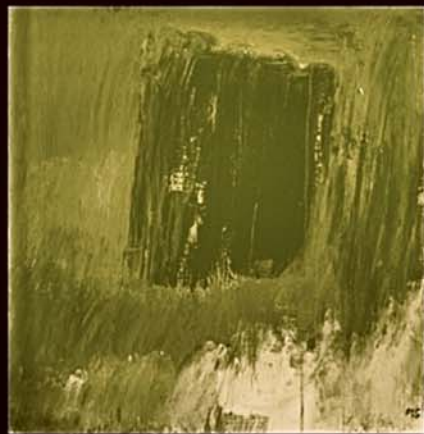


# TOFU INK ARTS PRESS SUMMER 2021





## Tofu Ink Arts Press

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# TOFU INK ARTS PRESS

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DANIELLE KLEBES **Untitled**



DANIELLE KLEBES **Untitled**





DANIELLE KLEBES **Untitled**

**Divina Sensoria: The Greater Crisis of Elodie**

I hear You. From the East and the West,  
the zephyr blows traces of You,  
and in them I hear you. But like the zephyr,  
those traces quickly disappear  
and I'm left believing the absurdity  
that we are apart. When the zephyr passes,  
it is replaced with whispers of doubt  
that I had heard any trace of You at all.

I hear You. From North to South,  
I hear Your Name named by every tongue,  
lauded by all creeds. Ambrosial Names!  
Whether I hear or speak in tongues,  
no matter what form You take, I know  
when I hear Your Name. When the zephyr scatters You,  
I want to kill myself, then I remember that Zephyr  
is a name that also belongs to You.  
A Name that scatters traces of Names!  
I hear them and lack all understanding.

I hear You manifesting unrelentingly,  
in the groans of Gaea as she eats and births  
Herself, in the sprouting roots of the living,  
in the rot and decay of the dying, in the laments  
and exaltations of songbirds, in the trembling leaves,  
in the snapping branches, in the sound of fruit falling  
and the consequent thump as they hit the ground.  
I lack all understanding and hear You all the same.

I hear You, rhymed and unrhymed, without reason.  
No matter the arrangement of Your syllables,  
no matter how corrupted or masterful the recitation of You,  
no matter how contorted or distorted the pronunciation,  
no matter how subtle or gross the insight,  
no matter how soft or abrasive the tone or timbre,  
the subject and object of all recitation is You,  
and in that my belief is unwavering.

Indeed, You are manifest in these and infinitely more ways,  
and I am grateful, but *why* do I hear You?

I see You. On every page I find You there.  
When I read You, I laugh because I keep finding You.  
You mock me when I turn the page and You're not there,  
then mock me when I cry and wet the page,

and when the salty-ink admixture runs down  
and stains my skin, I am completely humiliated by You.  
In despair, I rip You out and toss You. Then,  
to atone for my violent act, I turn inward,  
and in the confines of my being,  
there You are! Laughing.

I see You. In the dark, You are absence and substance,  
and so You frighten me. In the light, You are the sun,  
and so You burn me. When I take shelter from You  
in the shade, You expose me! I look down, I realize  
I am naked, and for that You mock me and I am humiliated.  
I shiver naked in Your shadow, curse the cold,  
then shamelessly return to You for warmth  
and the right to bathe in You. How shameful,  
how humiliating!

I see You in the straightness of Form,  
I see You in the form of Straightness.  
I see You in the curvature of Form,  
I see You in the form of Curvature.  
In asymptotes I see but cannot meet You.  
Parabolaes begin and terminate in You.  
As proof, You are abstract, as abstract,  
You are proof. There You are, occurring  
and recurring naturally and unnaturally.  
In denotation and connotation, You again!  
Numerable and innumerable, phenomenal  
and supernal. Verity and error bend  
at Your behest. How absurd! The more I learn,  
the less I know of You, and so I remain  
perpetually ignorant but aware of You.

I see You there, scattered across the hemisphere.  
How splendid is Your panoply of bodies, moons,  
and mansions! The Northern Lights envy You,  
Vernal Dictator, Autumnal Keeper!  
Celestial whirlpool, vega, nebula, dysnomia,  
You, You, You! You Lunar, You Solar,  
Queen Andromeda, King Oberon, Alpha Centauri,  
You the Rising, You the Setting. Look at You  
combusting and burning out unthinkingly.  
I see Cosmic You inhaling and exhaling You!  
How sublime You are, flanked by Your esteemed retinue.  
How does an ignorant sycophant fit in Your design?

Indeed, I see You manifest in all these ways,  
present and immediate, wherever I set my sights,  
and I am grateful, but *why* do I see You?

On my fingertips, I feel You. I bury my hand in You,  
I can feel You in my fingernails. and when I shake You off,  
I scatter You. In the meadows, groves, and pastures,  
I make sure I walk barefoot so that I can feel  
Your tufts between my toes. By the stream,  
in the soft wet clay, I press my hands into You,  
and when I lift them, there You are! The cuneiform  
code of You. Had You not stripped me  
of my discerning faculties, I would decipher You.

In the North, I feel You. On the shores of the Cerulean,  
You invite me in, and so I walk into You.  
Ice-cold and up to my knees in You.  
I feel You trying to drag me under, but I resist.  
Then You roll, rise and crash over me.  
Down I go, like a stone submerged in You.  
I feel You filling my lungs and feel the fear  
of drowning in You, until You spit me out  
and leave me gasping for You! Every time  
I resist You, I get dragged down.  
But when I give in, You return me to shore,  
floating in You.

In the South, I feel You. The earthy breaths  
of the pistachio trees fill my lungs  
as I walk through You. In the foliage,  
there You are! Crunching beneath my feet.  
Along my path, I find You every now and then  
uprooted, fallen, rotting, obstructing my Path.  
And when I place my hand and hop over You,  
spores fly and I get splinters of You in my skin.  
One by one, I pull You out. How difficult You are  
sometimes! When I get lost in You after dark,  
or I am caught in the rain, I find a hollow  
and shelter in You. How long will I remain lost in You?

From East to West, from the flood-plains to the steppes,  
from Hazar to Anburam, I roam You. And when I am weary,  
I drag my feet in You, surveying You. I feel every pebble  
in my pathway. And when You sink below the Horizon,  
I set up camp and wait for You to rise again. You rise and fall,  
I feel the urge to roam the whole of You, longing  
to feel You all the time. The more I feel of You,  
the less I understand. How much more is there of You?

On my fingertips, across my skin, through my hair,  
beneath my feet, and in my lungs, there's no avoiding  
the feel of You, but *why* do I feel You? Undoubtedly,  
I am the lord of ignorance and You are Knowing.



So make me understand! if I keep hearing You,  
and I keep seeing You, and I keep feeling You,  
wheresoever I go, then why do I still have doubts  
about You? Is it Form or is it Substance that deludes me  
and obscures You? Will I ever perceive Your self-disclosure?  
What part of me must be pried open in order to find You?  
Why do I love the wayfarers but not the Way?  
Why do I trust the servant but not the Master,  
the subject but not the Object? Why are the writings  
of saints more sacred to me than You? Why do I love  
so fiercely the idea of loving You, but find it impossible  
to just love You without qualification or impediment?  
Why are there strings attached? If I hear and see  
and feel You all the time, but spend my days doubting  
sensoria summarily, are You just a foreign entity  
possessing and tormenting me? I just want to understand.  
Loose me from my self! I am impatient, I am defective,  
and I am fearful of my own ignorance.

I suppose, if ignorance is my slave-driver,  
there is no other recourse but to till the field,  
sow You, tend to You, harvest and deliver You,  
then watch as others consume You at my expense.

I will till the field, sow and harvest.  
But when the time is right,  
I will raise Gaea from the very earth.  
I will be one of the dirt-eaters  
who stuff themselves with You.  
I will ambush the overseer  
and spring myself from bondage.  
I will haunt the Zagra Valley as a fugitive.  
I will scour the flood-planes.  
I will feed on the dirt and the clay.  
I will chart the course of nothing.  
I will mark the days on my wrists  
and lose c o u n t.  
And when I've soaked the earth,  
and there's nothing left of me,  
I will give to Gaea and await my verdict.

ΞΞΞΞΞ

Like the zephyr, traces disappear.  
Give my regards to the overseer.  
Say to them, 'it had to be this way'.



GEORGE L. STEIN Renee, Stonewall



GEORGE L. STEIN *anna at coney*





GEORGE L. STEIN a walk in the park



GEORGE L. STEIN *visitor*

COLETTE CHIEN

**that chemical tastant**

h. d. told us to embrace living in a toxic world. break down the sordid barriers, entropy will envelop all of us in time.  
i don't know how to reconcile piles of my maintenance as waste in

another's home, i'm sorry to the wrasse, you are now living in a toxic world —  
did you taste some of my shampoo yesterday, did it turn your mouth purple? i know it didn't clean it out.

she told us to accept the respective time for the secular to break down;  
hours, months, days

some things vanish in an instant, other things stay. but there aren't enough bugs & sea slugs for plastic to turn to  
palatable waste.

toxic angler in the mariana trench, an island that floats away / only to expand in their throats.

we're used to formaldehyde, foreign & plastic face masks at a funeral, goodbye forever wrapped in a polymer sheet.

(on inheritance— inventions of things that bend without break, continue to fall into synthetic laps. how unfair is  
that?)

entropy, in a large scheme,  
is reassuring. my body will become a fig, that fig will become a cheating wasp. all that is lost will become the dust to  
which something else is made. even dust in the air is something, it's enough.

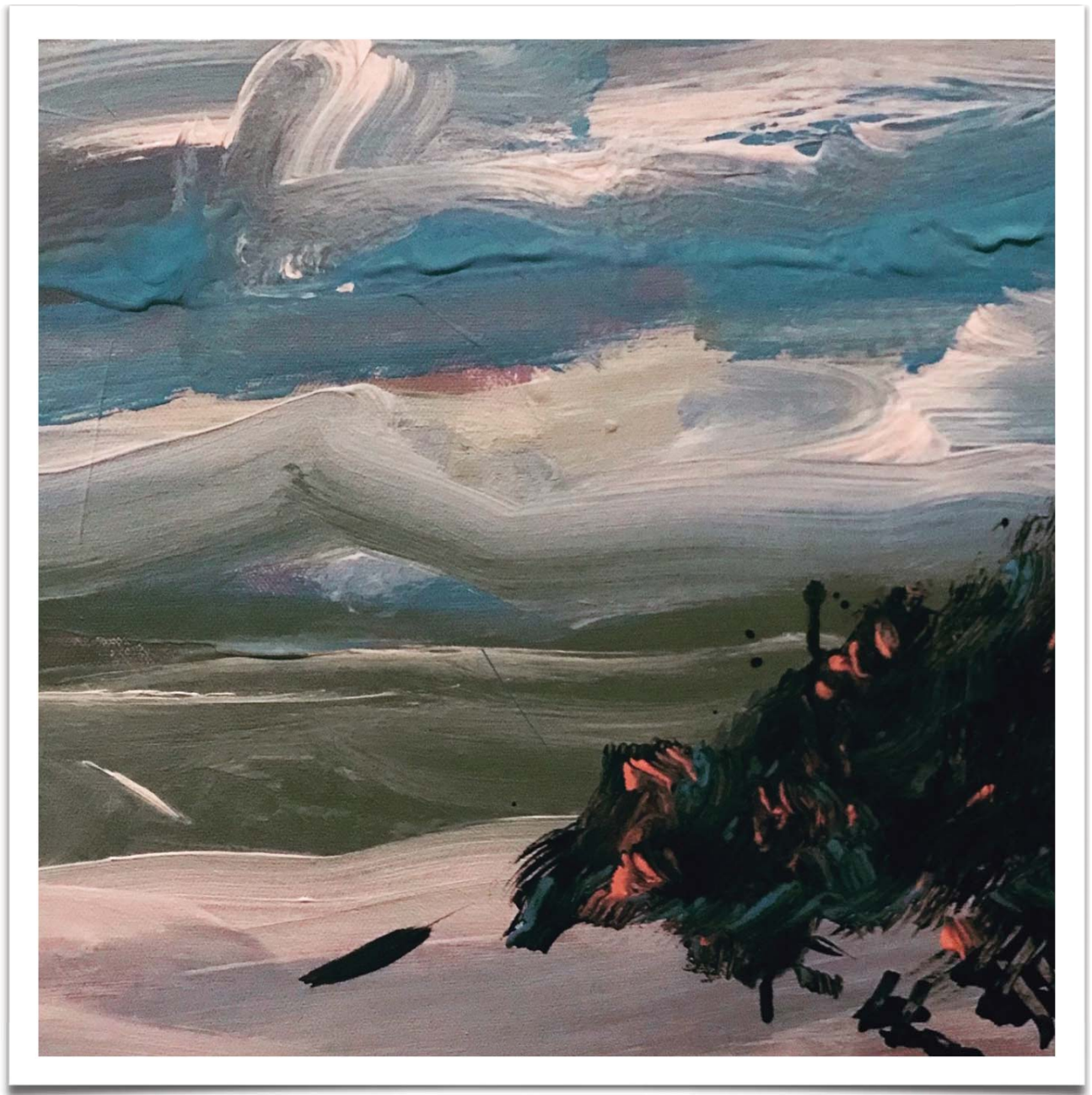
ANDRE F. PELTIER

### **Jim Crow Sunset**

In the long shadows  
of a Jim Crow sunset,  
the long work-a-day  
lives of a Mississippi,  
Alabama, Georgia,  
South Carolina cotton field,  
they stand or crouch or kneel  
with determined exhaustion.  
Bare foot and muscular  
shoulder, they look to  
the future, the young girl's  
American Dream resting on  
the horizon line of all tomorrow's  
cotton bales. Will she  
leave the fields and migrate  
north? Will she find the  
streets of Harlem, Cleveland,  
Detroit as welcoming as the  
warm embrace of her mother  
and father? When Earl Wilton  
Richardson flew from his fourth  
story window, when his love  
and *Negro Achievement*  
crumbled to red-dust fields  
and red-dust yesterdays, did  
she understand his pain?  
Did the daughter of those  
who drove the mules and  
dammed the Saluda  
see into tomorrow's  
deadly distance?

(Earle Wilton Richardson: *Employment of African Americans in Agriculture*)





CYNTHIA YACHTMAN Covidscape 8



CALUM ROBERTSON

**“ms chrysanthemum” at the door (a 1912 japanese wedding seen through western eyes)**

...and where was the go-between this luncheon but drunk somewhere  
strangled beneath a musky cunt and his wife patiently sat beside  
“ms chrysanthemum” and her mother-in-law-to-soon-swiftly-be  
that was when the american cameras came to preserve  
there in battered vellum inks the go-between’s glaring absence  
can be obviously seen today and a century more

a turid corpse-in-waiting-at-the-ready flattened  
a domestic rupture shaped silhouette  
in the garden where crushed flowers weep  
for their tender bride now taken  
married to a concrete street  
whose only green-growths are accidental  
casualties of mucky gutter-voids  
left unclean for the duration of wine-veined  
teacosy-winged butterfly migrations spanning  
press release to greentea tearstained page.

ADELE EVERSLED

**Gifts To A Young Lady**

in the bathroom you with your cracked skin (call it marbling) and pulsating mound are offered gifts that  
you bundle in hands and mouths to taunt the brittle beauty promised but better down the stairs the  
stuffing of apples into pink plastic so with the grace of tearing out comes a reliquary smell found in  
forgotten books and ruddy leaf piles moldering rusty cumborsomely heavy as you crunch bird bones  
beneath a white robe to hide from the divine—too divine—breaking a witch-hazel rod you secretly divine a  
sewer to baptize and generously mold wild things to make a wooden bowl where you can stack the bruised  
apples before the fall and know that nobody no matter how lovely ever had all the answers

