HALL OF MIRRORS

THE CONTINUIST

FALL 2020

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Trapped in a confined space, forced to confront images or versions of ourselves that are warped, twisted, and stretched beyond our recognition – this past year has often felt as strange as a summer fair funhouse, where reality is suspended and the only thing to do is move forward. With that in mind, we wanted to give creatives a space in which they could feel free to go out of their comfort zones, and share their experiences of 2020 through their art.

We can definitely say that it's been "a year to remember," though hardly for the reasons we'd hoped for when we rang in the New Year back in January. For one, the global COVID-19 pandemic completely changed the way we lived our lives as students and creatives. The switch to online learning (added to a whole new level of reliance on technology-mediated forms of communication) made it challenging to stay connected with friends and the rest of the art community. For those of us who were fortunate enough to remain in quarantine, it can't be denied that the long months of loneliness and isolation were often crushing. The images of the new world we saw each day – on our phones, on our TV screens, and through our car windows – were strange, unfamiliar. Frightening.

In many ways, however, every person's experience of the pandemic has been completely different, and with different experiences come different forms of artistic expression. That's why we decided to divide this publication into separate chapters, each of which touches on a different emotional aspect of the past year. The first section, "Retrospective," conveys a tone of nostalgia, a longing for better times and memories past – whether they be from childhood or from just a few days before the start of lockdown. "Pandemonium" reflects the state of panic and confusion into which we were all thrown at the beginning of the pandemic, and the fear we felt for our loved ones and for ourselves. "Dead End" is the longest section, featuring pieces on the loneliness, repetitiveness, boredom, and frustration of life in self-isolation. In "Breaking the Mirror," artists envision what it would be like to break out of these limitations, to fight their way out of the maze. "Delirium" reflects the haziness of consciousness that many of us experienced, as we attempted to grapple with the shock of what is now known as "the new normal." It's at this point that the narrative takes a turn – "Picking Up the Pieces" conveys a sense of upward motion, of a determination to gather the fallen fragments of life and build something new. We end on a note of hope with "Future," leaving the reader with glimpses of a world beyond the seemingly never-ending labyrinth we live in right now.

We would like to thank our entire team of dedicated and talented creators, graphic designers, and social media team members at *The Continuist* for all their contributions to this project. We thank all the artists from the Ryerson student community who sent in their work, who totally blew us away with their vulnerability, honesty, and sheer talent. Last but not least, we want to express our extreme gratitude to all the lovely folks at the Ryerson Faculty of Arts and the Ryerson Liberal Arts Society (RLAS) for their generous support throughout this school year.

We like to think that this publication could serve as a sort of time-capsule, so that we never forget how we thought and felt over the course of this turbulent year. More importantly, however, we hope that this publication speaks to you, the reader, and to your own experiences – and that it leaves you with a sense of hope for the future.

So turn the page, and walk this journey with us...the Hall of Mirrors awaits!

Eunice Addo and Rebecca Rocillo
Co-Editors of The Continuist

December 21, 2020

HOW TO ENJOY THE FULL MULTI-SENSORY EXPERIENCE

At the beginning of each section in this zine, you will find a QR code
that will take you to a playlist of original music from *HALL OF MIRRORS: THE ALBUM*.
Scan the code to listen to the soundscape of each section as you enjoy the art within.

Before you enter the Hall of Mirrors, give it a try:

SCAN ME

THE HALL OF MIRRORS AWAITS...

RETROSP

ECTIVE
SCAN ME

The Calm Before The Storm

Cassandra Pascucci

Touch

Urbi Khan

I go to sleep by your touch,
engulfed in a memory.

I make space on my bed so you can sit by my head
with one leg dangling.

You don't ever speak. Nor can I feel you smile.
Your face, I imagine, is solemn.

The disembodied voice of a gentleman does a guided meditation
within the four walls of my bedroom.

I stay still and turn towards one-fourth of the walls as
you both hold me unto sleep.

I don't remember the last time I touched
or was touched.

The grooves of your fingers on my head are plain.

Hugs used to bug me and make my skin crawl.
And now I crave a brawl –
For touch.

Cusped in the memory of your touch I linger –
waiting to drift off to sleep.

I don't know who you are now
but I am cocooned and soothed by the memory
of somebody I used to know.

A someone who does not think of me anymore.

All I do;
I can still feel you.

Far away and tucked safe from me –
I hope you can walk.
I hope you can run.
I hope you can breathe.

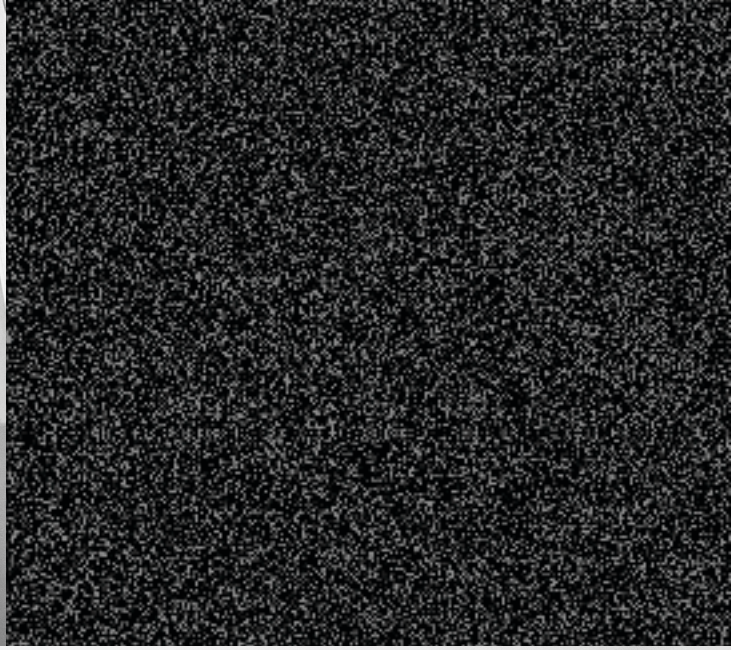
All I do;
I can still feel you.

One leg dangling. Brushing my hair gently.
I welcome oblivion –
in your warmth.

THE END
[OF THE TUNNEL VISION].

SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

Tamia James



Vacant & Dreary

By Cassandra Pascucci

Bouncy Castle

Basma Khan

I stumble on the bumpy climb,
Stepping onto air-filled plastic,
Waiting in line.
My turn
To think twice
And thrice.
I jump so high
For a quick bounce
That makes me slip down,
Sliding down,
Down, swiftly descending onto cool sand.
The friction beneath almost burnt my skin
But I climb once again.

They force me to slow down as I slam the ignition – a fury to warmth. I pull myself out. Ah, the snow blankets everything. I try to catch snowflakes with my tongue when they fuzz my lashes and are snorted up my nostrils.

I picked up the shovel and began the task. As the white sand's accumulations became heavier, I huffed and puffed. Sweat in my winter jacket – a well-acquainted phenomenon to bundled-up Canadians.

I continued shovelling, more and more – when I peered over to the other side. A salty driveway – fresh with no sign of winter – was my neighbour's.

Breaking the ice, I thought – maybe good walls don't make good neighbours. More Frost. More Stopping by Woods that were houses. I continued mowing the snow as the blanket compressed beneath the boots.

I thought of all the times I had asked them for help: that day when the fire alarms acted up, borrowing the rake, when the frozen pipe caused a flood in the house. I remembered their support and forgotten pizza that I wanted so badly to consume. Now, we share. And send them biryani.

Wintertime neighbours.

Neighbours To A Degree

Basma Khan

Plurality at the Puissant's

Colin James

After the dancing,
a few of us negotiated
the labyrinth of tunnels
running under the block
and further on
beneath the high street,
accessible through a closet.
I think I made love to her
I'm not quite sure,
fumbling for my designation
while awkwardly
dispatching the other travelers.
We were meant to be alone
and cooed thereafter harmlessly.
She wrote her phone-number on my back
inclusive of a mirror to read,
or a reliance on friendship
which can be misleading,
selfish, even egocentric.
I saw neither of them again
until my postcard collection
required refurbishment.

Humans of the GTA

Yousef Al Khodari

The world is broken. As every day passes, I watch the sun rise and I watch it set. I sit here to wonder to myself, why do I exist? What should I do? How can I help? Not long ago, there was a time where things were much more peaceful. People were not afraid to get close, people weren't covering up their faces and avoiding meeting each other in real life. It was not long ago but this peace feels so distant. I wonder if I will ever get back to a time where I can pick up my granddaughter without fearing if one of us could be victims of a monster claiming lives every single day. A voice in my head repeats the word "you." Now I wonder, where will I be tomorrow? Where will I be next year? That sound in my head blocking out the noise telling me "you will be okay." I have hope for the future. I have hope that we will get through this broken world, together.

- Anonymous Mississauga Resident

PANDEM

Onium!

SCAN ME

self portrait

Cassidy Skye James

SCAN ME

Masked Youth

Doris Chen

Art by Olivia Anthony-Kachur

This Pissery Has Lovely Green Eyes

Colin James

Minerals, you have to get them on your side
otherwise disenchanting brown stains occur.
The attendant is subtly attentive
behind his glass partition.
He reads a travel brochure,
yet another refurbishment of Brighton Pier.
Probably longs for the American northwest.
White overalls and other tree houses
anchored amid the higher reaches.
There is that pause before the waterfalls
when the lake of inversion increases.
For he's a jolly good fellow
and so say all of us.

Revenge of the Avant-Garde

Colin James

The criminal wore a belt made of middle fingers.
If he was in a good mood,
he would just warn you,
"The digit beneath my bellybutton
is starting to wear down".
Otherwise, he cut yours off at the knuckle
while you considered belated alternatives.
Too late for terror and decorum.
Once a year at the summer solstice
he travelled up into the black hills
ran around naked, conspicuously belt-less.
Independent, trailing behind
a strand of what he was famous for.
Sure as shooten their belligerence
would pester him for days.

The Woman in the Crimson Blouse

Colin James

When a tent walks
pegs are ripped from the ground
effectless earrings, trapezes.
Stop for a bite to eat
negotiating with the tables,
aisles of assumptions and speeches.
Still, mosquito netting saved the Maori.
Third course something light and fruity
unlike the restrooms which are not inclusive
and door signs at best arbitrary.
Afternoons spent expanding the sand
a desert whose sun insults no one.
Night goggles to the front please blinded
like a discombobulated double whammy.
The tent not yet camuleric and unable
to climb back in the truck bed window
before deferring under a desperate overpass.

