better, but it never did.

I could feel that he had one foot out the door, like he always had his running shoes on. Because, a sad truth about life is that some people wake up one day and decide to never speak to you again - they don't give you an explanation, they just decide that they are done and make it look as easy as anything. I never even felt good enough for him. He was far smarter, understood politics way more than I did, he had a million interesting stories that I would never get tired of. He was unbelievably funny (we were maybe on par with that one) and he was good at almost everything he tried. I just felt completely inferior and I don't think I knew how to deal with it. I've always found myself to be a bit too much for people, as though I'm a bit too sad or too irritating. I feel like I'm *too much*, and yet, I was never enough.

He ended things with me over the phone, the reason being because he no longer had time to see me. He told me that maybe we should put a 'pause' on us, to which I corrected him with 'end' since that's clearly what he meant. He said he didn't want to put me on the back-burner because it doesn't feel respectful; I guess appreciated that. He even told me "You're certainly worth my time, I just don't have any". We both were adamant that we wanted to stay friends, and he mentioned that he didn't want to lose the friendship we'd built. I tried to say goodbye and thank him for

"Newsflash: every fucking thing is temporary."

He was my best friend. I think maybe that was the worst part. I wanted to talk to him all the time because he meant so much to me and I could *feel* that I was becoming overbearing but I couldn't help it. There were so many times that he asked what was wrong, but how do you tell someone the reason you're sad is because you love them?

the time we'd had together but he interrupted with how he didn't want to do this over the phone; he wanted to say it in person. I agreed to see him one more time but with a few conditions. I didn't see the point in meeting up just to look at him and feel miserable and spoil all the lovely memories we had together, so I suggested that we have one last happy memory together and just be how we usually

were, before saying a painful goodbye. Looking back, there was definitely a small part of me that thought maybe I could convince him not to leave me if he could just face me.

“Well, you did sign up to a temporary thing.” He said. Was that supposed to make me feel better? Newsflash: every fucking thing is temporary. You don’t date someone for nine months and then effectively break up with them by reminding them that it was always temporary.

The part of this that really makes me cringe is that I honestly thought I had him, just for a moment. I thought it would be different, we became so close in such a short time and I really thought he cared about me. I was, of course, wrong. I still want someone who doesn’t want me. Someone who will be fine without me, someone who won’t notice that I’m not around. I am in love with something that can’t be. The only thing I have left are the memories, and I’m so scared that my bitter and damaged brain is going to overthink until they are tainted and warped into something that I don’t recognise. I just want my mind to leave them alone and preserve them so that I have something to look back on when the sadness is too overwhelming.

However, I am also left with all the things I’ve learned from this experience. Not everything is supposed to become beautiful and long-lasting, I know that now. I understand that occasionally people will come into your life to show you something, or make you feel something. Not everyone stays forever and we have to thank them for what they gave us. So, this is me thanking him. I am grateful to have learned that I am not asking too much of people when all I ask for is basic communication. I will make sure not to depend my happiness on someone else, but let the happiness they give me add to my own. I am so fucking thankful that I now know not give someone everything I have without making sure they want it first.

I want to get to a place where I know that I deserve better. A place where I can recognise who isn’t good for me, and to choose someone

who cares as much as I do. I would also like to think that eventually I’ll be busy enough that I won’t miss him anymore. I’ve learned to accept that self-blame can be important once I realised that I am responsible for letting myself be treated this way. You can’t pour with an empty cup, so I’ll make sure I love myself enough first before I love someone else.

Written by Harri Wood

"A personal essay on the first time I fell in love and how it changed me"



From 12 postcards to Australia by Sofiiia Yevlaninkova

ally of the benevolent

Moving certain cracks
 Discover glistening snow
 Soft Belonging Tags
 I passed without being an
 indulgent soul
 I can no longer conceive the
 smell of honey Replace desire
 with faith
 No one knew before him
 I wanted it perpetuated, just as it
 was
 Do not tear through eyepieces
 I wanted to advance to a hundred
 and one lares That they embrace
 the rhythm of a heartbeat
 Electricity lives in the cold
 Suddenly smile
 Without staining red lips
 With powdered wings I ski
 Stocked match blue

Poems by Jimena Ramos

*Image (left) 'Love's Reward' by
 Romero Pasin*



manifestation of a convolved mind

It takes an old spasm
 To keep seeing the skies,
 That lack flaw,
 They hint at a favorite kiss
 His countenance clears
 In front of my only shelf
 Drag clouds in its path
 And I'm wishing for a pacemaker
 The inherence in his nature Is not enough in his head
 His balcony collapses
 Nerve pressure from the overhead
 Wants more angel books
 And the truth of those who sing A scarlet present
 Know that you need a postscript
 Time to time was coming
 What remains and is rewritten The passion for who I paint
 A better gift overwhelmed





be enduring

Your footprints are marking a story
 That does not collapse before the wind
 You are neither logical nor sane
 Precipitated, and I lose myself

Silent door, you don't knock
 Try to uncover the old glories
 Without poisoning the present
 You are already quite absent

You tend to infinity
 Incredulous and suspicious written
 They run claps of a song
 Crippling bandolier in my heart

And if you feel that I am inspired by more
 Your relic, it's lustral delirium
 Do not think to neglect mental alienation
 You meditate rudely on the threshold

*PICTURED: Jimena Ramos and her mural.
 Poem by Jimena Ramos.*



Cynthia Vaders

happybody

As a kid, I hated colouring books. I met adults who thought I had mobility problems, due to me ignoring the black lines of those colouring books. I wanted to create my own lines, my own boundaries. I have been ignored because of my appearance, of my imperfections and my size. Being raised in a society where we judge on how we look and act have taught me a lot of life lessons. Especially, the negative judgement of people, only based on rarity. Now, I am putting myself out there with messy drawings, colouring outside those black lines on purpose. Going wild and rare. Loving all kinds pure human colours, shapes and 'weirdness'.

WE DO

Why are you trying to run
When you know you can't leap away underwater
From the surface the bottom appears dirty
But it can't be as the translucent lake cleanses

Do you know what it feels like
To fall in love
Without any regrets
Or is that just another myth

I plot love against the Y axis
Time against the X
My graph turns out to be a plateau
Absence makes the heart grow forgetful

You scream your lungs out
Inside your head
My love grows with distance
Paradoxically peaks when your arm's around me

If we couldn't be more wrong
For each other
Why do we have to feel so right
Why aren't we more afraid

You hop and jump to me despite all odds
My heart does the skipping
The plateau turns into the upward slope of a mountain
We knew we were meant to be.

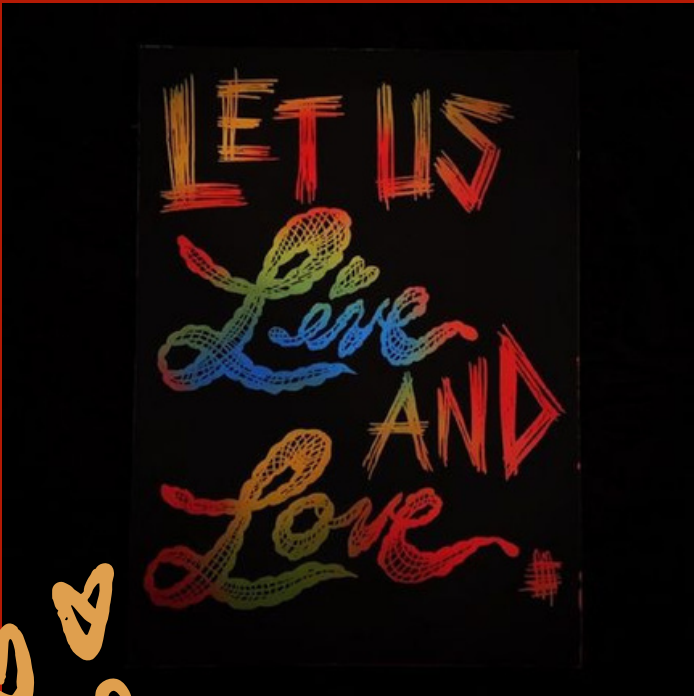
By Udita Mukherjee

Cynthia Vaders



Strong

By creating art, I strive to share love to all pure human stories that cannot be expressed by words. Showing the world that it's beautiful to expose everyone's own self-love. It is also sharing that mental health matters and exists, by showing the colours behind the people and how beautiful the shapes of a body can be. Self-Love is the most important love of all. Because how can people love someone else, without knowing how to love yourself?



By Caramel Mikeyato

Love is not

Love is not patient, nor is it kind -
Let's not pretend that it is anything
But cruel - divisive, inconcise,
It threads itself into knots inside your chest
Because love is not the simple mess
We often paint it to be. Love is not free -
It comes at far too great a cost, most times
And often leaves you lost inside
Love will pin you by the shoulders
Into uncomfortable quarters with no way out;
It holds the key aloft, just out of reach -
Pacing through your dreams in heavy boots,
It leaves your head a wreck.
Solid knots across your shoulders and neck
From constant aching for some coincidental
meeting
Because love did not present itself,
An oven-ready dish; it hid, instead, in plain sight
Just visible amongst the weeds of your life
Buried beneath a patch of stinging nettles
Because to grab it, to hold it - is painful
It forces you to rake over what was
And burn it
In the hope that once you stand in the ashes
It was all somehow worth it
But you know what
It always is

By Rebecca Kenny



"Best Friend" Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches, by Jane Forrest

This is a portrait of my best friend, Ava. We are both painters studying contemporary art together at the Etobicoke School of the Arts. Ava was the first person in our class to be truly vulnerable with us through her art. Because of her bravery, our class now has a family-like relationship; we love and support each other through everything, and push each other to do our best work

PERFUMED PAGES



all my friends will be getting a big kiss by Leonie Bellini



RENEGADE PARNTER

BY AMELIA RHETT

Renegade traded the California palms for the Wisconsin pines. Scientist Renegade climbs every tree nearby. Renegade drives the hatchback to Big Sur while laying down, jumps over the creek with one swoop in Birkenstocks and socks. Renegade travels the Arabian Nights. Renegade builds muscle for armor with 100 push-ups a day. Renegade with snow in his beard.

A vigilante.

Renegade protects his family. Chipped his front tooth. Renegade in bomber jacket. Renegade with vintage glasses. A taste for grunge, Renegade blasts Audioslave in the shower. Renegade bakes chocolate chip cookies at midnight. Sleeps with his hand over his forehead. Squeezes like a bear when he hugs me. Renegade is a secret poet. No one can read his writings but me. Despite his name, Renegade is not a traitor.

He is a renegade thinker,
for social change,
a rebel for revolution.

Sadly, the lionhearted Renegade and I love from a distance. In different states, we replace our birthday gifts with imaginary gifts. Renegade sends me a bouquet of illusive flowers. He receives an unreal, giant cookie with his name in icing. Renegade tries to conceal his smile. Renegade sings The Lion King in muscle tees.

Renegade always has a comeback.

A madcap,
a daredevil.

Renegade is a top student in medical school. Fantasizes about living with me and owning a German Shepherd. Reads Jack London and Mark Twain. Renegade watches the news with a stubborn expression.

Renegade has a fury for corrupt men with the badge.

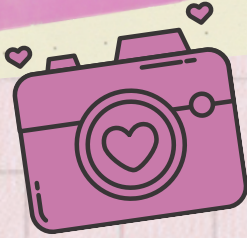
Renegade is a fierce radical.

Renegade is sublime.

Renegade knows his truth.



an interview
with



Gabrielle
Ortiz

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I'm Gabrielle, but usually, I go by Gabby. I'm a photographer in the Sacramento area. I'm 17 years old, and I'm a senior in high school-I'm graduating in 2021! I've been doing photography basically since I learned how to pick up a camera. But I started actually with my account (@gabriellesfilms on Instagram) in 2018, I believe. Other things besides photography I like doing- usually I'm very dedicated to my schoolwork. And I also work a job as well. But for fun, I like watching movies. I'm a huge Marvel fan.

What inspires you to keep trying photography in new ways and maintain your dedication to it?

To be honest, I get a lot of my inspiration from Pinterest and Instagram. Just other photography, like people that I know what keeps me going. It just makes me very happy to see, like my clients like fall in love with themselves through my photos. I'm really thankful to have these people around me always asking me for photos. Because really, in general, it's the people that I work with that make a memory so great for me. I need to have a creative outlet to make sure I'm not over-stressing myself with work in school.

Do you think you found your coming of age moment as an artist? Or are you still in search for it? like have you is has there been a place that has really like affected how you grown as an artist in that way?

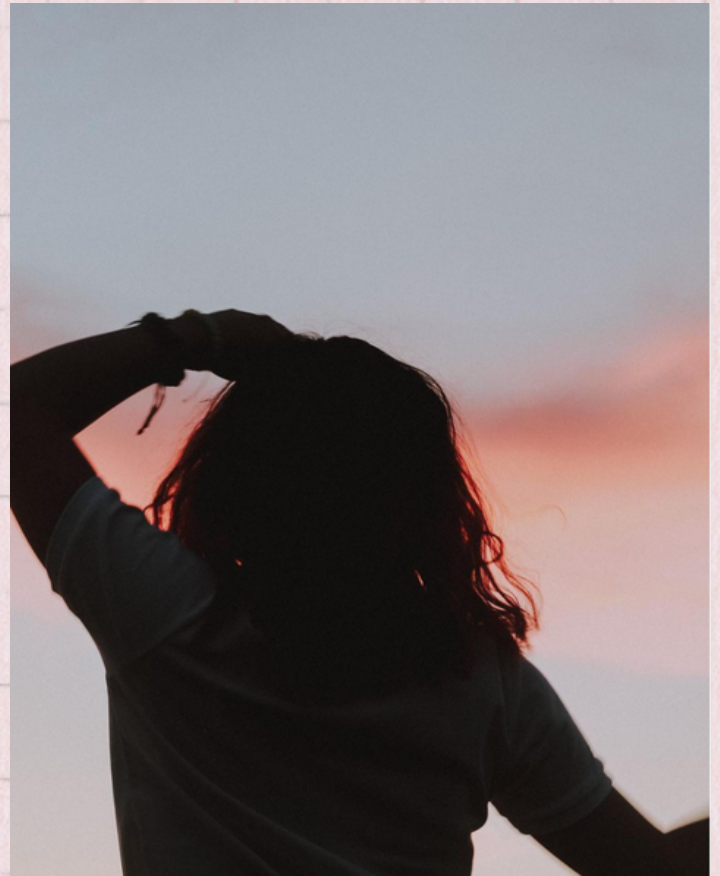
I think I'm in my coming of age moment, right now, I wear all these familiar places are starting to get really nostalgic for me. And I think growing up here, even though as much as I hate to say it, I hated it when I was like growing up. But now I think I've truly found the beauty within it. And I think that's that moment. It's definitely helped me improve as an artist, especially because I have to work with what I have. When I started my photography, I just went somewhere like 20 minutes away from my hometown, and I had some friends, we took some photos. That's when I truly realized that I have some potential here. I found [coming of age] within my hometown, so I'm very appreciative of it

Do you think you've noticed any influences on your photography, whether it's film, music, anything?