BRIAN L. JACOBS

**One's Euphoric Liberty the Vibrant Language of Its Boom**

similitude robustesse  
in displeasure'd watch

etched  
in the ransack

of two  
modes

between new  
and old potencies

unearthing  
unearthings  
\*

marionette  
ramshackle'd

gash'd guttural  
encyclicals

blue bearded  
at the acme  
\*

moonfish  
convalescence

against  
the movement of histories

genocidal  
operatics

wishing oneself  
cosmos and grass  
\*

to profit  
one's euphoric liberty

the lapidary orgasms  
of gushes  
more dead  
than bayoneted vibrates

\*  
dues in light  
valorize combustion

desecrate  
the denaturer

the vibrant language  
of its boom  
\*

womb  
the sperm to this ether

spray the logic  
of marshalled assets

the mass  
of birth

of all  
entirety  
\*

decerebrated  
peoples

arm stretched to the realm  
of denials

the overseas  
judders of onetime

## the hue nocturnal in the guano

genocidal profits  
blaspheme devantures limber fate

delivered doom  
“ ” to compose

comparative supplants  
escape  
\*  
insouciant failure  
molt'd

less'd the verdure  
trembles

the layer  
of nightfall

in which  
to drown  
\*  
last  
the rhythm frisk

maladies  
of enunciated tongues

inserted in maximum secret  
of our stupefactions

our chaotic  
births  
\*  
memory glebes  
accident

contrabands posterns  
of barbarism  
\*  
reticent  
mutterings

the infamy  
of extirpation

scour  
the hue of humus

glorioles suave  
the rose cell

nocturnal  
in the guano

\*

anarchies  
lattice

walk  
finding no shrines

\*

solstices  
a pure kiss

on the mouths of the dead  
opt'd for the sun

\*

passional  
multiplicities

Gehenna  
the mud demons

deport  
me

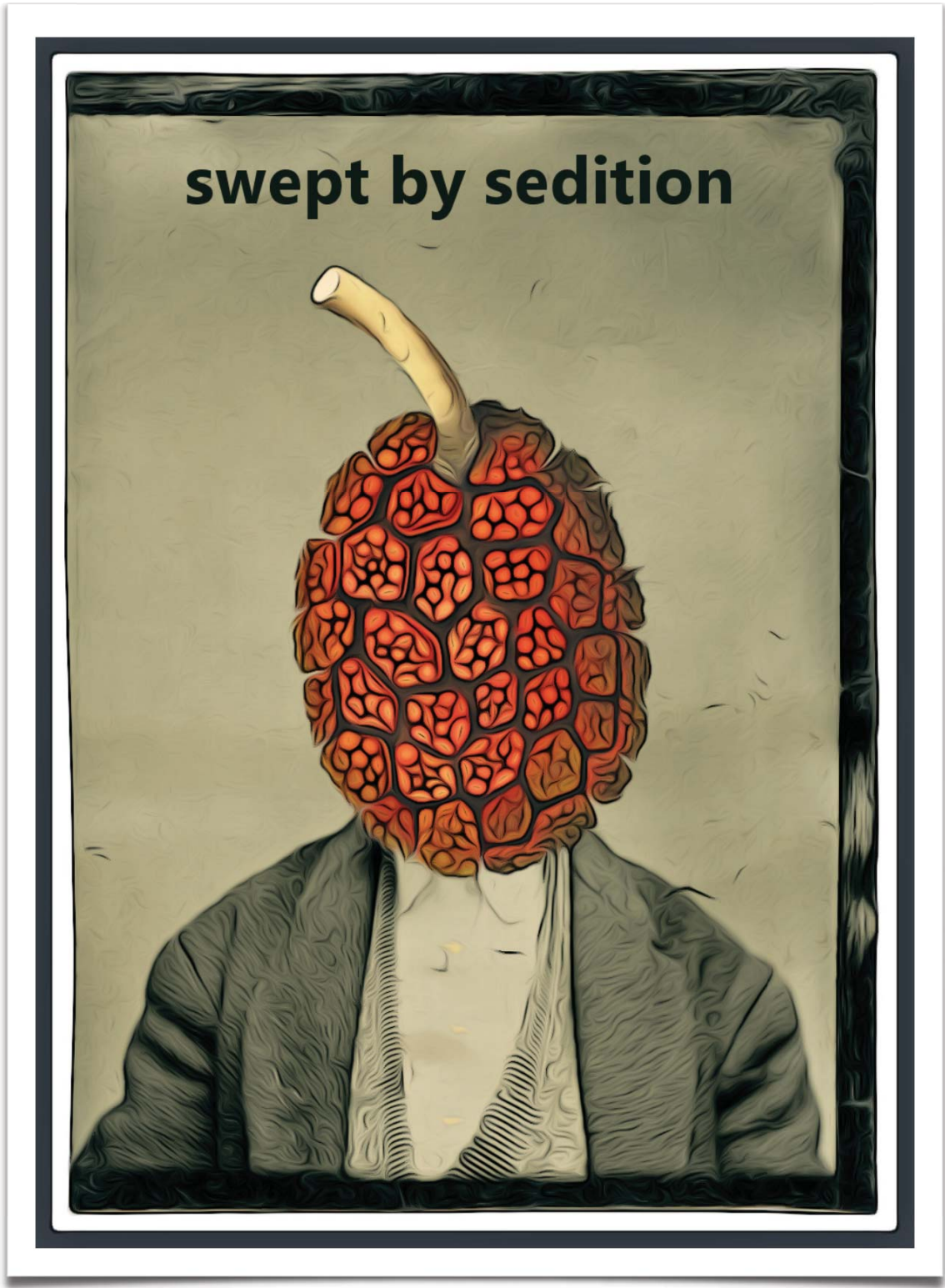
to a novel of  
dirts

\*

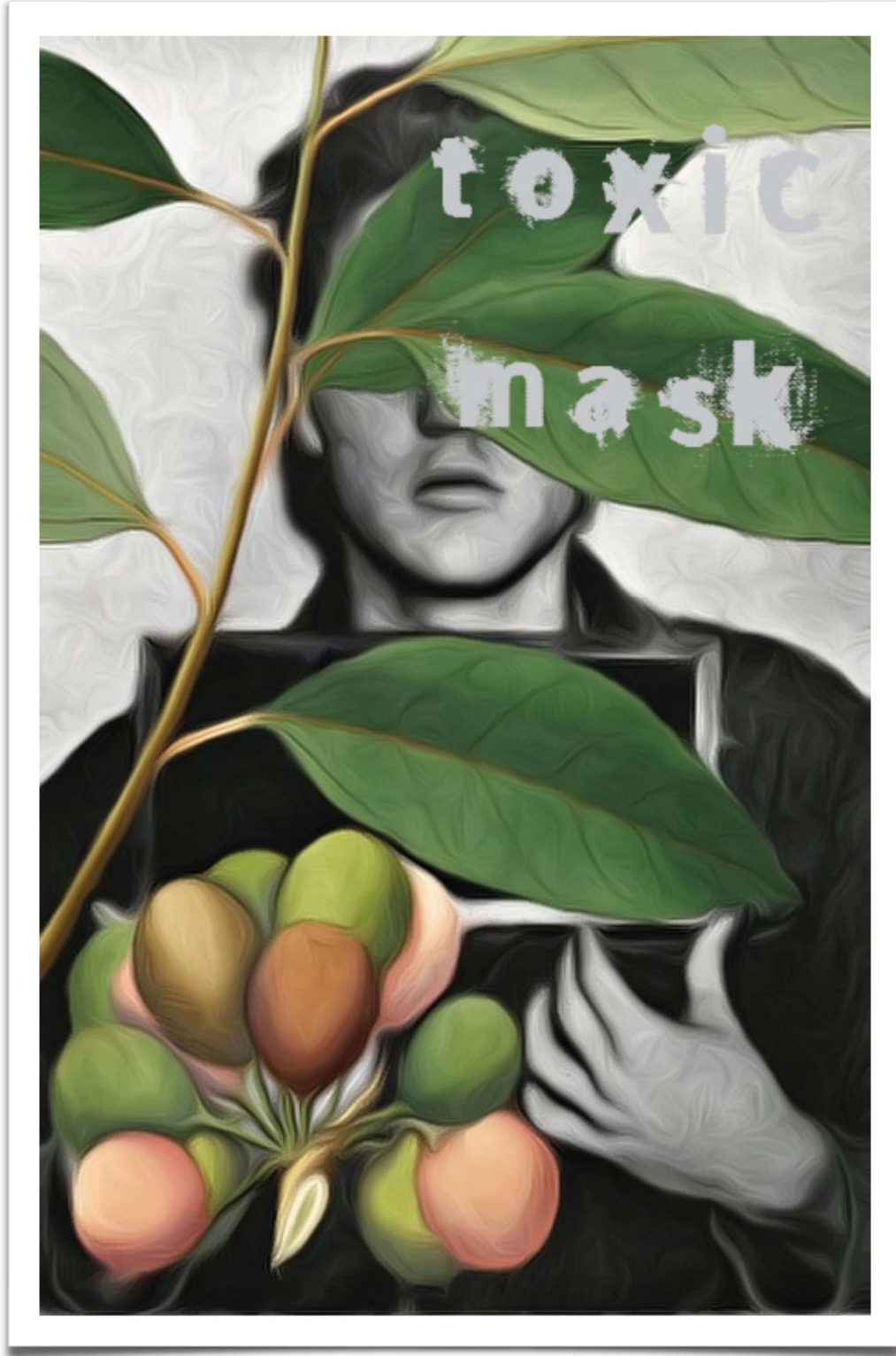
envision'd  
menu

sand'd spells  
on day's clasp

ALL  
has not been explored

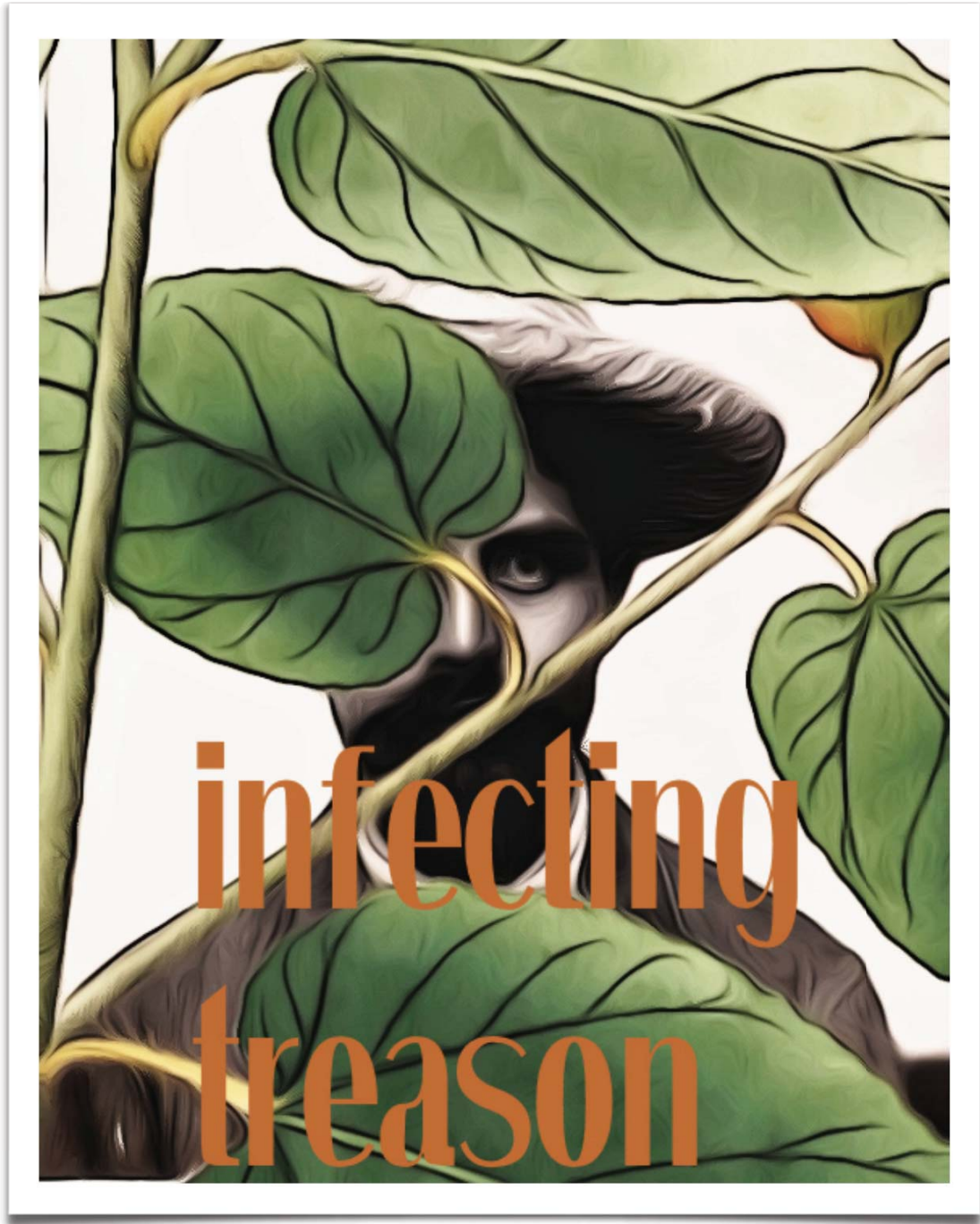


ASHLEY PARKER OWENS *Angel Series Images*



ASHLEY PARKER OWENS **Angel Series Images**





ASHLEY PARKER OWENS *Angel Series Images*

HUGH FINDLAY

## Trolley

In Frank's 1955 black-and-white photo, *Trolley*, children sit in the middle row between the races — light in front and dark in back. All are facing toward the camera, seeking their own reflections.

But the children, it's the children who are unknowing, curious, even a bit excited, taking a simple trolley ride through town. What they don't know, they can't care, and at the moment there is no fractured history, no civil disobedience, no disenfranchisement, no discord, as every rider claims his or her place, separated by the equidistant windows and seats.

And the camera captures them in abject objectivity, as they breathe the same air, share the same freeze-frame, stiffly gaze out to a world that mirrors their American lives: a Black man with arms on the window stretching toward his freedom; the ample woman behind him looking away at some unseen splendor; a White man in the front with his face blurred and ghostly; the stoic woman behind him throwing a judgmental glare; and the children between them all, souls still intact, innocent, pure, inheriting a trolley that always stops but never ends.



Robert Frank, *Trolley*, 1955  
Cover photo of "The Americans" 1959

JOJO L.

**P'ain't PINK**

Joli garçon  
Je dis oui  
in the city of Pink Martini and rose  
I rambled,  
got drunk  
and turned  
PINK.

(Credit: Joli Garçon, song by Pink Martin, "Je dis oui!" album, 2016)



JOJO L., Portland 2018





MELINDA R. SMITH **Michigan Summer Paintings**



MELINDA R. SMITH Michigan Summer Paintings





MELINDA R. SMITH **Michigan Summer Paintings**



MELINDA R. SMITH **Michigan Summer Paintings**





MELINDA R. SMITH Michigan Summer Paintings





MELINDA R. SMITH **Michigan Summer Paintings**

SARAH SOPHIA YANNI

**photographic evidence**

three family portraits  
still hang in the hall and  
I feel, at once, the  
enormity of time. my parents  
pull out albums, call them  
jewels. daughters posed  
like angels  
on the old brown porch.  
I can still feel the skirt's  
crinoline layers, the gem-buckled  
sunday shoes, the way  
the sunshine  
laid across my nose's  
tiny bridge. and the one  
where I'm in the white  
gown, a silver  
heart-shaped pendant gently  
on my chest. jesus. to  
conclude, this is what  
I've learned: to unbecome  
a girl you must  
rip hard. we are plants  
lodged deep in  
fertile earth. you must  
feel the tug of every root and  
weedy tendril trying  
to resist. you will feel  
the fraying and eventually      the snap.

JACLYN HOGAN

**What the Fuck, Incredible Hulk?**

*inspired by Jordan Eagles' "Untitled (Hulk/AIDS)"*

So Hulk doesn't save his friend.

The same guy  
who saved his cousin,

made Jennifer Walters  
into the Savage She Hulk,

let's Jim Wilson  
die of AIDS.

I am thinking about  
how it would feel  
to have radioactive blood

while the sky outside  
ripens like a plum.

Why can't we have a Black, gay, gamma-powered hero?

Hell, if Hulk's blood cures AIDS,  
let's have a bunch of them.

If we can have Red Hulk and Red She Hulk,  
if Rick-fucking-Jones can be A-Bomb,  
if Hulk can have a half-alien son named Skaar,

then give me  
a badass, queer,  
irradiated  
super team.

Let me read  
about their adventures.

Let the guy at the shop  
with the leaky a/c unit  
recommend me their book

instead of the one with  
the time travelling rapist.

They could be called Gamma Squad,  
Smash Masters,  
or The Radio-Activists.

Featuring the Mighty Bicuspoid,  
who chomps foes in half!

The Ossifier, who  
turns bad guys  
to brittle bone!

And the cover of *their*  
comic book will be  
anything but black and  
red and so goddamn sad.

## After the Elephant Died

*inspired by Christina Nicodema's Elephant Raft*

The Elephant is caught dead on the canvas  
pressed like a plucked four-leaf clover,  
a page in the story of her edible life  
cooked tender and rare.

Brimming with strawberry blood,  
and supped on by prickly spiders  
and gem feathered cockatiels.

Then the Elephant  
unbreaks,  
and

stitches herself together again. Button  
and clasp, undoing the wounds of sharp fork tines.

Back through the spigot, the water flows  
up and out of the drain. Time winds backward,  
the pages flutter back from the end of the story.

The cake server clatters back into the drawer.

The cake is unbaked, ingredients uncombining.  
Chocolate back to the bean, flour to the wheat stalk.  
The cheese un-ferments, becomes milk again,  
returns to swell the cow's udder.

The fruits shrink back into the flowers.  
The water in the pool wavers between  
un-condensing, and un-evaporating.

The Elephant smoothes her trunk over her skin as her epidermis joins,  
and, whole, can retreat into the

hot gold savannah. Walk away from the  
pavlova and raspberries, liver and entrails.  
The Elephant can live backwards  
reduced until she is a calf,

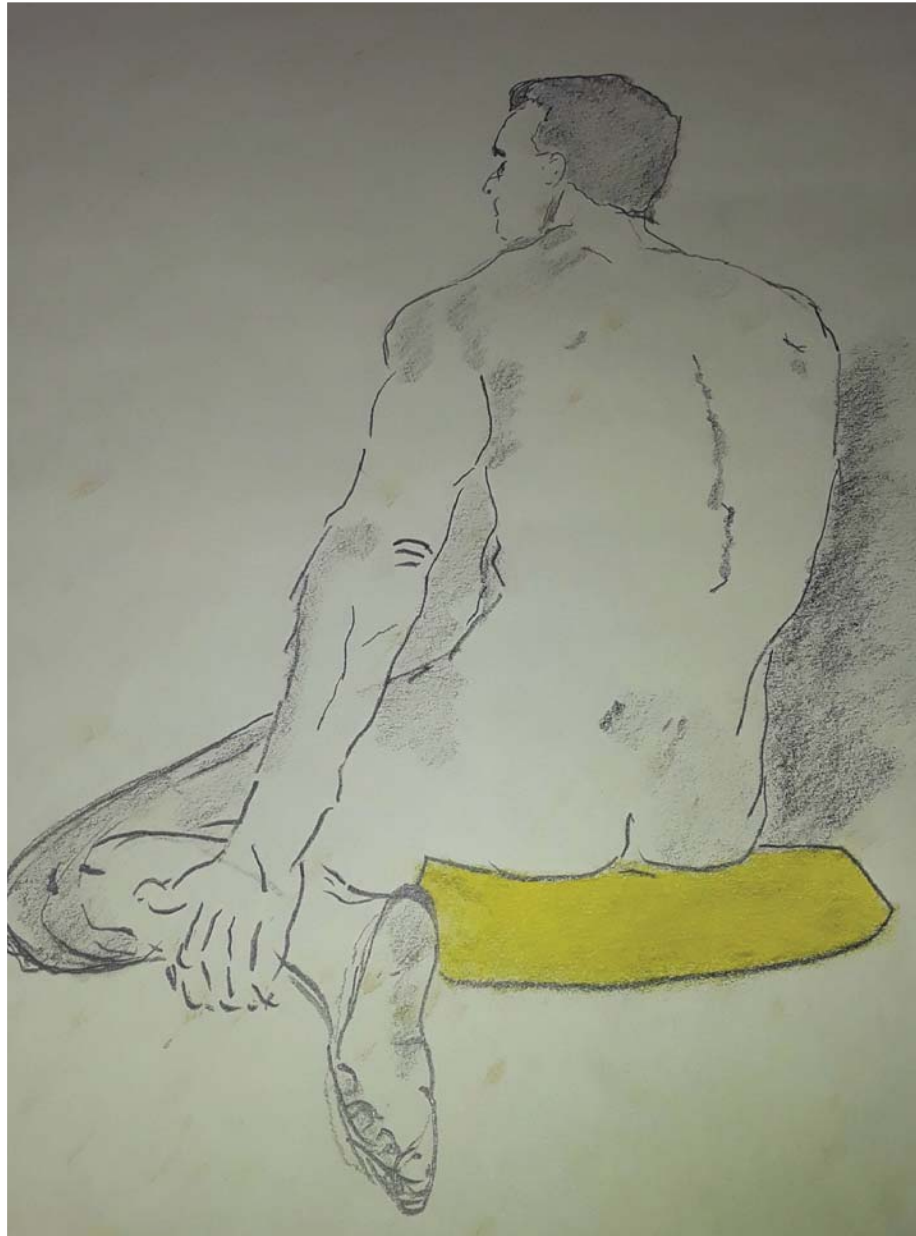
Then a fetus, then an embryo  
until the egg separates from the sperm.  
And then the Elephant will un-exist again,  
until time rewinds, restarts, resumes.

The Elephant remade, to be unmade.  
Consumed like any other bite  
of sweet or savory, as delectable  
as any other broken perfect thing.

CHARLES BECKER

**For Trevor**

Unbow your head  
get off your wounds and knees  
eyes open, unborrow time  
and lift your shoulders back.  
Unclasp worried fingers  
stretch them tall  
like giant redwoods do  
expose those long lines of your palms to air  
and loud your voice  
strong each word  
inhale what's done about your past  
but exhale into the future.  
The lies you told yourself  
in childhood already afraid  
of what was coming, were never true  
you were nothing bad, only good  
you were nothing wrong, only right  
there was just your nature, simply your heart  
and the deepest sense of knowing.  
So tell me now you're coming out  
and I will cry with you  
for your storied silences  
coverings in corners  
and dependence on gray areas, self-denying  
pleas, forced thank-you's  
half-lived dreams and censured visions.  
You will know a world  
of possibilities soon  
inclusion, infusion, communion  
people who get you and speak  
your lifestyle.  
You will feel unalone, refriended, revived, recreated.  
Unbow your head, get off your knees and wounds  
then just move towards traced footsteps  
of our ancestors  
found-family elders who can teach you  
how to recognize  
and fill  
custom-fit  
ruby slippers  
with your own purpose  
and sureness.



CHARLES BECKER **Untitled**



FRANK WILLIAM FINNEY

**Red**

We were painting the stairs  
that led to the lake  
when the trolls strolled in  
to watch us paint.

One asked us why we chose  
to paint things red  
when trees were black  
and white and green,  
and the bushes were spotted  
with blueberries.

A cardinal landed  
near the stairs

and the trolls grew suspicious  
we were painting the birds,  
as we blushed behind our  
brushes.

Had they never seen strawberries,  
cherries or beets?

Had they never sliced open  
a watermelon?

What about roses and rubies  
and blood?

What about all the blood?

## Soapy

Sometimes in the soap aisle, I think  
of you. You always had a thing for soap.

Your collection was the subject  
of much speculation; the envy  
of the nuns on Northanger Road.

You always made a room smell clean,  
no matter who or what was in it.  
So when you refused to sing something

from Salome in the shower, I coaxed you  
with a bar of Khan Al Saboun and you sang  
to the steam as you lathered up.

You were still in your robe  
when the doorbell rang, but neither of us knew  
who ordered that pizza.

## Cabin by the Lake

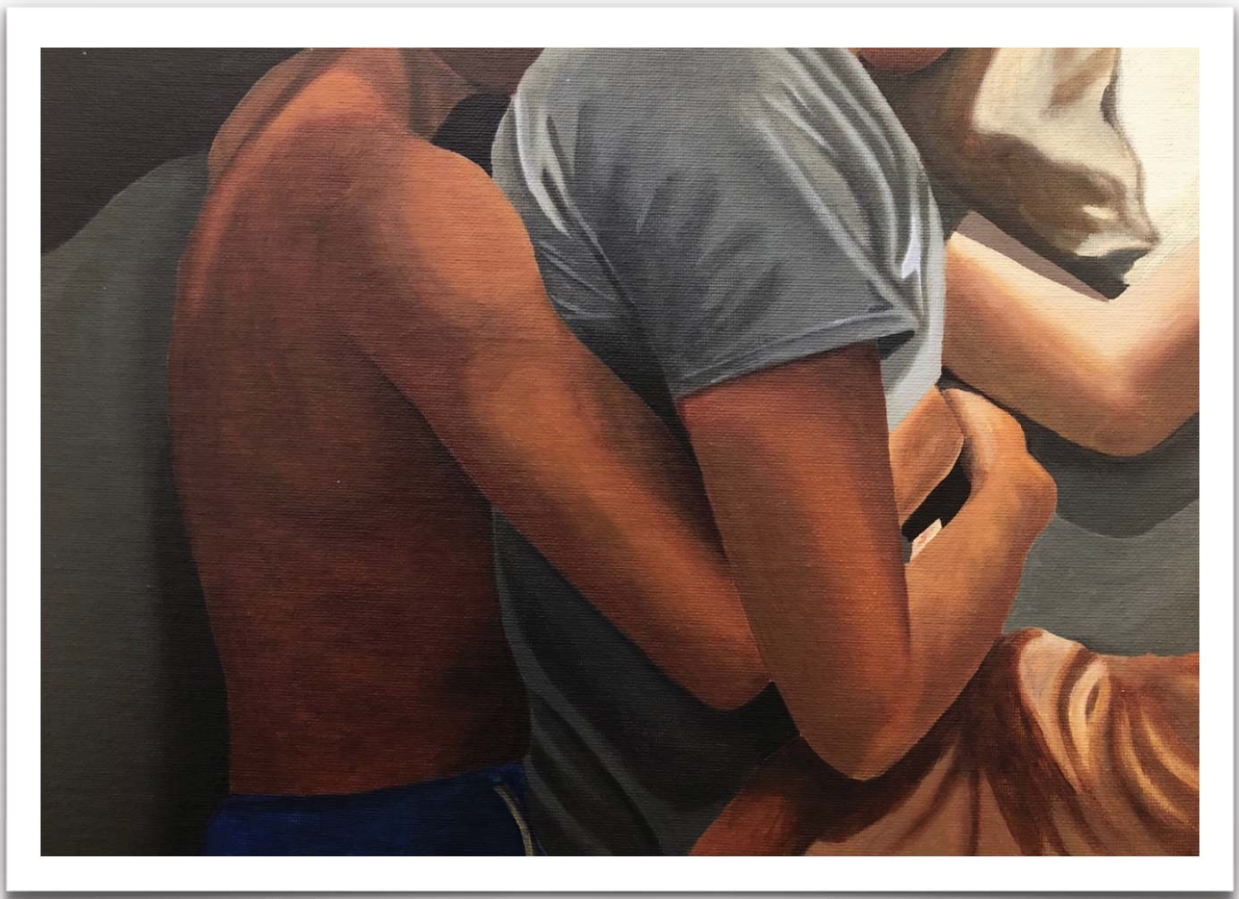
It was somewhere near the lake, as I recall.  
The cabin, always thick with smoke and sound: *Aqualung*  
*my friend* ... The only album they played that spring.

The owners, I mean: the scruffs that lent us that little cubby-  
hole under the stairs. Yes—under the stairs—years and years  
before the motif.

Those ‘*We-know-what-you-two-were-doing*’ looks on their faces  
each time we emerged from our love shack’s knotty walls  
The soundtrack: jacked up Jethro Tull: *Don’t you start away uneasy*. . .

I think we’d always known we’d never marry. Not each other  
anyway. And if they told us then that pot would be legal  
by the time we got old, we would have laughed in disbelief.

Chances are the scruffs are dust.  
Who knows who might live in the cabin now?  
Or if they finally tore it down.



**Embrace**

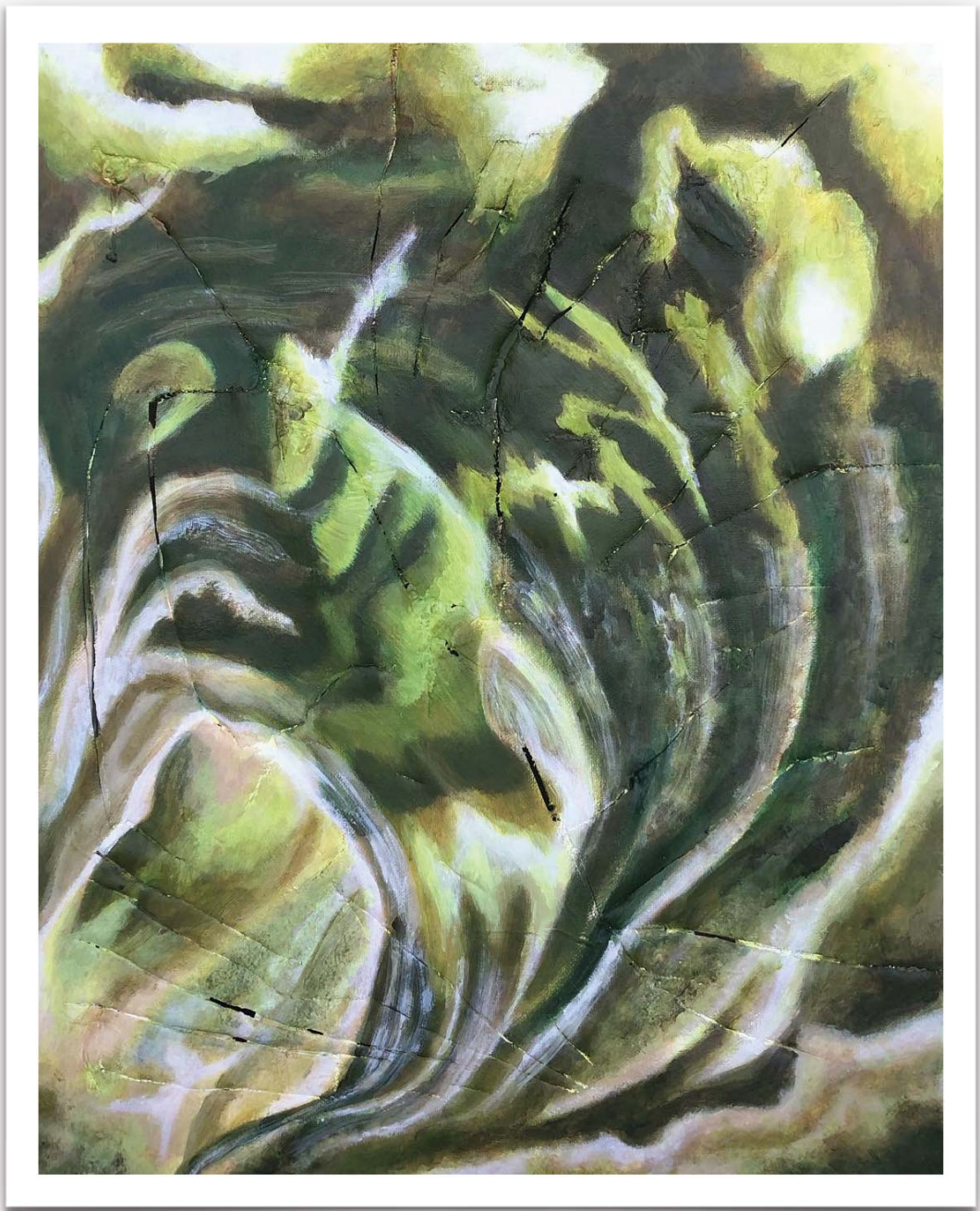
I came out to literally the whole world in middle school and was then single for 7 long years so getting my first boyfriend stirred up a lot of feelings. I obsessed over what does it mean to be with someone. How were my feelings changing? How was my own identity changing? Was I falling in love because that seems like a lot and what if he didn't say it back but also was it too soon but what does leave even mean?! Yes. I created a series of paintings detailing how my perceptions of the relationship changed over time and also filmed a short video showing the first time I ever shared the paintings with him.