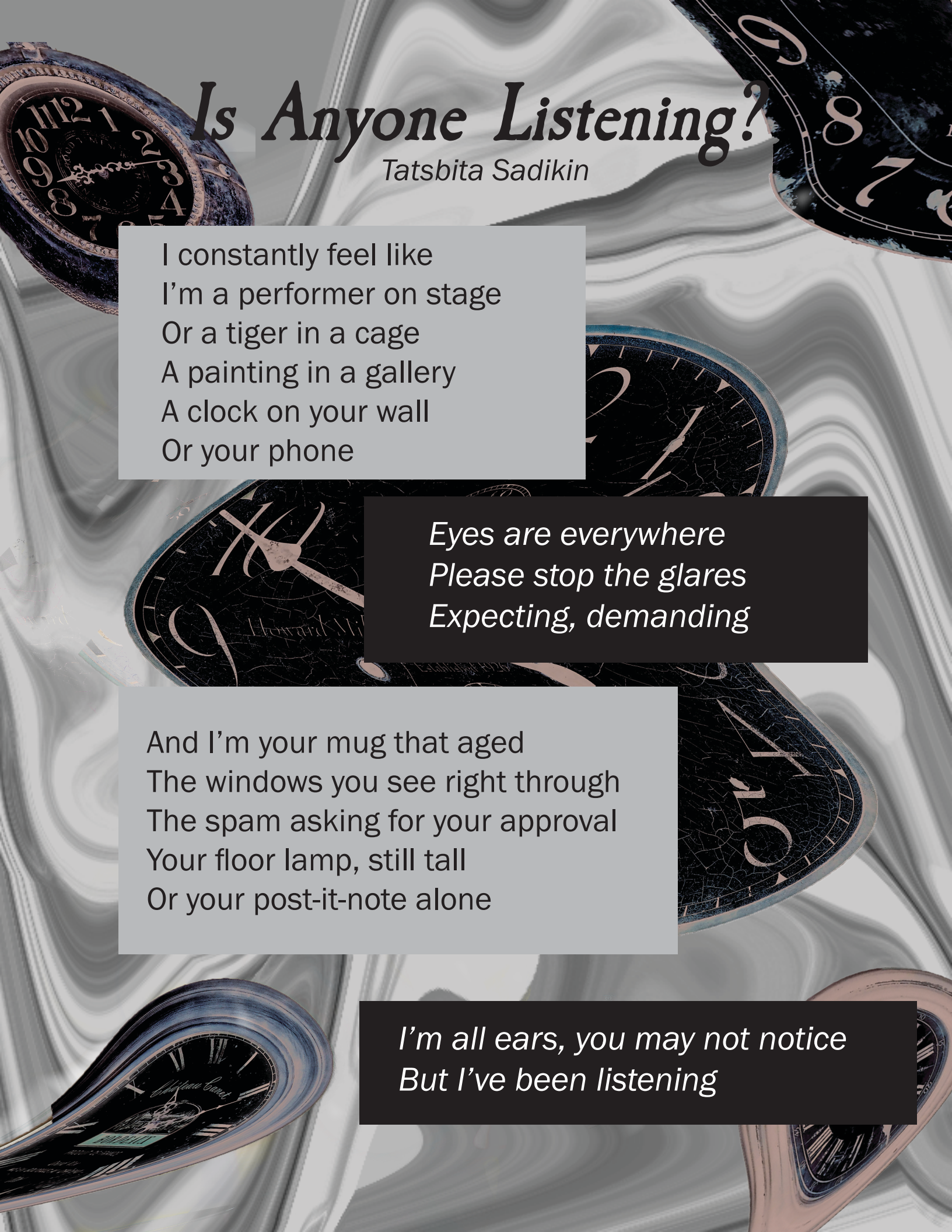
Overlaps

by Tatsbita Sadikin

Memories overlapping without timeline

Is Anyone Listening?

Tatsbita Sadikin



I constantly feel like
I'm a performer on stage
Or a tiger in a cage
A painting in a gallery
A clock on your wall
Or your phone

Eyes are everywhere
Please stop the glares
Expecting, demanding

And I'm your mug that aged
The windows you see right through
The spam asking for your approval
Your floor lamp, still tall
Or your post-it-note alone

I'm all ears, you may not notice
But I've been listening

DE
EN

AD
ND
SCAN ME

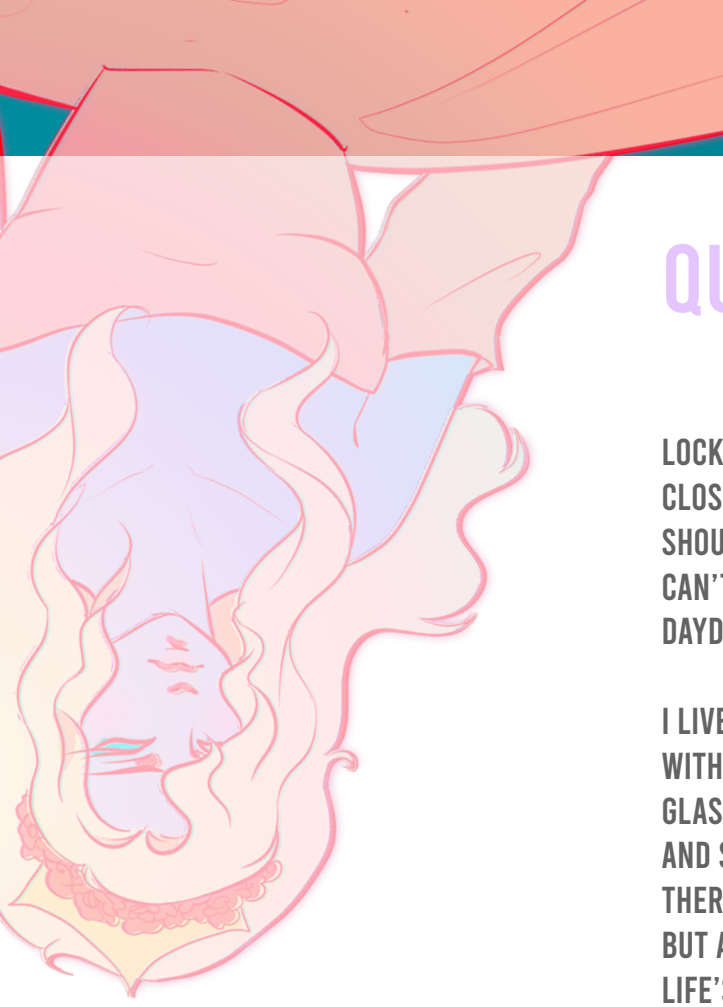
NIGHTS I FEAR MOST

BY VICTOR RUSU

"These are the nights I fear the most;
when the silence is loudest
and the hours
ceaseless."

RINSE AND REPEAT

Theo Belc



QUARANTINE CASTLE

NIKITA RUZYCKY

LOCKED AWAY AT HOME, LOST IN THE
CLOSING CUTTING KILLING AIR
SHOULD I READ MORE? WRITE MORE? YELL SOME MORE?
CAN'T DO ANYTHING BUT ALLOW THE DAZE OF
DAYDREAMING TO TAKE OVER...

I LIVE IN A QUARANTINE CASTLE,
WITH A CARRIAGE OUTSIDE,
GLASS SLIPPERS IN MY CLOSET,
AND SIBLINGS AS DWARFS.
THERE'S NO EVIL GODMOTHER, ALTHOUGH AT TIMES IT FEELS SO,
BUT ALL I CAN DO IS PUT A SMILE ON MY FACE AND PRETEND
LIFE'S A SHOW.

I DRESS LIKE A PRINCESS WITH BALLGOWNS AND CROWNS,
AND DANCE WITH MY PRINCE UNTIL NO ONE'S AROUND.
I AM SERVED WITH DELICIOUS FEASTS OF GOURMET FOOD,
LIKE FONDUE, CAKE AND PROSECCO TOO!
IN THE MORNINGS I SING TO THE BIRDS,
WHO GRACEFULLY FLY AND DANCE WITHOUT WORDS...

DAMN,
I'M BACK IN THE WORLD OF FOUR FIXED WALLS,
WHERE I DROWN IN BOREDOM AND CAN'T THINK AT ALL
NOSPACE NOBREATH NOMOVEMENT
BRAIN FEELS DEAD BUT NOT DEAD
BODY FEELS ALIVE BUT NOT ALIVE
EYES ARE DRY SEARCHING FOR GOOD NEWS BUT STILL,
NO GOOD NEWS.

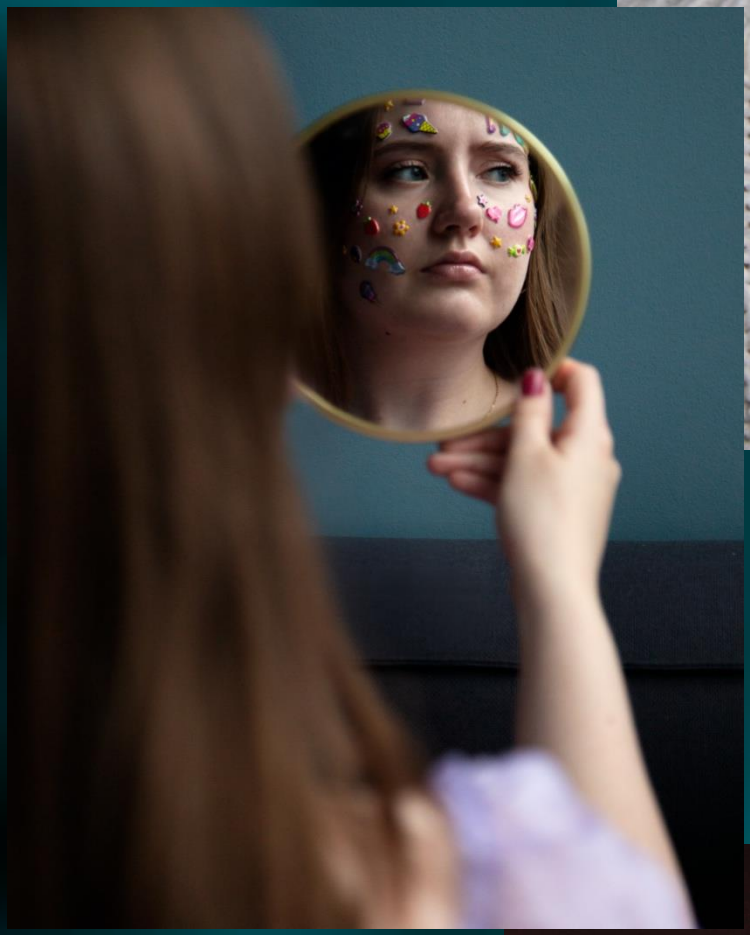
I LIVE IN A QUARANTINE CASTLE...