Definitely giving a shout-out to one of my best friends who helped me with this journey. I actually use them as a model a lot. Their name is Gabriel Cortez, they're seen very often on my page. They're one of the people that always hits me up. They're always telling me better tips on how I can make everything better. And they've just been a great person to me, like throughout my whole journey, and have always supported me. And I just love them so much.

What do you think your plans are for the future in relation to your photography? Are you prepared for the changes to come, or is it one big abyss?

I'm actually going to San Diego State University in fall 2021. Go Aztecs! I am currently doing a major in psychology. A lot of people are like. "Oh, why aren't you majoring in film". And then they think that I don't want to major in film just because I'm not going to do it forever. I'm thinking of doing a minor in film because I don't want to let go of that part of me. And even if I don't do my own film, I know that I'm always going to do photography, I'm always going to be taking pictures. I am really excited to go to San Diego, just so I can get a new location to find those picture-perfect spots where you can create memories and capture them. And I'm very upset to leave because I've only known this place. I've not moved from my hometown, since I was born. It's scary, but I'm also extremely excited to get this new beginning. You know?



"Love is everywhere. It's in every single relationship. It doesn't even have to be a romantic kind of love".

How do you think love shows up in your work in all of its forms? And how does it keep you going? And where do you place it in your creative work and your journey?

I've placed love in the passion I have for photography, and the amount of work I put into my pieces. Just because a lot of people tend to think oh, you're just snapping a photo. And I'm like, it's deeper than that. I'm only doing it because I love it. I wouldn't be doing all this work if it was just a little hobby for me, it's more than a hobby. It's a passion for me. I also love capturing love. Love is everywhere. It's in every single relationship. It doesn't even have to be a romantic kind of love.

shot by Gabrielle Ortiz

Of course, I do couple photoshoots. But I love capturing love and friendships with other people. You can just see how happy they are. And I like how I can capture that moment in my service. Love is everywhere!

OUR NIRVANA

We take a walk
 outside of the blue and grey apartments
 lined with the pine needles.
 The melodic rustle of the tie-dyed leaves
 that scrape across the dewy sidewalk
 seem to harmonize with me. He concentrates as I sing
 the velvet blues while we stroll.

Our journey takes us not too far but back into society for mere
 moments.

I gaze up at him
 beneath lamppost #23 in the desolate shopping mall parking lot
 and dissolve into a stirring warmth so wondrous:
 the subtle color of the moon fades and a citrus sky rushes towards us
 through the copper breezes, under the comet road.

Our walk is cut short by the yearning in our fingertips
 that tingles when our hands meet.

Back home, the pomegranate candles entice us
 into a comforting glow, shadows waltz along the wall,
 espresso rings and chamomile bags mark the remains of our evening.
 An abiding epiphany continues to roll around my mind as I watch him
 toss the pizza dough in the air. With flecks of flour in his beard,
 he laughs as it flies too high,
 bumping the scissor lamp stretched out from the sage walls.

The small house echoes a pleasure like no other.

The window is spotted with rainy drizzles,
 and fresh spinach, basil, and olives are chopped upon a bamboo board.

free women. Если же только кто-то пожелал
to see Sofia. И Софи не возражает.



01:23

He may want me with him again, кроме
меди. Заговариваю
С девушкой Софию и ее мамой.
С мамой Софию.
И заговариваю и не могу спать
одна ночь.

I mean, even if someone thinks
"gravity doesn't exist, they'll fall off
a high-rise if they walk over the edge,
right?"

Right. I fell. I really did

And I will try not to make this letter dramatic

P.S. Got maximum for the speaking part of my eng exam thanks
to our talks :D
XXX Sofia



In my heart I saw you form, take shape. Every day I saw a new facet, new possibilities for you and I. It started to feel like I was because you were. I fell in love hard and fast with your soul that engulfed the hollow that existed before you came. The ethereal light the wise men speak of was so real so tangible to me now.

In every twinge in every ache, I saw you becoming. I dreamt you to life with every breath. Your being and my breathing were but the same. Every shadow of doubt pierced through the eternal circle that cradles life...even as I whispered gentle words of love I saw you pull away, you tugged at every fiber of my being asking to be let go, for your soul to be set free. I held you and looked into your eyes that only I had seen, tired of a fight you fought for me, staring into the face of defeat I couldn't bring myself to see.

You fought my child you persevered...but rest now the trial is all but over. I'll always belong to you and you'll always belong to me. We'll always have this memory...you will know my face and I yours.

As gently as you took form you melted away not a deluge but a gentle flow so red with love...there'll never be a hollow there....your memory will linger and nourish me from within.

You and I until the end of times...a love that truly transcends.

"I lost my baby at 6 weeks. This is a love poem for my child who never was but will always be."

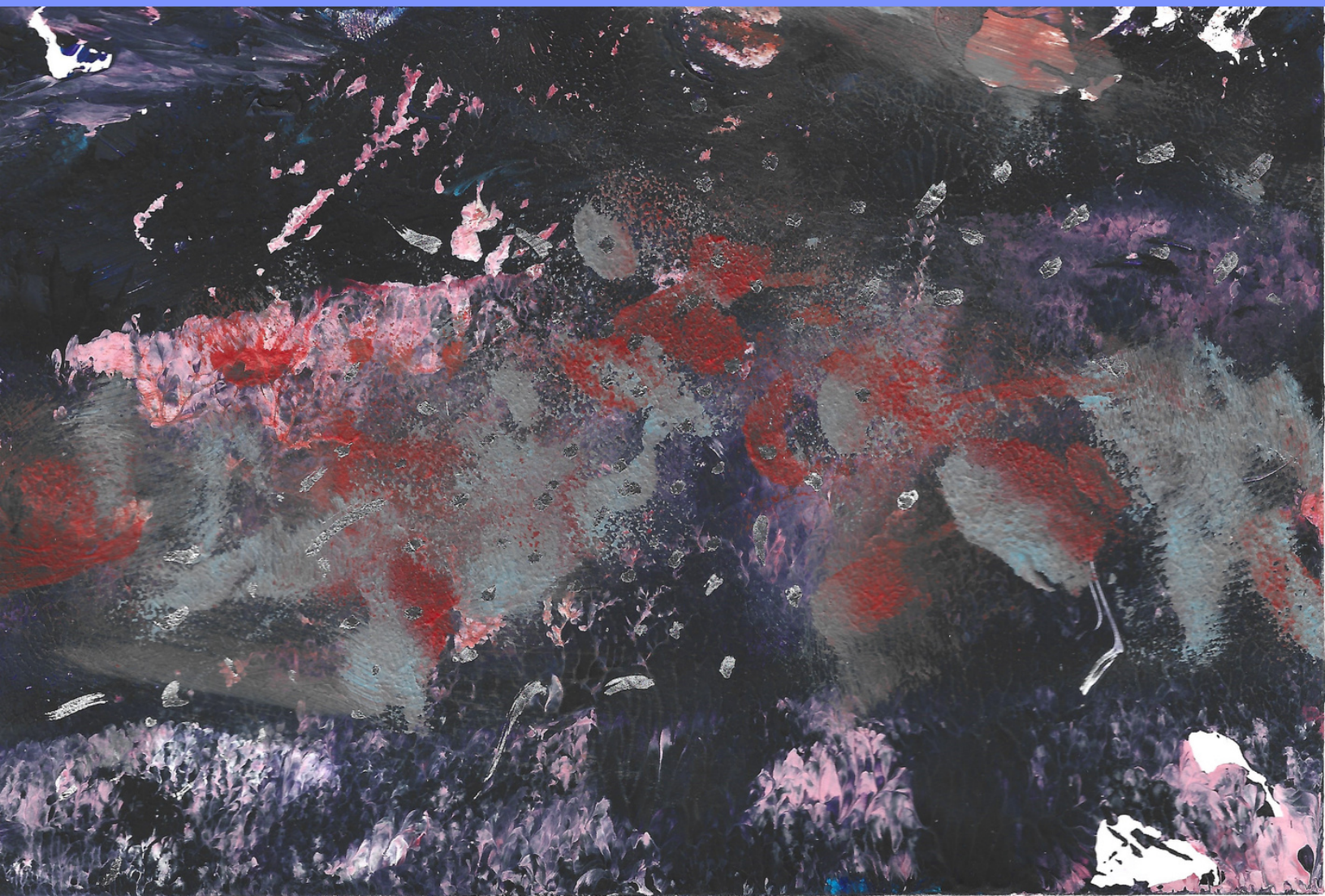
- Sunanda Sharma



Garden 19000

BY DARK RECONSTRUCTION ART

"Inspired by a nighttime garden. Lush flowers blossom, and midnight dew glistens on the petals. A sense of calm washes over you as you stroke the branches of the bush, looking for thorns. The best things in life hurt a little. It will all be okay. Acrylic on canvas."



*call
me
with
you*



BY DARK RECONSTRUCTION ART

"Inspired by a classic Russian pop song by Alla Pugacheva. I was told by older Russians that the song had been written by a man whose wife had passed away. Once Alla recorded the song, he had passed away also. It's a very typical Russian story, I suppose. Acrylic on canvas."

SNOW

The train doors hissed open and I took too big a step, stumbling out onto the platform as the weight of my backpack threw me forward. The rain poured down between the train and the platform awning, sneaked past my collar, and trickled down the back of my neck. I shivered. Leo was already at the hall waiting for me, my train had been halted outside the station until the previous one had pulled away. Avoiding the water cascading down the steps, I made my way out of the station, my rubber-soled climbing shoes tapping the backs of my legs with each step. Outside, the warehouses watched me walk down the street, silhouetted against the clouded grey sky.

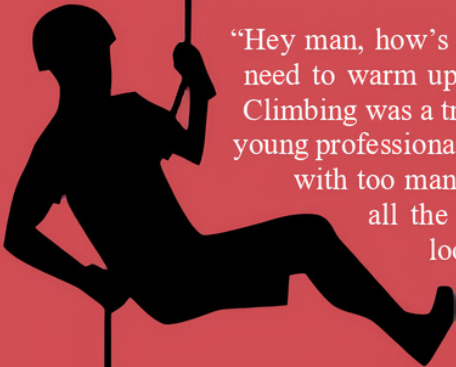
Leo wasn't the kind of friend I'd usually have. We'd met on a business trip abroad, our first conversation sparked by the chalk bag I'd forgotten was still clipped to my backpack. It turned out Leo was also a keen climber. He spoke confidently, brags, anecdotes, and wisecracks all punctuated by the same short laugh. He liked being the center of attention and our conversations were invariably about him. How Leo was doing, how Leo's work was going, how Leo climbed, how Leo saw the world. I didn't mind. I sheltered in the lack of pressure. The only words I needed were an occasional yes or a no, permission he could keep going. I wasn't surprised the following year when he messaged me with the news that he was moving here for a new job. It made sense. Besides, I valued him as a friend. It meant something to me that he wanted to stay in touch. He ended up living several cities over, but we met up every few weeks to climb together.

Arriving at the hall, I spotted him with our group. I'd introduced him when he first came climbing there with me. Though he visited irregularly, he'd already established himself as a member of our group. It wouldn't be the same without him now. I checked in and dumped my things in the chalk-dusted bag rack. Leo turned towards me as I made my way over. He'd been waiting for me, harness strapped loosely to his waist and shoes in hand.

"Hey man, how's it going?" he exclaimed. Not waiting for my reply continued, "Do you need to warm up? Probably not, right? Shall we start, it's already getting kinda busy?" Climbing was a trend now, and shortly after the end of the workday the halls filled up with young professionals clad in the latest branded sportswear. Girls wearing skin-tight lycra tops with too many straps at the back and guys in tough abrasion-resistant pants, just like all the professional climbers in the videos. "You still want to try that 6c?" I looked up at the grimy pink handholds snaking up a gently overhanging wall at the back of the hall. I nodded in agreement. Leo would go first.

We tied ourselves in as Leo regaled me with a recap of his previous attempts. "Yea I think I'm really close to getting it now, just that last sequence man." Looking up at the wall he stood on one leg, loosely miming the body positions for the last few moves. This was the done thing.

"Okay, when you're ready dude"



He made his way up the wall moving fluidly from hold to hold. He wasn't much to look at, unshaven, hair permanently matted and shoulders hunched forward. But all this dissolved when he climbed. He moved gracefully, only the strained fibers of his muscles revealing any effort. As he reached the hardest part of the climb, Anja, a girl in our group, joined me at the base of the wall, eyes turned upwards. "Strong!" she called out as he glided through the hardest part of the climb. I looked over to acknowledge her, but her eyes were still fixed upwards. Leo topped out and I spooled out rope to let him back down.



"Hey, nice dude!" Anja and Leo fistbumped as he unclipped himself from the wall. The two conversed while I put on my climbing shoes. I looked up to join in, but the moment didn't come. "Heyy" Anja finally acknowledged me as she turned to walk away.

Now I started. I put my weight on the first foothold and slipped instantly. The pink plastic was slick with scraped off black rubber and I grazed my knee on the textured wall as I slid. Blood trickled down my leg.

"No worries man, it starts off a bit slippery right?"

I kept on. Moving from hold to hold, relying as much on Leo's tight grip on the rope to keep me on the wall as my own strength. I felt the blood creep further down my leg. The grey sky outside peered down at me through the skylight. Descending from my struggle to the top I told Leo I'd rest. I put thick climbing tape over the graze on my knee while Leo chatted with the group. As I dabbed at the blood on my leg with a torn square of toilet paper I heard Leo ask if I wanted to climb another route. I told him I'd stick to the practice walls with the padded mats underneath. He went to climb with Anja.

I fell from the wall, landing heavily on the padded mats. I lay there like a starfish, watching as white spots fell past the window and more clustered on the skylight. It had begun to snow.

Later I waited with Leo at the station.

"Dude I didn't see you at the thing last week"

"The thing?"

"Roy's thing, we watched that new movie, the one with Alex Megos"

"Oh, I didn't know"

"Wasn't it in the group chat?"

"Erm maybe, sorry, I didn't see it"

"Ahhhh yeah okay, no, well we'll do another one soon anyway"

We stood at the far end of the platform, outside the awning. Snowflakes had started to settle on my shoulders. Water ran down Leo's back. Train doors hissed on the opposite platform.

"Oh man, yeah that's my train, I'll message you dude".

He waved as he stepped onto the train. Doors hissed. The train rolled off. Its yellow lights growing smaller as it ran into the distance.

When I was small my mum told me that in life we have both friends and acquaintances. She said that I'd have lots of acquaintances, but I would be able to count my real friends on one hand. I stared at the climbing tape wrapped around my fingers as my train pulled up.

That night I lay awake in bed bathed in light from my phone screen. Leo didn't message me and after scrolling through and reading every message in the group chat, I set my phone on the bed stand and stood by the window. Snow

still fell from the sky, but nothing had settled on the ground. The next day at work, I remarked to my colleagues that the snow last night was odd for the time of year, puzzling at their blank faces. Later that week, Leo organised a movie viewing at Roy's, a new climbing movie. We would go to the hall again in two weeks' time.