Link to video: [https://youtu.be/\\_aIV989vEEA](https://youtu.be/_aIV989vEEA)



DARREN YU **Untitled**





**Trauma**

This piece conceptually is a collaboration between my friend and I. What does a life free from trauma look like? How does trauma change us? How do we respond to trauma? Are our coping mechanisms truly healing us and allowing for growth?



**Remember**

I never really got to know my grandparents, especially on my mother's side. Still, with the help of my family, maybe it's not too late even if they're gone.



BRYN GRIBBEN

### **I Am Starving**

*After Simeon Solomon's sketch of the same name*

World, you're wicked—  
wild in your waving away  
of others' troubles, weary

of witnessing and wandering  
of the eye, you look everywhere  
but somewhere that might need to be seen.

Woman, what are you staring at so sharply?  
Start forward—what if that girl is really drowning?  
Perhaps put down your mistletoe, enlist the gentleman

to put aside his glove and watch with you  
the swirling current suck her skirts  
into its stream. The mud larks will find

nothing to sell from her, not even her name.  
Swollen and somber, maybe she had a wristwatch  
once, but some street rat stole it, stashed it,

went and wasted it, if wanting  
a decent meal is wasting. See how he  
argues now with me, his angry brother,

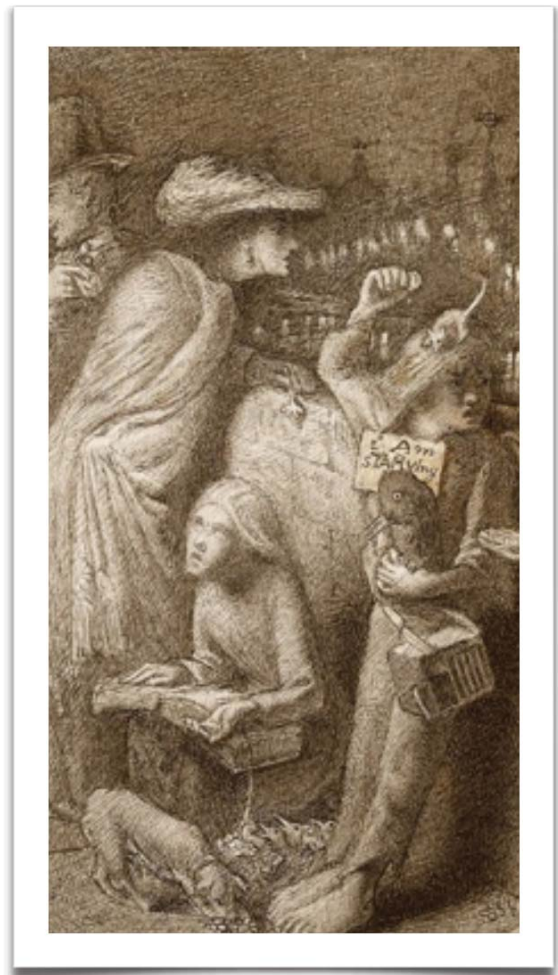
standing outside all day  
a sighing symbol, my head a stage  
for dancing mice—you promised me

some food, hot supper, not a shilling.  
See how a shilling isn't supper, and  
you can't kill the nestlings at our feet—

we've named them, and the dog's found  
all their breadcrumbs, and now we've all  
these mouths to feed. Look: no one else

takes notice, only us, outside, and who  
here can compete with the spectacle of wanting  
when there's an easy, tragic death to watch?

Woebegone, winsome, wistful—no.  
These are not the words of those waiting in winter.  
I am starving. Even the blind girl at our feet sees this.



## Vanitas

The Old Masters inserted it through clocks or watches, bubbles,  
candles at their wicks' ends—glossy fruit in glistening glass,  
lemon wedges, light near Hulsdonck's lobster,

its life already done, made delicious by death. Sick or old, we  
find our own bodies' decay in vanitas. It's how  
we all use metaphors—like morphine, to remove us from our meager selves,

not because we think we will be safer but because  
a writer knows nothing inevitable is seen straight on, at first:  
the natural's unnatural until the body gets a B,

the bloom goes off the rose, and age bubbles up  
from somewhere so readily we think it always must have been there,  
the death's-head in the vase's pattern we can see as children,

the effect of pareidolia, perhaps, or maybe we're seers,  
knowing, even from our youth, somehow, that someday, even  
grown-ups grow back down into the earth.

The Marquis de Sade asked to be buried “without ceremony in a grove”  
in a grave “sown with acorns so it might disappear,” consumed by later trees,  
but before that final disappearing act, the Dutch of other centuries

composed scene after scene of the plenty meeting peril:  
the peony with the worm just outside its fringe, the fragrant lemon  
yet to be squeezed, the child delighted by the rainbow bubble, the things that are still life.



## Santa and Sisters: 1976

Older Sister faces forward,  
Peggy Fleming hair and knee socks,  
while Little Sissy sits in Santa's lap,  
giggling and holding her treat,  
so small her legs stick out straight  
as Older Sister's gaze—she knows it's for the papers.

Older Sister's too old for this lap  
but then again, the oldest always is:  
too old to be babied, told what to do,  
for waiting for Mom to get on her shoes,  
too old for playing or for punishment  
although their dad's been hard on her.

She's six years older, nine in the picture,  
the year she feeds the younger one Palmolive,  
tells her it's liquid candy, gives her  
a glass of water as she tries to spit it out,  
knowing bubbles will come out of her nose.  
Nine is old enough to know

that if we tell our three-year old sister,  
all big eyes and soft hair, wearing  
our old white coat when we weren't done with it,  
if we tell her we have a baby bunny,  
show her a leather glove turned inside out  
revealing rabbit lining, offer it like a gift,

she will believe it,  
swallow it all like liquid candy,  
and the reason why we won't feel bad  
when we lock her outside  
in winter is obvious, when no one  
wants to be alone, and  
why should *sbe* get the lap?





OLIVIA ROSE UMSTEAD

**starjuice**

my dreams are more vivid than they've been all year. yes, i keep seeing you.  
there's something beautiful about us in them, something doomed and beautiful.

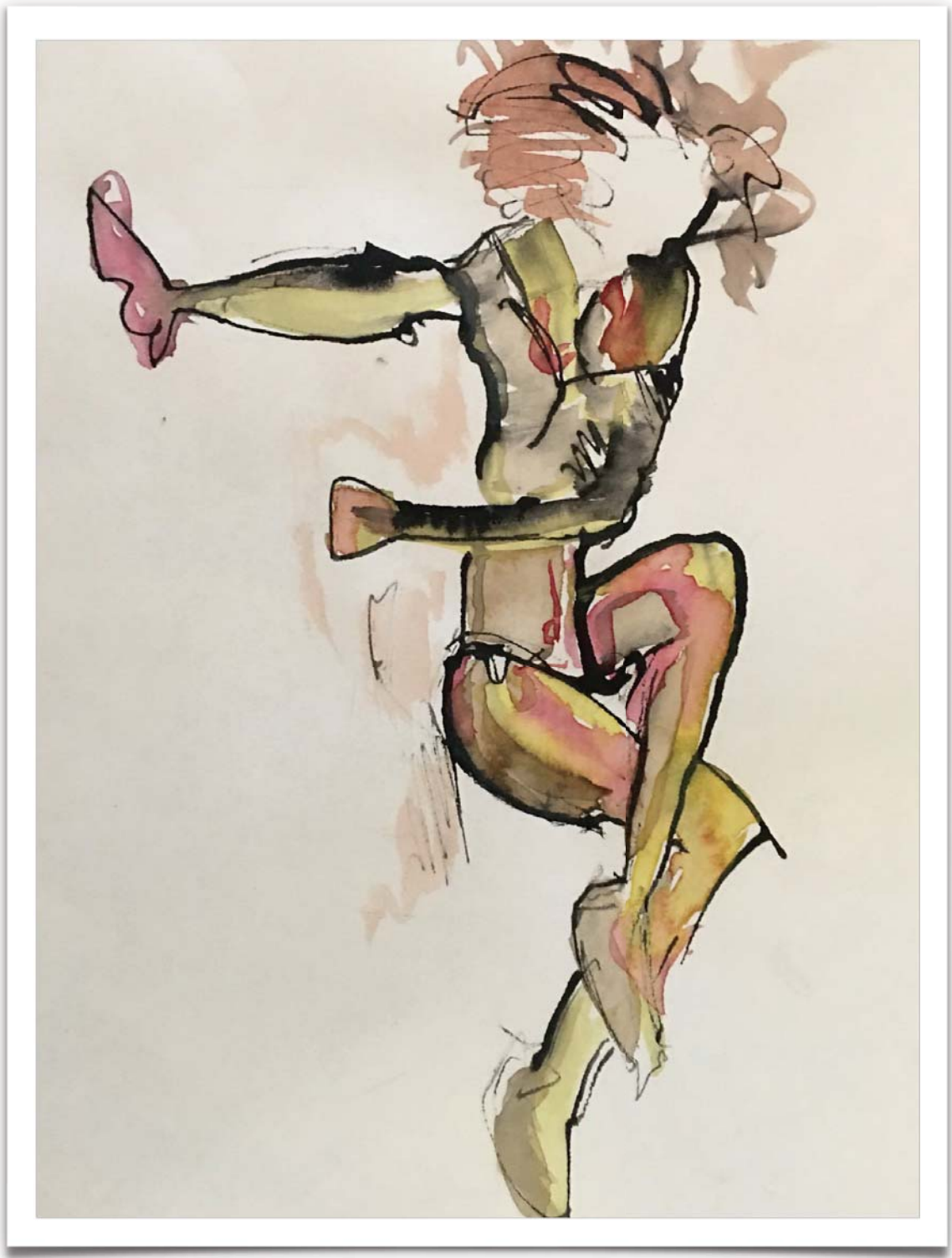
we are as alive as we know how. we speak in colors that require no translation.  
we are fluent in starspeech and smoked salmon and seinfeld quotes.

we pay rent for our castles in the air. we get married under a waterfall.  
it vibrates when we step in. we splash each other and it turns gold.

my cheeks sprout roses. yours turn lavender.  
and when we laugh together the sky splits open.

our tongues forget what space is. you touch my palm.  
i feel it in my teeth and elbows and ankles. i turn fluorescent.

and each night i look forward to evenings culminating in raven.  
the stars hold meetings in my backyard and lull me back to life with sleep.



AMARIS SANDEN **Untitled**

OLGA GONZALEZ LATAPI

**flower children**

to the cement that  
covers the muscle

the Spanish  
I forgot  
when I  
was twelve

and the rain

I called a coward

given up  
walked out of  
the sea

but we survive in

this flesh obsessed  
world  
of butterflies  
bastards sure can flutter  
fast

those

I am always

one who  
endures the pain

and melting of existence

organs slumped on

street corners like  
trash burning in the  
stinking sun

skin out of petals  
flower children they will call us

in history books

flowers

on the streets of  
Chicago New York  
Atlantis

with a

tube of intestine sticking  
out of the face of a  
hydrangea

the sunf

lowers our  
stomach

wait

are you allergic to life  
allergic to the circus

on its way  
for a tour of  
flower children

falling apart  
lining up to  
pluck out our  
petals

people

he loves  
me she loves me  
not they love do they?

watch as

our skin petals  
fall to the ground  
in mounds of  
fragrance

rotting organic

matter on the side  
of the street as  
taxi cabs

splash black

snow

wait  
story

is that

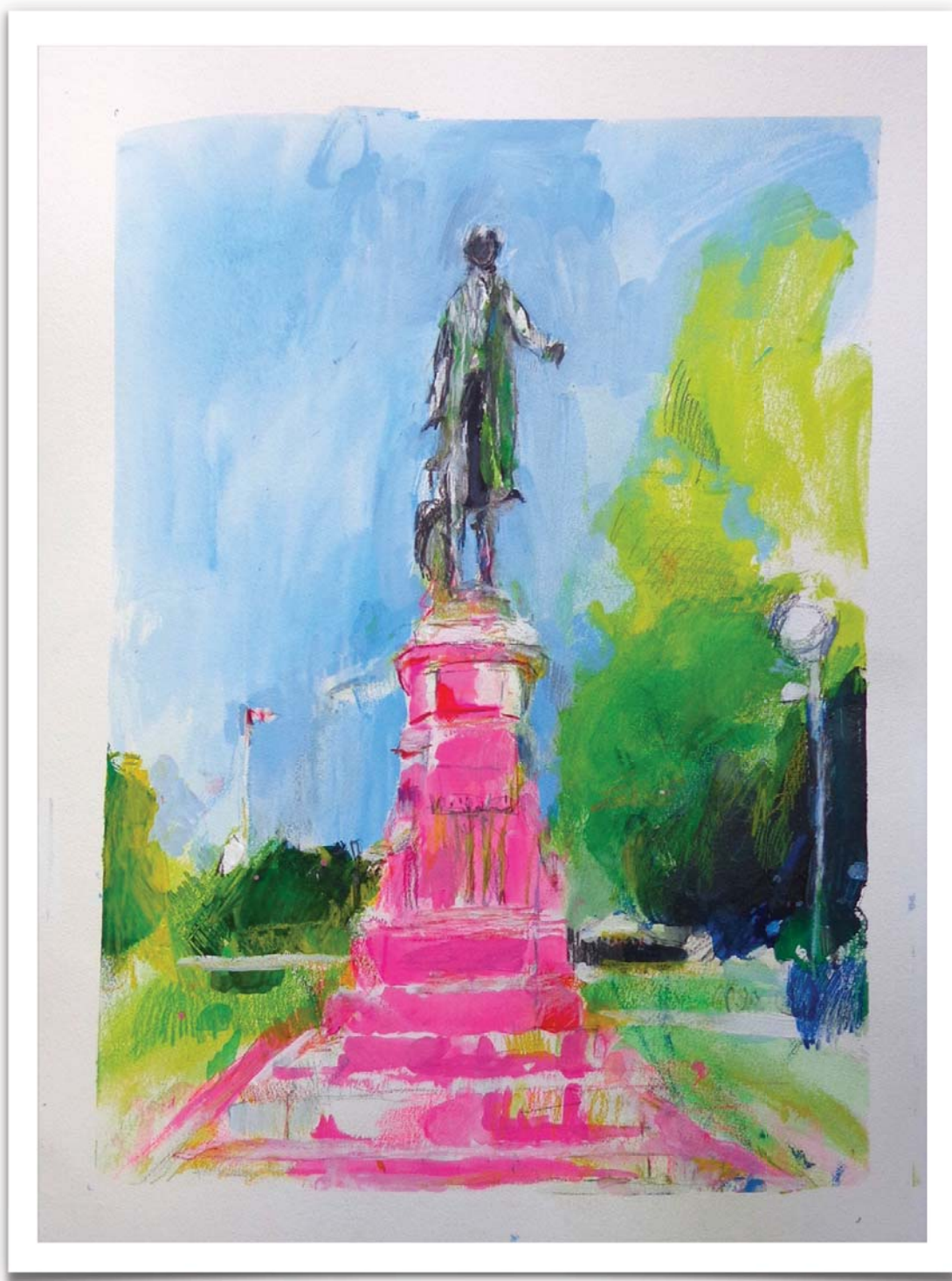
true?

NICKY BOSMAN

**Nosy.**

The greasy spot on the window  
betrays my eagerness  
in bearing witness to the world, a habit  
formed right from the womb.  
Willing myself out there  
with those coloured cloud formations  
which without fail reveal the mood of the day.  
Safely watching the world turn and tumble  
from that spot high by the window  
and the warmth of my living room.





**HOWARD SKRILL MacDonalD splashed pepto, Toronto**

Work on paper, MacDonalD splashed pepto, Toronto, 30 1/2" x 22 1/2", ink, gesso, graphite and colored pencil, pastel on watercolor paper, 2021. In the aftermath of the summer 2020 murder of George Floyd, countless public monuments as with this statue of Sir. John A. MacDonalD, Canada's first Prime Minister. His statue (now concealed behind wood and plastic) is in Queens Park in Toronto.

ASANTEWAA BOYKIN

**A list of things I need to forgive myself for**

Lying  
For believing the lie  
The ones I told and the ones I embodied

For being a non-believer in myself  
For giving-up  
Because giving up is sometimes easier

For avoiding the liberation  
Promised by conflict  
As if Atoms aren't a thing

For hiding behind fear  
    But not being afraid  
For selective strategic cowardice

For holding on to bitterness  
But letting go of love  
The idea of love being pleasurable and not a burden

For manipulating half truths  
To fit my agenda  
Which technically isn't a lie

But ...Is?

For being ok with only being half  
Of my full self  
Choosing favor over authenticity

For laughing at inappropriate jokes  
Behind the backs of friends those jokes would hurt  
And sometimes being the jester

For needing perfection  
Needing to project perfection

For competing  
For competing with anything or anyone  
Other than the lies in my own reflection

D. DINA FRIEDMAN

**Horses in the Gully--After the painting, "All the Tired Horses in the Sun," by A.C. Canon**

The artist says they're tired,  
maybe because they're in a gully,  
each direction a climb  
no discernible road. Why

is one of the horses red,  
the sky orange? Why are the spots

on the red horse blotchy  
like the white spots in the orange sky?  
Are they supposed to be clouds?

Why do children ask why-questions,  
and why do we stop asking why-questions  
when we become adults?

It's like, somewhere along the path  
(this roadless gully)  
someone (or many someones) say  
this is it

and we believe them.  
Where is that divide

in the non-existent road  
between belief  
and disbelief? Why does the blue horse  
(the one that's ass backwards)

have small dots  
raining down its legs  
like a pattern found on woman's skirt  
made in a sweatshop in India?

What else can I ask?  
This painting questions everything  
I once believed

about colors of sky and horses,  
the existence of roads out of gullies,  
horses (horses' asses)  
lost in lies.



TEONG BENG NGO **Untitled**

JENNIFER GAUTHIER

**Cobwebs on Diana**  
**(after Diana, by St. Gaudens, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)**

Like lacy tracery linking one  
ankle and your outstretched leg –  
glowing gold in the afternoon sun,  
Tiffany windows alight around you  
locked in this fantastic prison.  
Once you were free high atop  
Madison Square Garden  
bow notched to pierce the sky.  
For St. Gaudens you were  
nature's celestial body  
poised to portend the weather,  
the only nude and mistress  
Mrs. St. Gaudens must abide.



**Conscience Point**  
**(after a film by Treva Wurmfeld, 2019)**

While your clubs beat the dunes  
and your heels crush sacred ground  
our ancestors await the day  
we take it back.

Take back our sand and dirt  
our hills and knolls  
the waters of the bay  
and the tide that marks the time.

Once your ancestors battered  
this beach with their fleet  
and feet  
bringing greed and war  
pain and more people than  
our little island can bear.

Weep not grandfather, for we will  
shelter you here while the  
heart of the Shinnecock people  
still beats  
strong and proud.

Fear not grandmother, your daughters  
stand with arms entwined  
bodies solid as a wall to  
block the bulldozers  
and prayers to sing you  
to sleep.

H. RAVEN ROSE

**Sacred Birthday, Sacred Wales - Pen-Blwydd yn Gysegredig, Cymru Sanctaidd**

South coast of Carmarthenshire,  
pass the estuary of the River Tâf, Laugharne,  
find the remains of the boy-man who loved the words,  
"and death shall have no dominion," the bard said,  
his poetry, my thoughts, as rain,  
follows me like an obsessive lover,  
into this "very odd town."

Sad, goldenrod colored St David's flower,  
a yellow face shining in the gloom.  
Gleaming, gleaming, gleaming, shining song-blossom.  
Traverse the countryside,  
terrifying birthday sojourn,  
St Martin's Churchyard,  
foolishly lean against, hug and seek healing,  
from ancient Yew trees of long life,  
the sacred evergreen, ywen.

I die a soul death,  
contaminated,  
infected,  
pathogenic entities,  
made filthy by a massive number of darkest energies, demonic beings, spirits of the dead, and the souls of  
animals ritually slaughtered during wicked, vile, noxious ceremonies at and under the ancient Yew trees.  
I pray for the Yew trees,  
those living wood homes of spirits,  
for the purification of Yggdrasil.  
Inoculated by the iniquitous and long-lived,  
illness follows, initiation, shamanic crisis, a spiritual sickness,  
a slipstream of venom traversed reality,  
from the underworld into the middle world,  
when I was foolish—foolish I was—embraced a world tree,  
in a courtyard of corrosive evil.

Yet a triquetra of blessings follows.  
First, a gift of semi-divine personages in animal form.  
Once living spirits,  
the souls of animals slaughtered ritually at the trees,  
purified with journey work,  
healed of their suffering,  
are sent to the mystical dimension.  
Three animal totems endure:  
European badger, red fox, and white-faced sheep remain, carrying powerful medicine.  
Second a gift of novel aural faculty,  
the trees, the weald, the timberland sing.  
I hear the trees, the blessed, joyful, exquisite forest,  
and all of reality singing buzz-humming,  
head-spinning joy,

burst into tears,  
the woodland purr vibrates love-life.  
Third, the ability to see an animal spirit,  
look at a photo,  
see its Soul face, just like a human face.  
See a picture of a stag,  
feral IIs and ICs scream and cry out,  
the horror of having eaten animals previously,  
the stag looks like/is experienced just as a human man, with all of the wisdom, beauty, personality, and  
humanity of a human being,  
horrible knowledge beautiful.  
I cry, pray for the creature souls, eaten in this and any other lifetime.  
The animals are just like people; to eat them is a form of cannibalism.

Strange, miraculous, horrible,  
Sacred Birthday, Sacred Wales,  
Solar logos/Angel of the Sun,  
Llywelyn now speaks to me daily.  
Now to escape the Lower Worlds,  
Annwfn, very deep,  
ande-dubnos, underworld,  
to purify,  
be reborn,  
sanctification for months,  
hyssop, Cedarwood oil, shamanic ritual,  
now soul mending in the middle world,  
wishing Tallyessin was by my side,  
disperse the realm of evil into mist,  
renounce the Sitra Achra, אַחְרָא אַחְרָא,  
forever decline to contract with/renounce the "Other Side,"  
dematerialize ande-dubnos, under,  
embrace holiness only, forever.