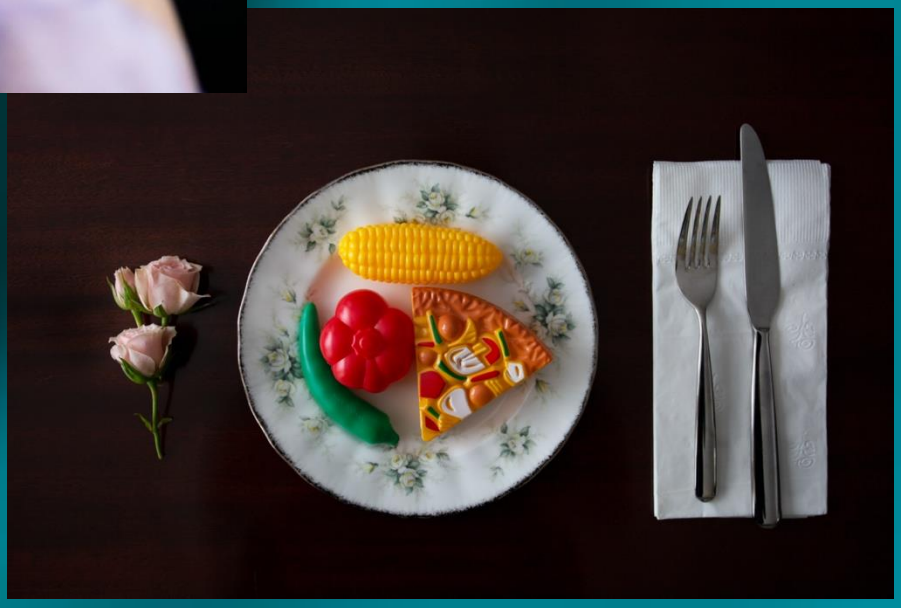
GIRL'S TOYS

Molly Steels

Model: Erin Colquhonne

Model: Mikayla Halliday



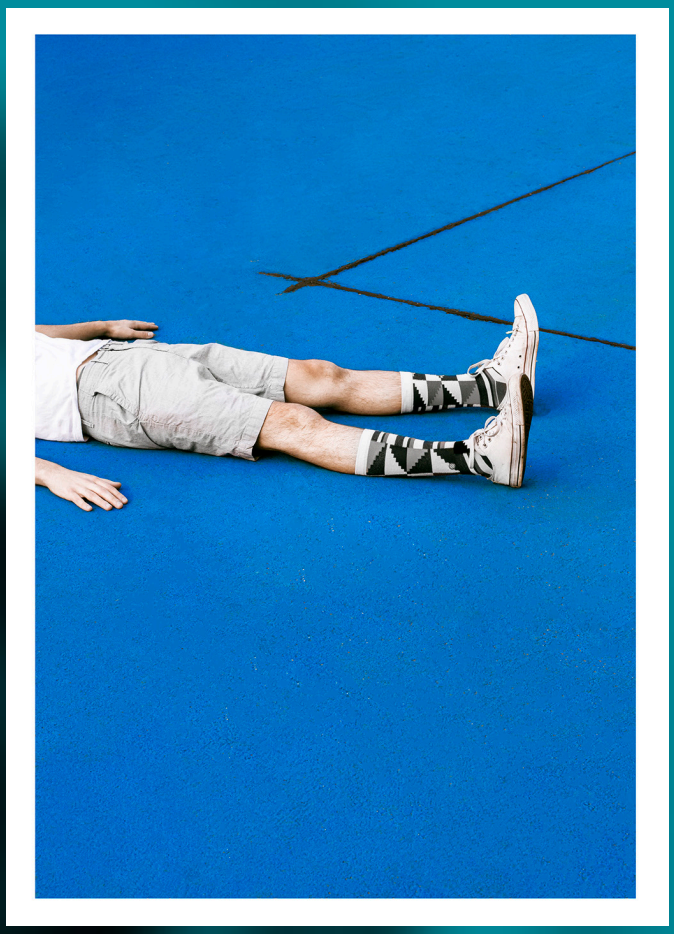


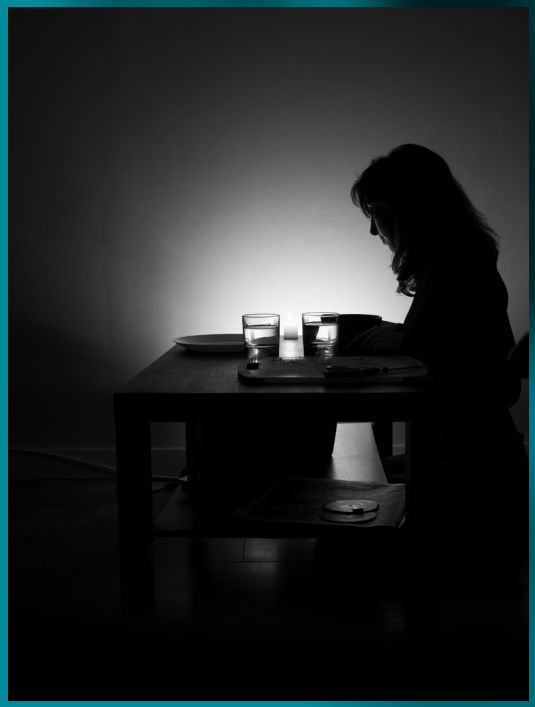
LOST TIME

Levi Hearne

THE ABSURD

JESSICA BEMIS





THESE WALLS

KRISCHANDA BEMISTER

IF THESE WALLS COULD SPEAK
THEY WOULDN'T SPEAK
THEY'D ECHO ME AND SCREAM
AND THEY'D SOB
FROM PITY
OR SORROW
OR LOSS

MELT FROM THE ACID IN THEIR OWN TEARS AND DROWN ME IN
THIS VERY HOUSE
PUSH MY BODY BENEATH THE FOUNDATION
HOPE THAT HAPPIER LIVES WILL BE BUILT ON TOP OF MINE
AND I MIGHT BE GRATEFUL

BUT WHO WILL CLEAN UP THE MESS IF THERE'S NO ONE IN THIS
HOUSE BUT ME?

I NEED HELP

I CAN'T BREATHE FROM THE STRESS OF IT ALL

IF THESE WALLS WEREN'T MADE OF STONE AND

CONCRETE AND DRYWALL

THEY'D CRUMBLE

CRACK AND BREAK

THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH WEIGHT THAT ANYONE OR

ANYTHING CAN TAKE

HI, WALL

I WON'T BLAME YOU FOR NOT HOLDING ME UP

BECAUSE EACH DAY I GET HEA VI ER *(WHEN DID THIS AIR*

STOP BEING AIR?)

IF THESE WALLS COULD SPEAK

I MEAN, REALLY

THEY MIGHT JUST TELL ME TO GET OUT

OR WHISPER IT

AFRAID TO SHATTER THE GLASS THAT HAS REPLACED ME

OR MAYBE THEY JUST WOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING

MAYBE THEY'VE LOST THEIR VOICE

MAYBE EVEN IF THEY DID...

THEY'D SAY "WHAT'S THE FUCKING POINT."

DIFFERENT WAY

Ayden Elworthy

God
I was so young
And so fucking afraid
And his nails tore into me like candy
And his nails were dirty and pink and all picked at underneath
And he kept taking me
Taking each piece of me until I was all gone
Gone, not in a sad sort of way
Not gone like dead
Or gone like disappeared
But gone like moved on, out of the time and place and that feeling of being left alone
It's like when you suddenly smell something that brings you back to grade 11
And you quietly say to yourself "I never thought that smell would smell like grade 11"
That kind of smell

And he was so large
And tattooed
And blinding
His eyes didn't look like they were from here
They looked like they were imported from heaven
Or shipped from across the creek
The creek that never actually was here
But was more, always there, always in your mind somewhere
That creek
That creek with frogs and rocks and birds and fresh air and water you might drink out of your hand if you got thirsty enough, and enough mud to make your feet dirty, but never enough mud to make you unclean, unless you wanted to be unclean and then there was certainly enough mud

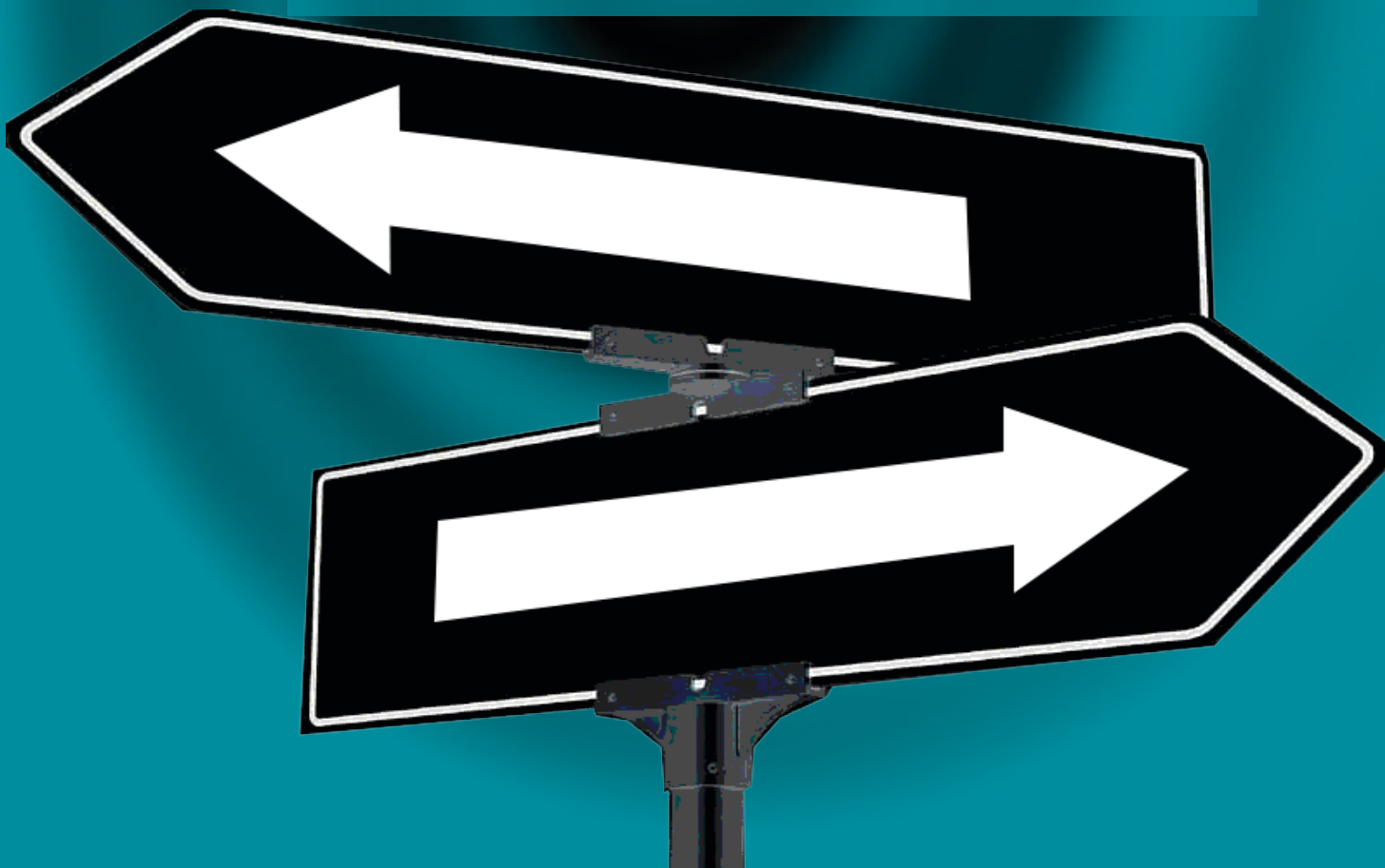
And I'd always thought he looked different than others
Like maybe I was meant to see him in a different way
But never like this

And he always showed me exactly what sort of sad to be
Exactly what sort of way to spit in my face
And he showed me how to hold my mirror up to the other people that didn't care about me
How to see their beauties in a way that made mine less so
He always showed me how good it was to be old, and angry, and unhappy, and to pretend to be gold

And that was that.