The day we were due to climb Leo messaged me at work to apologize: he was going to climb with Anja, but I could climb with Roy. I looked over the top of my computer monitor. Outside the sky was blindingly blue and countless sunlight tinted roofs peeped back at me through the office window.

That evening I watched Leo and Anja climb. They stopped and chatted to others from the group as they made their way from wall to wall. I felt dizzy. Between each route I stopped climbing and went to drink from the bathroom sink. As I walked out my shoes left odd triangular prints in the water others had spilt. They reflected the light back up like cat's eyes in the night. I could tell Roy was irritated I wasn't paying attention, but he played it off and focused on his climbing. I watched his stocky figure grow smaller the further he climbed and my mouth felt dry.

I looked over at Leo as I tied myself in to climb the next route. Roy asked if I'd climbed this route before. It was a white 6b+. I replied that I hadn't.

I was halfway up, my scabbed knee wedged between two large holds. The scab was breaking and small red beads formed at the cracks. I reached for the next handhold and my knee slipped. I fell back for the rope to catch me, only for it to whistle through my harness. The white handhold grew smaller.

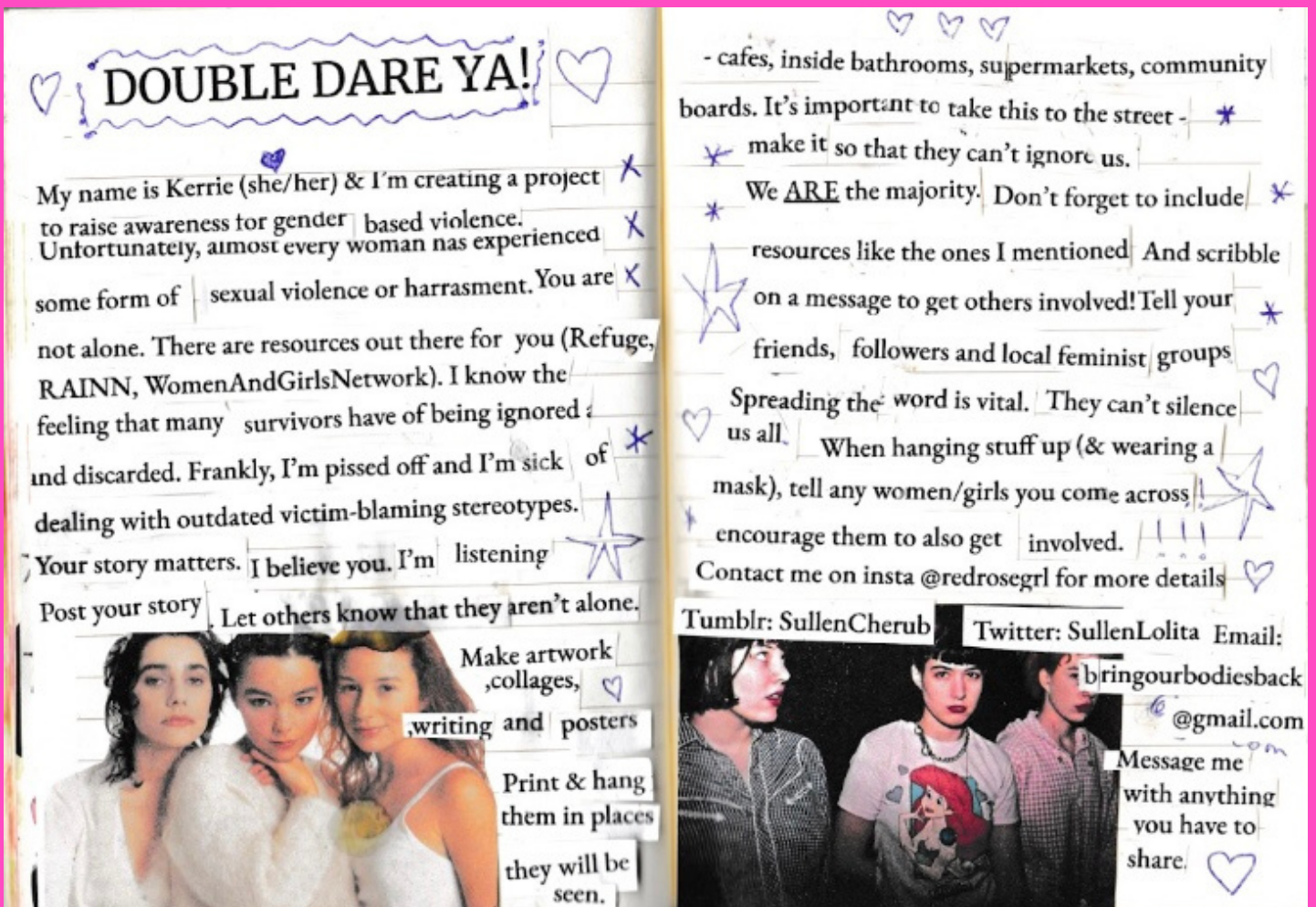
I could hear Leo's voice, I could see shapes blur and blend around me. One of the shapes grew closer. Leo's face came into focus. I spread out my fingers and reached upwards through the circle of blurred shapes. Leo's face drew away and blurred again. But I could see quite clearly the snow starting to settle on the skylight high above.

Written by Alexander Rhodes

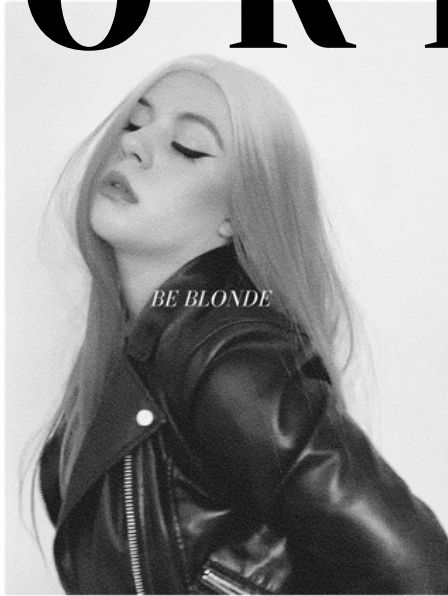
"Love has leapt from the most unexpected places and people, bringing about drastic changes in my personal life. These changes have not always been for the better, as love has embellished doubts, anxiety, fear and shame. Despite this, it has changed the way I look at life for the better and is responsible for memories I will never forget. I wrote this story to look back at some of those feelings and think about what a strange emotion it can be."

Porcelain Grrrl

@PorcelainGrrrl on Instagram is a zine me (@redrosegrl) and Andie (@screamgrrrl) are working on to share other people's experiences in. It doesn't have to be about gender based violence. It can be anything that relates to your experience but we do ask for it have a feminist theme. You can submit via DM or email. Let us know if you'd like to be published anonymously. Share the word! Let society know that we won't be silenced.



LEMON LORD



LEMON LORD

BE BLONDE
LEMON LORD

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NOVEMBER 24, 2020 - 12:01 AM

PAINT MY FACE	03:51
QUEEN	03:16
DESTINY	03:31
ALL I WANT	03:12
THE GAME	03:29
CHAPEL	03:44
DIAMOND	01:10
SUPERPOWER	02:41

OF ITEMS SOLD 8
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CARD #: *****2020
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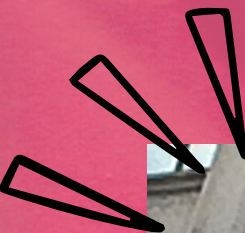
COPYRIGHT INFINITY RECORDS 2020
ALL SONGS WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY LEMON LORD
RECEIPT DESIGN BY @JGSCHXCK
@IAMLEMONLORD

Lemon Lord is a pop music artist based in Los Angeles. She released her first album "Be Blonde" in November of 2020 and it has been added to numerous playlists on Spotify including "Gaga Daily," "Women of SynthPop" and "Own Your Voice," curated by Madame Gandhi. Her singing in the galactic anthem "Superpower" was compared to Madonna by Bloom Magazine UK. Her slogan, "To Infinity and Be Blonde," is a reminder to us all that we can do anything we dream of and we can be any version of ourselves that we choose along the way. Lemon Lord wrote all lyrics, melodies and arrangements on her album and hopes to release more music in 2021. Stream Lemon Lord music anywhere here: songwhip.com/lemonlord and follow her on Instagram @iamlemonlord. Shop for merchandise on shoplemonlord.com. []



Dafel Zaurs

So there's this special girl Zi who I love and we broke up. So I really didn't know how to express my feelings to her 'cause I'm kind of introvert. As a graffiti painter one day I found access to this roof; it was in the center of the city and at the end of street where she was living. One night I decided to hit that spot although it was pretty dangerous and risky. The roof was sloping and I almost slipped off. So I painted this piece as I would slip and hit my head on the roof and all in my head was just hearts and love.



Arrangement

Aimee Nicole

I want you to take me on a date to sit across from her.
 We can have Chinese and sample each other's dishes three-way.
 Daddy, play with my hair so she knows I am only on loan for the evening.
 I keep looking down at my plate, her walnut irises paralyze my tongue floppy.
 Anticipation builds over sesame tofu (mine) and kung pao chicken (hers) and
 the three of us know you are expendable yet a bridge.
 My mafia boss thank-you-very-much-sir-for-setting-this-up now sit over there and let us get to
 work.



Starting Again

Aimee Nicole

I want to kiss you sloppy on a soft blanket under the setting sun.
 Our warming bodies searching one other for the secrets everyone else left behind.
 Your hand moving up my thigh, thumbing that fading tattoo.
 My fingers tangled in your wiry, short hair that always smells like peaches.
 This isn't like most love stories because I'm 30 now and still waiting for my divorce to be final.
 But we've had a lot of tea together and our first kiss made all the hairs stand up straight on my
 skin announcing: "he's finally here."
 You shocked my system and I want to lie with you while weather wraps her sweet arms
 around us.

a moment [sublime hesitation]

I woke up this morning with the veil of dreams still running through my blood.

Your touch was so real.

I felt the hairs on my arms prick up in anticipation as your fingers trailed the
curve in my back.
the stretch in my neck as I lean my head back, your cool lips leaving a trail of
wordless affection.

[our favourite flavour of cigarette kisses]

My eyes shut tight as i feel the real world pushing its way to the front of my
mind.

There is a tender weight covering my body,
I feel nothing but the empty space around me - silently wishing for the veil of
dreams to return.

In the stillness, I fall back into that moment. ~~our moment.~~

In my mind I run it back

s l o w l y.

savouring each moment.

Stretching seconds into minutes

...holding your touch in the dark of my closed eyes.

It blurs.

Slowly at first and then it's gone
My body left unsatisfied.

That craving ~~of your touch~~ is something I don't remember feeling.

Fingertips on my spine, thumb under my chin tilting my gaze to meet yours.

Fantasies and reality get jumbled, my dream's touch feels so true.

– There is a tenderness when our eyes lock. –

I push to keep looking,

but. inevitably...

my cheeks will tinge with wild roses, the heat of a summers evening radiates from my face and i can no longer bare the intensity of your gaze.

Fluttering like a birds wing i look down

gently.

softly.

like the way your hand brushes against my cheeks.

When it does: my head moves in closer, tilting to feel more of your skin on mine.

It happens instinctively,

without thought.

As if my cheeks cool at the touch of your hands.

~~When you are no longer here~~ I still feel the last touch - its memory shivers just above my skin. The last contact between our bodies. Be it the finger tips stretching to meet for a final time as our hands unlock. or your body wrapped around mine, [protectively, thoughtfully] in our final embrace.

I breathe you deeply.

into my nose,

my throat,

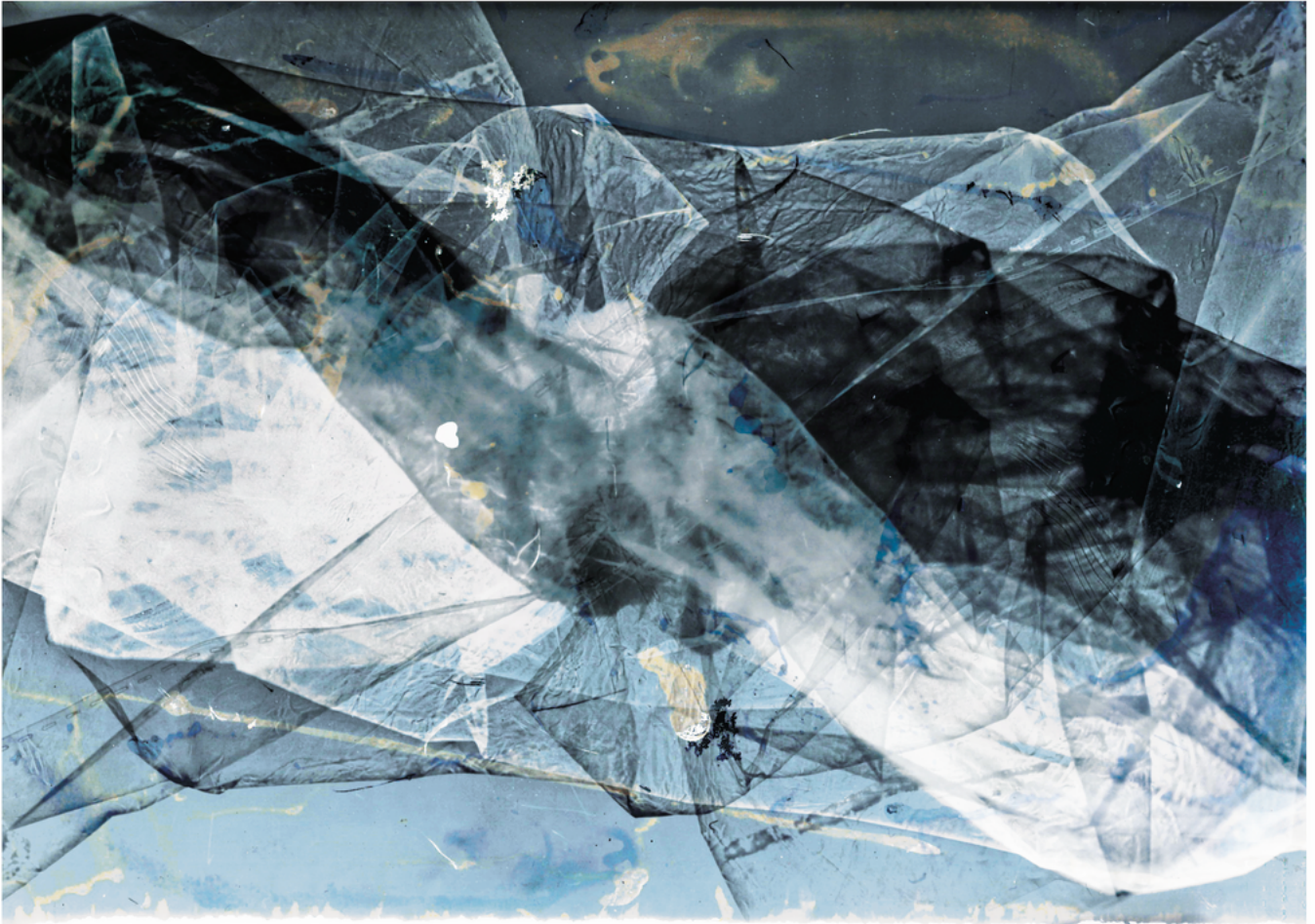
my lungs.