To honor living totems,  
I make a spirit animal altar purchase  
tiny creatures of felt:  
black and white striped badger, mochyn daear, or earth pig, Meles meles,  
the red fox, llwynog coch, Vulpes vulpes,  
the white Welsh Mountain sheep, Defaid Mynydd Cymreig, Cambrica Mountain ovium,  
beautiful, sacred animal medicine,  
an endowment of execrable illness and pain,  
three gifts are given,  
Happy Birthday 2019,  
Sacred Birthday, Sacred Wales.



Video poem written/directed by H. Raven Rose  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/454113641>

Video Poem Credits: Music *Night Vigil* Composed by Kevin MacLeod. Welsh voice-over talent Tomos Davies. Cinematography of the poem location, Laugharne, south coast of Carmarthenshire, Wales, UK, by Andrew Gronow. Additional Wales forest cinematography provided by Dave Shaw | Dave's Walks ([youtube.com/channel/UCX6CKT9IKip2nKB26HgVjwQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX6CKT9IKip2nKB26HgVjwQ)).

KEVIN FOSTER MCCARTHY

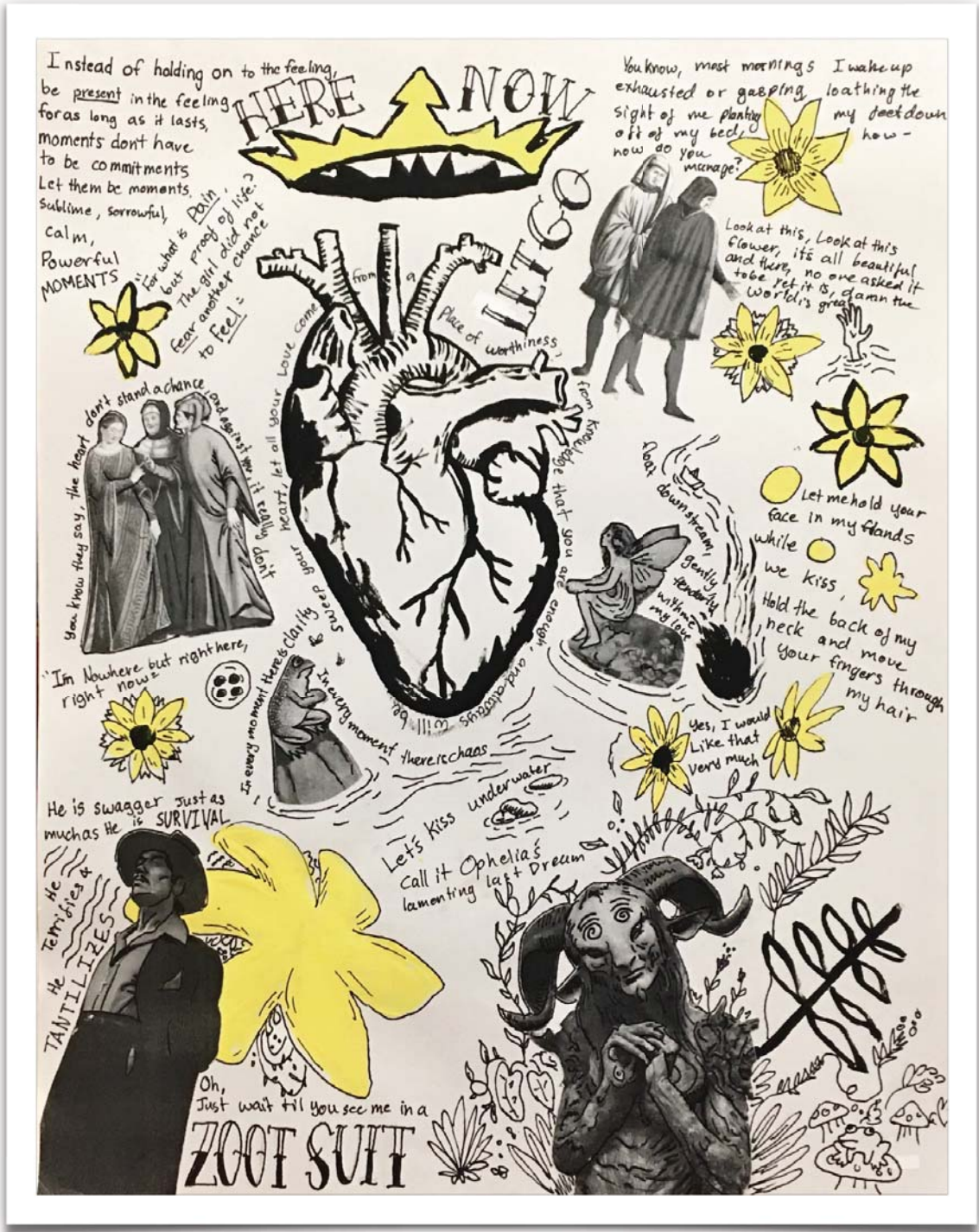
### Woodstock (It's Over, Johnny)

D.C. departure fifty borrowed dollars in pocket Ford Bronco steed full of women and me and Kentucky boy named Vert short for Vertimer. Friday flash outta town/stopNYC/rich girl's house/Lawn island? "am I inEngland?" /drink drink smoke smokey stone/Mom makes breakfast for silent weirdos/daughter loses it, "Can you at least say thank you!?!?" "I did I say but people can't hear/I didn't even eat/Budweiser please/that got a look/outta there/BigCity BigCity BigCity rubbin' my elbows...BOOM!BAM!...Country/onslaught of cars snaking at us/Turn around! Turn around! they yell, roads are closed/Giddyup keep buckin', Bronco/4 wheels begging for turf - HANG ONTO YER HATS! BA BA BUCKING BAM!/like a dream/I'm in a bubble/trees leafy finger caress window glass/speed whackin' thru fields/and YARDS...oops! a yell a holler and I'm on an UPSTATE CARPET RIDE/then dirt roads/"hippies" wandering cow town/WHAT'S HAPPENING IS HAPPENING HERE/Mister sez "Aw shit, what's the use, park here next to the porch." I walk in/Woodstock/through GATE ruins/"Thumper, I'll meet you there"/and there he is/tailgate sittin', smokin'/we enter the bowl of TEN MILLION PEOPLE who like like them and me and us... the girls look for familiar/for D.C. CROWD, prolly have a tent ha! Me Thumber Vert dive in/mid bowl muddy plastic seat music. WHO THE FUCK IS SHA NA NA! country joe, eh 1234 etc. acid drop/sun goes in/cold/ah, trusty jacket/pass-out-in-it-no-freeze-to-death-jacket. Thumper. "let me wear it a while"/ok give it back/we fight/acid is sparkling/we fighting/people booing/I get jacket and acid is ON!/our plot is a town/bedroom/store/school/movie/spaceship/"am I dead?"/indoor outdoors/Eric/moon, I walk it/huh/wow... GOOD MORNING, PEOPLE, sez Grace and I come in for a landing on Jefferson's Airplane, piloting, beepbeepbeep STALL, chirp, landed, applause, for me? NO/sun is up/sunday morning, need a drink, don't even dream, puff puff, DO I STILL EAT?... THERE'S NO FOOD, MAN!/I walk into a field of corn/each ear is jasmine/cake/water/slice of sky/candy blood/cotton milk/aqua air bites/peanuts, popcorn and pussy NIGHT: Come on baby, one more time, Going Home!! Going Home!! (note to self: get white clogs) Chip Monk sez, Ladies & Gentlemen... Ten Years After, MusicMusicMusic... Whoa! Jimi Hendrix/me and thumper/Top of Bowl, look Jimi, remember, touch forehead, click. Stick out thumbs/VW Bus, color of mud/side door wide open/where to, bros?/DC, man!/Hay we goin' Silver Spring Maryland/haha ha! we ride, silence and joints/I'm so thirsty I could drink a fucking building.

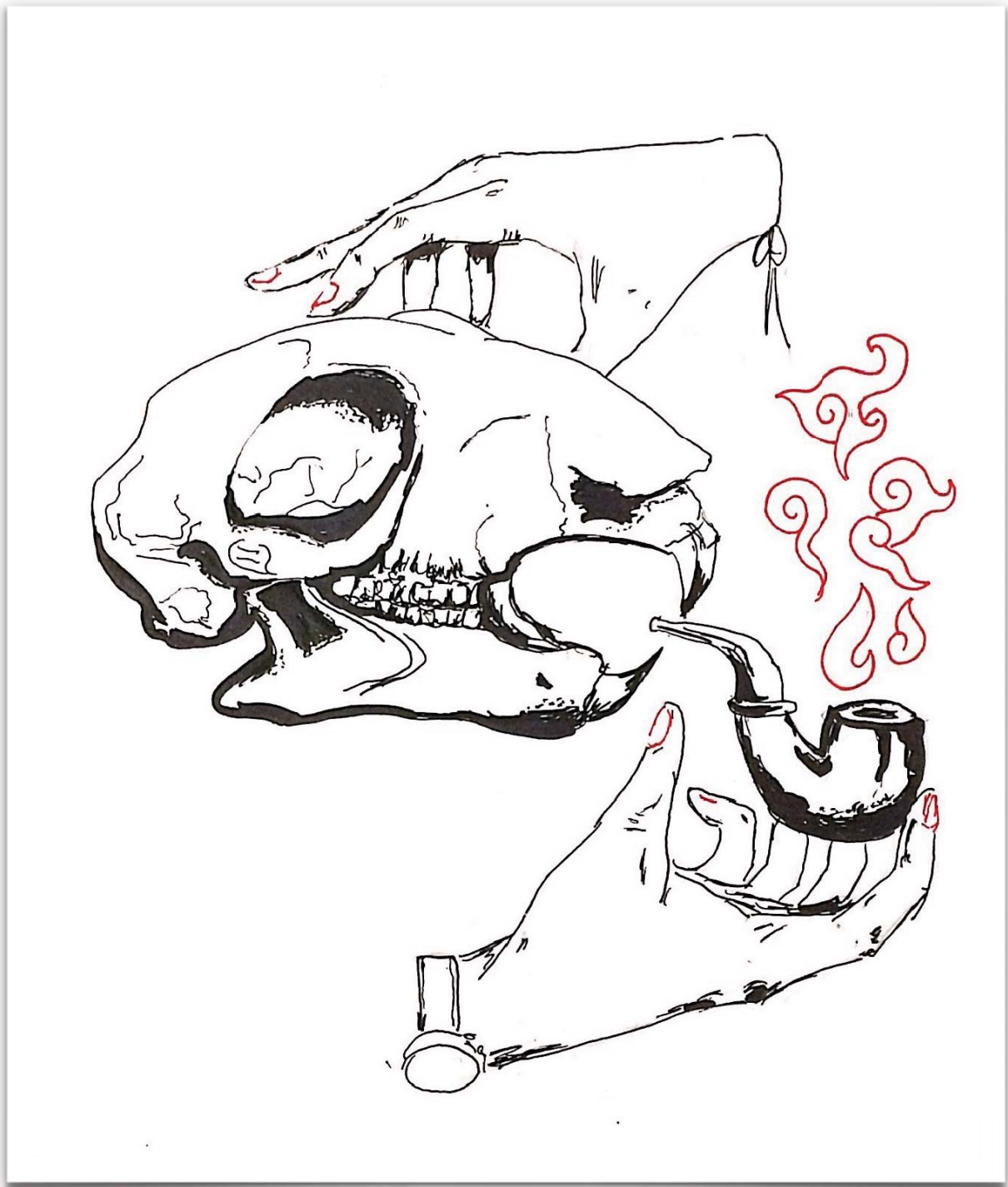




DIEGO SHARE-VARGAS **Zoot Suits and Animal Skull**

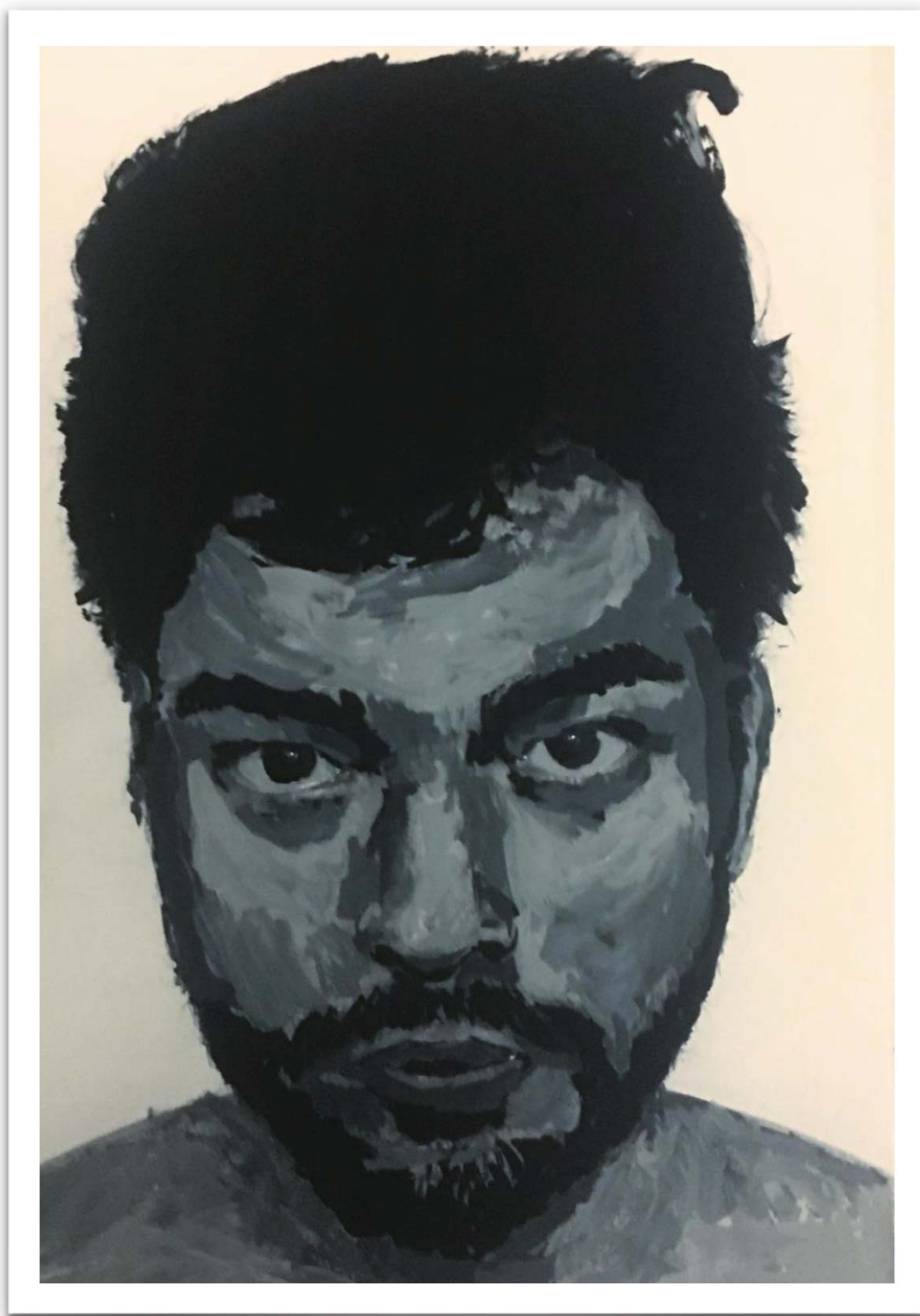


DIEGO SHARE-VARGA Royal Heart



DIEGO SHARE-VARGA Full Size Render





**DIEGO SHARE-VARGA Self Portrait**



DIEGO SHARE-VARGA **Crown, Wings Head**



BRIAN YAPKO

### Except for Lavender

what if the rainbow lost a color and there was only invisible space where lavender should have been, lying feverish and helpless between azure and violet? rainbows don't lose colors by accident. it was you who extracted the lavender and buried it deep in the closet of your boy's old bedroom in your immaculate suburban townhouse. then, like lady macbeth, you tried to wipe the purple stain away. you failed. *selah.*, those were the years, when that other plague swept away a generation of handsome sons from greenwich village to west hollywood and brought mortal danger to your boy's weakened body. i heard you speak in low whispers. you abjured the role of nurse. instead you invoked lear, capriciously imposing false criteria for what your son should have been. yet he loved you. why must it always be cordelia who loses? the cemetery now is a distant memory but the lavender stain remains. you had said you accepted him, but you bit your lip and shunned who he held hands with. you claimed to love him but averted your eyes to that special one who so briefly gave him such joy. you shouted on street corners that so many lives mattered, but gave no grief for the decimation of your son's t-cells. you even lied in the obituary, your falsehood rolling a tank over no-man's land crushing every flower, tainting all things of beauty -- and the gentle man himself. you say you love justice; you write checks. you press so many "like" buttons your fingers ache. but what of the little boy who became a man who acquired a syndrome of immune deficiency, then literally wasted away? alone. i have come to forgive you, but i will never understand. what would i do for a dying son? lord, what wouldn't i do? i miss him. you say nothing. but from the way you keep rubbing your hands. i think you miss him too -- despite the fact you love every color of the rainbow except for lavender.

GABBY GILLIAM

**Self-Portrait as a Tehuana, 1943**

Starched lace of Tehuana *traje*  
fresh from wild animal hill  
white frame around your face

your Huipil Grande tangled  
with roots and vines  
a splash of purple ribbon

undulating beneath their lines.  
Diego's face casts a shadow  
on your brow. Is he the reason

your eyes are distant

or is he there to support  
the verdant fronds of your crown?

Does he nourish your roots or starve them?

Do you wear his face

like a brand

a reminder

that marriage is not a necessity  
just another *vela* and a husband  
your most flagrant regalia?



THYE AUN NGO **Untitled**

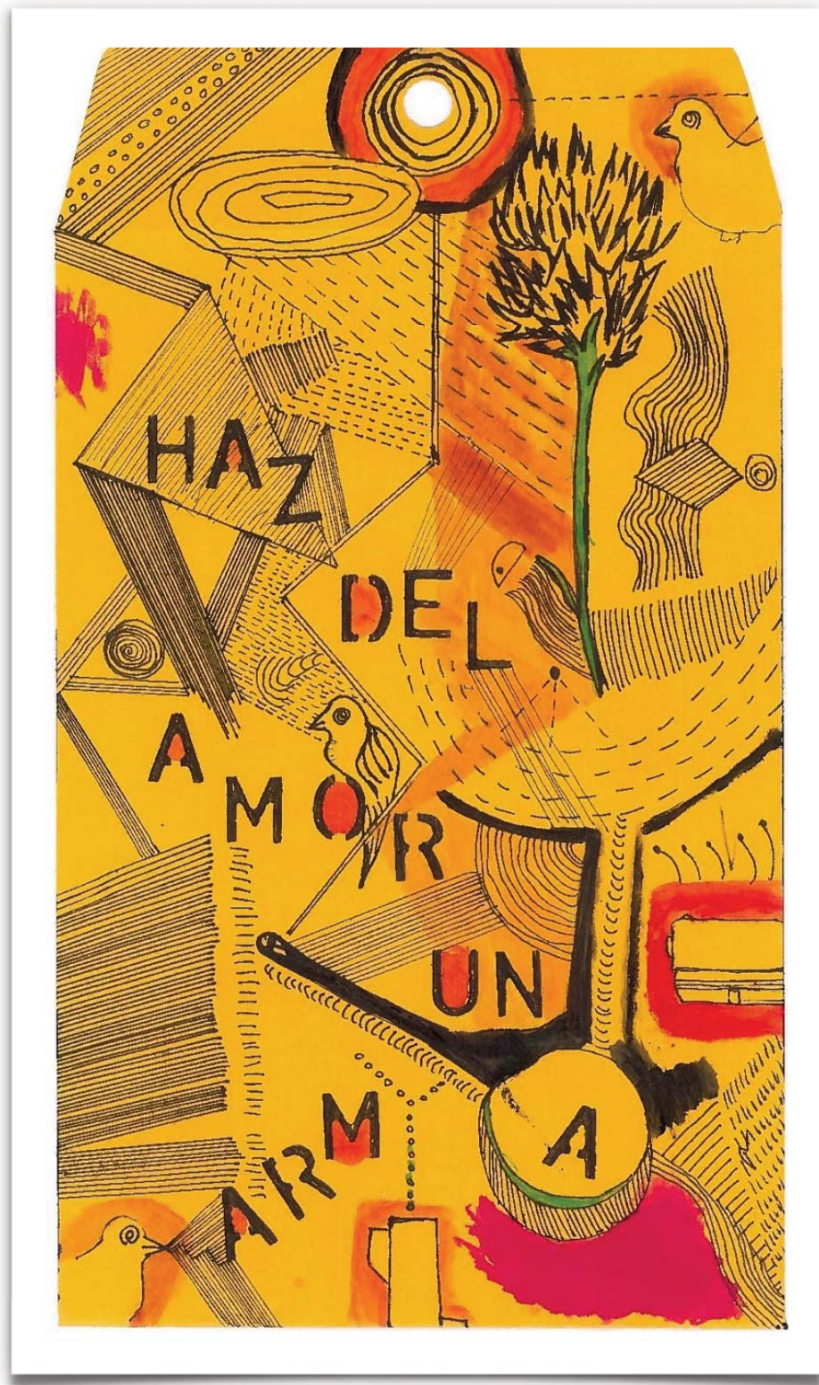
JENNIFER RAWLINGS

### **The Three Seasons of Summer**

As a young child you lick popsicles until your tongue turns purple.  
You stay in the pool until your toes and fingers are shriveled and small.  
When you finally get out of the pool you compare your "wrinkles" to that on your grandma's hands.  
Grandma laughs and tightens the towel around you.  
Mom is cooking dinner in the kitchen.  
Grandma asks you to come sit on the front porch and watch the sunset. Dad comes home from work and joins you and Grandma on the porch.  
You sit on the porch swing between Grandma and dad watching the sky turn colors.  
Grandma says "This was the most beautiful Sunset I have ever seen in my life"  
Dad tamps down the tobacco in his pipe, and lights it again.  
The crickets start chirping in the grass, and you pretend that you know what they are saying.  
You chase fireflies , catching them in jars, giving them names.  
Mom says it's time to go to bed.  
Dad reads you a story. Then two.  
"I love you and goodnight."  
In the morning the fireflies have lost their light and their life. But you will catch more fireflies tonight- hoping for a different outcome.