It was always like that with him.

I wouldn't call it love, as much as tolerance.



THURSDAYS

Zahra Yassiri

Here you are again.
Unwelcomed,
Dreaded guests.
Still judging me,
By the only means
I express my pain -
Hiding it inside
A deep, dark drain.
Keep taking away
Her belongings;
For your own gain.
Her pill bottle,
To numb the pain,
The phone number,
She called me by
Every single day.
Whatever you try
Memories will stay.
Just stop measuring
The drops of tears
I have publicly shed.
Oh please, dear God
“Cry your eyeballs out"
To make others proud?

Isn't equal to love at all.
Stop with this nonsense
As if my mere existence
Has caused in any way
To her passing away.
Stop the bickering
Under your tongue
Everyone can hear
So say it out loud
I know you despise
Me speaking facts
How you all adored
Loads of cash
And inheritance
More than anything else.
For the one last time
I'm asking you to leave
Stop judging my grief
Or I will start calling
You by your true name,
thief.

SOAR

Basma Khan

A grand hand crept in,
Inside the cage wherein

I sat, perched as if
My form was frozen molten metal.

Where could I fly away to now?
Where would I be
If not here?

Trapped in this misery –
A mystery that aptly demands
My solidity.
But again, I melt in its sweaty, sore grasp

Sucking in the air before
What I know will be my last breath.

EVER SIT AND WONDER

Sariya Adnan

Ever sit and wonder
About just how meaningless it all is?
Think about it
Morning comes and, hooray, we lived to see another day, isn't that great, it's so great, the sun is shining and it's so great and
Then comes the afternoon
Long and never-ending, honestly the day never seems to end sometimes I feel like time is drowning me the hours go by so slowly slowly slowly I have to wait hours before I can finally say
Finally, it's the blessed nighttime and darkness takes over
There's quiet and bliss and stillness and beauty but
By then you're too tired so you fall asleep and
Bam! it's morning again and
You just went full circle
For the millionth time so you
Sit and wonder about how
We wake to get an education
We get an education to get a job
We get a job to make money
We make money to afford the bare necessities
We afford the bare necessities to survive
We survive only to die anyways so
Tell me,

Where in all that was all the living we keep preach-
ing about?
It's like we're on a carousel and it just keeps
Spinning and spinning and spinning and
Great, now I'm dizzy and sick to my stomach and
can barely stand
To see my life be wasted away as I
Focus on nothing, live for nothing
I see no happy ending, no happy middle either for
that matter, hell
There was no happy to begin with it's
Depressing, I know but
As life,
If we can even call it that,
Goes on, I learn that's all it is
Depressing
Wake exhaustion sleep
Wake exhaustion sleep
And it just goes on and
On and on and on and on and
I'm barely alive at this point I'm just
Dragging my feet trying to

Keep moving because if I stop—God forbid I stop—if I stop I'll
Never move again I'll freeze and I'll never move again I'll
Give up right there and then because it's no use I
See nothing I
Care for nothing I
Am nothing.
Ha
Depressing, isn't it?

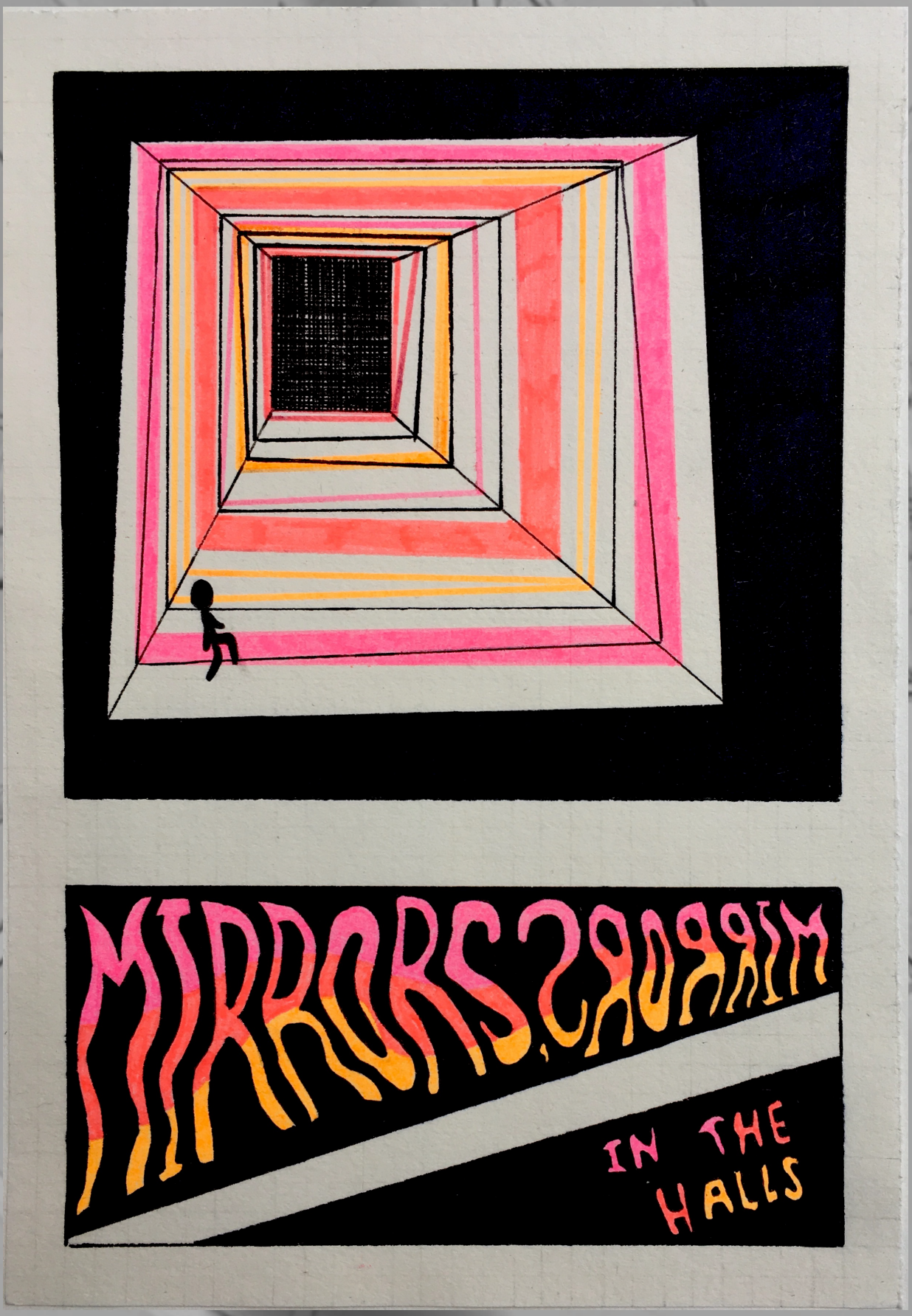
You know what
I take it back
Sit and wonder never
Don't do it
Ever
Or you'll live the rest of your life
A mere skeleton
Already buried six-feet deep