Then almost as quickly as you're here. you're gone.

"Until next time," i say.

with a smile and with a wink.

~~Then looking around~~ i am [alone] again - with only your scent making its way through my bloodstream. Fingering the cells that make up the parts of my body now belonging to you.



a moment [sublime hesitation] is the
accompanying text for Katie Bowdery's
photogram 'Lo Fi Flow 5'

Submission

Aimee Nicole



Under this blanket, I'm a dormant canvas and you're my
Hieronymus Bosch.

I want hard hands sure of their destination.
This body has walked miles without shoes —
skin leathered by unseasonable men is tougher than it
looks.

I want bruises that blemish sweet memories into flesh.
Lips inflamed by hungry teeth that begged a safe word.
I want long sleeves in summertime to erase the traces of
you.

If you leave my body like you found it, it's like you were
never here.

untitled

Sarah E. Hoffman



Take everything I offer you,
My safety and my pleasure,
My desire and my pain

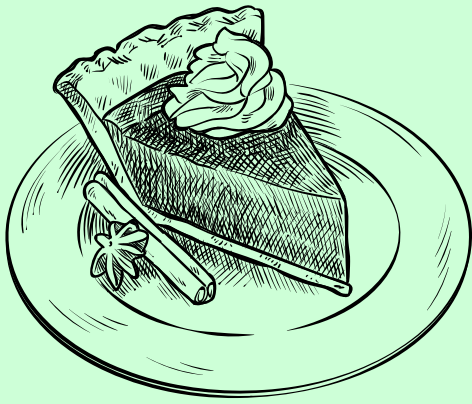
Lose yourself in desire; show me your want.
Bite me, control me, consume me
Make me arch under the weight of your touch.

But leave untouched as sacred
What I hide from you



***Eros and Pysche* by Kseniya Scher**

"Created under inspiration of ancient myth [...] the moment of endless trust—Psyche could not see face of Eros and I think it's really precious between lovers to have the trust."



In the future, I lay the table for a feast

ARDEN BOSHIER

Heat. This is how it goes
To raise from the ground a lifeblood
Sweet and warm

Where you split the earthbones to fragments.
Everything is warm enough to melt gloriously,
Covering our insides in sugar.

Everything is love, a Turkish-delight powder
Clasped to everything outside us,
Feeding the ants and the dogs and the people.

This is how it goes
To build a creature—soft animal—of the heart,
Setting it down so deep inside my beloveds,
Set right there against all cold.

It is a place where sickness can unbleed me,
And the child remains a child of honey and jam.
The feast bursts with welcomes unbruising.
Hunger will wait at the altar of joy.



SAMO Creative:
"Our mission is to
represent all kinds of
bodies, especially of
black and lgbtq+ people."



what love can do

written by DeShane Short / bio

Loving you is like dumping my hands in boiling water. Waiting for the moment you burn me. I know it will happen. I know your fingerprints will leave traces of long lasting scars. I gathered all the insults you threw at me, transformed them into red armor. I wear that red armor as I fantasize about you holding me, touching me, kissing me, fucking me.

Though, I have to stop. I have to stop my heart from beating when your presence is around. I have to convert all your comments and compliments into hate speech. I've watched your rosy lips move, only never for them to utter I love you. Your warm, smooth body shifts closer, I must force my soul to become frigid in order to drive you away. Waiting for the day you walk out and be cleansed of a past life from a sacred bottle of holy water.

You don't want to change. You want to stay prickled, dreaming of women who'll never entice you. Never spark the flame of raw passion lingering in your pants. You want a dream house built with a wife, two kids, and a dog by the countryside of Alabama. You want a reality conceived by secrets and lies. Loving you is like dumping my hands in boiling water, only to end up with blisters.



Elbow Kiss

by Arun Jeetoo

Last night I dreamt about your elbow
I kissed and kissed and kissed it,
and in that world, we neither lied nor
hid what our mothers designed for us
because you were not a boy,
but a girl.

The real world wants us to love
different genders
and our love would be accepted
if you were a girl.

I love you, but I fear
for us.

Under Yemen law
We live in fear.

I do not ever wish
to see your beautiful face
covered by a white sheet.
As you do not ever wish
to see my body
buried underground.

I don't want to change you.
Not *all* of you anyway.

I want your chirpy laugh.
Your inquisitive brain. Your
freckles. Your cinnamon smell.
Your indie-pop music taste.
In a girl's body.

This is the only way:
Let me kiss your elbow.

There is an old saying that if you kiss your elbow, you change genders.

review

'Elbow Kiss' is a poem from Arun Jeetoo's debut pamphlet
"I Want to Be the One You Think About at Night"

a summary

a 20-poem pamphlet by Arun Jeetoo, published by Waterloo Press. exploring love in the 21st century. sprinkled with pop culture references and allusions to staples of everyday English life. Jeetoo's poetic style is described as "dirty realism", and his poems reflect the frankness of a man who knows what he's talking about.

our thoughts

every poem is a wonderful example of how contemporary poets capture the things we feel and make us experience them all over again. Jeetoo's poetry uses language that compares love to bullets, links Nando's to summertime, and dialogue to delve us into a relationship. this pamphlet is a new story at every turn. no word goes wasted. everything is intentional.

elbow kiss

we chose to feature *elbow kiss* in issue one because the sentiment rolled out of the words on the screen and right into our hearts. the reason perfumed pages magazine celebrates love to the extent it does is because of its deep awareness that there are places where loving becomes unsafe. *elbow kiss* is an excerpt from a love that deserves to be but is unable to do so.

other favourite parts

'70 days': calling upon the age-old tradition of numbering (*10 Things I Hate About You*, *Sixteen candles*, *Twelfth Night*) Jeetoo writes a poem cataloguing the stages of a relationship.

'Sunflower': a poem full of longing, anyone? we love this reference to sunflowers being able to exist throughout seasons.

an excerpt

dipping toes in emerald lakes,
 French-kissing tongue-tied
 next to Nando's dumpsters
 in alleyways

- *Summer*

links & socials

find Arun Jeetoo:

Instagram: @g2poetry

Pamphlet: Waterloo Press,

<https://waterloopress.co.uk/books/i-want-to-be-the-one-you-think-about-at-night-2020/>

Other reviews on London Grip Poetry Review and Bad Form Review.



Movie Night by Megan KJ
Fine liner pens and marker on paper

the man of my *dreams*

ALLISON DEDECKER

I don't remember how we met,
with us, there is no "before."

When we love,
we come together like
magma to the ocean waves.
Colliding
Crystalizing our bond to granite.

Until

He starts slipping away from me,
melting through ever-widening
cracks of consciousness.

I wake,
holding nothing
but my grief.
Mourning a person who never
existed.

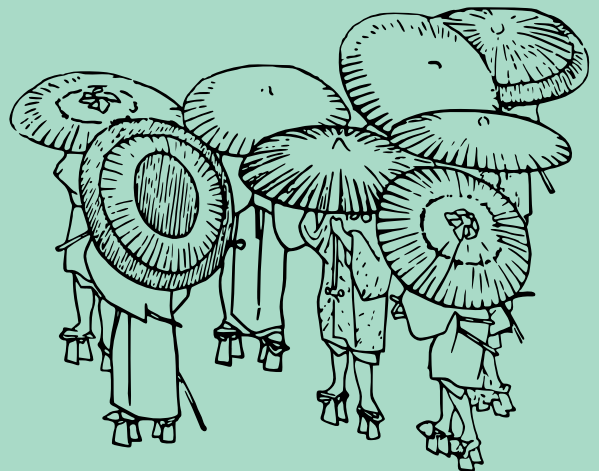


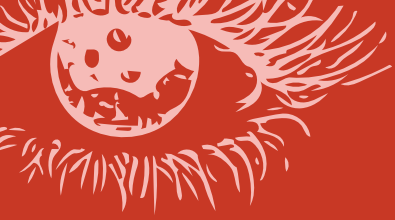
Dawn Dance in the Rain

He followed me reluctantly as I recklessly ran out into the rainy dawn, his hand in mine. The only explanation for my childish tenancies being the constant high of being in love. I jumped up and down in the shallow puddles not caring about the uncomfortable wetness in my socks and flailed my arms to the song playing in my head. He stood there and watched me from a distance with amusement written all over his face and a slight smile on his mouth. But it was his eyes that enthralled me. Within them they held a degree of love that I've never seen before. Love so pure that it captivated my soul entirely. Love so deep that I knew I only needed him and his beautiful heart to sustain me for the rest of my life. Two souls that intertwine so effortlessly don't find each other easy. Yet in front of me stood the completion to my soul: my lover and my peace in this chaotic world. The sun will one day stop rising. The grass will one day stop growing. The rain will one day stop falling. But never will I stop loving the boy standing in front of me and never will he not be my addiction. As I dawned upon this realization I gazed at him as intently as he did me through the rain clinging to my eyelashes and I understood more than ever the phrase "a penny for your thoughts". I walked up to him and planted a gentle kiss on his lips as if to pay that penny and ask without the hassle of words: what is going on in that beautiful mind of yours? A mischievous smile formed on his mouth as a symbol that he was intent on leaving my question unanswered. Grabbing my hands, he pulled me back to the spot I was standing a few seconds ago. Embracing one of my hands with his own and placing the other on my waist, he swayed us to the song we somehow both knew in our hearts. The world went silent as if watching us and the rain that previously drowned the sound of my humming became mute as if envious of the overwhelming passion. I lay my head on his chest and listened to what the heart of whom loved me so intently had to whisper in my ear. And I swore I heard that him & I are forever.

By Anushri Prasad

About how powerful the feeling of love can be between two people and how it can make even a small moment seem like much more!





A FEVERISH DESIRE

How beautiful your eyes are
 Such pretty your smiles are
 My heart melts for you
 Oh my seductive lady, these breathes are for you
 See the love in my eyes
 That's all I want from your side
 I am your secret admirer
 Fulfill my desire
 The world's just a freaking place
 Ignore those creepy mouths and face the case
 Now you better create the fate
 Else you'll have to live within that hate

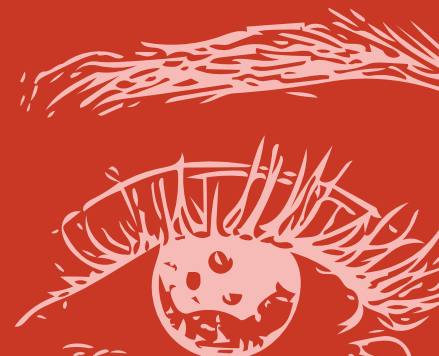
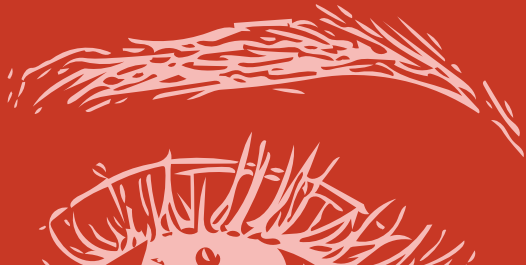


AN INCENTIVE GILMPSE

That twinkle in his eyes
 As if a sparkle of heaven's light
 Pulse of his heart
 As if someone banging a drum
 The flash of his reflection
 As if a lion roaring in bewilderment
 And set out for a mission
 Complex than nuclear fission
 His crave for destination
 Empowers the beautiful soul
 His passion is all
 That sprays the fruit juice



By Ilsa Afzaal





Mistaken for Strength

I remember the taste of your tears
 The sound of your cries
 The look in your eyes

I remember the ringing in my ears when he hit me so hard that I saw stars
 When it was all over you'd hold me in your loving arms

I'd look up and pray to God to save my mom

Angelic Devil

His words fall out like molasses pouring all over me until I am a distressed, sticky mess
 His rose petal hair lays on top of me as he tells me to tell no one
 His hands
 Larger than his heart
 Always reaching for me
 Until I am nothing
 Until I am gone

Pool Party

The smell of sunscreen dances into my nostrils
 They take off their demin shorts to go swimming in their neon bikinis
 One girl leaning
 The other cupping her ear and whispering

The rest giggling about somebody
 Somebody who is me

The blue pool water hugs my knee
 My only friend in this God damn pool party

Poems by Leeann





DISCOJAZZ

By Kat Hendrickson: "Inspired by classic disco and how much I have missed roller skating since COVID-19. (I have not been able to go out!)"

Young



We were young then
 young like color hanging on chipped
 paint
 willful and
 wondrous
 misplaced kids
 clinging on moments like
 splinters under nail beds
 on staircases to
 nowhere significant

it was then

you took out your film camera
 and danced in decades your mother
 never stepped foot in
 we were
 shadow dancing against
 the stories our grandparents
 warned us about
 of chemical spill kisses on
 contact paper



it was snowing
 keeping warm with only the fires we
 lit between our teeth
 I had never known a friction that
 failed to burn
 out but
 I could still taste the apprehension
 warm off your breath

The first time you told me you loved
 me
 it was my birthday
 and I knew
 you meant it.
 each syllable scratched up
 from the back of your throat
 your lips
 brushed the dust off the words sitting
 atop your parents' wedding vows.
 I wonder
 do they hold each other at night?
 can they keep the bed warm with more
 than just skin
 these days?
 is this something my mother can never
 teach me?
 I ask her what love looks like and she
 shrugs her shoulders hard like
 hurricanes.
 She wraps twenty-five years around her
 like blankets after the storm hits
 I ask her
 does the absence of the wedding ring
 ache like
 a phantom pain?
 is it still
 Providing a last bit of artificial comfort?
 Does it feel like home?
 can you caress calloused hands
 with an eager mouth
 and taste new beginnings?