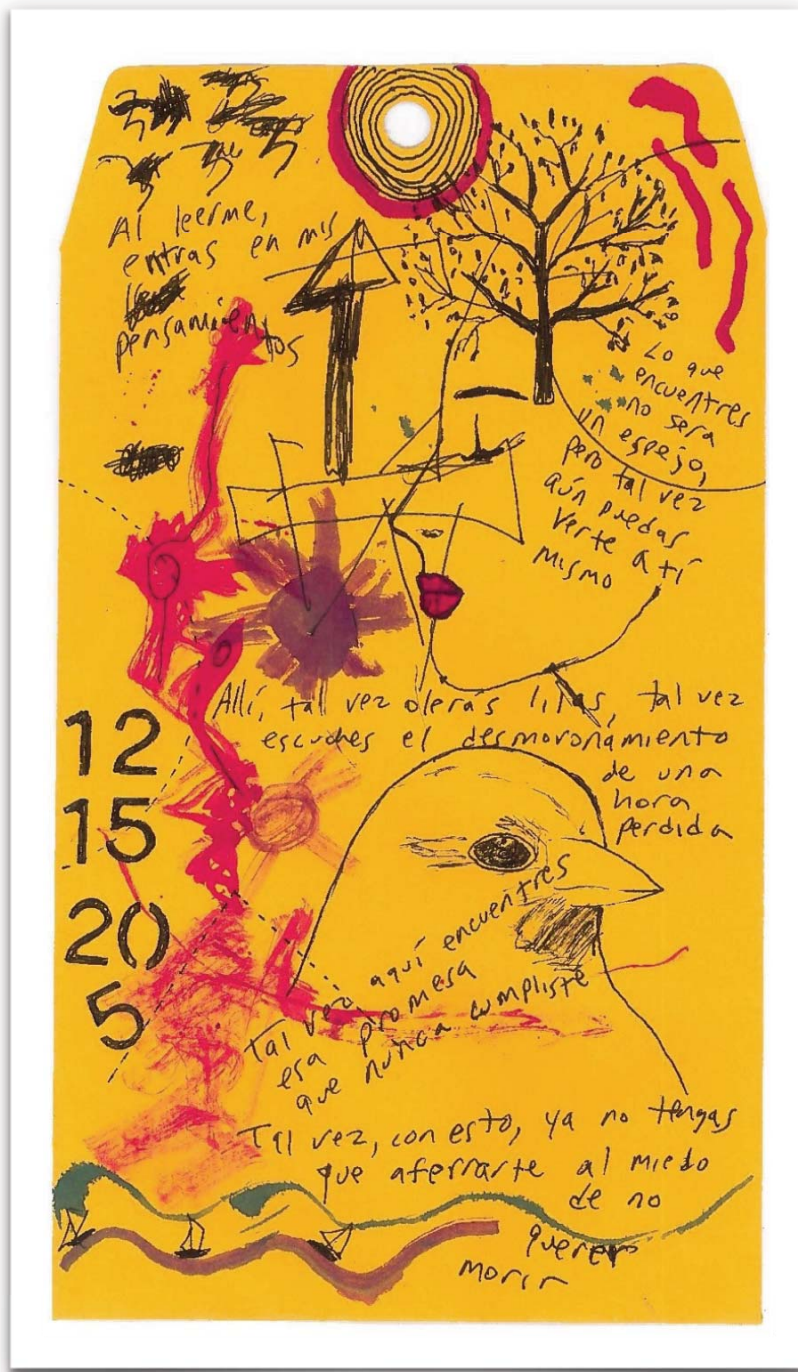
As a teenager all you want to do is go out with your friends.  
Your mom wants you to get a summer job, you want to get a tan. So you take a job life guarding. Grandma slides you twenty-dollar bills when mom isn't looking.  
You drink cheap beer on the riverbanks that you bought from the liquor store on State Street that doesn't check ID's.  
You blow smoke rings from the second hand smokes you swiped from your Uncle when he was asleep on the couch.  
You make out with your boyfriend in the back seat of his dad's car and pretend like you are in love.  
When he drops you off at home- you sit on the porch swing and listen to the crickets chirping. You know just what the crickets are saying "That boyfriend is a dud"  
In the morning you realize the crickets are right- "He is a dud and you are not in love."  
But you will make out with him again tonight- hoping for a different outcome.

As an adult ,you load your children in the car driving 1500 miles back to the front porch swing.  
Your sisters have traveled, with their kids, back to the front porch swing too.  
Grandma is long gone.  
But dad is there on the porch swing tamping down the tobacco in his pipe.  
The cousins laugh and play in swimming pool.  
They stay in the pool until their skin is shriveled. They compare their hands to those of your mom's.  
You wrap them in towels to watch the sunset, and you know for fact that "This is the most beautiful sunset you have ever seen"  
The crickets chirp.  
The fireflies swarm, and the kids run to catch them in jars.  
Your dad chews on the end of his pipe, saying "I'm so happy you are here."  
"Love you daddy"  
And tonight, on the front porch, you are glad that somethings remain the same.

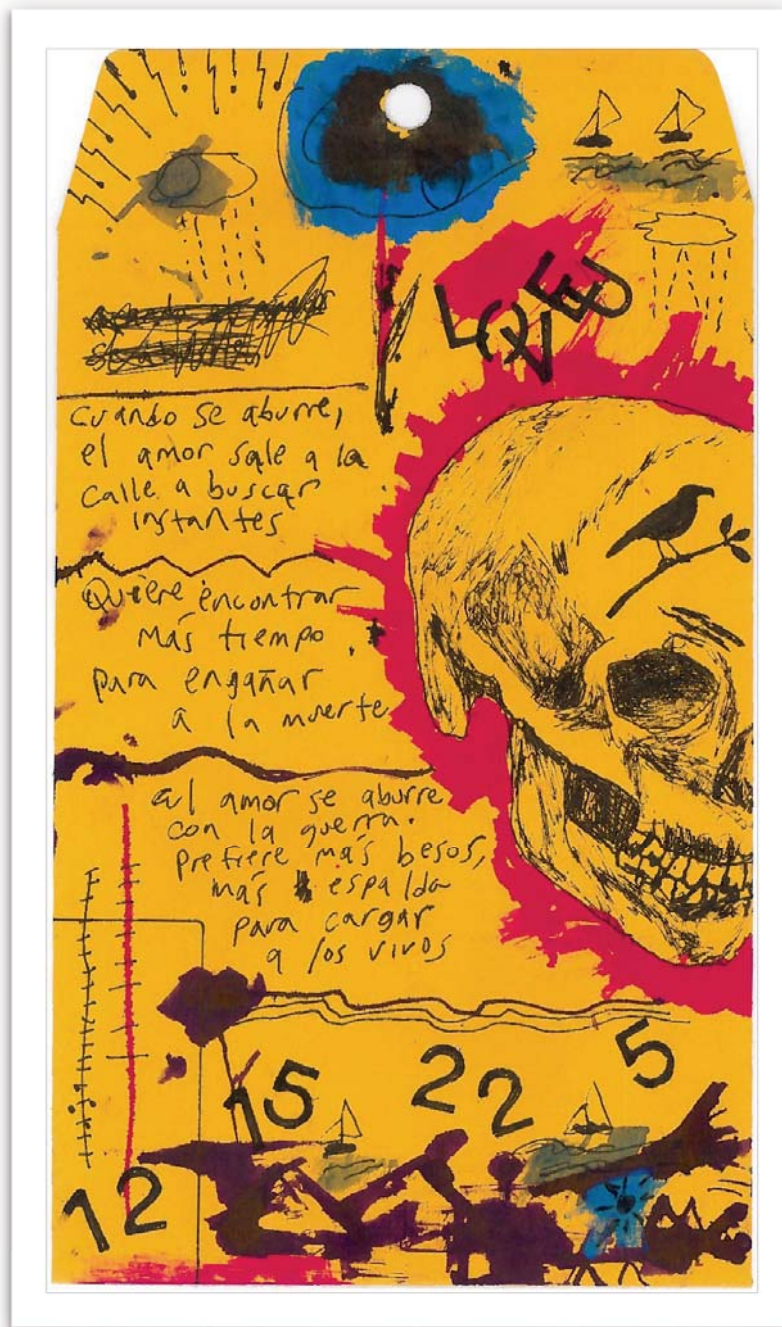


OCTAVIO QUINTANILLA Frontextos (visual poems): Los Dias Oscuros

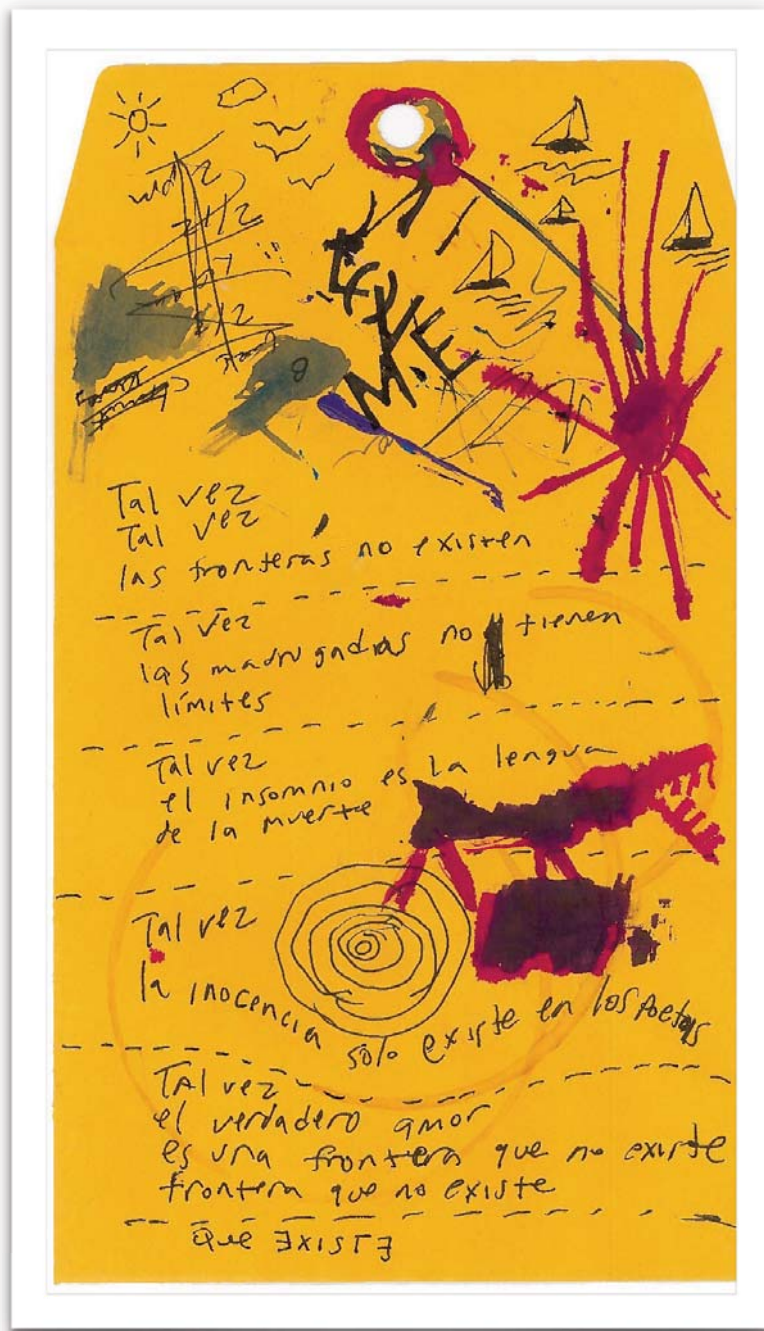




OCTAVIO QUINTANILLA Frontextos (visual poems): Los Dias Oscuros

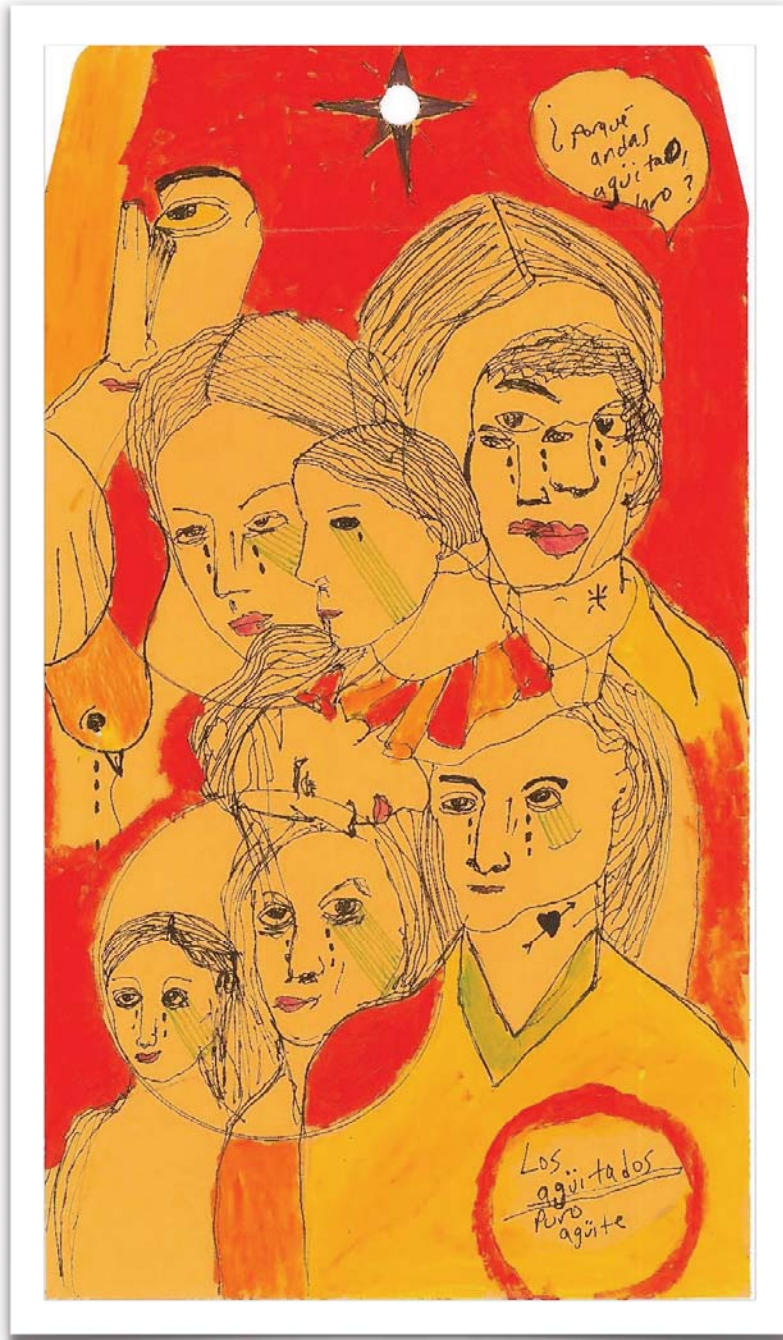


OCTAVIO QUINTANILLA Frontextos (visual poems): Los Dias Oscuros



OCTAVIO QUINTANILLA Frontextos (visual poems): Los Dias Oscuros





OCTAVIO QUINTANILLA Frontextos (visual poems): Los Dias Oscuros

GLENN HARTMAN

**New Orleans Klezmer All Stars: Bloody Sunday Sessions** (on accordion)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6-0RFoMuTI>





JORDON TATE

**No Knife**

Some fathers talk in swords  
made of My-Father-Used-to-Say,

but I was mumbling in my sleep  
while my son snuck out a window.

*That's why you took a knife:  
you didn't know any better—*

Not something a boy would know.  
Not something even real kings know,

so nobody wins anymore.

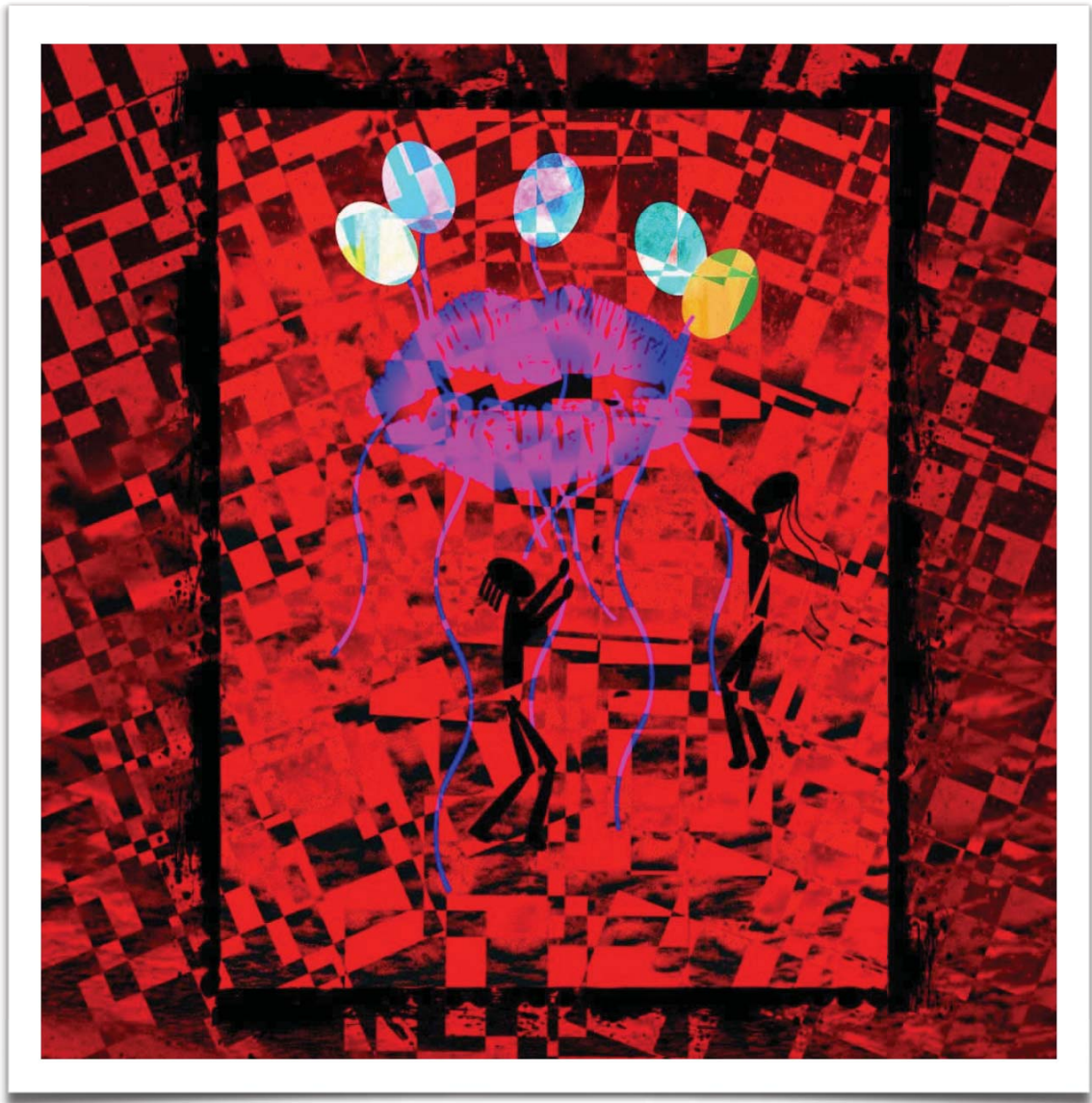
*Not a knife, Son. The bladed bully  
and his rabid crowd expect a knife,*

I didn't get to say,

*You never take a knife to a knife fight;  
You take a  
    *semi-automatic absence.**



DIAMANTE LAVENDAR **The Road To Realization**



DIAMANTE LAVENDAR **Entangled By Words**

JONES IRWIN

**Joanne and Aurèle Making Out**

*After a Nan Goldin photograph*

Criss-crossing strapped high-heels what a pair of prolonged legs then her thighs to literally die for stripped down to a pair of black panties and a purple top Aurèle's strong masculinist hand with glistening silver bracelet is lodged firmly in between Joanne's privates and his heavy tongue is pushed in her delicate mouth I wonder right just now what they are both thinking about possibly the time her husband gets back so what if he genuinely does get back earlier than expected we all know what he is like the reputation the strong arm tactics the friends he can draw on from the dark side oh my man Aurèle you know me I have the utmost respect for a bit of romance and whatever but was this really the bestest idea in the cold light of dawn was it really the bestest idea my man that hard guy and his cronies have a murder violence record that is top of the charts and his moll is not for sharing no matter what she says

## FREE ARTAUD! MAINTENANT!

*There is no division in Artaud between life and writing.* Paul Auster

How in hell does an anarchist surrealist poet become head psychiatrist but let's face it he was also an atheist which was no doubt for the best if the death-toll at Ville-Evrard would have killed Artaud also by the end of war the transfer to Rodez was lucky and thanks to this anarchist Ferdière still at first Artaud was in terror of this as yet unknown asylum leaving him open to the magic forces always chasing him moreover he lost his voodoo sword en route from Chezal-Benoît his hair was shorn so short but here he would grow it long again and gain a toothbrush for his eight remaining teeth in the 1940s after a succession of psychiatric hospital stays going on for years each new one often compounding the acute problems he faced Artaud's case finally came to the attention of the French artistic community a series of defences was prepared to allow him finally to achieve an existential freedom he craved and so thoroughly deserved not that this much sought emancipation would last long our hero would be dead within three years accumulated violence inflicted on his individual body and soul over many years finally take their brutalized toll still many similar victims of medicalized scientific history never get the second chance he got short as it was the paradigmatic defences of this extraordinary artist are a unique reveal of mid twentieth century life amongst these heartfelt, passionate missives ones from Breton and from Sartre and Beauvoir a curious and somewhat unexpected deposition from the writer Georges Bataille noted as a difficult transgressive voice of the times though there is no remaining extant version of the latter text defence the following is a reconstruction made from the residual fragments which have survived

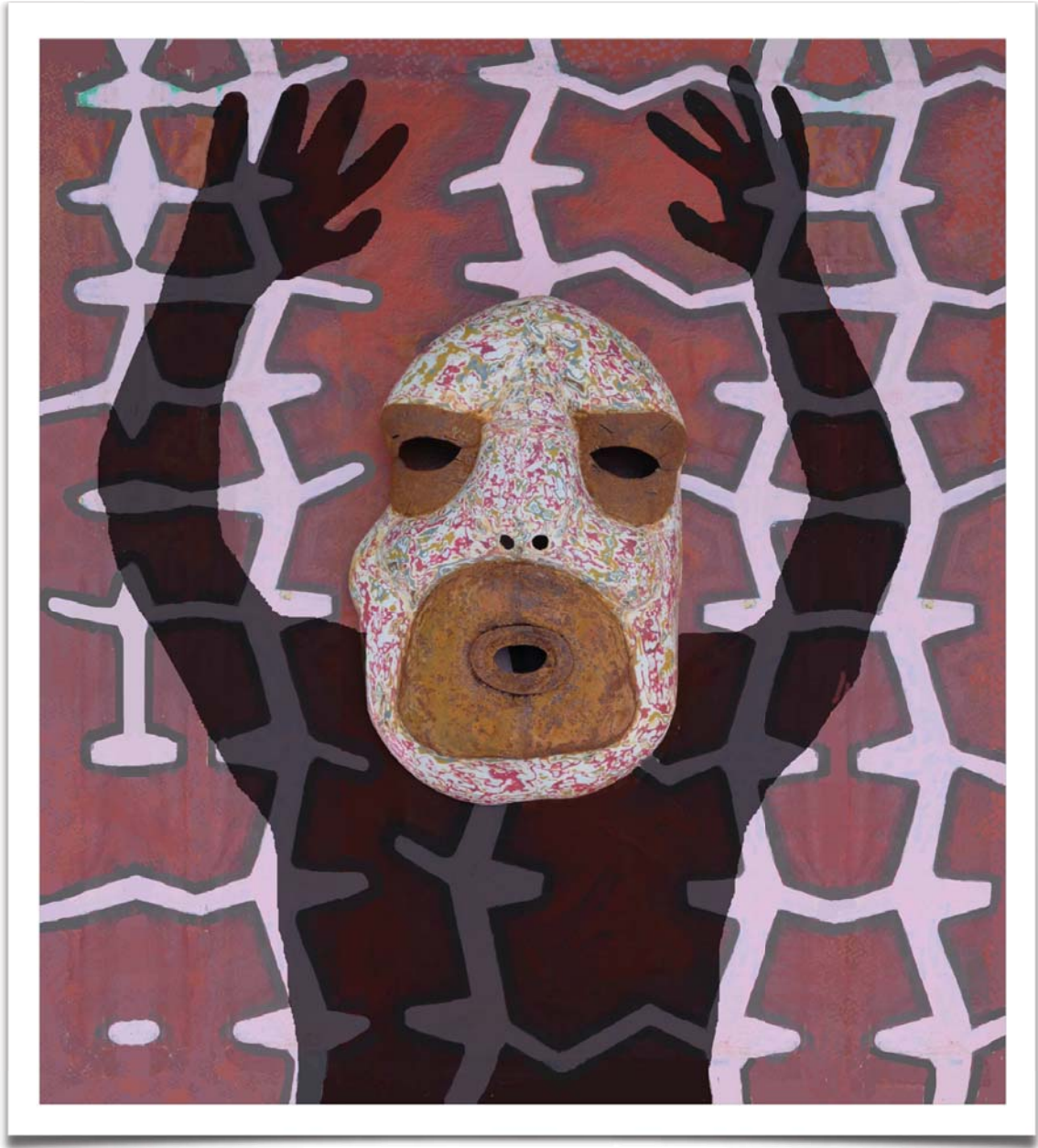
let me say first this is a painful testimony I am not here easily people will know I am not a fellow traveller after all I am the solitary thinker par excellence yet having read Artaud's *Letters From Rodez* most recently I can only say I was shocked into action truly and horrifically of course I know Antonin longer than most early on we used to meet in Pigalle with some mutual acquaintances it has been well documented that there were frequent stays in psychiatric institutions but of course when he was out