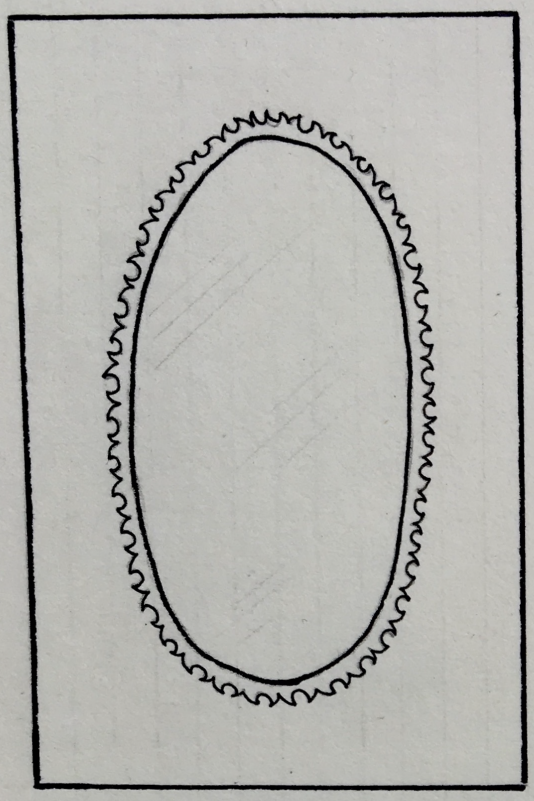
BREAKING

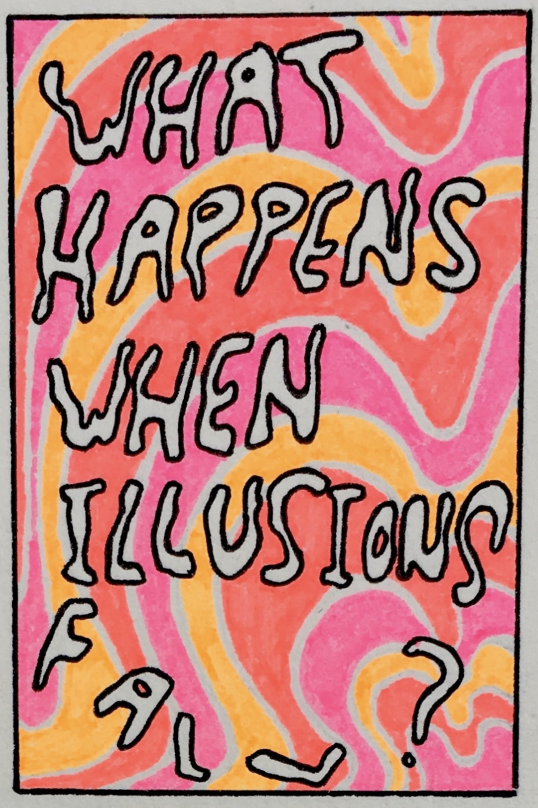
TH3 MIRROR
SCAN ME

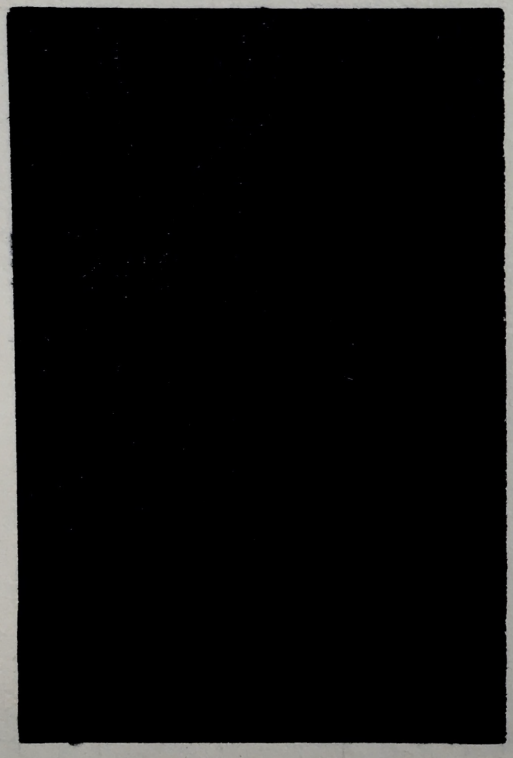
“Mirrors Mirrors”

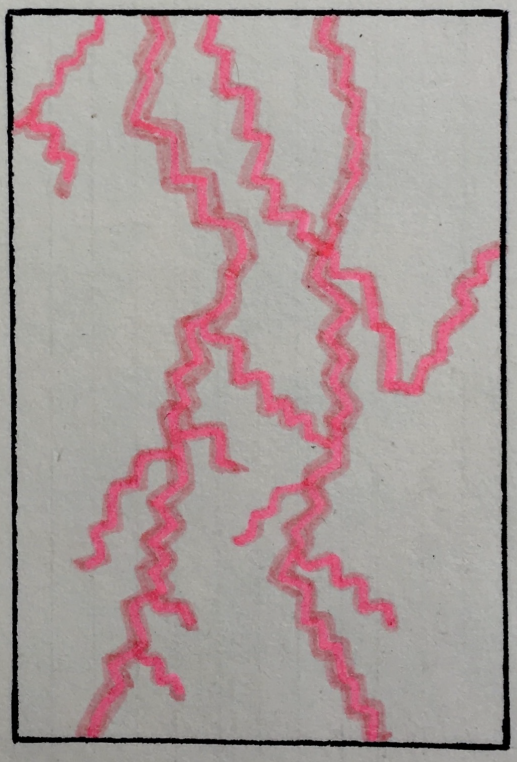
By - Richie Ocean

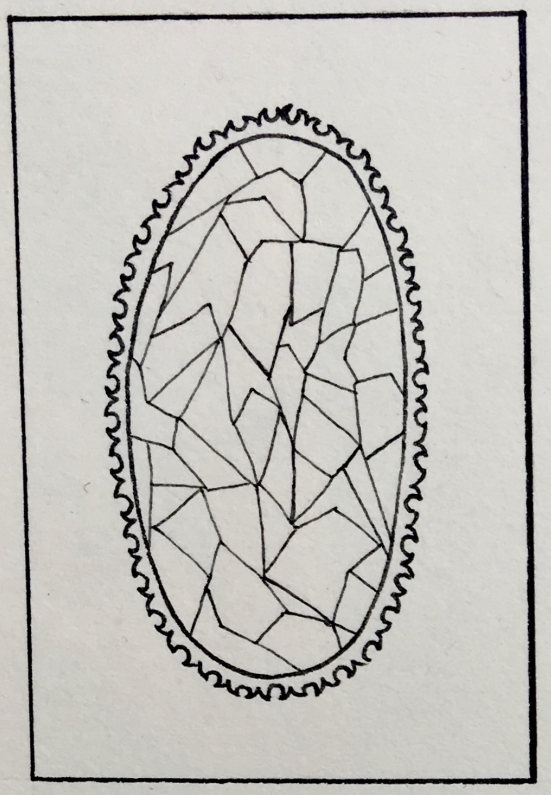


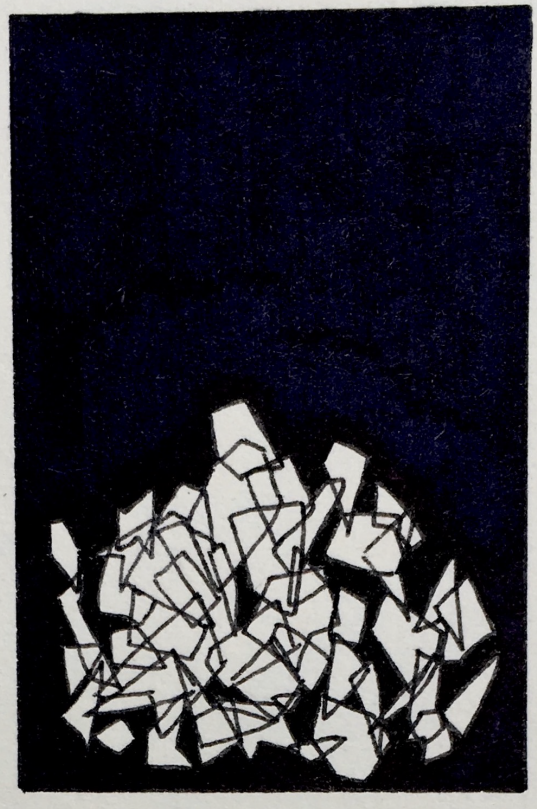



WHAT
HAPPENS
WHEN
ILLUSIONS
FALL?



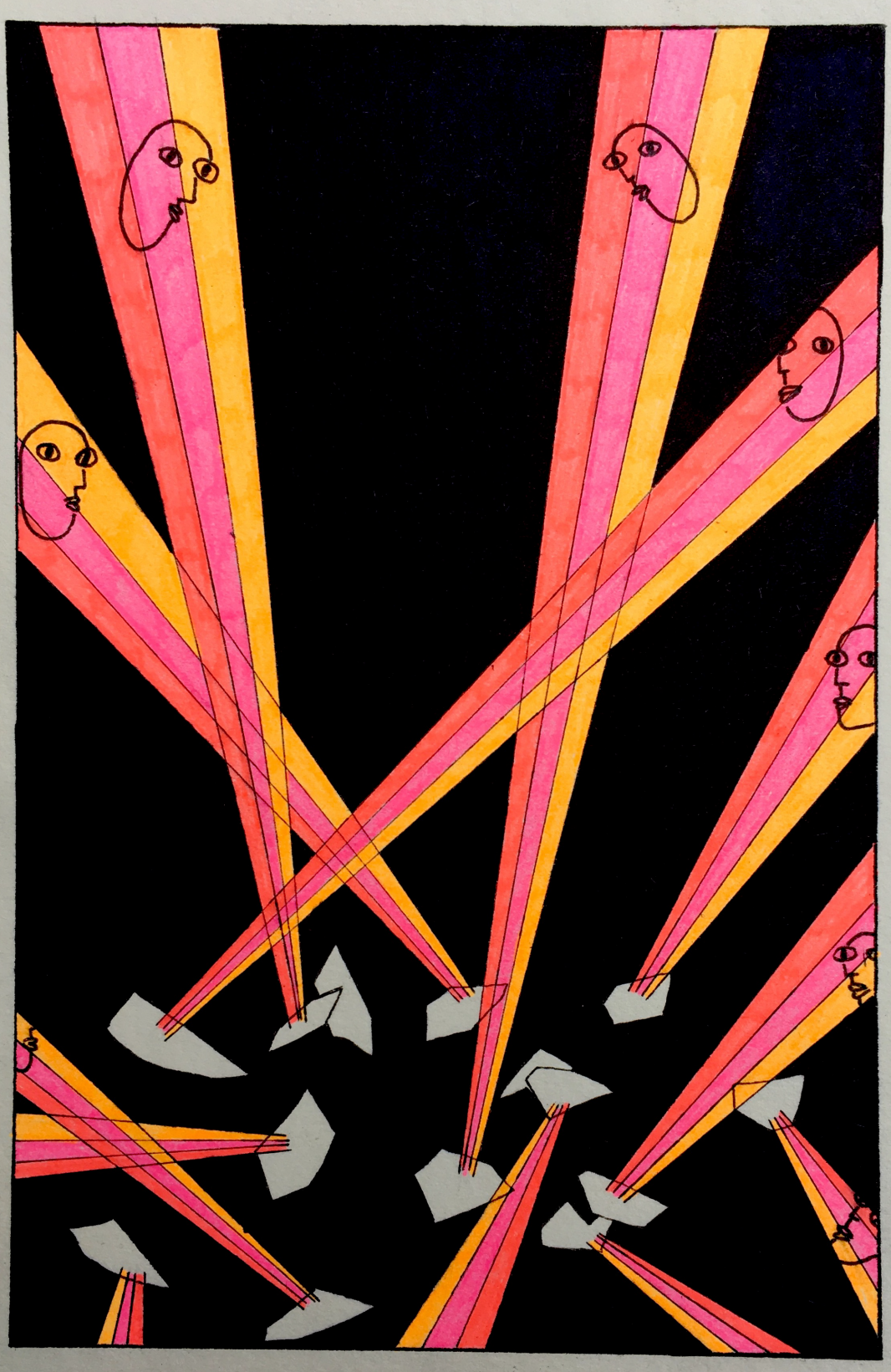






REFRACTED

SOMETHING OF THE SELF IS REVEALED



Dysphoria

Theo McQuiggan

“What do you expect to see there?” she sneers. “No matter how hard you look, nothing will change.”

“Go away,” I mutter, staring intently at the glass before me.

“Your face is too small and round.”

“My nose is bigger though.” I trace my Jewish schnauze, feeling the bump that’s been passed down from my refugee ancestors. She does the same. “That’s not really feminine.”

“It’s ugly though.”

“No, it looks fine. You’re just being an asshole.”

She snorts at me. “Yeah, that’s my job.”

I touch my bright red shoulders. Wearing a tank top in July was a bad idea. “Look at my shoulders. They’re pretty broad.”

“You’re super curvy though.”