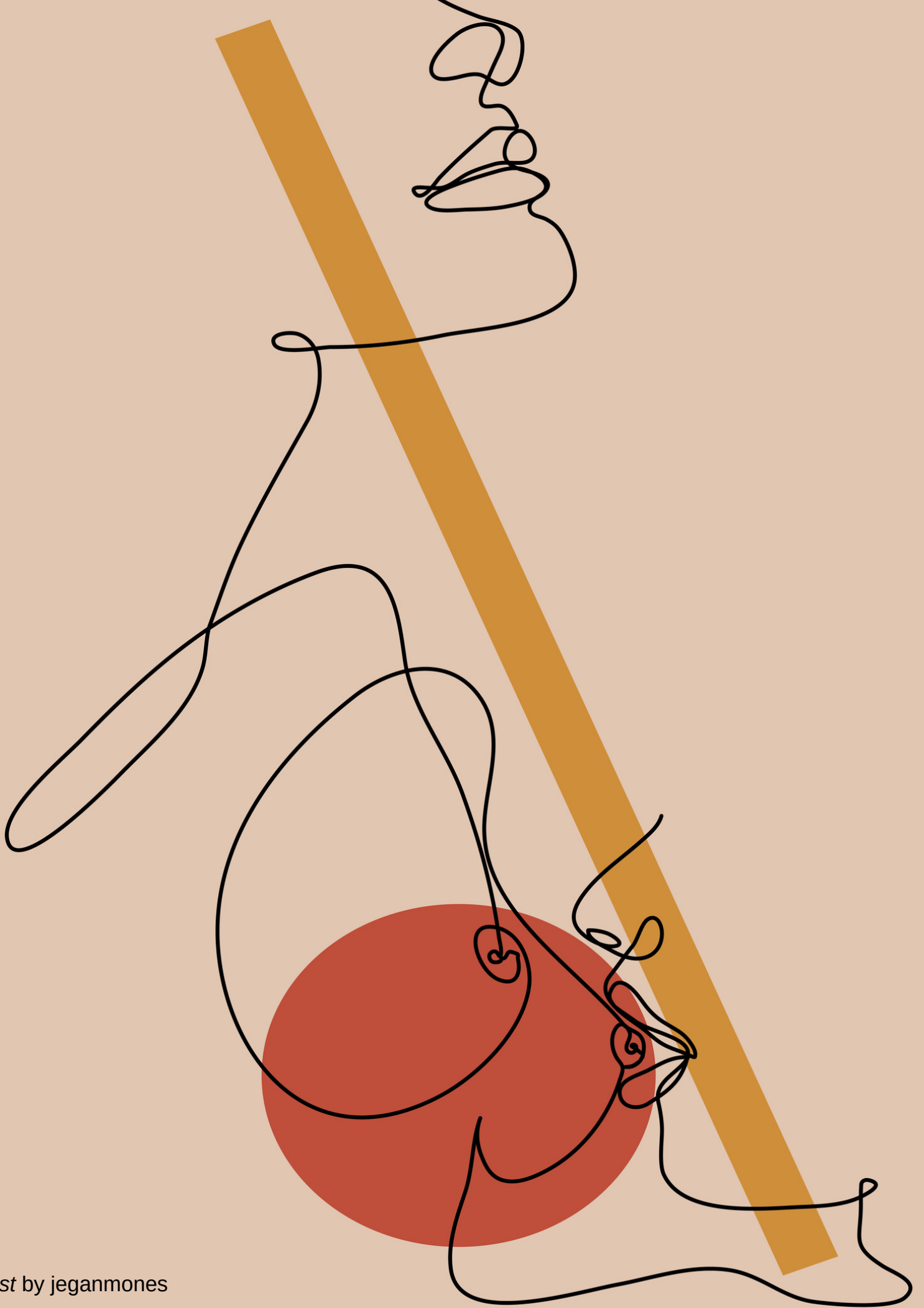
She says
She hopes so.

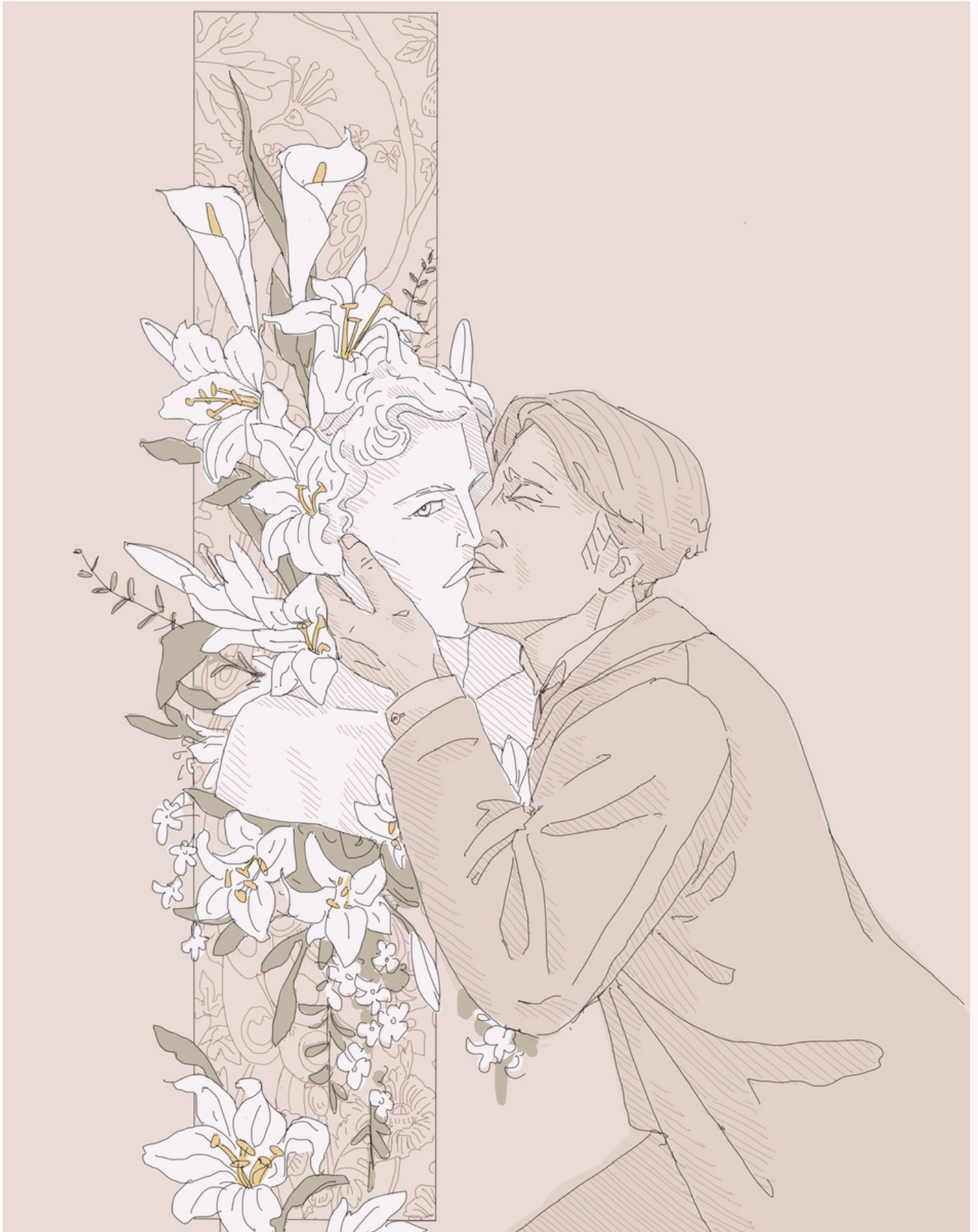
It was mid-June
the sheets were soaked in summer
heat
and
shaking bones
we were new to this
to making our beds and lying in them
comfortably
I mean.
I am dusting our sheets with skin and
Sunday morning
day dreams.
splayed across our mattress
I am trying to make a home from
loose eyelashes and
morning breath
as if I am creating an elixir to
hang this
honeymoon curiosity
like
I'm still clutching chipped paint
beneath my tongue for you
can you taste it?
could be made of lead you know
my words I mean
the way they sit in the bottom of your
belly
Do they make you feel whole?
Or just heavy?



I am learning that love is the phantom
pain our parents never warned us about
An existential technicolor
Shutter button
Release
I ask him
If I am hanging on to this image too
tightly
I ask him
Do I feel like home,
still?

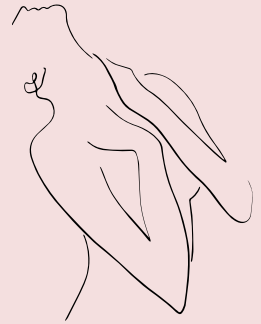
By Reina Davis





An illustration for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* about falling in love with the idea of a person by Sharone Malka

dreamgirl



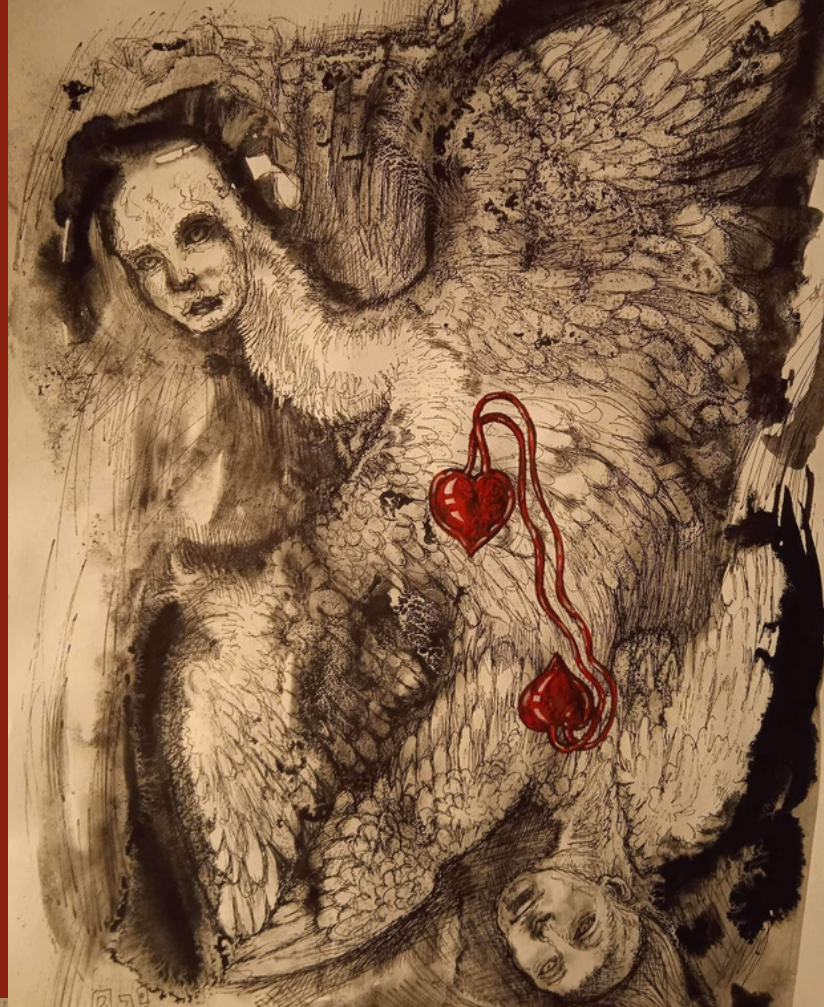
BY REINA DAVIS

You said I looked like your 1980's dream girl and I wondered if I looked as beautiful/comfortable as the day your parents fell in love. When they were teenagers sneaking out the window of their parents' houses. When your father's mom was passed out with an empty bottle of wine & a cigarette butt laying between her fingers. game show lullabies coursing through the living room/no life to be had there/volume at 13/. The day your father vowed to never become his father and vowed to never love a woman so hard she became nothing but empty filters & a box of wine corks./laugh track/. Did I act as coy as your mother did the moment she told your father it was the first time she had ever smoked weed then wrapped her lips so naturally around that joint it made your father's palms sweat. The day your father did not equate misconception=failure=pain. I will admit I am still learning these things. heart racing ≠ fear ≠ imminent death. I am learning to sit comfortably in this iphone photograph fitting nicely within this rule of thirds leaving room for you/me/my enamored of you/ (double tap). The way your mother folded herself so sweetly/effortlessly into the window of your father's wallet. back pocket romance. gas station roses. polaroid flash. She did not fear the way her love took up space leaving room for hidden pleasures tucked in his Levi jeans next to a/condom wrapper/stick of gum/new-found vulnerability/(reblog). I admit I revel in past generational romance yet fear the speed with which time moves. I fear I will speak so fast I will choke on my words and cough up a year or two. I will look at my hands angry that I am vomiting blood and still can't predict the future. I am waiting for the day the unknown ≠ failure ≠ pain. I am practicing looking at you slow like the long exposure of a photograph (f/32) so I will be able to record you in my memory and exist in front of you simultaneously. dance in duality. (click). I am finding a new-found vulnerability in sharing both my trepidation/exhilaration with you. here/now. I am learning to look as beautiful/comfortable folded up within you in this present moment as you do blanketed in my poetry. kids will see us hand in hand and they will pay no mind but they will listen to their parents' favorite song and they will think of us. (click). They will find my self-rejected love poem crumpled in the street along with a /broken nail/crushed soda can/pigeon feather/ and they will know I am discontented with the words I gave you. words not worthy enough to span across generations. but they will know.

that I am happy. (retweet).

IRINA *novikova*

Medium: Mascara, gel pen.
30x40 cm. 2020.



"It's like a story of the
past: two hearts and a
single thread..."

About love or hate, about
what hurts or once hurt.
Perhaps it will stop hurting.

but only tomorrow

A cloudy day, the place not known...
 Surprisingly, I was not alone!
 You, yes, you were with me!
 Without problems, I was free
 Can you remember the day, dear friend,
 From beginning to the end?
 It was neither too hot nor too cold
 The same people, the same city, old
 Ev'rything seemed to me fresh and new
 These days are good and they are few
 Can you recall we were walking down
 Every door was open in this gigantic town
 Suddenly your hand touched mine!
 Unintentionally, and that was fine.
 As I had nowhere to go
 I only had our hearts to follow.
 Into my ears whispered my heart,
 "You have to tell her, you are smart.
 Tell her at once, tell her now."
 I felt nervous, I said, "how
 She takes me as a friend
 This is the beginning; this is the end."

"You have to give her a tight hug."
 Something inside me gave a tug.
 She looked at me and saw me pensive
 She gave me a smile, as she used to give...
 The smile was directly from her soul
 We said nothing and continue with our stroll
 We walked and walked for an hour or two
 She said, "I have to return, your dreams you
 can pursue."
 I said nothing, only goodbye I did wave
 Her eyes were sad, still a smile she gave
 Away she went, and I felt all my sorrows
 And joys, they will come, but only tomorrow.