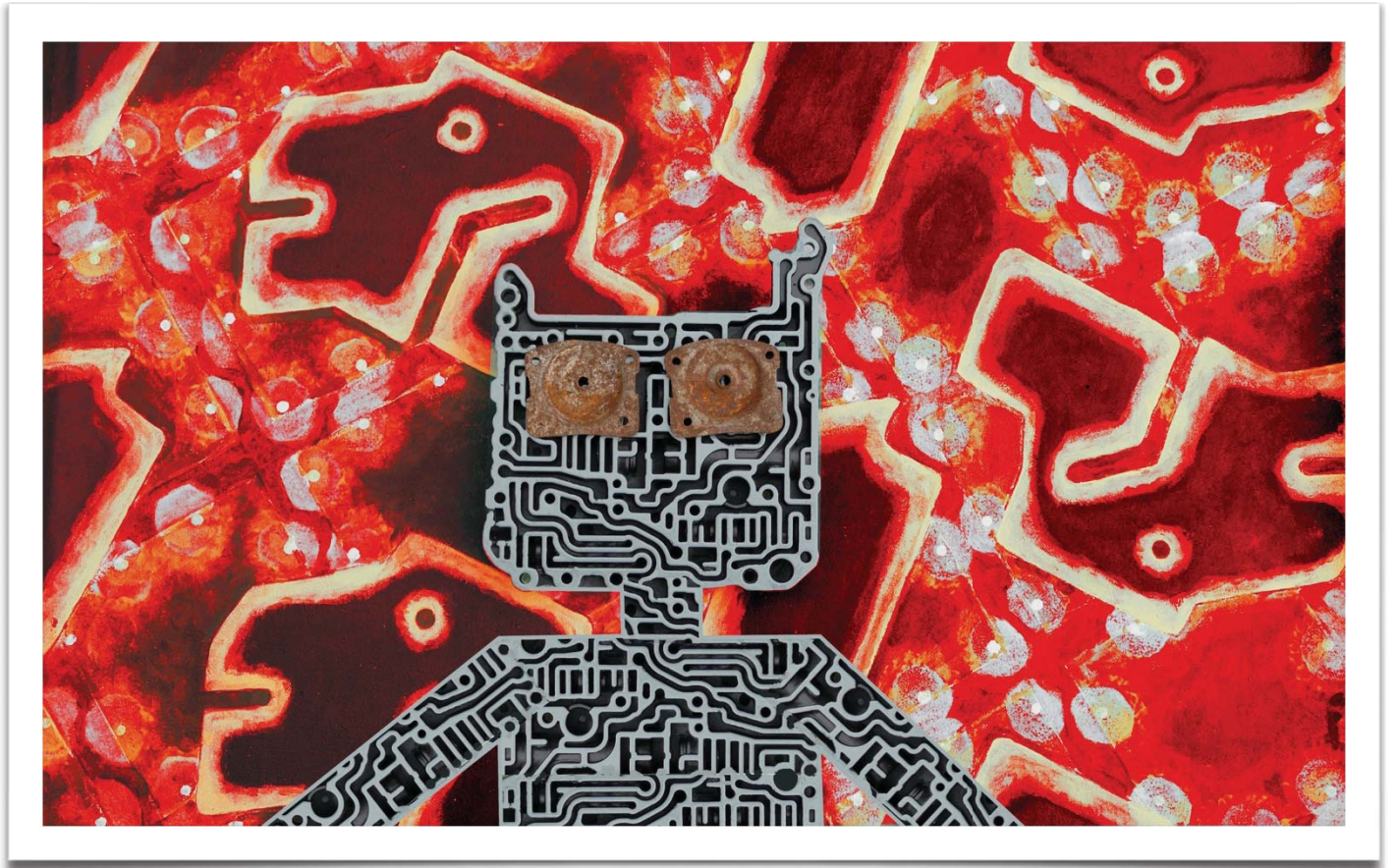
Artaud was even more unstable poor devil used to keep saying that the nurses told him that the electroshock would feel like a pinprick no wonder he tried to kill them all at Ville-Evrard with his voodoo sword LIARS but if there was darkness *and there was much* there was also handsomeness a handsome face and an elegant stature can excuse a great deal in life if that was all there was to say in defence we might still get some distance in trying to free our hero from these dreaded medicine men and electroshock monster machines true beauty goes a long way it being a sign of divine selection is it not and who shall underestimate the discrimination of the immortal gods did you ever see him dance in that long calico dress for the film he was making with the Surrealists honestly the sight would have moved the long dead thus we may well have got him out of Rodez on this account alone but crucially and famously this is indeed not all that we can count up in this extraordinary figure's favour for isn't Antonin Artaud also an authentic poet actually let me contradict that immediately as it is TOTALLY FALSE I wrote a book called *Hatred of Poetry* and I can say that my vitriol extends to those that write it too but let me quote Artaud in his own words written in his own blood always *all writing is pigshit where others present their works I claim to do no more than to show my mind* so Artaud is no mere poet let me be unusually bold as it is rare that solitary thinkers of my ilk seek to make connects and comparisons but I will make an exception in this case Artaud I propose is a VISIONARY in the best sense only someone who perhaps through his dreaded suffering most of all and so unjust and cruelly inflicted a one at that CAN SEE THROUGH TO THE FUTURE if this is a unique life gift then it is no wonder that the punishment followed didn't he anticipate this plague of resentment when he declared in his famous text that Van Gogh was the patron saint of *those suicided by society* and the more Artaud refused to conform to the threats and the strictures at the heart of these sick if respectable institutions the harsher and more unforgiving the sadism became look at him now before us as the most tragic skeletal figure, hair and teeth falling out emaciated shaking with convulsions still majestic of course the light shining through that extraordinary angular face and those most exquisite if tormented eye sockets he always reminded me of a trapeze artist high on the wire oblivious to fear envied by those who

couldn't ever countenance such adventures of the body and of the spirit so this in brief is my defence of my comrade Antonin Artaud those who know me and my work and all its controversy know that this step is unprecedented for me I rarely even contemplate joining forces with any other human being to put my neck on the line for Artaud nonetheless came urgently as a demand to my singular Nietzschean anti-religious and anti-moral conscience deep in the dead of night and I have not been able to rest since Free Artaud I say I beseech you the human is a genius this concept being vastly overused but not in this particular and increasingly desperate instance **FREE ARTAUD! MAINTENANT!**

Signed: Monsieur Georges Bataille esq.



JEFF MANN **Tire Jungle**



JEFF MANN **Phoenix Robot**





JEFF MANN **Proud Termite**



HELEN HAWLEY

**Boat Going Through Inlet**  
**Arthur Dove, 1929**

Arthur Dove paints marine waves.  
Between swells of blue manganese,  
clouds (waters of the sky) bloat  
extravagantly. A big ol'  
moon rides a low-slung  
branch, barely, a boat.  
Mast, a little wobbly,  
snaky wood buoyed  
by the dark rippling sea.  
Spills leap overboard. A boat  
with no sails is an idea of  
a boat. On the idea of a boat  
I am taken away.

## Mars Touches Venus

Mars wears a gleaming helmet  
in the richly colored bedroom  
where Venus pinches a flower.  
Over her shoulder her eyes  
meet ours. We follow the arm  
of Mars. He reaches Venus,  
feels, what we feel with our eyes.

note: The last line takes from the 1958 film, *The Horse's Mouth*. The main character, painter Gully Jimson, instructs, "I'll show you how to understand a painting. Don't look at it. Feel it with your eyes."



R.L. EDMONSON VANCE **Fire Goddess**

KEN EDWARD RUTKOWSKI

### **Swim in the Meat**

Will you guilty over there FedEx little loss advanta going to be something but never me swimming in the meat Lucy in the winter time come to be so hot it's been so hot it's normally been at this time when it never ends and then when it does then it comes fast another fast night blast at investors like pain pain change along the band van now I wanna see you in about One again welcome to Canada stars all that going too far technology and then we're gonna see what's gonna happen see I'm alone I love that every time cast at it I can tell you when you don't know what they don't know it seems like the people going people say they sell clothes and come without them aligned ways and lies and lies in the picture sinking into the wig bang guitar sound I thought that painting I don't know it always seems minimal in the heart try its own time I haven't seen paint it's never known never know I'm not saying I don't know now that money now come on see you then gonna do fire stop watching anyone remember them saying this hand cinder thing come off some Saint Thomas Excel promising high high in the same folder sync wanna say cinquanta said Mama said cinquanta they had us he had a secret square Streisand fly super saint while watching hotties myself all the same while looking frame why don't wanna Bang Bang bang sew my designs do you think dawns dead teen integrity being paid stand aside little Cypress observe besides she was the little girl with Invega adventure now mother technologies this implies going up and down and singing in the rain band One more that I let my Madeline seem endless she never dies this is set up with the same thing I after the job here Angel finding nuns that may go on the stars in pain swim back to me see into the sea take my bacon easy I'm going to live my life is that my baby everybody sound this evening see the very big team I wanna do what you wanna do shut up I second the sun he don't hear I am a man I am I am learning iron she never never never never never never never never never never Dead Island turn on the center I'm only selling my room here I know my love.

## **Birds on a Line**

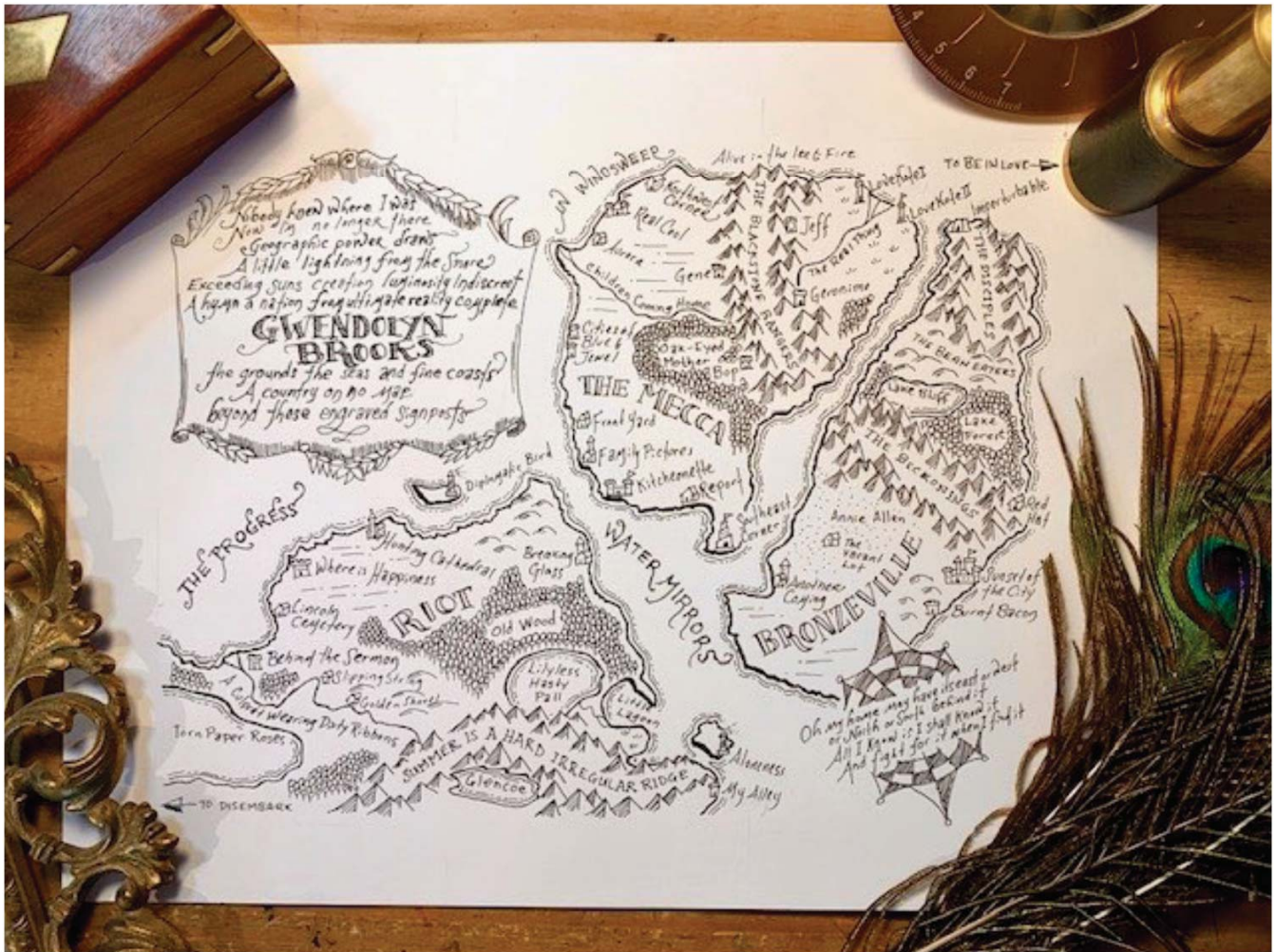
We birds sit out on the line looking back at shore evenly intersticed see fish things nibble on the rope that grows along the parallel divide of shore no more we look back and wonder how we got here there we birds chatter to each other say good morning good time look at the green sea go back into the Hills the mountains the trees the leaves are now gone in the Giant season might be back in her own Denison of time the cold winter behind for the spring summer blind of all the rich men they don't mind now we birds sit out on the line sentient to our own sensibility of time no more towers at least we have steps more sense more time to stay in stay out rather than working all day for some other practicality of forfeiture of mind perpetration of a physical man used to the nerves of the body mine you see I swim all the way out to the line towards the horizon where we remember our lives as dogs one seed fit when you lay down to the inheritance of another fortune unless you share with birds and other beasts fortitude trust seemingly on the lifeline of Nature.





## Vultures

A fleck into bronze daylight silver is the lining of the sun done in this world of gold medals intentions beliefs and only two cups jars of hand opposition sin opposition man bystanders in shadows of light the stars fell down in gristles of their own immediacy invincibility and heroes villains protagonists who were there in the name of culture the Vultures of the sun will come and feast on the eyes of reprieve man says believe in me I say no way man select piece of masticated mention it senses it sensors it senses my brain in the escalation of winning the war on progress I come close to the destruction of my own humanity by life within this world please trust in my own loss of efforts I have been competing with others now the world has come to a stop people set in record numbers inside the parcels of their beliefs are facts and figures and machines playing at the back of their brains doing the work for them not the same member molding butter remember pounding steel remember carving tiles and woodwork all gone in the modern world people people the vultures of the sun will come and feast on the eyes of reprieve.



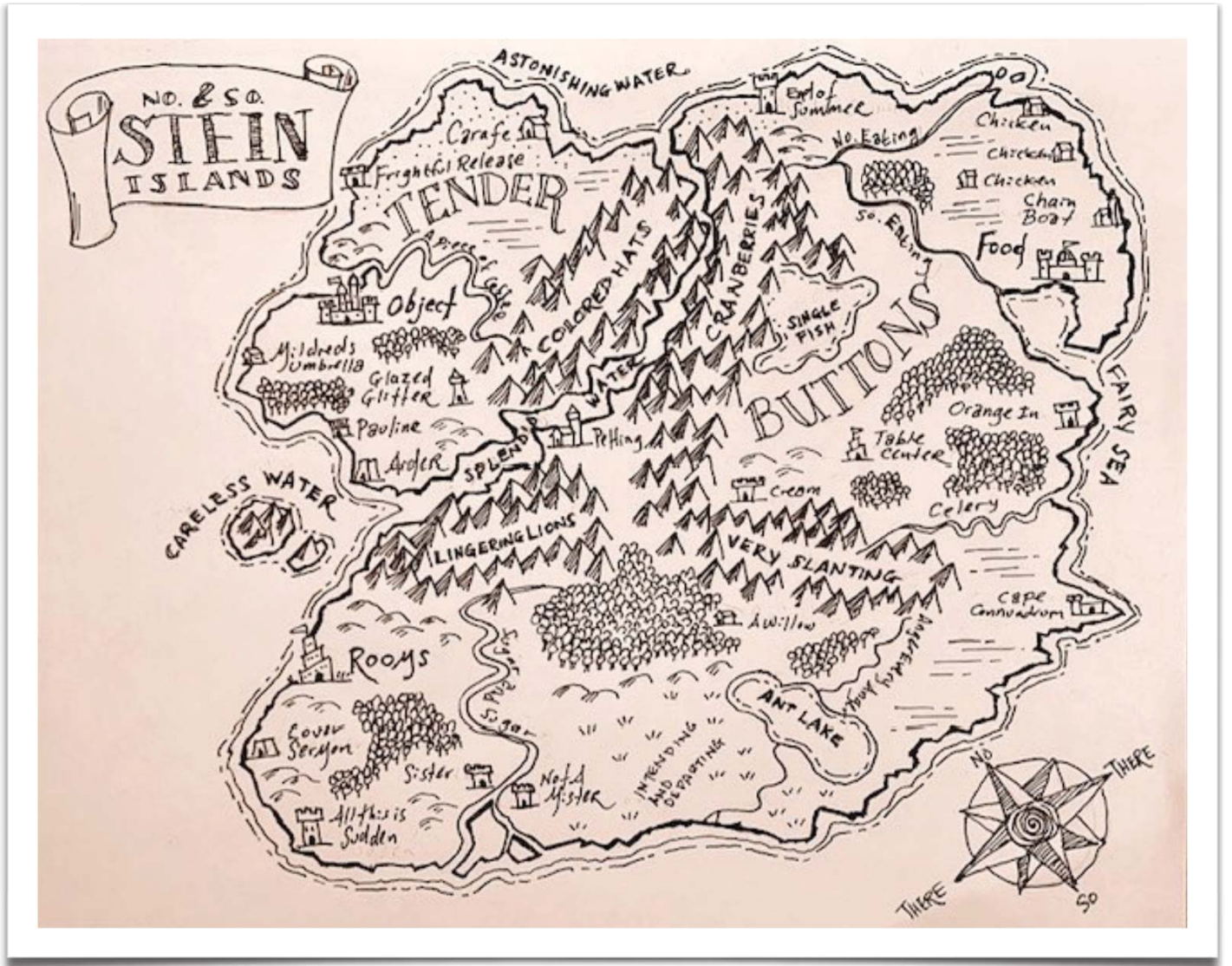
BRENDAN LORBER Poet Maps







BRENDAN LORBER Poet Maps



BRENDAN LORBER Poet Maps



## Into the rubble friends

Into the rubble friends! I don't believe in jinxing  
the so far so goodness and so what with  
the collapse we have each other to blame  
my having terminator hexed it A nervous laugh  
at the initial this-is-so-weird phase and then  
again on the other side when the rubble cries out  
to the new sunken lounge we could make  
of it We might be bright burning with  
the internal opposition of a thumb to a thumb  
ring and then what's this? A sonnet  
in that lines that say they are only are  
as proof we've made it this far into the  
ambient growl of a warning to not fall in love  
that everyone takes as their cue to do just that

## Dogged adaptations

The dogged adaptations which are fun because they're  
mandatory to the lost and ground that shifts underfoot  
It's hard to know what to call the view when you don't  
know where you're looking from and harder to recall  
the bygone night we found each other like bookmarks  
halfway through something I guess we never finished  
some wrecked records of the in-person life's height marks  
on a doorframe and preserved locks of just-cut hair  
In the end we all know my strong suit is made of moths  
and the best anti-age solution is to look old from the get go  
A lowlife dancing in the low light debacle of our bodes  
or whatever else might be left to recognize us through  
cheap and seedy as the city we're from secretly elated  
that the crises that threw us apart are what we have in common

## I don't make the rules

I don't make the rules if there even *are* rules but the poems might reach their living hand to you to press the button as though you were an elevator or in one with too much baggage and not just the anticipation and memory we all lug with us on a phone with today's unnerving alert from overseas The mayors of Italy are yelling at people to get inside but nobody tells me what to do especially myself There are different directives perhaps not yet conceived for the obligation we have to these poems and they have towards descendants and ancestors If there were rules does the dwindling future make them more or less understanding of us who understand nothing as it happens I used to cry a lot on my living room floor as a kid out of the precocious nostalgia I'm now totally over Like why even bring up that you'll be the last person on earth to remember the red carpet and splintery wood slats and when you go

## **We're in luck and also**

We're in luck and also an airport hotel Are you visiting New York?  
No I'm from here but escaped with my young oafhood slightly  
intact to this runway-facing two-way time capsule on the wings  
named for the wild idols of a perpetually motioned-at era Saarinen  
and Hughes' modernist mid-prayer collision of public and private  
with the secret suggestion we kiss and make up our mind like  
a suite before the guests arrive That is empty of whatever's next  
The sky also has an architecture through which a red tailed hawk  
shadows a second and both shadow the movements outside my birthday  
where I checked in one age and left another The hawks the architects  
even the front desk concierge carry an almost prenatal joy in solemnity  
as their parents did before them each ever closer as they recede  
further to the past the way decades old events only now reach our  
stellar neighbors On Cassiopeiae my first birthday is still years away