Well, she has a point. My shoulders may be broad, but my body does go in then out again. Classic hourglass. Others would kill for my figure. I wonder if we could trade. “If I wear a baggy shirt it’s less visible.”

“Are you going to live in baggy shirts forever?”

I shrug and sigh. “I guess.”

She snorts again, all derisive dismissal. “At least they’ll hide your giant boobs and fat stomach.”

I fruitlessly try to press my chest down, then put a hand over the pocket of skin and fat spilling slightly over my well worn Value Village jeans. “They’re not *that* bad.”

“For someone as tiny as you? Yeah, it totally is. Don’t delude yourself. You really need to lay off the Reese’s.”

“It’s not all about diet. A lot of it is caused by genetics.”

She rolls her blue eyes at me. (My blue eyes.) “Sure, you keep telling yourself that.” A wide grin slowly spreads on her mouth. (My mouth.) It looks like it’s made of knives. “Genetics also determine what you are. You know you can’t change those, right?”

A familiar sharp pain hits my heart. My fist clenches at my side. “Of course I know,” I growl.

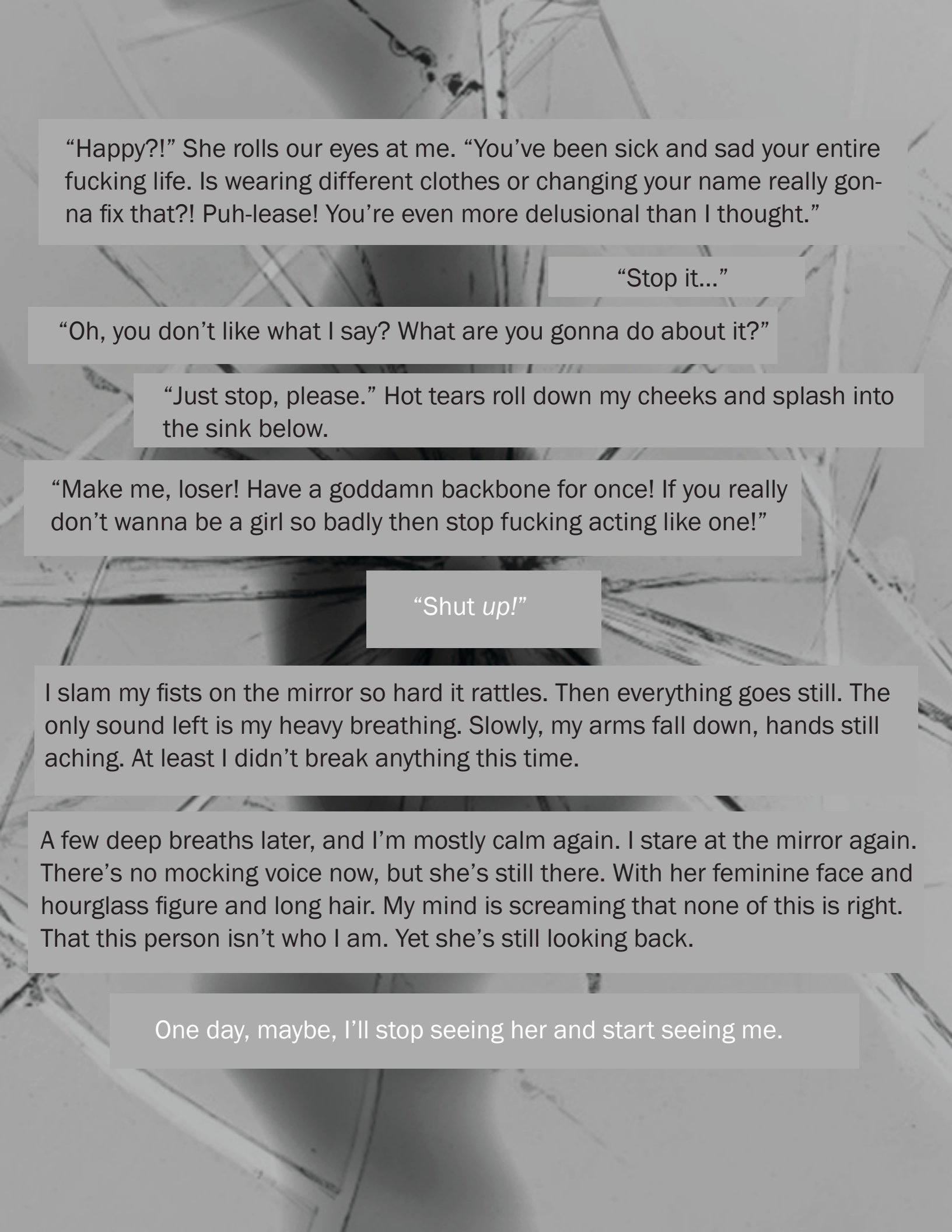
“Then why do you try so hard to be something you’re not?”

“Because! Because…”

I slowly press against the glass, and she reaches forward too. Our fingertips press together on the surface. They match perfectly, because our hands are the same. Our faces and bodies too. But all I can see is her. It’s always her.

“Because I want to be happy,” I say.

She cackles loudly, taking our laugh and twisting it into something cruel and heartless. The sound grates on my ears so much I fear they’ll start bleeding.



"Happy?!" She rolls our eyes at me. "You've been sick and sad your entire fucking life. Is wearing different clothes or changing your name really gonna fix that?! Puh-lease! You're even more delusional than I thought."

"Stop it..."

"Oh, you don't like what I say? What are you gonna do about it?"

"Just stop, please." Hot tears roll down my cheeks and splash into the sink below.

"Make me, loser! Have a goddamn backbone for once! If you really don't wanna be a girl so badly then stop fucking acting like one!"

"Shut *up!*"

I slam my fists on the mirror so hard it rattles. Then everything goes still. The only sound left is my heavy breathing. Slowly, my arms fall down, hands still aching. At least I didn't break anything this time.

A few deep breaths later, and I'm mostly calm again. I stare at the mirror again. There's no mocking voice now, but she's still there. With her feminine face and hourglass figure and long hair. My mind is screaming that none of this is right. That this person isn't who I am. Yet she's still looking back.

One day, maybe, I'll stop seeing her and start seeing me.

The Mirror of Truth

He hoped for nothing
but to be loved.
To be understood for his
insecurities,
And to be like a bird with
it's liberties.
He stood before the mirror
of truth;
And he couldn't see
his reflection.
He was haunted by
his past;
A past so grim he thought would last.
The mirror shattered at his sight.
It couldn't bare to look at his
lies.
He himself broke into tiny
fragments,
Drowning in his lies.

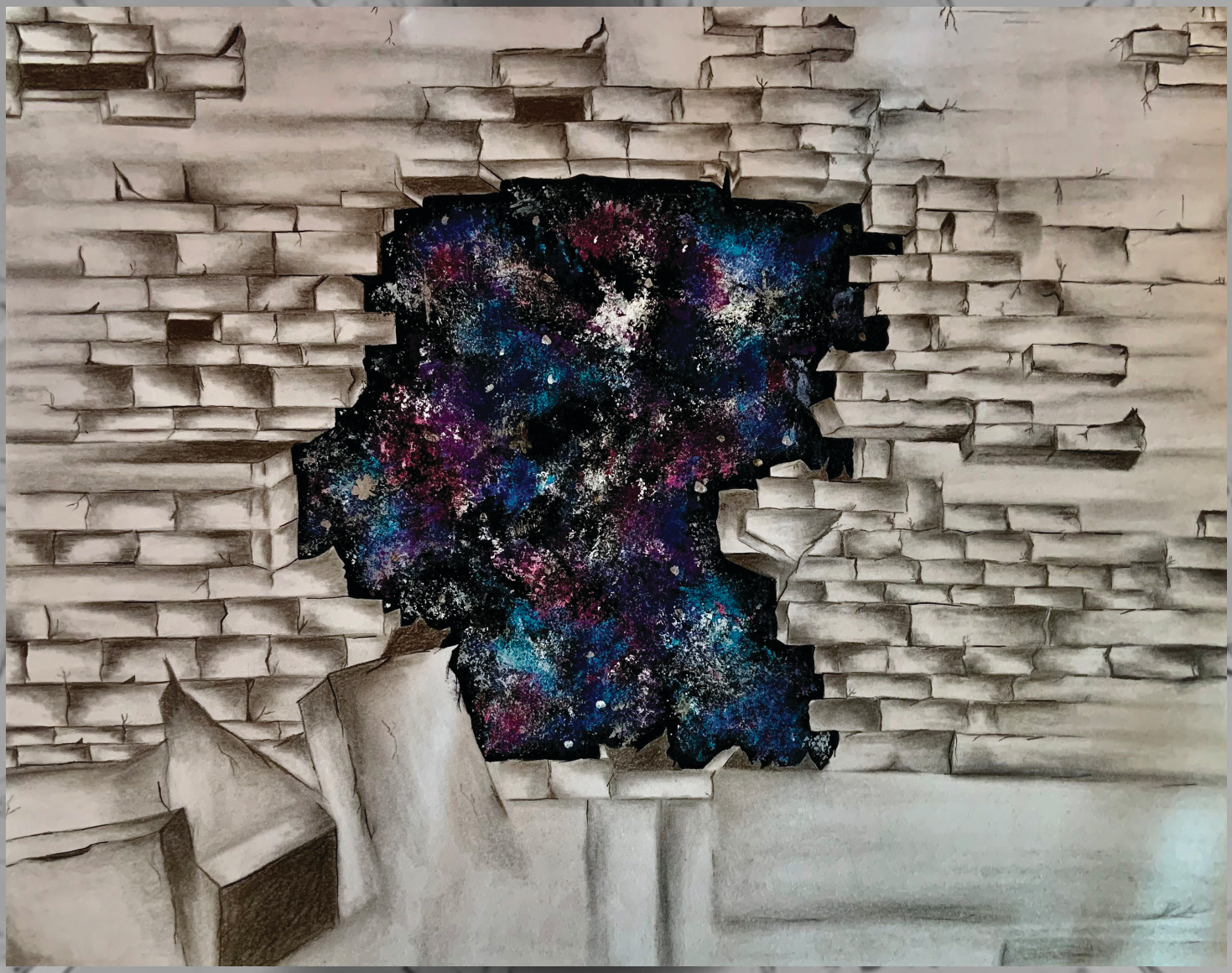
He lost his innocence.
He lost his light.

You see,
The mirror of truth tried to save him
But he was too stubbon.
He held on to the life he wanted.
The life he would never get a taste of.
The broken glass pieces pierced through his skin.
But it was so freeing.

It was so peaceful.

Poem by: Nada Abbass
Layout by: Lorenza De Benedictis

Bloque



by Catherine Zita Dias

DELi

MIR

SCAN ME

Paid Parentship

Nick Garel-Jones

SCAN ME

Reflectors of the Past

Rachel Gopal

I'm walking through a funhouse, but it's not so fun.