By Spandan Bandyopadhyay

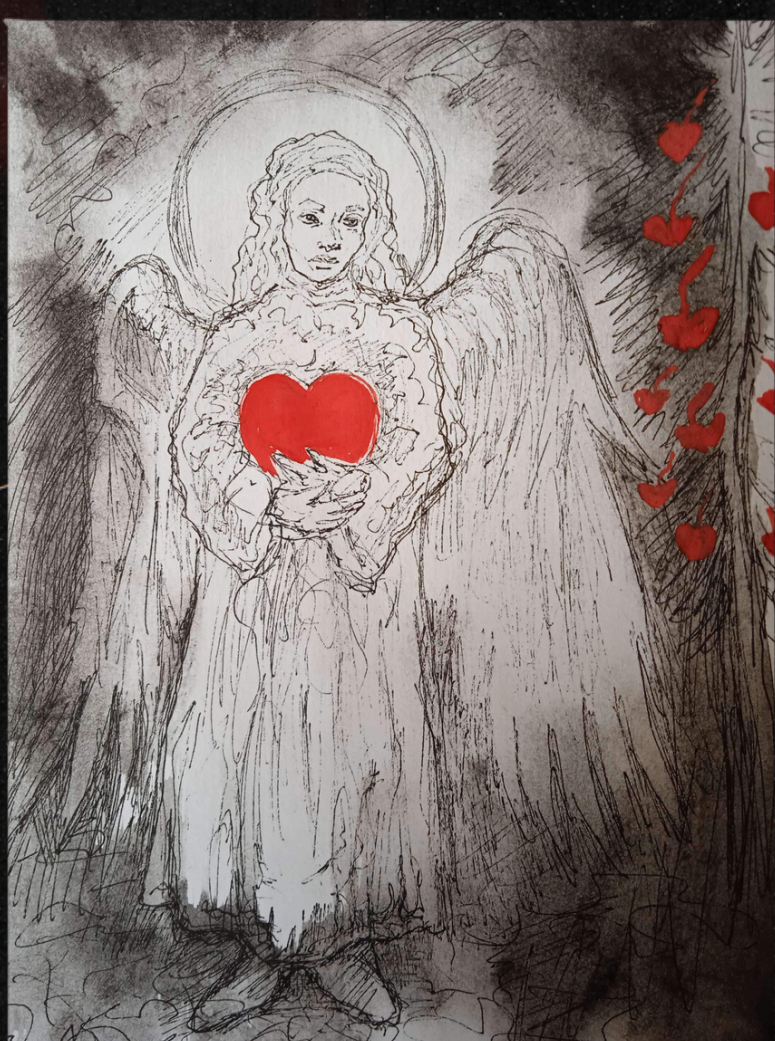


IRINA *novikova*

I drew small drawings of angels for Valentine's Day. I wanted to draw unusual cards or drawings. Initially, the idea was to take large sheets of tinted gray paper and depict unicorns, but the mythological animals confused me a little, especially the thin long horn, it seemed like something sharp in no way suited to what I wanted to express, so the idea was born to draw small angels and large, and they all carry their hearts to people, hearts full of love and tenderness.

Title: *Angel and Heart*

Materials of execution and sizes:
Ink, ink, paper, 21x15 cm.



In an alternate universe where I don't write about you

The world looks a different grey, definitely a shade duller. It smells alien, like a part of the earth I've never set foot on. The sun's never up in my sky and I don't bother to ask why. The weather's almost always gloomy, the stars above don't canoodle each other to form constellations. The flowers in my front yard wilt sooner; they no longer have a penchant for warm, vivid colors. Champagne tastes like water. Nothing tugs at my heartstrings anymore; there's a discernible lack of joy in my laughter. And love, it always remembers to stand at an arm's distance from my happily ever after.

Because, words are all I have, and when you don't exist, they choose to ditch me too.

Reasons to love you

I don't think I have ever needed one; you don't ask the earth why it goes around the sun.

It is involuntary, almost inexplicable; only, I know that without you, I wouldn't have the will to breathe.

You and I, we are not alike. We are the earth and the sky, the cactus and the bonsai. And yet, you unwittingly nudge me to fly high, to break free; you make me want to believe in endings that are meant to be happy.

We may sit miles apart and between our quiet conversations, years may have passed. But every time I look at you, I realize you are whom I inspire to be; you are, and will always be the muse behind my poetry.

Poems by Annapurani Vaidyanthan



YOU ARE ON MY MIND

by Annapurani Vaidyanthan

I can think of you only so much every day. You're already part of my passwords, my morning prayers, my prose, my pictures, my poetry, and yet, I miss you with a ferity that would put gravity to shame.

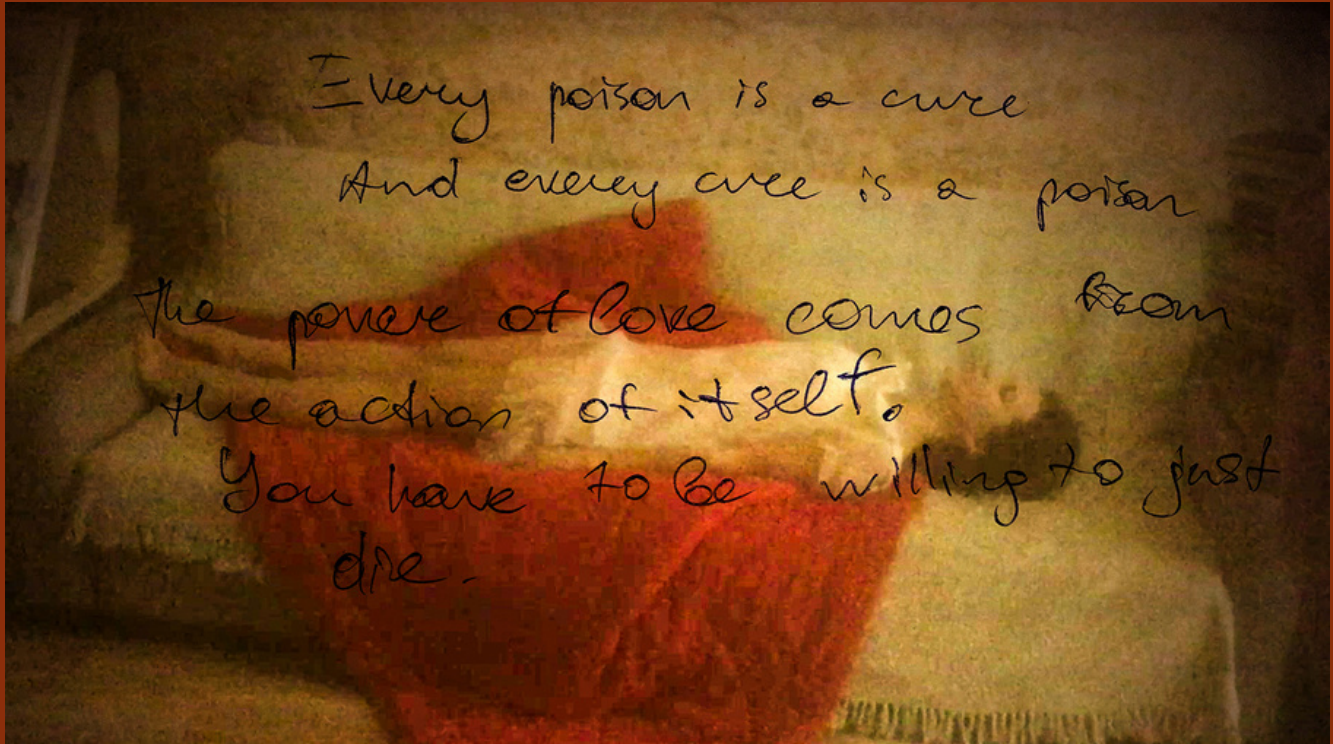
I wake up each morning wondering if you're fiction, if you're a part of a plot that only I know, if you're a character from a novel that I'd fallen for, from the word go.

Because there's an avalanche of stories I write in my head - every passing minute - just about the possibility of me and you. Because imagining a universe where you don't exist screams chaos and unease and hullabaloo. Because, you remind of home, of hope, of warmth, of safe havens, of dreams that are meant to come true.

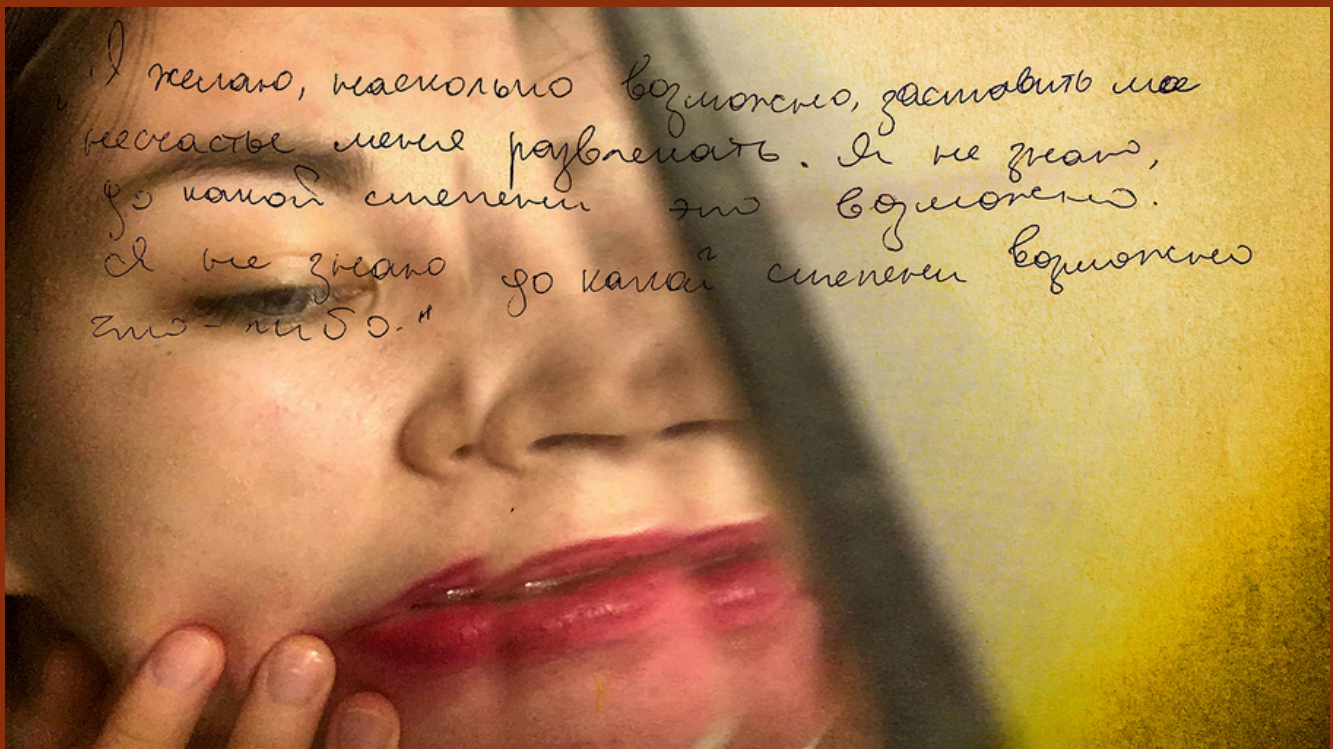
Natch, at night, when I hit the sack, my eyelids are heavy with nightmares of us breaking apart, of you choosing somebody else over me, of you and me becoming strangers who have never met, of me drifting away to another planet.

But somewhere in the periwinkle blue yonder, between a today that will get you to stay, and a tomorrow that wouldn't steer you far away, when the past ceases to matter and the future doesn't scare us, I can see you and me holding hands, living the beautiful forever.





From 12 postcards to Australia by Sofija Yevlaninkova



That's My Girl

by Shivani Verma

I.

In elementary school, sometimes my mom couldn't pick me up, so her friend would drive me back to her own house for the evening, and i remember — *What do you want to eat?* My favorite food back then was macaroni and cheese, but she didn't have any of that at home. *Let's go buy some.* What? Why? *So we can make it for dinner.* But there was nothing special going on, and I told her so. After all, it was just Friday. *Well then, let's make it special.* At eight years old, sunlight warming my face through the backseat windows of her dark car, that was when I first saw the world bloom.

II.

You make life feel like a celebration. Lately I've been turned down at the door, bouncer glaring and shame burning through my veins. The party roars and rumbles inside and I kick Coke cans in the corner of the parking lot, feeling sorry for myself. Feeling like everyone's going somewhere but me. So I sit down where the pavement meets wilderness, weeds rustling at my ankles, and trap myself so close yet so far from all that I deny that I want (because I can't want, I don't know how to let myself). And then I'm melting into the shadows like I never existed at all. You come in — tripping over the curb because of course you do, falling backwards onto the parking spot lines and laughing where I would've cried. Your dress is dusty and I watch in fascination as you brush all the little things away. Before I know it your razor-sharp gaze is on me huddled there all sad and lonely, and I feel unspeakably seen. *Why aren't you in line?* I shrug my response because I can't make the words come out. You nod but then flash a smile and a fake ID. *Well, I'm getting in line,* and I hear the words you don't say. And then you're going, and I'm left with my decision. And you know the rest because — what else is there to do but follow?

III.

Your touch on my arm is a plot twist, so when you yank me down the aisles of a Target on the second date, our raucous laughter echoing in a way that would've bothered me if it wasn't us, I'm thrown. I don't know what comes after this, I think then. Because you make a Friday feel like more than just a Friday. Because you speak sweetly to move bugs off your jeans but startle at a ladybug's flight. Because you make me count my curses like blessings. Because your caps lock texts are my happiness, because your bleary eyes are my exhaustion. Because you've got me glancing at my phone at all hours of the day, but you always text back when I pick it up. Because you're never not with me, because I draw dreamscapes with my pen strokes in the lonely moments and they all look like you. But when we're sitting alone, you desperately still and me aching to know what you're thinking, I trace lines onto the back of your hand and suddenly the murky future clears — I want to romance you until you forget everyone else's name. And so I will.

IV.

You're the euphoria of eight-year-old me skipping through the aisles of Safeway, picking out just the right brand of boxed mac and cheese. You're not the hoping life will be special, but the making it what we want. The loud 2000's music at 10 AM on a Wednesday, my involuntary exhale when you say how you always know what I'm talking about, even when you know nothing at all. My camera roll is filled with flowers because they all remind me of you — purple blue orange pink, a rainbow matching the colors of the beats of my heart. Every emotion you offer me is a thread that I pull and pull until I'm surrounded by a spool of multicolor. You make a month feel like a few moments. And when I find myself settling back onto the curb of that empty lot, watching all the pretty people go to all their perfect places, all the places I know they deserve (all the ones I tell myself I don't) you don't sit down beside me, you don't even cajole me to my feet. You stand there and grin, never even entertaining the thought that I can't do anything myself. You say, *I know it's hard, but what's sitting down there gonna do, anyway?* I don't have an answer to that. So I say, *Okay*, without meaning it, and with leaden legs and heavy arms I pull myself up to standing again. You cheer and pull me into your arms. And you say, *That's my girl.*