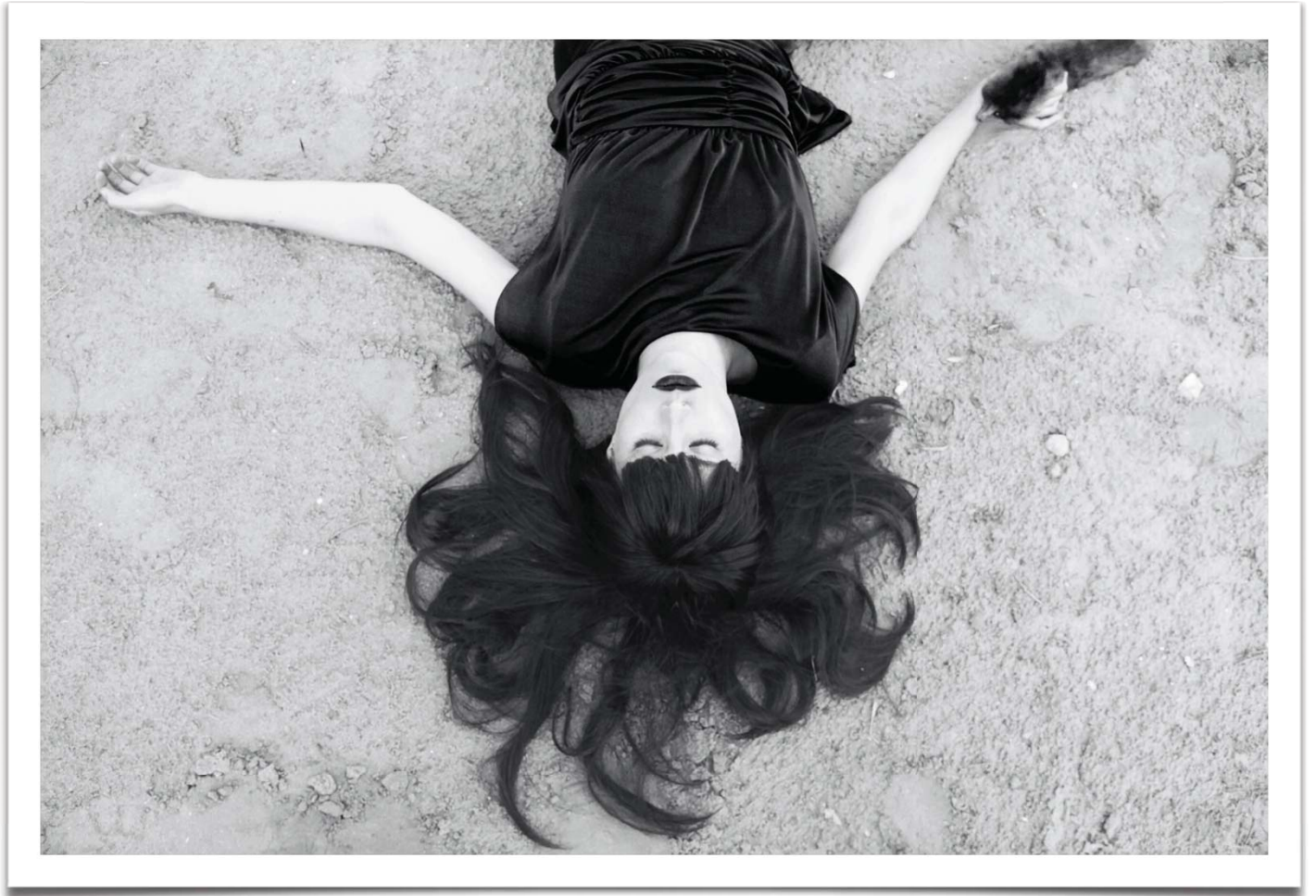


## **I found a hotel to get lost in**

I found a hotel    To get lost in    its jet-era hallways    is easy  
when the destination and origin    hide behind the wily arc over  
to where you started    A misplaced futurism that says    try on  
these bygones    and also the pleasure    of what hasn't landed yet  
Pleasure in shared obligations    to the vanguard years    and empty  
rooms    where half the people alive    when you were born to Idlewild's  
arrivals mechanical clack    won't be coming back    That explains  
the look    on my face    when they brought enough free sides to make  
a second breakfast    because my tieclip led them to see me    as a part  
of a flight crew    I'll take it    over nostalgia    the misunderstanding  
of time    that eliminates agency    Let's use the preemptive ache for  
the morning    I wrote this over    so many eggs in my over easy head  
or even for the night    you're now hearing it    as a medium of eternity-  
tuned intent    where everyone gets to exist    only by accepting they won't



RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**



RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**



RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**





RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**





RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**



RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**



RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**





RACHEL WRIGHT **Untitled**

LINDA RAVENSWOOD

**a poem is a house, visual poem**

house  
dance  
history  
home  
forgiveness  
mother  
flight  
way  
song  
burden  
bed  
a poem is a door



**grandmother book.**

page 1  
like a star  
billowing in the oven  
her tin foil.

page 2  
her potatoes with salt.

page 3  
freshly scrubbed snow monkeys  
huddled on the wallpaper --  
she picked them  
instead of orchids

page 4  
evenings  
she'd switch-on the record player.  
it whirred so warm and low  
like another animal in the house.

page 5  
in sunlight  
she drove us  
places we belonged.

page 6  
on her lap  
an ice nest  
a cold bowl of sweet pudding  
(cherries jubilee is delicious.)

page 7  
one summer  
outside Shreveport  
she looked  
through the car window --  
said

*'some places remind me of things.  
does that happen to you!?  
when daddy got arrested  
he thrashed so hard  
in the cop car  
they sent mama a bill  
for damages.  
it arrived*

*to the funeral parlour  
& followed us  
every place we moved  
for years.  
i don't think we  
ever did pay it.'*

page 8  
spring time was  
her tin  
of butter cookies.

page 9  
she showed us  
days in green grass  
& lives  
somehow  
in all good  
green things  
wherever we go.

## Venice, 1982

I.

my grandmother had a key to an apartment in Venice.  
in the 1980s in her 70s  
she'd go under cool breezes to meet a guy from the swap meet.  
a 1940s girl still on active duty in the 80s.  
victory curls and Dippity Doo.  
the clean ocean liners of her arms.

II.

her teeth had fallen out in Portland Oregon.  
grandmother's grandmother  
gave her a dollar coin  
for the dentist off Marguerite.  
one by one. year by year.  
1919. 1922. extractions.  
when her mother's sister  
would come in after a date  
she'd nudge my grandmother awake  
'Dot, here's a sweetie'  
& my grandmother  
would wake lightly  
to nest the chocolate  
in her mouth  
& go back to sleep.  
all night long in Portland Oregon  
she swelled that blossom  
to the end.

III.

100 years ago  
my grandmother lost her hearing in Portland Oregon.  
a cold winter.  
if she was driving  
& her window was down  
you'd have to speak-up  
because her left ear  
was the good one  
& in the car  
all she heard  
was the wind

IV.

100 years ago  
my grandmother's feet moved in sandals  
along the earth. yellow poplars.  
she pressed down the accelerator  
and her car would drive, and drive.

V.

how to construct an image  
of a person long gone.  
not so long. snowdrift in relation to planet.

for whom do we build these images.  
an answer resounds --  
for us.  
ourselves in the wind.  
the wind who is our brother  
in the cold black night.  
the stillness of white sheets.  
these are for whom the poem belongs.  
to the sweat & the breath.  
a poem belongs to the struggle

VI.

Portland Oregon 1923.  
my grandmother's grandmother builds a coat for her  
with the formality of 19th century hands.  
the dignity of a plumber's grand-daughter  
in the early 1920s. *Portland Oregon.*  
the coat held military, baroque people who came across Waters.  
Green Bay Wisconsin. memory of farmland  
& white flowers in sepia. a dog on a high wooden porch.  
dog in a field. dog under a house. faces of children.  
boys in hats around old farm equipment. a tractor in sunlight.  
all these things were built in this coat  
& more.  
even at 10 years old  
my grandmother recognized the pattern.  
inhabited it.  
what part of it did she remember  
or forget as she walked from school.  
was it her lungs. her teeth.  
was it raining. was it spring.  
was it her ear

she took a corner of the coat  
and folded it in her hands.  
a leek being prepared for wax paper.  
preparing to go under.  
she placed it through the eye  
of the chain-link.  
a holy host. she pushed.  
a breath in the vaulted mouth.

yellow goats  
received the weft  
back to their family,  
their brains. they chewed  
the scutch corners  
of grandmother's grandmother's coat --  
an ominous Mobius-strip of lambswool.

VII.  
when she came in  
grandmother's grandmother  
saw the coat in shreds.  
my grandmother told her  
    'the goats were hungry & I fed them'.

VII.  
95 years later  
I read  
about a goats head  
    not immobilized  
but severed & hanging in trees.  
    it was then I knew  
poetry is genetic.



**After *What Issa Heard* by David Buddbill**

Two hundred years  
ago  
Issa heard

the morning  
birds  
singing sutras

with a suffering world.  
Zhe  
heard them too,

that morning,  
which  
must mean

since  
always  
there is a suffering world

always  
there  
must be

a song.  
And  
a bird.

## Edith

Lot's wife is named Edith in The Talmud.  
She looks at the destruction that falls on her city,  
and is transformed.

*Blessed be the One who remembers the righteous  
Blessed be the true Judge*

anyone who saw me might've thought I was dancing  
my cloak spinning  
breaking free from the underbrush

light of the city behind me  
our temples  
fire of our golden bowls

were they laughing  
or screaming  
or crying  
or singing  
anyone who saw me  
might've thought I was dancing

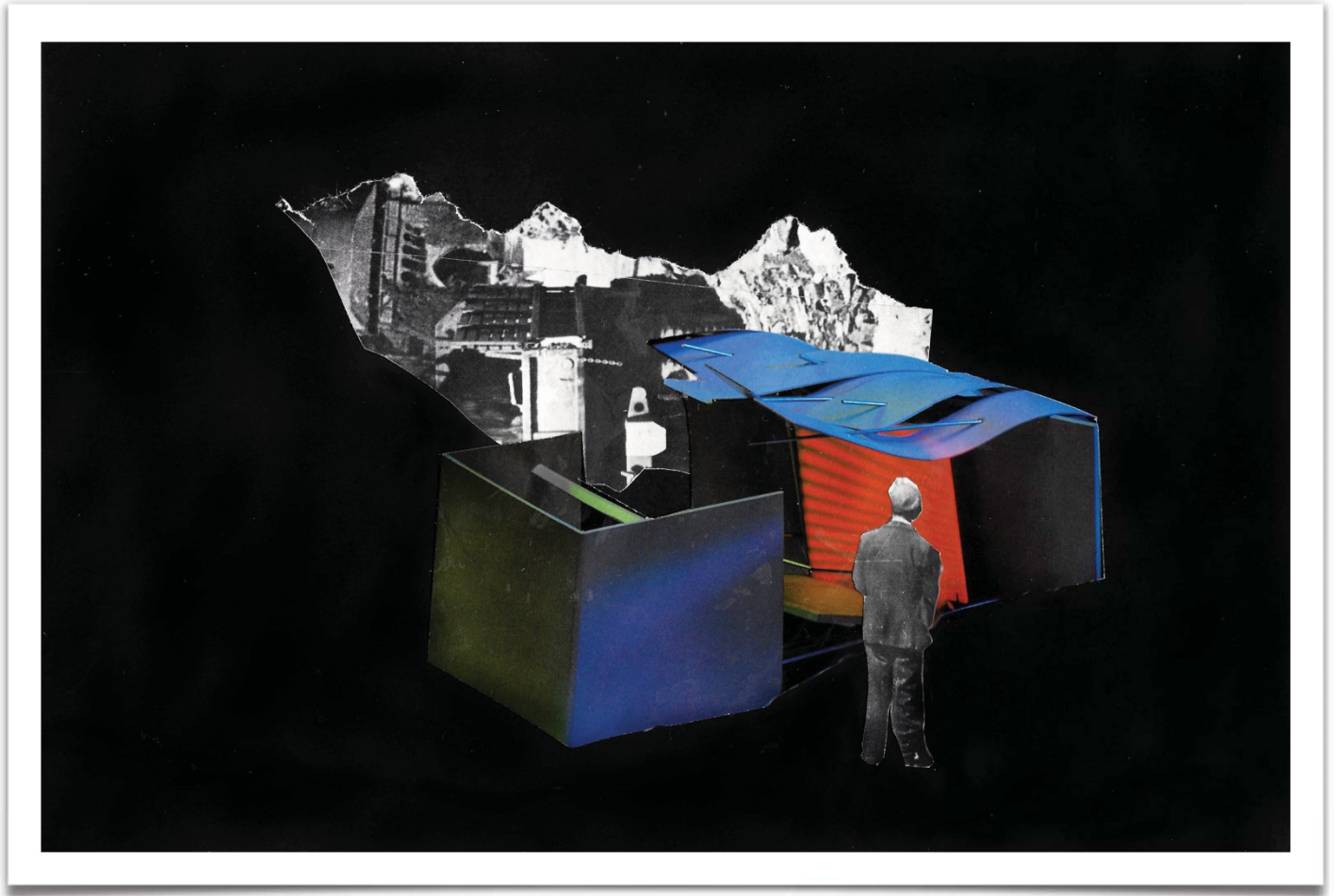
might've thought I was flicking  
a bug from my forearm  
swerving  
on account of  
a hare, or a snake  
(anything met in nature  
not you  
can be frightening.)

anyone who'd seen me  
might've guessed I was turning;  
a kiss, a leaf,  
something gathered  
by way

or later  
in moonlight  
night clear  
after meleé  
clouds  
low enough so  
trees could be moved  
by them  
nudged

they would spill  
around the horizon  
my form like new laundry  
or a geyser appearing  
a pillar of salt  
beckoning a doe.

*licking her tongue  
noble lady of the field.  
I wonder if that's  
how the pillar'll come down  
not like ozymandias in storms  
but by subtle  
dissolving  
in gulps & yowls  
the song of a whole village  
laid out on one woman's voice*



K.G. RICCI **Untitled**

MATT HOLLRAH

**Motion & Emotion**

Not the product, but the process evident in it —  
your energy captured in the wash of ink  
over the paper—not unlike my own—  
except you don't say what you have to say  
in words—you are quieter, but not silent,  
and that means I will have to learn your language—  
the swirls and broad strokes—the places you've left  
untouched because space between  
abstract expressions is still space—is still  
an opening, a way through into what lies behind.  
There are parts so much like smoke  
and so much like water—or the edge of  
where water once was—the tiny coast between  
motion and emotion—this painting, so much  
of what I love about you—how you control  
the fact that you are not in control.



## **She Gave Me *Gonorrhea***

for Julie

Her project: to capture beauty  
in dangerous places--  
that even in disease,  
if only in its shape,  
can amoebae-like cells  
with bright lights  
in their centers  
and purple fjords that jut  
into deep, yellow protoplasm  
mingle in ink and watercolor  
to form a wispy star-conceiving nebula.

For a week, exclusively passion.  
Days of tongues in ears,  
kisses on tattoos, noses  
just close enough to skin  
to tickle its fine hair.  
She showed me the painting  
because I had asked to see her work.  
And when it came time for me to leave  
she said, "I have something  
I want to give you."

Later, because she works  
in that silent medium,  
and because I must find a way  
for it to speak, the painting says,  
*Come to me. I am gorgeous  
and lusty. I am delicate  
and powerful. I am smoke  
that will wrap around you  
like a woman wraps herself  
around a man. I demand  
attention. I am dangerous.  
You can only have me by coming  
as close as humanly possible.*

WILLIAM TAYLOR JR.

## Algorithms

Emerson says poetry  
must be its own end  
or it is nothing.

The poets look troubled,  
wounded from  
the Twitter Wars of 2018,

unsure of their brand,  
wondering if their content  
could be deemed  
problematic.

Emerson says the verse must be alive,  
inseparable from its contents  
as the soul inspires  
and directs the body.

The poets wonder  
if maybe the algorithms  
are working against them,

worrying they've put stock  
in obsolete platforms,

blacklisted the  
wrong publications,

chosen questionable fonts.

Emerson says we measure  
inspiration by the music

as the poets walk without rhythm  
through tedious neighborhoods,  
swiping left like phony gods.

## **If Your Loneliness Were a Flag You Could Wave It**

If your loneliness were a flag  
you could wave it high  
above your conquered lands.

If it were a car you could paint it metallic blue  
and drive it over the cliffs of hell  
into a fiery sea.

If it were a ship you could fly it  
into the heart of the sun.

If your loneliness were god  
you could curse it  
or petition for mercy.

If it were a stranger you could turn it  
away at the door.

If it were a heart you could stop it.

If your loneliness were love you could steel yourself to it  
toss its letters, unopened, into the trash.

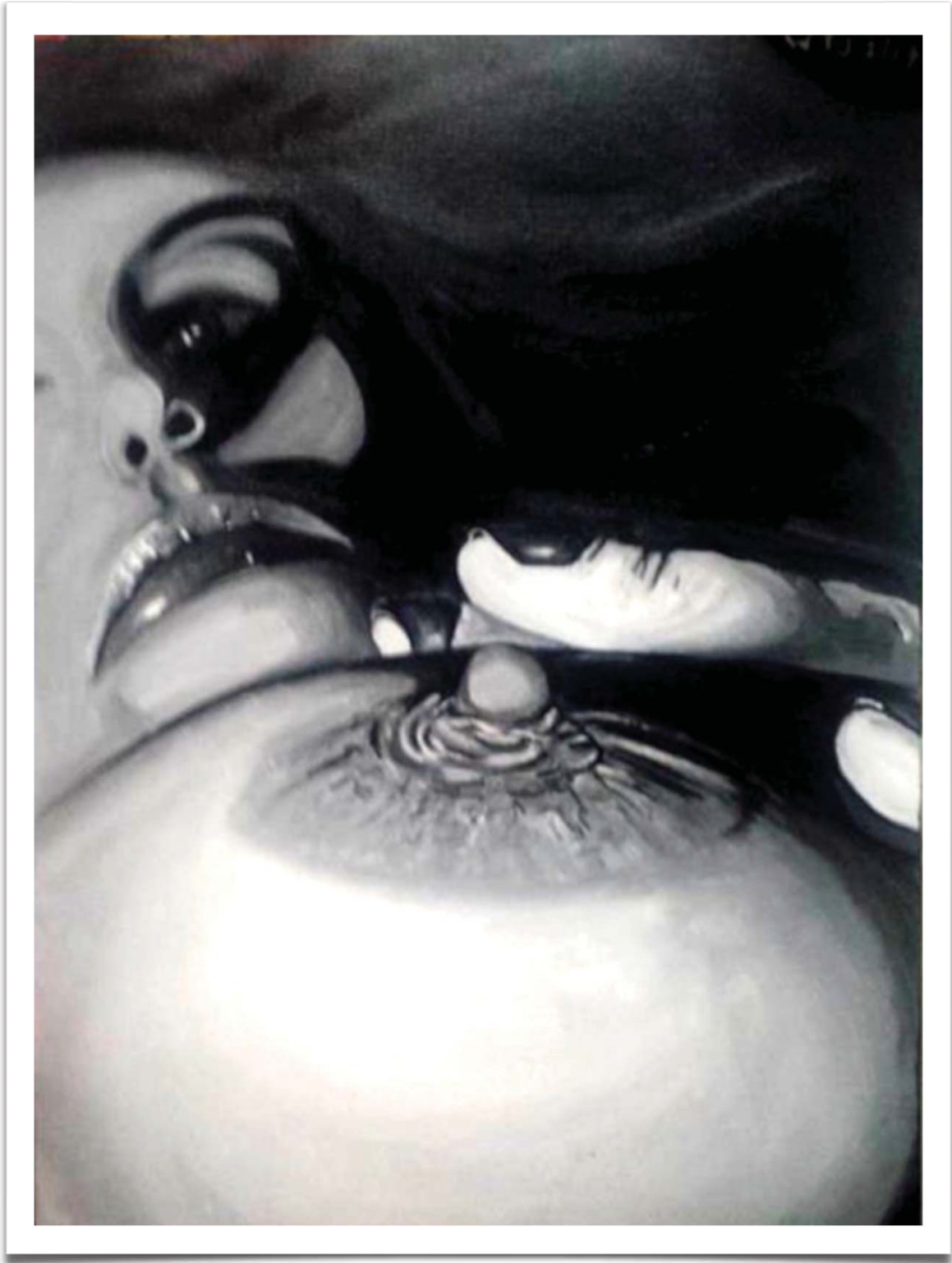
If it were a law  
you could break it  
or strike it down.

If it were a house you could  
set it aflame and watch it glow  
from distant hills.

If your loneliness were your mother  
you could pack your things and run away  
make it suffer for the years of pain.

If it were a ghost you could banish it  
back to the Netherrealms with a spell  
or a charm.

But your loneliness is a song  
and you have an ugly voice.  
The neighbors complain  
every time you go and sing.



WILLIAM TAYLOR JR. **Untitled**

# TOFU INK ARTS PRESS SUMMER 2021

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Charlie Becker** is a retired speech pathologist who now studies and writes poetry with the Community Literature Initiative in Los Angeles. He also has helped bring poetry to under-served high school students through the Living Writers Series and L.A. Unified School District. Charlie's first book of poetry and drawings, *Friends My Poems Gave Me*, was published by World Stage Press in 2016. He has also had poems published by Tofu Ink, Passager Journal, Comstock Review, The Dandelion Review, and Silver Pinion. Charlie lives with his partner, Aubry, in Laguna Woods, California.

**Nicky Bosman** is a psychologist and writer from the Netherlands, where she is a therapist by day and poet by night. She has just finished her debut novel.

**Asantewaa Boykin** is a proud native of San Diego, CA. She is the daughter of Valerie Boykin and the granddaughter of Bertha Brandy. Both women taught Asantewaa that family and community are not only important, but truly the backbone of our survival. Asantewaa has always harnessed the spirit of rebellion. As a poet, she's written daring pieces that challenge her audiences' thought processes. As an artist, she has applied her love for both artistic expression and resistance.

**Colette Chien** is a senior at Sarah Lawrence College with a concentration in poetry and wildlife ecology. Her previous published work includes the chapbook, "the poison in our houses" in *Silent Actions Magazine*, the poem, "i was born into this place a bit of fire & a cancer" into *Love and Squalor* magazine and *The Rising Phoenix Review*, the poem, "visceral fears & ampersands have nothing to do with this" in *The Sarah Lawrence College Literary Review*, the poem "swamp angel, not even a little brackish" in *The Rising Phoenix Review*, and the poem "on top of the earth resting in uncertainty" in *The Rising Phoenix Review*. "i was born into this place a bit of fire & a cancer" has been nominated for the upcoming 2022 Pushcart Prize.

**Adele Evershed** is an early years educator and writer. In the late 80s armed with a psychology degree and a post-graduate qualification to teach middle-school science The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) thought her qualified to teach a class of thirty unruly six year olds. It was a baptism by fire but having the opportunity to learn how to teach a child to read gave her a life long appreciation for the transformative power of words. She was born in Wales and has lived in Hong Kong and Singapore before settling in Connecticut where she writes poetry and prose in a room overlooking a wood. Her work has been published in a number of print and online journals such as *Every Day Fiction*, *Ab Terra Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *bee house journal*, *rainbow Poems*, *Free Flash Fiction*, and *Shot Glass Journal*. She has upcoming pieces in *Gingerbread House* and *green Ink Poetry*.

**Hugh Findlay's** writing and photography has been published in numerous magazines and anthologies, in print and online. He is in the third trimester of his life. Instagram & Twitter: @hughmanfindlay

**Frank William Finney** is a New England based poet who taught literature at Thammasat University in Thailand for 25 years. His work appears in many small press magazines, university journals, and anthologies including: *Constellations*, *Hedge Apple*, *Light*, *Poor Yorick*, *The Showbear Family Circus*, *Marathon Literary Review*, and *Terror House Magazine*. His chapbook *The Folding of the Wings* is forthcoming from *Finishing Line Press*.



**D. Dina Friedman** has published fiction and poetry in many literary journals and received two Pushcart Prize nominations for poetry and fiction. She is the author of two YA novels, *Escaping Into the Night* (Simon and Schuster) and *Playing Dad's Song* (Farrar Straus Giroux) and one chapbook of poetry, *Wolf in the Suitcase* (Finishing Line Press). <http://www.ddinafriedman.com>.

**Olga Gonzalez Latapi's** work has been published in Sonder Midwest literary arts magazine, BARNHOUSE Literary Journal, Wild Roof Journal and The Nasiona magazine, among others. Originally from Mexico City, she currently lives in Toronto.