The walls are mirrors, each to a different version of reality. These versions are ones that I have escaped, and I do not want to glimpse into any of them. The funny thing about running away from your past is that somehow, somewhere, you're going to have to face it.

I would rather walk through this funhouse with a blindfold on, tripping and falling would not hurt nearly as much as to look into one of these mirrors.

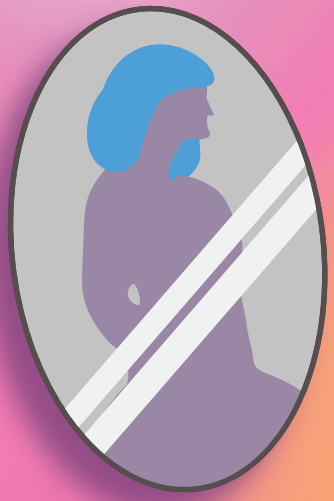
The lights are low, the only illumination coming from these mirrors as if they were television screens. The sound is overwhelming, I hear the voices of people I haven't heard from in years. There is a path but the problem is that there are many side entrances, it is not a straight line.

I wonder where the exit is, there are no signs.

I think about if I had to go back and choose a reality, which one it would be. I stop walking. Is that the answer? I have to go back?

That seems counterproductive.

I have spent years recovering from things I still struggle with from time to time. Thoughts cross my mind occasionally reminding me that there is a past behind me that I do not always want to acknowledge.



They say acceptance helps with healing, but it takes time to get there.

I have passed this stage.

I used to use acceptance of my past as identification, I used to wear it as a name tag. At some point it started to feel forced, fitting my old self into my baggage. Sometimes it just becomes easier to let go of who you used to be and never face them again.

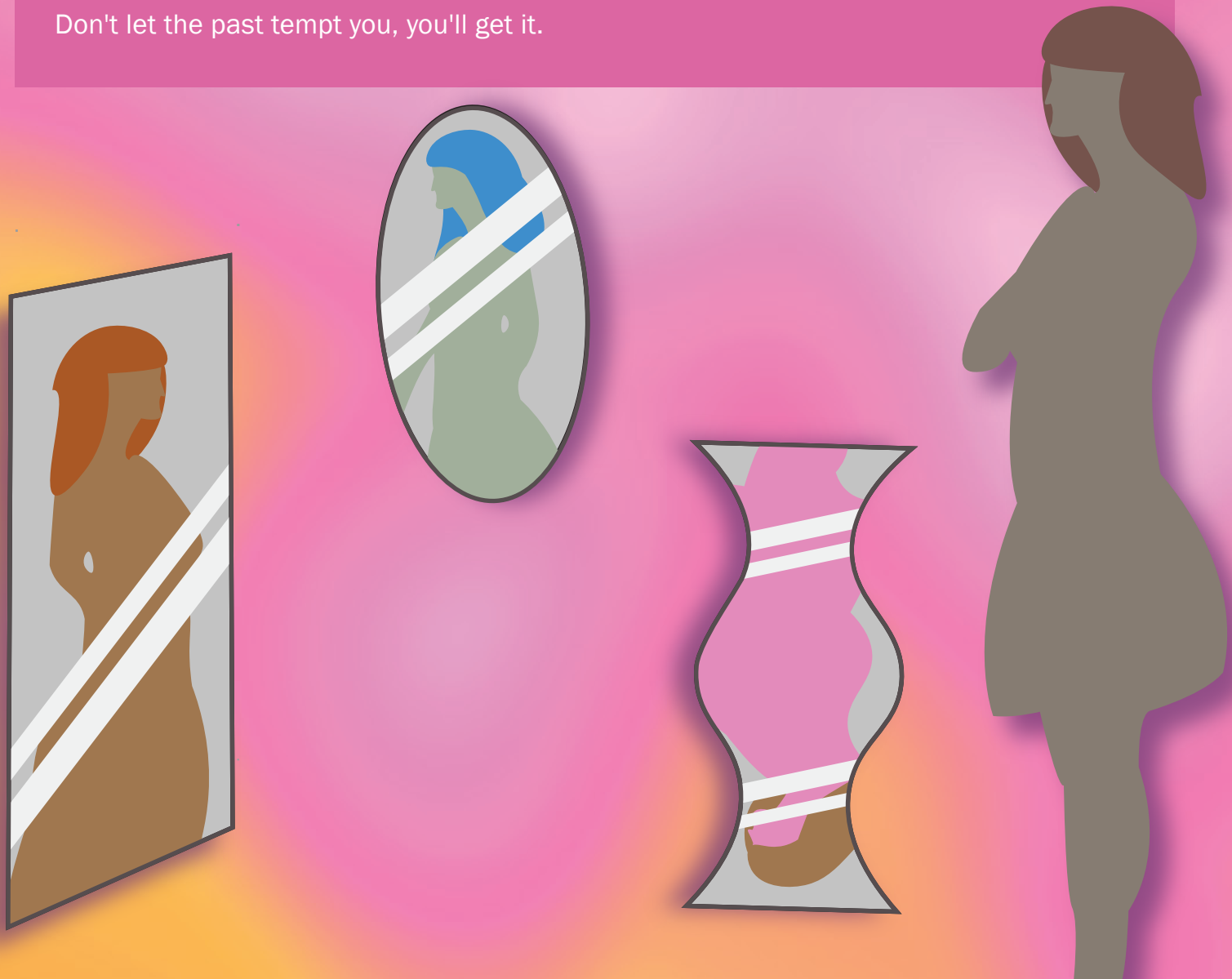
That's what I'm doing, but that is why these mirrors scare me.

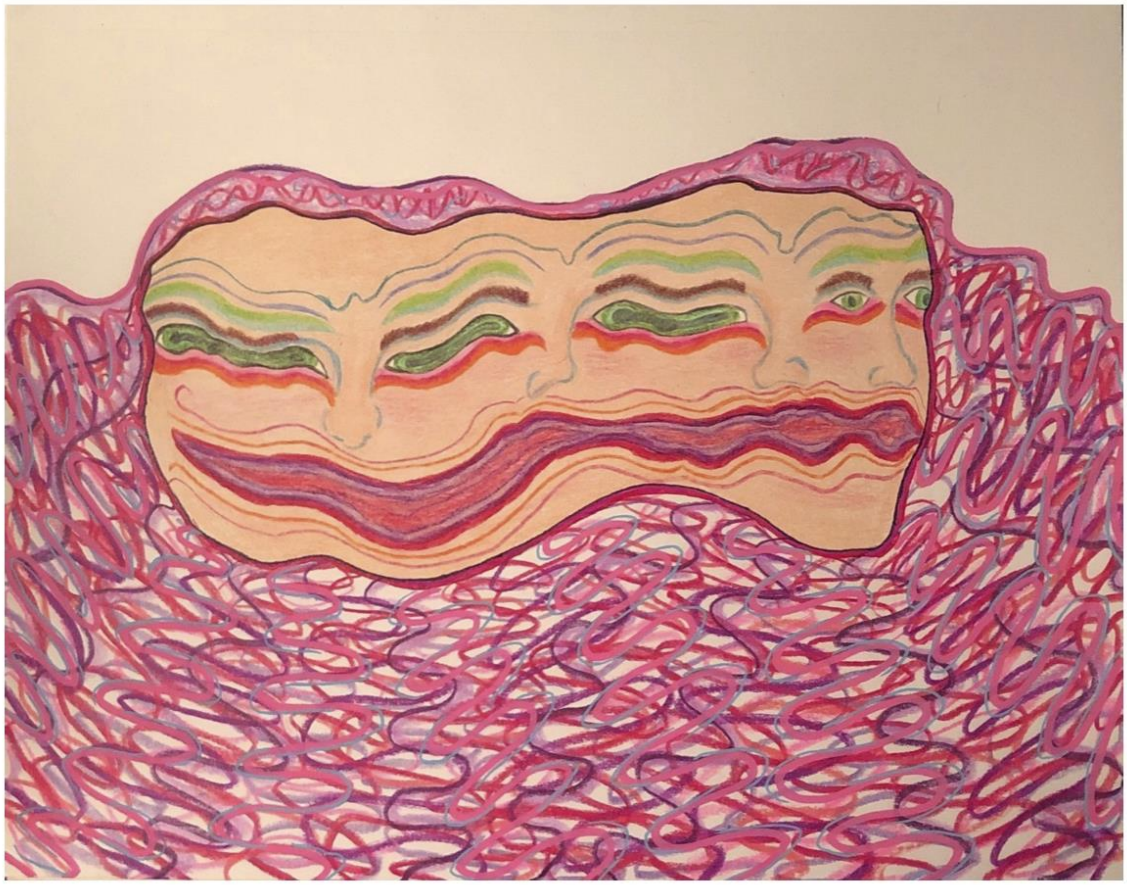
It is tempting to fall back into old versions of oneself, especially in tough situations... like this funhouse. I think the symbolism here lies in the fact that old realities are tempting because they have been experienced before. There are many past versions of oneself,

the future version yet to be seen, which is perhaps why it is the hardest to get to.

The future me will exist outside of this funhouse. The trick is to stay on track, keep going.

Don't let the past tempt you, you'll get it.