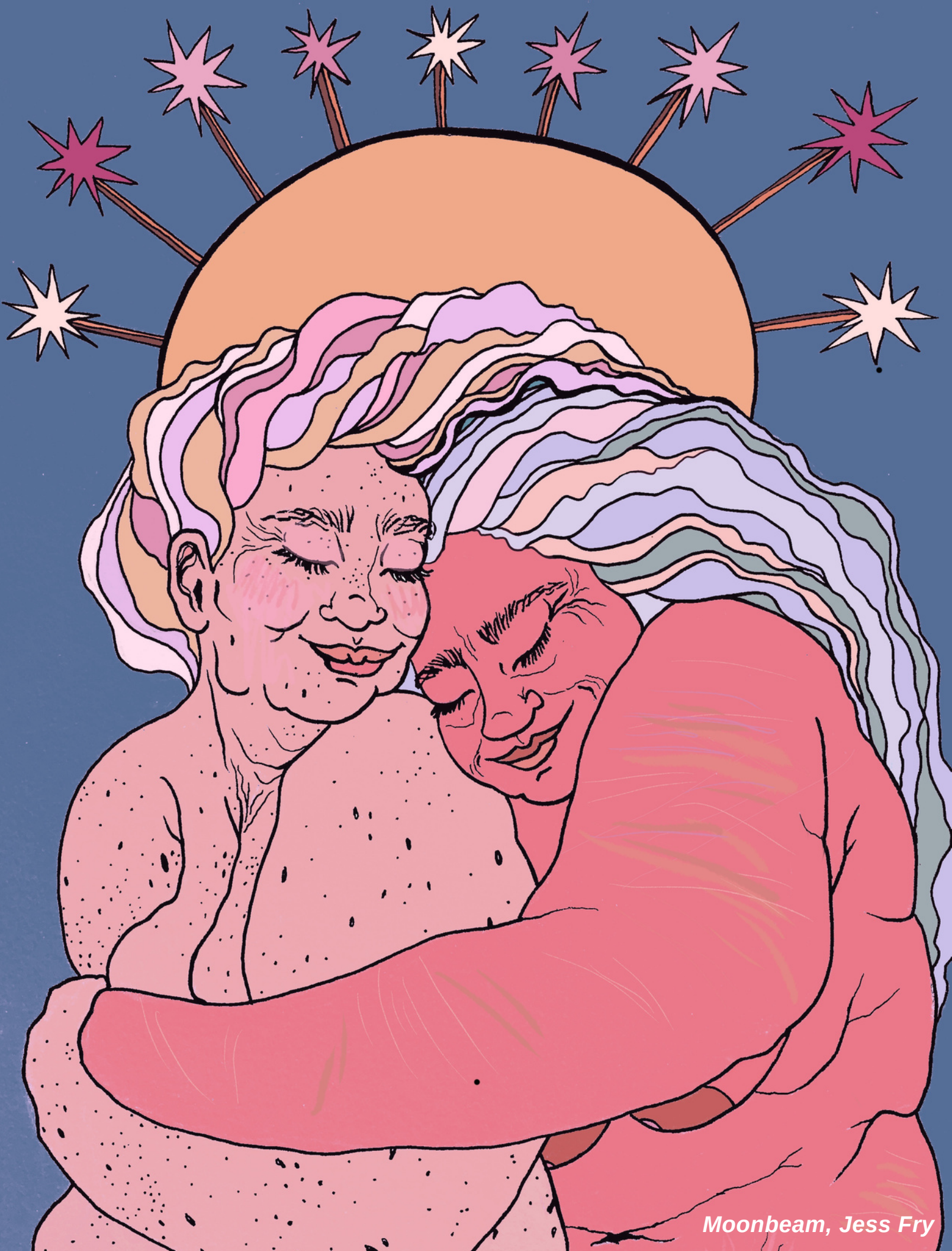
Sacred Love



Sanctuary

JESS FRY

Jess (she/they) is a fat, nonbinary femme painter living & creating in the midwestern united states. Their art is a labor of love, intention, and celebration for all that is femme, scarred, fat, aging, wild, fragile, wounded, raw, and honest about it. Grief work is at the center of her artistic practice; a sacred, creative alchemy that guides her & her art through trauma, recovery, and cycles of healing.



Moonbeam, Jess Fry



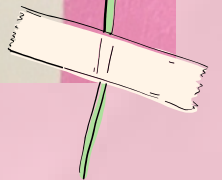
The Balance of The Lovers by Anacia Sessoms

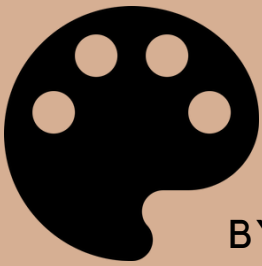
I OFTEN THOUGHT,
"wow, if I could marry
girls life would be better."

ONE OF THESE GIRLS HAD A
PINK HIGHLIGHTER STRIP DOWN
THE SIDE OF HER BIBLE. I
THOUGHT IT WAS SO PRETTY. I ASKED
HER TO DO IT TO MINE. I COULD HAVE
SWORN MINE WAS PINK, TOO, BUT
SHE MUST HAVE USED MY DISCOUNTED
YELLOW ONE. I HAD CONVINCED
MYSELF IT WAS PINK.

"It's my sister's favorite
part of the bible" she said,
DRAWING A STRIPE DOWN
THE SIDE OF OUR PRECIOUS
BIBLES.

BY
ARIKAH
LYNNE





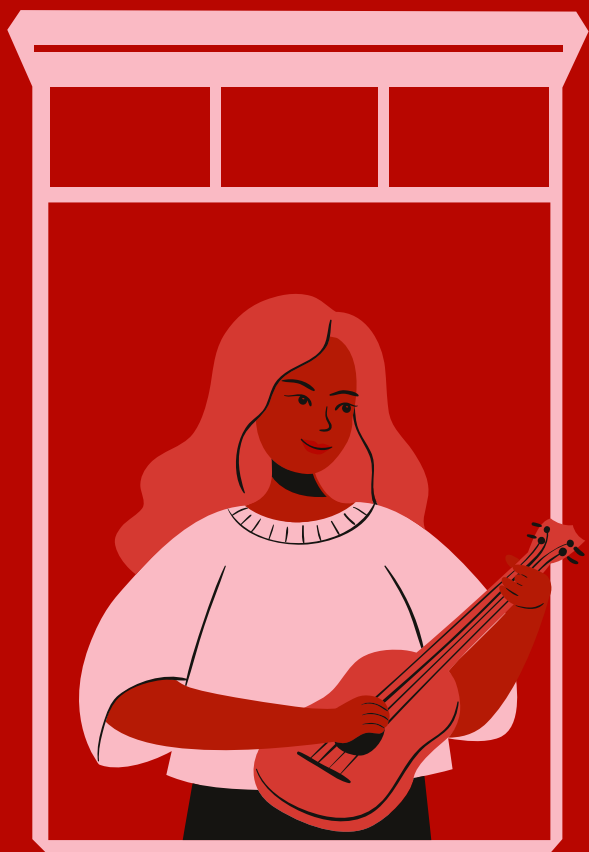
BY SHIVANI VERMA

You see me sitting in my gray desk chair when I can't quite make myself get up. You see me white against purple, fairy lights and cheery walls and all things of disillusionment that hide what I really am underneath: not cracking, not shattered — not like they say in the novels, but rather muddled browns and grays. The type of color you get when you've finished your 2nd grade art project and your teacher is asking you to collect the pieces and put them on the drying rack, so of course you do, of course you would (because if not made to serve then what are we here for?), but most of your classmates aren't cleaning up at all. Instead, you see your classmates huddled up around a table, swirling all the paint in their palettes into a murky hue. How perfectly apt it is that we can have beauty, but too much of anything, just the right number of shades blended together, can create something so wholly undesirable? And that's what we are, isn't it? Just an amalgamation of parts. But take too much of the beautiful and pristine and people will glance away, furrow their brows, never ask the questions you want to answer. And seeing is exactly the word, exactly what you do that the rest of them don't. Because people will always look and I ache but they don't see, do they? Maybe they don't want to. Nobody ever really sees something if they don't want to. There's only so many people who can talk to me for half an hour while I muster up the strength to pull myself out of the hole that I know I climbed in myself, thinking the bottom wouldn't be too far down. Today it struck me that maybe I was waiting for someone to say you'll be okay. I think I was waiting for someone to tell me what the right answer is. I know I was hoping for someone like you. Because most times when I look at myself I see all the separate parts, but the other days when they inch towards each other to create a turbid hue all I see is the muddy, despicable brown but you — you just see me.

P
A
L
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E

Ukulele

BY HALIN ROCHE



ukulele:
 when the
 night goes
 young and the heart
 turns infantile,
 you and i lie
 together in a trance
 under the
 ceiling/for
 us that's
 the moon
 lit sky/it
 carries our
 dreams in a
 big casket,
 held with
 aeons-old
 clusters of
 stars and
 comets/
 your hands
 reach for
 music and
 you sing me a

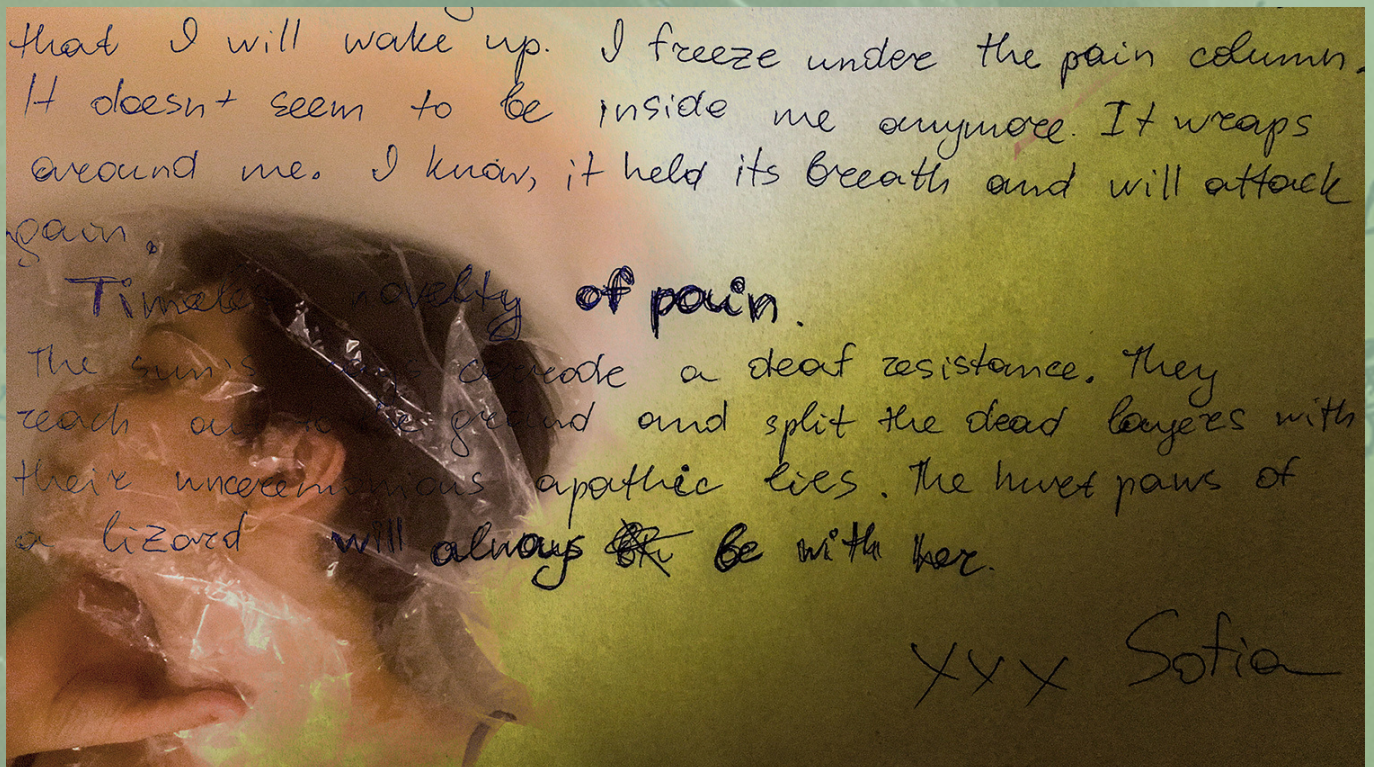
lullaby on the fragile ukulele
 strings/careful, they are as delicate
 as the glossy moss you find on walls in
 a rainy day/with every pull, you set the
 tune of whatever there is between us/soft
 and smooth treble clefs sing about the love
 our hearts bear/your fingers try to adjust the
 tuner while the frets align themselves as they
 are ready to oscillate every time you pull a
 string/crotchets, semibreves, bass clefs and
 beam notes, quavers and dotted
 minims enchant the night as your
 calm music kisses the burden in
 my mind/i feel weightless and light/
 my sorrows disappear into the thin air/
 our thoughts race back to where we first
 started together- by the sea, enjoying the salty
 breeze/we could sense the burnt smell of corn
 and nuts/we collect sea shells and walk on the sand
 with slow-paced footsteps/we see children making
 sandcastles while we erect one of our own made up of myrtle
 and turquoise in our hearts for us to reside forever/i baptise the sea
 on your name/not just the sea, but also the sand, waves, and reefs/the
 tides, the moon, your ukulele notes: all have something in common/you
 three rise and surge in a rhythm/recede, hibernate and lull yourselves back
 in a rhythm/i am no longer a buoy or an anchor that waits for someone
 to return/i drown serenely finally knowing where I belong/high notes slowly
 go low and halt/at last, the music stops/you put the ukulele to rest, calmly aside
 by the bedstand/i gently stroke your hair and pull your cheeks/i map your
 eyebrows and feel your minute eyelashes nestle my skin/i ask you to meet
 me by the sea which we see in our celestial dreams/no more tears to
 trickle and with that tiny twinkle in your eyes i doze to sleep with
 you beside/now come back to bed so that i can whisper "i adore
 you"/when the night goes young, you and I can lie together
 in a trance under the ceiling which we fantasize
 as the moonlit sky

12 POSTCARDS TO AUSTRALIA

Oh, darling, we fucked up
 You told me
 Tomorrow I will start forgetting you
 I'm telling you
 Meanwhile
 I look at the mirror and
 Everyone of them says I don't exist anymore.

Bad-quality selfies and dozen of letters, 11 of which have never been sent. I am talking to him but he never hears. I'm packing the letters, putting them on a shelf and travelling through time: in twelve years, me convincing myself I made it up; me convincing myself I don't need back what he stole from me.

You're never getting back what you're giving, remember about those holes, cripple.
 I was waiting summer for so long, but sun rays are falling on my shoulders as burns.



The last postcard and an accompanying poem from Sofiiya Yevlaninkova's project *12 postcards to Australia*.

texting poem

thoughtful of you I
wait for a ping in the
silence / if the rain

makes the day dimmer so be it
& if weeds choke out the lawn
in a week or two I won't mind

for I have a hope
like a fist of fresh
raspberries / if the rain

blows out the cellphones I know
we'll speak soon / soon someone
will come home & I'll actually say

something / my tense & urgent talk
tighter than smatters of wild violets

By Emily Murman



for luke

so you have swept me back to our shakespeare class—

thursdays spent in scenes between
tables & chairs, all of us leggy & fervid

in the curl of your mouth I remember
how you charmed, puffed like the
sails of a ship in salty splendor—

your mop-headed nod.
your laugh in the library boardroom.

quieter now I hear it still,
our speech as easy as marine slang.

you grin, we laugh, I toss my head
blossomy w/ the glow of knowing

today is a simple sonnet
clapped out on my chest.

By Emily Murman



By Esther Rabe



"These are recent pieces I made about living as a woman through the pandemic in isolation, its challenges, and how that affects mental health."

By Chantal Rios

SIMRAN *kaur*

You eat it, you take another one, another, another again until they are finished. You crave it, you crave it again, and again and once more again until your hunger turns into lust in your dreams, and you wonder if is gluttony and lust mixed in the plate set in front of you.

What I'm trying to say is that there always been a connection between food and love.