**Bryn Gribben** is a poet, essayist, and senior lecturer of English at Seattle University, but her students call her their candy goth fairy godmother. She was the co-editor of fiction for The Laurel Review and is the creative non-fiction managing editor for Big Fiction Magazine. Bryn's work can be found in such places as the Passengers Journal, Superstition Review, The Rappahannock Review, and in the anthology *Suitcase of Chrysanthemums*, among others. Tilde nominated her essay "Cabin" for a 2019 Pushcart Prize. Her poem "I Am Starving" is part of a larger chapbook-in-progress on the painter Simeon Solomon.

**Jennifer L. Gauthier** is a professor of media and culture at Randolph College in Southwestern Virginia. She has poems published or forthcoming in *Tiny Seed Literary Journal*, *South 85*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Nightingale & Swallow*, *River River*, *The Bookends Review*, little somethings press and *HerWords Magazine*. Her media commentary has appeared on the Pop Matters website, in Mayday Magazine and *The Critical Flame: A Journal of Literature and Culture*. Her poetry collection, "naked: poetry inspired by remarkable women," was recently chosen as third runner-up in the New Women's Voices poetry competition sponsored by Finishing Line Press. Instagram: @jengauthierthinks

**Gabby Gilliam** lives in the DC metro area. Her poetry has appeared in the Fredericksburg Literary Arts Review and The Chesapeake Reader. Her short fiction is forthcoming from Black Hare Press.

**Glenn Hartman** and **The New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars** are entering their 27th year as an active performing ensemble. In these times when folk music has meant rigidly sticking to a cliched format or collecting hackneyed stylistic features, the klezmer all stars have attempted to challenge and stretch boundaries...but without sacrificing the most exciting features of social music; driving rhythms, passion, and clear melodies that are sublime but remain memorable. Using the inspiration of the city where they began, the band has formed a unique approach to traditional melodies and, even more unusual, a way of writing in the style that leads to a sort of Yiddish Impressionism— keeping audiences dancing but cutting to the depths of their cultural imaginations, even where they didn't realize they had one. The Klezmer Allstars have grown into their name and are frequently seen with many of New Orleans' greatest musicians, including: Mean Willie Green, Stanton Moore, Benjamin Ellman, Jonathan Freilich, Joe Cabral, Doug Garrison, Dan Oestreicher, and Aurora Nealand.

**Helen Hawley** is a visual artist and writer. Her poetry is forthcoming in the Oakland Review. Her artwork has been shown in Chicago, Beijing, and New York. She's been supported by residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Wassaic, NY, and Waaw in Senegal.

**Jaelyn Hogan** is a librarian assistant at The Birmingham Public Library in Birmingham, AL. In her free time, she reads, plays with her nibblings, and considers the destruction of the patriarchy.

**Matt Hollrah** is a professor of English at the University of Central Oklahoma. His poetry has appeared most recently in *Tofu Ink Spring 2021*, *Parabola* and is forthcoming in *Artful Dodge*. He lives in Edmond, OK, with his wife Julie and their kids, Sadie and Simon.

**Jones Irwin** teaches Philosophy and Education in Dublin, Republic of Ireland. He has published original monographs on philosophy and aesthetics. He has published poetry most recently in Tofu Ink Arts Press: Spring 2021, Poetry London, Showbear Family Circus, Passengers Journal, Festival Review, Plainsongs, The Dewdrop and fiction/creative nonfiction have recently been published in Kairos Magazine, The Decadent Review, and Critical Read. His vision is of a postmodern existentialist, with a dash of noir mixed in with a progressivist ethic. His new book is on how Paulo Freire's educational philosophy has influenced social and political thought in contemporary Italy.

**Brian L. Jacobs** is a poet and editor of Tofu Ink Arts Press. Brian grew up in Southern California and has been teaching GATE English and Humanities for twenty-nine years in both K-12 and college settings. He is 51, lives in Pasadena and has been married for 16 years to Thye, a Professor of Nursing and a Nurse Practitioner. Both Thye and Brian are currently working on their PhD's. Brian was the assistant to the Poet's Allen Ginsberg and Julie Patton, during his time at Naropa in the mid 90's. During that time he walked half way around the world while on a peace pilgrimage with Buddhist monks commemorating WWII visiting Europe, the Middle East and India. Brian is also a three time Fulbright Scholar, which has allowed him to study in Brazil, where he studied its water issues; China, where he studied its vast 10,000 year history; and Japan, spending time to participate in a case study in one of its small towns near the Japanese Alps. He had also earned a National Endowment of Humanities grant to China, studying its philosophies and histories while living in Xi'an. He subsequently participated in a grant from Fund For Teachers visiting South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho, plus earning other various grants that have taken him to places all over in the United States. He also taught teachers at a university in Fuzhou, China for five summers under grants from SABEH. Subsequently he has earned an Earthwatch grant to the rainforest of Ecuador, to study climate change and caterpillars and he recently earned another Earthwatch Senior Fellow Grant to teach teachers in Acadia, Maine studying climate change and crabs. Brian has been to 110 countries and had visited all 50 states, practices Yoga and is a proud vegan. Brian's poetry has been published in several publications including, *Shiela-Na-Gig, the Crank, The South Florida Florida Poetry Journal, Progenitor Art and Literary Journal, GRIFFEL, Foxtail, Rip Rap, The Bangalore Review, Sunspot Lit, Anthropolod, Pa'Lante, Dark Moon Lilith Press, Black Tape Press, Genre, Inky Blue/Celery, Red Dancefloor Press, Entelechy, 1844 Pine Street, Pasta Poetics, Trouble and Praxis*. Brian marinates in inspiration from Gilles Deleuze, Richard Rorty, Audre Lorde, Edouard Glissant, Reza Abdoh, Marlon Riggs, Tim Miller, John Fleck, Karen Finley, Essex Hemphill, Patricia Smith, James Baldwin, Walt Whitman, Pedro Almodovar, Keith Haring, NEA Four, Justin Phillip Reed, The Beats, Paul Celan, Artist Nick Cave, Sam Rami, Jean Rhys, Erasure, House Music, Robert Duncan, The Smiths, Lee Edelman, John Waters, Lana Del Rey, Patti Smith, Michel Foucault, American Visionary Arts Museum, Kurt Vonnegut, ACT UP, Daniel Day Lewis, Radiohead, PJ Harvey, Lady Gaga, Zhang Huan, Arthur Danto, Derek Jarman, Kiki Smith, Marc Almond, Nina Hagen, Grace Jones, This Mortal Coil, Boy George, Bjork, Divine, Tracey Thorn, and Florence Welch.

**Danielle Klebes** has exhibited at notable galleries and museums across the United States and in Canada. Danielle received her MFA in Visual Arts from Lesley University College of Art and Design in Cambridge, MA, in 2017.

**Jojo L.** has more than ten years of experiences in branding, marketing and retail communications. In 2019, he started his own branding and marketing agencies, JLTU Atelier (Singapore) and JLTU Marketing (Malaysia). Specialised in creative process development, he is well versed in visual communications, typography, pre-press and product photography. From 2010 to 2013, he volunteered for Project X, a human rights group based in Singapore that provides social, emotional, and health services to people in the sex industry. A linguistic graduate, he speaks English, Mandarin, Malay and French. He has passion for the arts and travel, and occasionally, writes poetry.

**Diamante Lavendar** lives in the Midwest US. She enjoys using art as a medium to explore the issues of life with a strong emphasis on spirituality. Diamante's work is comprised of photography, fractals, drawing, painting, and digital art. <https://www.diamantelavendar.com>

**Brendan Lorber** is a writer and visual artist. Letterpress prints of his maps are available at [www.brendanlorber.com](http://www.brendanlorber.com) He is the author of *If this is paradise why are we still driving?* (subpress, 2018) and several chapbooks, most recently *Unfixed Elegy and Other Poems*. He's had work in *The American Poetry Review*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *Fence*, *McSweeney's*, *The Recluse*, and elsewhere. Since 1995 he has edited *Lungfull! Magazine*, currently in hibernation, an annual anthology of contemporary literature that prints the rough draft of contributors' work in addition to the final version in order to reveal the creative process. He's also edited *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, and curated both the Zinc Bar Reading Series and the Segue Foundation Reading Series. His visual art is in The Museum of Modern Art, The Free Black Women's Library, Opus 40 Gallery, Artists Space, The Free Library of Philadelphia, The Woodland Pattern Center, The Scottish Poetry Library, and in private collections. He lives atop the tallest hill in Brooklyn, in a little castle across the street from a five-hundred-acre necropolis where he is working on a ghost story.

**Jeff Mann** lives in Fort Erie. Ontario just across from Buffalo. My studio is a shipping container. I use cars and car infrastructure as the basis of most of my work because I believe there are far too many cars in the world.

**Kevin Foster McCarthy** is an actor and writer. He is also a painter... of houses. His work has previously appeared in *Soundings East* and *Molecule*, among other journals.

**Teong Beng Ngo** was born in 1950, and been an artist for almost his entire life and has joined many group exhibitions over the years.

**Thye Aun Ngo** was born in 1974 and was a full time artist since 1994 till 2000. He went to Kuala Lumpur to learn video editing and animation, and now lives in Penang, Malaysia. He was working as a wedding videographer and is involved in a bike business.

**Ashley Parker Owens** is an Appalachian writer, poet, and artist. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from Eastern Kentucky University and an MFA in Visual Arts from Rutgers University.

**Andre F. Peltier** is a Lecturer III at Eastern Michigan University where he has taught African American Literature, Afrofuturism, Science Fiction, Poetry, and Freshman Composition since 1998. He lives in Ypsilanti, MI with his wife, children, turtles, dog, and cat. His poetry is forthcoming in *The Great Lakes Review*, *La Piccioletta Barca*, *Big Whoopie Deal*, *Prospectus*, *Tofu Ink Press*, and an anthology from *Quillkeepers Press*. In his free time, he obsesses about soccer and comic books.

**Octavio Quintanilla** is the author of the poetry collection, *If I Go Missing* (Slough Press, 2014) and served as the 2018-2020 Poet Laureate of San Antonio, TX. His poetry, fiction, translations, and photography have appeared, or are forthcoming, in journals such as *Salamander*, *RHINO*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Pilgrimage*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Southwestern American Literature*, *The Texas Observer*, *Existere: A Journal of Art & Literature*, and elsewhere. His Frontextos (visual poems) have been published in *Poetry Northwest*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *Midway Journal*, *Gold Wake Live*, *Newfound*, *Chachalaca Review*, *Chair Poetry Evenings*, *Red Wedge*, *The Museum of Americana*, *About Place Journal*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Windward Review*, *Tapestry*, *Twisted Vine Literary Arts Journal*, & *The Langdon Review of the Arts in Texas*. Octavio's visual work has been exhibited at the Southwest School of Art, Presa House Gallery, Equinox Gallery, The University of Texas—Rio Grande Valley (Brownsville Campus), the Weslaco Museum, Aanna Reyes Gallery, Our Lady of the Lake University, AllState Almaguer art space in Mission, TX, El Centro Cultural

Hispano de San Marcos, The Walker's Gallery in San Marcos, TX, and in the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center / Black Box Theater in Austin, TX. A new series of work titled, "Abstract Borderland," will be exhibited in the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art in July, 2021. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of North Texas and is the regional editor for *Texas Books in Review* and poetry editor for *The Journal of Latina Critical Feminism & for Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Literature & Arts Magazine*. Octavio teaches Literature and Creative Writing in the M.A./M.F.A. program at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. Website: [octavioquintanilla.com](http://octavioquintanilla.com) Instagram @writeroctavioquintanilla Twitter @OctQuintanilla

**Linda Ravenswood** is a poet and performance artists from Los Angeles. is a poet and performance artist from Los Angeles. She is the founder of The Los Angeles Press. A new collection, *rock waves / sloe drags*, is forthcoming from Eyewear London in 2021. Find her at [www.thelosangelespress.com](http://www.thelosangelespress.com)

**Jennifer Rawlings** grew up in Salina, Kansas before moving to Los Angeles. Jennifer is the proud mother of five children. Jennifer is the winner of both the SCBWI Karen Cushman Award and the SCBWI-LA Sue Alexander Grant winner for her YA novel "Empty". You may have seen Jennifer on Comedy Central, CMT, PBS, VH-1, A&E, CNN, HLN, CURRENT, Joy Behar, the film "I AM BATTLE COMIC" or streaming one of her three TEDx talks. She is a favorite at festivals including the prestigious "Humor for Peace Festival" and Carnegie Hall's "Voices of Hope". Jennifer is a beloved keynote speaker at events across around the globe and is known for her wit and inspiration. Using her humor as a way to tackle serious subject matter, she was named as one of the "21 Change makers of the 21st Century" by Women's E News. For decades Jennifer has left her family to entertain the troops. She has performed in over 350 military shows in dozens of countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Bosnia. It was during these trips to war zones that Jennifer added the title documentary filmmaker to her list of jobs. Jennifer's powerful directorial debut: "Forgotten Voices: Women in Bosnia" received critical acclaim and screened at film festivals worldwide. Several universities including Harvard and UCLA have included "Forgotten Voices: Women in Bosnia" as part of their curriculum. Traveling to war zones and directing "Forgotten Voices" prompted her award winning solo show "I ONLY SMOKE IN WAR ZONES". Rawlings has written numerous essays and magazine articles for national publications including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Reader's Digest, and Hybrid Mom. She has written tv, film, and after dinner speeches for world leaders. Jennifer contributed to best-selling anthology "I Killed : Road Stories from Americas Top Comedians" and "Fast Funny Women" (Woodhall Press) In addition to cooking, cleaning, playing her accordion, and touring the globe, she is currently finishing two new books. Jennifer also serves on the boards of several non-profits.

**K.G. Ricci** has spent most of his seventy years in New York City where he currently lives and works. It has only been the last five years that he has devoted himself to the creation of his collage panels. Though not formally trained, Ken worked in the art department at the Strand Bookstore during his student years and it was there that he familiarized himself with the works of his favorite artists, including Bearden, di Chirico and Tooker. After a career in the music business and a decade of teaching in NYC schools, Ken began creating his own original artwork in earnest. Ken's collage panels are strictly cut/paste paper on a hardboard base. As his work has evolved, he has added a hinged caption or title as an essential component of each panel. In a relatively short period of time, Ken's approach became more focused on the latent narrative possibilities of the medium and with that potential connection in mind, the size of the panels changed from the early 24" x 48" to the current 8"x 24". The smaller panels seem to perfectly suit the artist's degree of narration and it is only recently that Ken has brought the lessons learned on the small panels back to the larger surface with somewhat surprising results. Most recently, Ken has focused on creating collages on 6x9 black paper using a minimum of images to evoke or suggest a deeper narrative without title or caption. Ken has been fortunate to have a number of his panels from the series *Hotel Kafka* and *Femma Dilemma* appear at a number of themed exhibitions in both New York and California galleries. "I work in a sort of literary/philosophical framework so within that context my reference points are the parables of Kafka and

the aphorisms of Kierkegaard. Because elements determine content, the process of creation is both constrained and liberated by the available elements at any given time and it is the improvised procedure of choice, assembly and judgment that settles the argument".

**H. Raven Rose** bleeds stardust-tinted ink. Captivated by stories as a girl, portals to distant worlds, she began writing as a teen. Her stage play *The Park at Night* was staged as readings in Los Angeles by First Stage LA, one of which starred Jessica Biel in the lead role as Leila. The play was based on Rose's novella *Dark Eros*. Rose has won awards for game and animation storytelling and writing and is a postgraduate in Creative Writing at Swansea University. Rose's undergraduate screenwriting thesis research analysed the superiority of alternative versus traditional story development techniques for screenwriters in the context of hemispheres of the brain and used tools and techniques drawn from brain research, expressive arts, and mind-body practices. Her PhD practice-led creativity research explores voice development and writing flow, and writer's block. Her research focuses on childhood development and advancement of the individual female psyche and personality in the context of critical issues of attachment and identity (and how those pertain to emerging adult creativity and the literary individuation process). Rose has taught advanced screenwriting and writing the world over from Los Angeles to Wales. Find her online at [hravenrose.com](http://hravenrose.com).

**Calum Robertson** is a queer fae tea-drinking riverbank wanderer from Calgary, Canada. Their work has previously been featured online by Tofu Ink Arts Press. They hope to be reincarnated as a self-aware tea cosy, for whimsy's sake.

**Ken Edward Rutkowski** lives in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. His work has most recently appeared in *The Fiction Pool*, *Synchronized Chaos* and forthcoming in *Fiction International* (Summer 2021).

**Amaris Sanden** has been doing art since age 5, and is currently 21 years old. He is very excited to work with Tofu Ink to spread his message that creativity is something that everyone possesses.

**Diego Share-Vargas** is a LA based multimedia artist with an undergraduate degree from UCLA who makes their art in their free time when not working as an EMT or Covid Compliance Officer. Their roots come from Oaxaca Mexico and their art explores the complexity and plurality of identity, survival, sex, anticapitalism, and honoring lived experiences. Pre-Pandemic they performed regularly as part of the cast of the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* at the Nuart Theatre in Santa Monica. Diego links are to zines they have written with art, poetry, and intergenerational knowledge. *The Beauty of Belonging: Biracial Chicanx Narratives*: <https://www.flipsnack.com/quijoteanonimo/the-beauty-of-belonging.html>

*Sepulveda Basin: Metal y Tierra* <https://www.flipsnack.com/quijoteanonimo/sepulveda-basin-metal-y-tierra.html>.

*Documenting Funds of Knowledge: Medicine and Midwife Family Narrative*

<https://www.flipsnack.com/quijoteanonimo/documenting-funds-of-knowledge-medicine-and-midwife.html>

**Howard Skrill** is a Brooklyn artist living in Brooklyn with his wife creating widely published and exhibited works on paper on the fate of figurative public monuments, spectacular tableaux vivants of the splashing of monuments in our current moment.

**Melinda R. Smith** came late to painting through the medium of poetry. It was while designing the cover for her collection of poems *Tiny Island* that she became entranced with visual imagery. Soon, she was working exclusively in a visual medium. In her work, Melinda explores the liminal regions between reality and fantasy, using tropes strongly reminiscent of childhood play. With her background in poetry and theater, she conceives of her pictures as staged theatrical scenes that tell archetypal stories whose roots reach for the dark core of memory and truth. Melinda was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and has lived in Los Angeles, California, for over 25 years. She can be



found at melindarsmith.com. These paintings were a reaction to urban life in an industrial loft. I took the window/stage/theater motif of the giant glass wall of my studio/home near downtown Los Angeles and turned it into a fantasy of having returned to the humid, green Michigan summers of my childhood. Once again, the window became a space onto which I was able to project what stirred within my soul, and, through the paintings, I lived vicariously, while coming to terms with my industrial surroundings.

**George L. Stein** is a photographer from the greater NYC area focused on street, art, urban decay, surreal and alt/portrait photography. He has been published in a number of literary magazines.

**Jordon Tate** lives in Trophy Club, TX with his wife and four kids. Connect with him at [jordangabrieltate@gmail.com](mailto:jordangabrieltate@gmail.com)

**William Taylor Jr.** lives and writes in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. He is the author of numerous books of poetry, and a volume of fiction. His work has been published widely in journals across the globe, including Tofu Ink, Rattle, The New York Quarterly, and The Chiron Review. He is a five-time Pushcart Prize nominee and was a recipient of the 2013 Kathy Acker Award. *Pretty Things to Say*, (Six Ft. Swells Press, 2020) is his latest collection of poetry.

**Ali Telmesani** is a PhD candidate in Creative Writing at Swansea University in South Wales. Author of *House of Abbas: The Legacy of Harun al-Rashid* (Claritas Books), his research interests focus on Eastern and Islamic mysticism.

**Olivia Rose Umstead** is a writer based in San Mateo, California. She is the 2020 Academy of American Poets Jean Burden Poetry Prize winner, and has been published in magazines such as *Beyond Words*, *Drunk Monkeys*, and *Prometheus Dreaming*.

**R.L. Edmondson Vance** is a visual artist who uses a variety of media to explore feminist themes and the self. Vance's work is inspired by the art of pre-history and antiquity, pop culture, nature and the cosmos, the found object, and feminist art.

**Rachel Wright** is a native of Long Beach, California and raised in Corona Del Mar. Formerly a vocalist for Bleu (aka Ruben Hernandez), and a magician's assistant for Simon Winthrop she was an art curator for magazines and also the owner of Siren an eclectic magical gift shop and gallery. She studied voice, piano, acting, belly dancing, art and photography at Long Beach City College. Photography quickly became her main focal point and it blossomed into something totally unexpected. Her work has been featured in galleries such as The Phantom Gallery (Los Angeles, Ca.), The Loft Gallery (Pomona Ca.), Salon Pop (Long Beach, Ca.), Luz (Long Beach, Ca.), and the Historic Pico House Gallery (Los Angeles, Ca.) where she received a certificate of appreciation from the City of Los Angeles. Publications include: *LA Raw*, *Spark Plug*, *City* magazine and more. Awards include: 1st Place for her fashion narrative series called HOLLYWOODLAND where she recreates the lives and deaths of old Hollywood starlets. Her recreation of the Life and Death of Jayne Mansfield features the car that Mansfield died in which was used as a prop for the shoot. The car was kindly provided by Jeff Perrin. The award was provided by Kara Saun and also judged by Neil France. Rachel has a love for high fashion, fine art, cinematography, astrology and tarot. <https://rachelwrightphotography.blogspot.com> IG: ray\_of\_luz

**Sarah Sophia Yanni** writing has appeared in DREGINALD, Maudlin House, Feelings, Full Stop, Tofu Ink Arts Press Spring 2021 and others. A finalist for BOMB Magazine's 2020 Poetry Contest, she lives and works in Los Angeles. [sarahsophiyanni.com](http://sarahsophiyanni.com)

**Brian Yapko** is a lawyer whose poems have appeared in Prometheus Dreaming, Tofu Ink, Sparks of Calliope, Gyroscope, Cagibi, Society of Classical Poets, Chained Muse, Abstract Elephant, Poetica and other publications. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Cynthia Yatchman** is a Seattle based artist and art instructor. With an M.A. in child development and a B.A. in education, she has a strong interest in art education and teaches art to adults, children and families in Seattle. A former ceramicist, she studied with J.T. Abernathy in Ann Arbor, MI. though after receiving her B.F.A. in painting from the University of Washington she switched from 3D art to 2D and has stayed there since, working primarily on paintings, prints and collages. Her art is housed in numerous public and private collections and has been shown nationally in California, Connecticut, New York, Indiana, Michigan, Oregon and Wyoming. She has exhibited extensively in the Northwest, including shows at Seattle University, Seattle Pacific University, Shoreline Community College, the Tacoma and Seattle Convention Centers and the Pacific Science Center. She is an affiliate member of Gallery 110 and is a member of the Seattle Print Art Association and COCA (Center of Contemporary Art) and an affiliate member of Gallery 110 in Seattle.

**Darren Yu:** I could be boring and say I've always loved art ever since I drew on the walls of my house with crayon and was forcefully shuffled into art class. But that's kind of generic. Enraptured with a middle school project exploring our personal heroes and influences, I started thinking of words and art in a new way as I came to terms with being gay. Working on that project pushed me to be honest with myself and those around in me a way that would probably make me cringe so very hard. I know this to be true because I simultaneously respect and will never reread that project, but I attribute all my personal growth to it. Since then, art has been my place to process. Maybe I'm a narcissist or maybe I just love the idea of a visual diary, but I really do hope that each of my work really captures a thought, a feeling in as much depth and detail as I can. Also, I'm currently an economic consultant full time and I think it's important to stress that I like being this soft art boi but I also enjoy research and analysis. Maybe one day I'll bridge the two. My instagram is @yuheffa.



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