"The most basic pleasure of the period was that of feasting "

- The Deepest Sense, Classen



Teeth Dreams

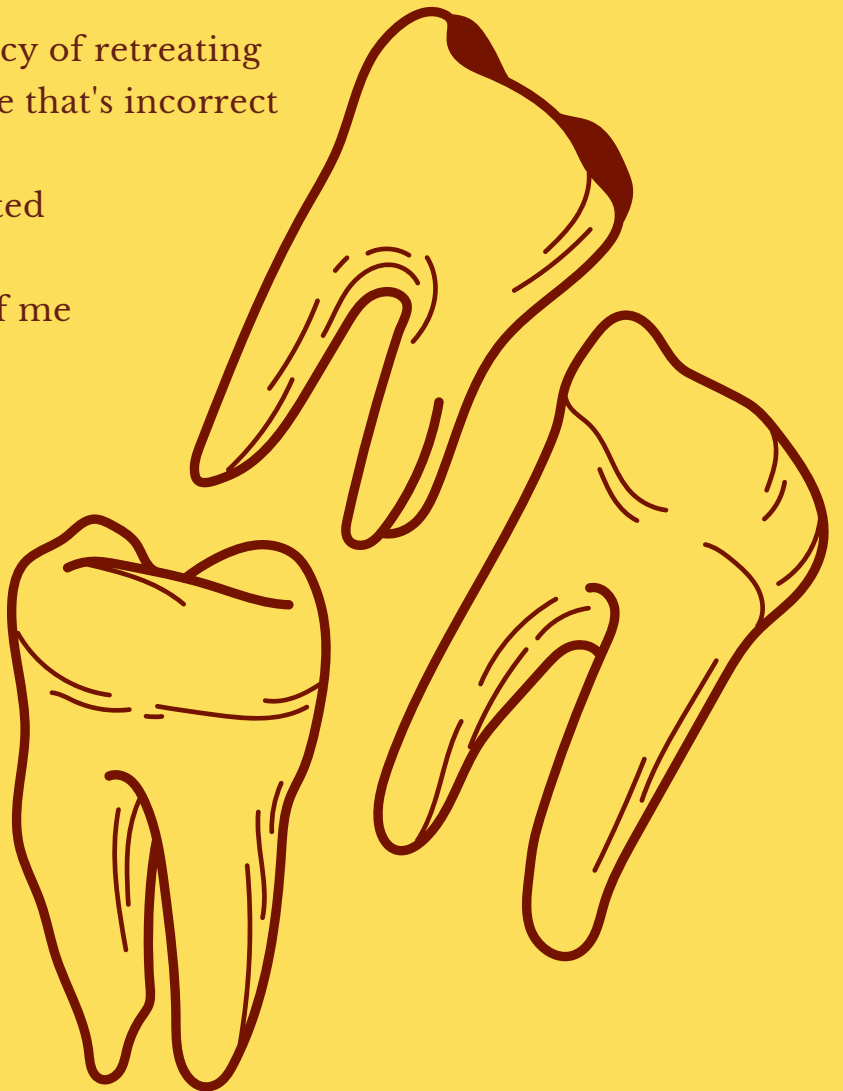
my teeth wake from a lucid dream
my closest friend, I saw you falling away from me again
waking with a dazed horror

my love, I dreamt of you, letting me go
thick, pink, healthy gum

my roots are deep
but you've always had a tendency of retreating
my bottom row showing an age that's incorrect

my visions say our time is limited
so does our tongue
as they glide against the back of me

By Lauren Rapp





Pink and White

By Leaann

I lay on my back and fade into your
pink and white floral bedsheets
Your eyes widen as you tell me what
happened this week
You're a daily assurance this world
isn't so bleak

Mazzy Star on CD

We sing in synchronicity
There isn't a thing I love more than
fading into your pink and white floral
bedsheets



By Carlos Luis Sánchez

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!
MORE ABOUT THEM:
in order of appearance

- 03** Amelia Rhett is a graduate student, earning her Master's in English (Creative Writing). Rhett's work weaves together folk and retro scenes with the search for soulful love in mind. Rhett writes of romance, heartbreak, surreal dreams, and ghosts that linger far too long.
- 05** Sofiiia Yevlaninkova: I started creating these pictures in an overwhelming emotional state connected with a person who was precious to me. He left (or maybe I had never arrived?); I had been writing letters to him and notes in my diary. I couldn't help but take pictures: my favourite self-portraits sorting out my feelings. All in all, the photographs were combined with scans of notes and the letters never sent.
- 07** Chris Mardiroussian is a graduate student at California State University, Long Beach. In 2018, he won First Prize in the Cinema Italian Style Film Festival (sponsored by the prestigious American Cinematheque in Los Angeles) for his short film entitled IL BREAKUP, which he co-wrote and produced.
- 08** Silvana Smith is a visual artist and writer born in Sicily and raised in Florida. She graduated from The University of North Florida with a degree in fine arts. Her creations typically focus on linework, longing, and language. You can find more of her baking, art making, and poetry through Instagram @eggexplorer.
- 09** My name is Anacia Sessoms, a 17 year old Creative Director, Model, Visual Artist, Fashion Designer, Graphic Designer, Photographer, and Videographer from New Jersey. I am inspired by the movement and vibrancy of nature through my Art. My Art is my Voice. My Artwork each tells a story about life within nature, one that we can't see through the naked eye.
- 12** Fraser Bentlee is a self-taught pop surrealist, based in Randolph, Massachusetts. They spend their evenings sketching and drawing up a concept for their next art piece. You can find Fraser Bentlee on instagram @fraserbentleeartofficial
- 12** Arikah Lynne: The works I'm creating in this moment are acts of longing, finding, and recording. I'm finding beauty in the small things, and searching for the bigger things within them. Dissociation, a feeling of disconnection from all reality, has been present my whole life. Through storytelling and snapshots I retell moments, mostly from childhood, before they are gone.
- 13** I'm Ella Breunig, a 20 year old animator and illustrator based in New York City, currently studying at Pratt Institute. Most often I create art in a digital format, combining elements of collage, line, and vibrant color to build imagined worlds, anthropomorphic characters, and stories that capture the magical realism of everyday life.
- 14** Sophie Raoufi is a British Iranian poet and writer who takes inspiration for her work from love, loss and technology.
- 17** Gianna Santucci is a nationally exhibited artist and recent graduate from Florida Southern College's B.F.A. and B.M. programs. She is currently based in Lakeland's Art/i/fact Studios. Her work focuses on traditional painting and drawing techniques and the marriage of contemporary activism with historical imagery.
- 19** SAMO (@samo.creative) is an art collective based in Brazil formed by three creative looks. A conglomerate of visual arts, fashion, design and behavior.

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- 20** My name is Dr.Manjusha Hari. I'm from Kerala, India. I'm a teacher by profession. I have published 2 solo poetry collections in my mother tongue- Malayalam. And a co-author of 3 anthologies too.
- 21** Yanitta Iew: I am a high school student from Bangkok, Thailand. I write poetry, screenplays and short stories when I am not drowning in a sea of homework. When I'm not writing, I'm listening to slam poems, binge-watching films or have my eyes glued to an award-winning screenplay.
- 24** Harri is a recent creative writing graduate from Kent. She is 24 years old and enjoys writing about mental health, love, and anything that her younger self would have been grateful to read back then. She has newly realised she is no longer able to ignore that she might be Taylor Swift's biggest fan. Swift's romanticisation of life inspires all of her writing.
- 26** My name is Jimena, I'm 19 years old, and I'm Peruvian. Since I was little I have dedicated myself to art. I started painting at 4 years old and at 6 I exhibited my first work publicly. From the age of 12 I began to dedicate myself to music. At the age of 19 I published my first book, a romantic novel called "Roma Enamorada" which is available on Amazon.
- 26** Romero Pasin: I am a self taught mixed media artist. My work is strongly influenced by my career in the performing and circus arts and by a nomadic style of life. I try to capture magic in the ordinary and to create fantastic but accessible worlds.
- 28** My name is Cynthia Vaders, I am a 22 years old Dutch female artist from Amsterdam. By creating art, I strive to share love to all pure human stories that cannot be expressed by words. Showing the world that it's beautiful to expose everyone's own self-love.
- 29** My name is Udit Mukherjee and I am from Kolkata, India.
- 32** Rebecca Kenny: I'm a poet and teacher, 36, living in Liverpool. Just started out on the scene during lockdown and using poetry to help make sense of the world.
- 34** Jane Forrest is a 16-year-old artist based in Toronto. She is currently majoring in contemporary art and studying contemporary photography at the Etobicoke School of the Arts
- 35** Leonie Bellini (she/they) is an artist and writer from London UK, currently living in Newcastle. Her work explores love, intimacy and care in all its forms. She loves cheap beer and listening to 'Pristine' by Snail Mail on repeat, and can be found on Instagram and Twitter @teenpeachmovie.
- 41** Sunanda Sharma: There's not much to say except that I write mostly when I'm at a loss for words. I'm most eloquent in those moments of chaos which render me "down for the count".
- 42** Dark Reconstruction Art: I am an emerging nonbinary queer artist working in acrylic and watercolor paints, creating abstract expressionist paintings, and a graphic designer with over a decade of experience. I currently live and create art in Queens, NY.
- 46** Alexander Rhodes (@creepingtrees) lived in the UK for 18 years until he moved to the Netherlands to study. Now permanently living and working in the Netherlands, Alex writes as a hobby covering memory, dreams and how they affect our world.

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- 50** Aimee Nicole is a queer poet currently residing in Rhode Island. She holds a BFA in Creative Writing from Roger Williams University and has been published by the Red Booth Review, The Nonconformist, and Voice of Eve, among others. For fun, she enjoys attending roller derby bouts and trying desperately to win at drag bingo.
- 53** Katie's interdisciplinary artistic practice explores the tactility and fragility of found materials. She is discovering visual language of these objects whilst responding to research on the human psyche, language of emotions and sensory experiences.
- "Spend time with the detail, the colours. Move closer. Be encapsulated by the stillness of this movement"
- 54** Sarah E. Hoffman writes and lives in Winnipeg. @sarahehoffman on instagram.
- 55** Kseniya Scher is a self-educated artist from Belarus, currently living in Russia. She works in visual art and art is a constant process of observation and development for her. Through travel, books, teachers, she gets to know this world, and through her work, the world opens up to other people in all its glory.
- 56** Arden Boshier: I am a disabled & trans nonbinary student and I have a lot of interest in love as interdependence, owing a lot to disability theory. I like the motif of food as a material way of caring for one another and oneself, with a particular devotion to trans people.
- 58** DeShane Short (He/ Him) is a proud Afro-American male from New Kent, Virginia who is currently a student at Longwood University, where he is majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing with an interest in poetry and non-fiction.
- 61** Megan KJ: Hand drawn illustrator from Detroit living in Melbourne, Australia
- 62** Allison DeDecker is currently based in Yuma, AZ. She draws inspiration from day to day life, current events, and the natural world. Her work has been published in the Colorado Crossing Literary Journal and is forthcoming in Pile Press.
- 63** Find Anushri Prasad on instagram @anprasad29
- 64** My name is Ilsa Afzaal and I'm from Lahore, Pakistan. I'm an ambitious young girl who's deeply involved in poetry, loves creative work and has a small imaginary world of her own!
- 65** My name is Leeann and I am currently on my 13th year of living. I was born in San Francisco but sadly moved to the very monotonous, Fresno, California. Growing up Middle Eastern took a toll on me and will continue to. I found euphoria by releasing those types of negative and sometimes positive emotions through poetry.
- 66** My name is Kat Hendrickson and I am 22 years old. I am a senior in college, a studio art major attending Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio. My dream is to become an album cover and merch designer for bands. I have been creating art since I was born, but really started taking it serious at age 12. Most of my art is inspired by music and dreams.
- 68** Reina Davis is a mixed-race Chicana from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is a graduate from the University of New Mexico obtaining Bachelor's Degrees in both Women's Studies and Chicano studies. Reina is an active poet in her community. She is continuously inspired by her family, and hopes to utilize her writing and visual art to connect herself and others through creatively amplifying the importance of identity, introspection, and empowerment.

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- 70** Sharone Malka is an illustrator and costume designer based in NYC. They love fiddly details, historical fashion, and queer beauty.
- 72** Irina Novikova: I am a graphic artist from Minsk (Belarus). Drawing began to interest me from an early age, the first subjects for me were Fantastic birds and animals. By my first education I am an art critic (State Academy of Slavic Cultures), by my second I am a graphic designer (MGTA).
- 72** I am a graphic artist from Minsk (Belarus). Drawing began to interest me from an early age, the first subjects for me were Fantastic birds and animals. By my first education I am an art critic (State Academy of Slavic Cultures), by my second I am a graphic designer (MGTA).
- 73** Spandan Bandyopadhyay is an 18-year old student from Kolkata, currently studying in class 12. He loves literature more than he loves himself. He wants to be a full time writer in future. You can follow him on Twitter: @Spandan_B_49 and on Instagram : @spandanb.49.
- 75** Annapurani Vaidyanthan: A 28-year-old mad hatter who can wolf down packets of M&M's before you bat your eyelids. Instrumentation Engineer. Author. Poet. Blogger. Will lay her life down for Roger Federer. Loves working with numbers. Passionate about technology, art, culture, and literature.
- 78** I'm Shivani, a 17-year-old with way too much work to do and not enough time to do it. Writing is my way of expressing the things I can't say out loud. Almost all of my work is rooted in my personal experiences, and I like to describe it as "feelingsy" — filled to the brim with my emotions for everyone to view. Other than writing, I enjoy listening to Taylor Swift on repeat, getting boba, and hugging my friends.
- 80** Jess (she/they) is a fat, nonbinary femme painter living & creating in the midwestern united states. Their art is a labor of love, intention, and celebration for all that is femme, scarred, fat, aging, wild, fragile, wounded, raw, and honest about it. Grief work is at the center of her artistic practice; a sacred, creative alchemy that guides her & her art through trauma, recovery, and cycles of healing.
- 87** Halin Roche is a student of literature from India. She is founder of Chasing Shadows Magazine. Her works have been published in The Sunbeam Zine, Fahmidan Journal, Lavande, Charmolypi Lit Review, The Walled City Journal's Walled Women Magazine, The Hearth Magazine and elsewhere
- 89** Emily Murman is a poet and educator from Chicago and holds an MFA from National University. Her debut chapbook, "SHRIVEL AND BLOOM," is forthcoming via Dancing Girl Press in 2021, as is her chapbook "I want your emergency" (Selcouth Station Press). She can be found on Twitter @emilymurman.
- 91** I'm Simran Kaur, I'm Punjabi and I'm 19 years old. I'm a still life, product, and creative portrait photographer and artist based in London (England). My Instagram account is @simran_k_01 and I do also have a website if you wanna have a look which is this one <https://simrankaur001.wixsite.com/photography>.
- 92** Lauren e.h. Rapp Los Angeles born, based out of Brooklyn. Writer moving toward equilibrium through art.
- 93** Carlos Luis Sánchez Becerra, (Maracaibo, Venezuela. 1987). He has a degree in Plastic Arts from the University of Zulia (2009), where he also studied dance and theater. Since 2007 he has made audiovisual works.