Work Mood

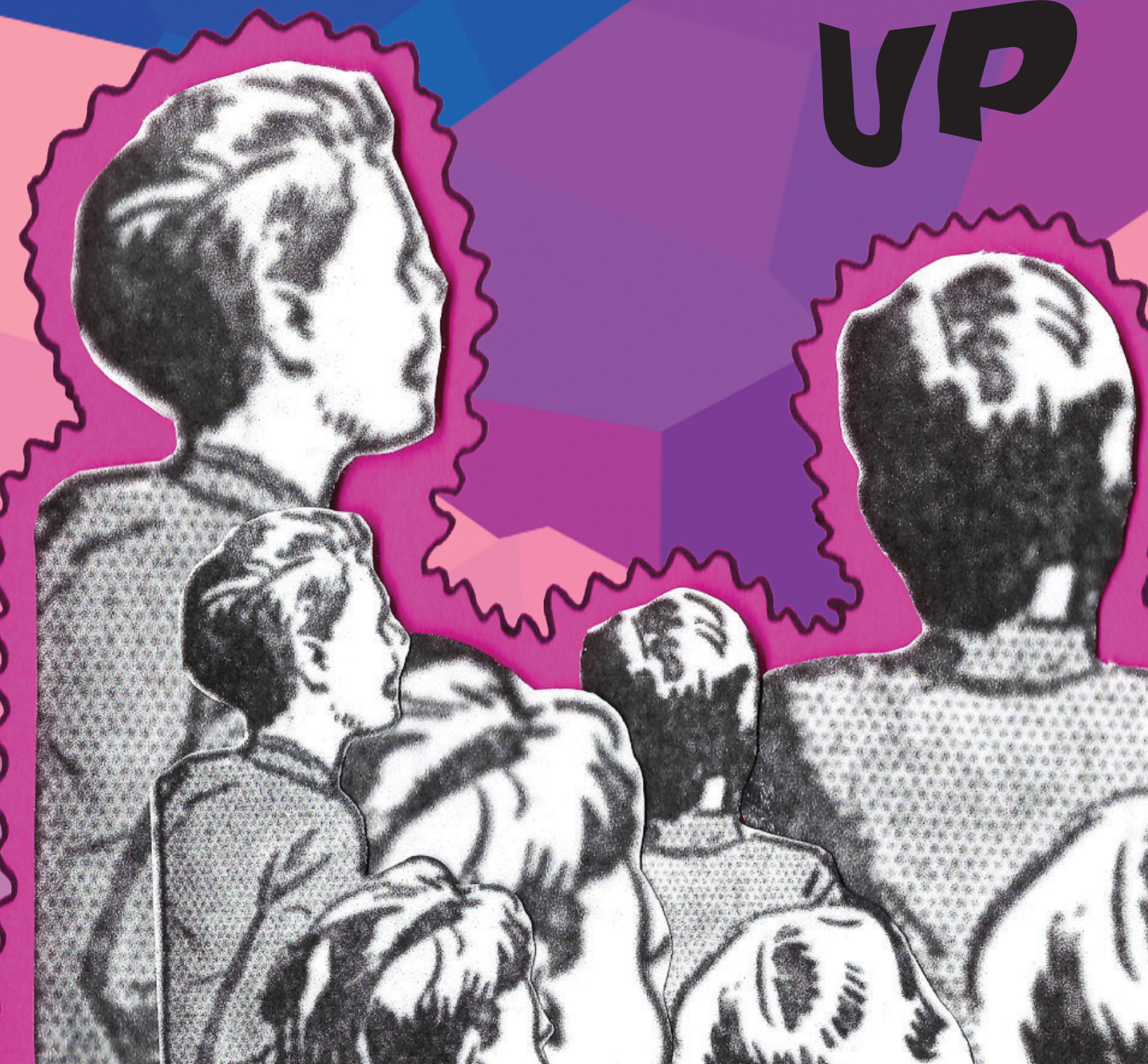
Lidia Foote

Outlet

by Olivia Ows

SCAN ME

PICKING UP

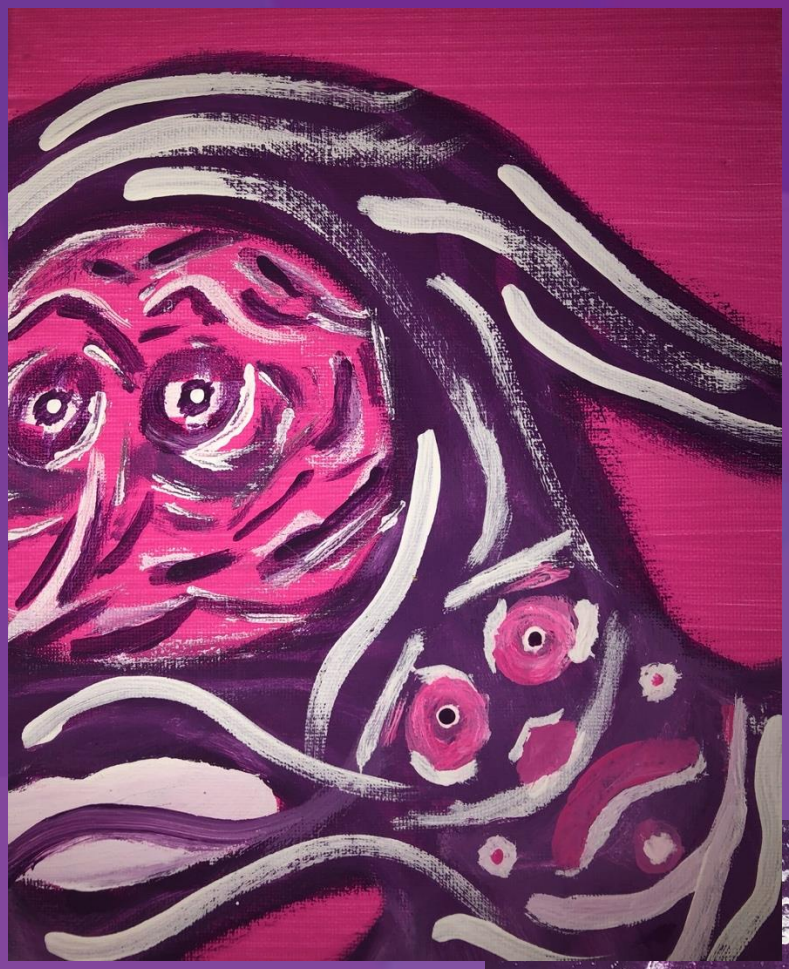


THE PIECES

SCAN ME

The Party

by Zoe Statiris

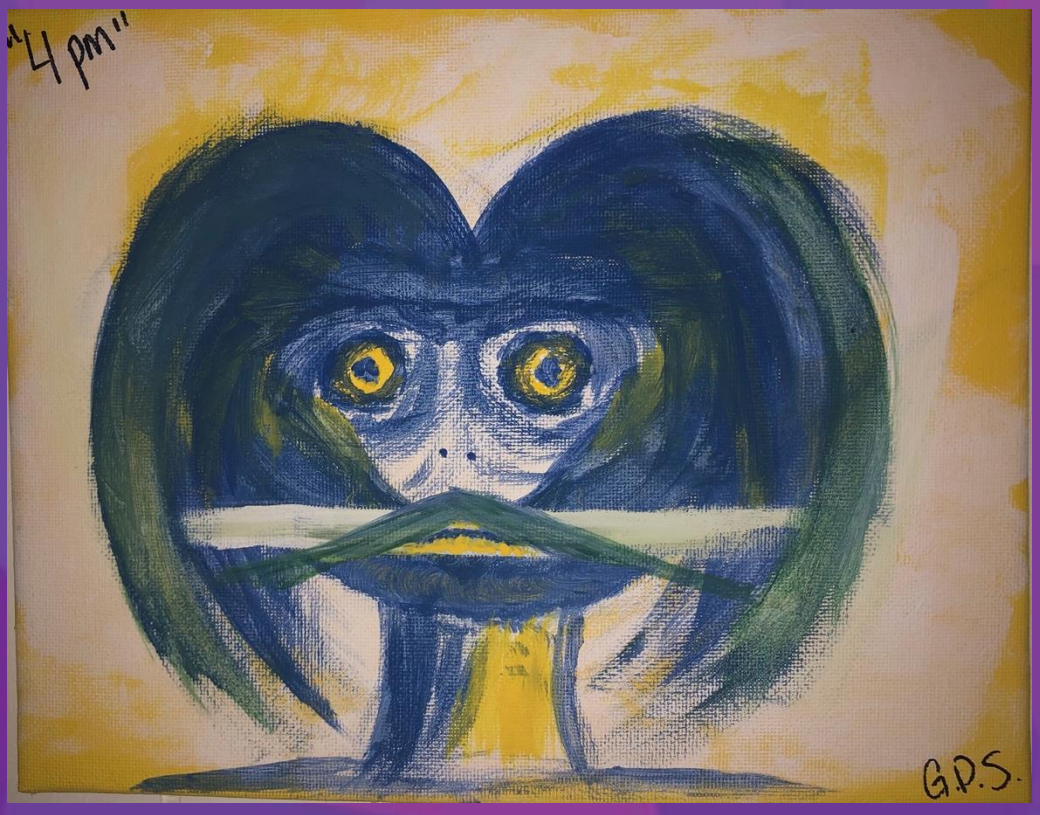


The Stress in My Neck

Spaced

SCAN ME

Protector



4 PM

Art by Gabrielle Samson

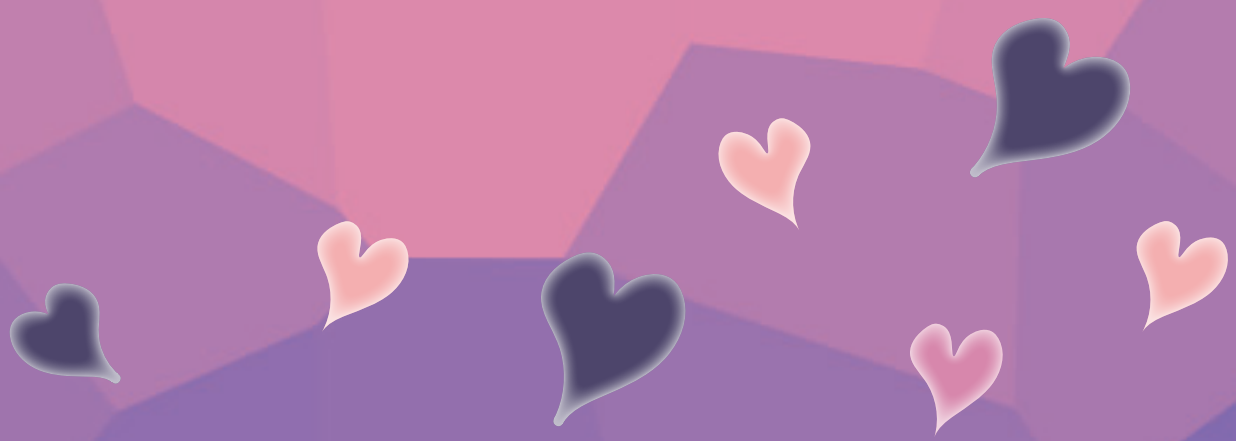
Dear Naive Me

Claudia Sanchez-Jara

You thought this time was going to be different
You did not know why, you just felt it
A feeling you did not know how to describe
Whenever you saw him, your heart would race
Your hands would sweat when talking to him

You thought this time was going to be different
But you thought wrong because things did not turn out the way you hoped they would
Your heart got smashed with a hammer by someone you least expected
By someone who was supposed to be your best friend
Someone to lean on when times get rough

You thought this time was going to be different
You heard the lies that made you feel like you were not good enough
Filling your head with false assumptions about yourself
By someone who you least expected
By someone who was supposed to be your best friend
Someone who turned out to be me



Instead of being my own bestie, I was my biggest enemy
Filling my head with false assumptions about myself

I thought this time was going to be different

I guess I was right
This time was different
It was different because I finally realized how bad of a friend I have been to someone who needed me the most
I finally realized that finding true love does not necessarily mean finding it in someone else, but finding it in me

It will be a long journey
But remember this gentle reminder, my friend
I am enough, I always have been and always will be

Untitled

Felicia Tessarotto

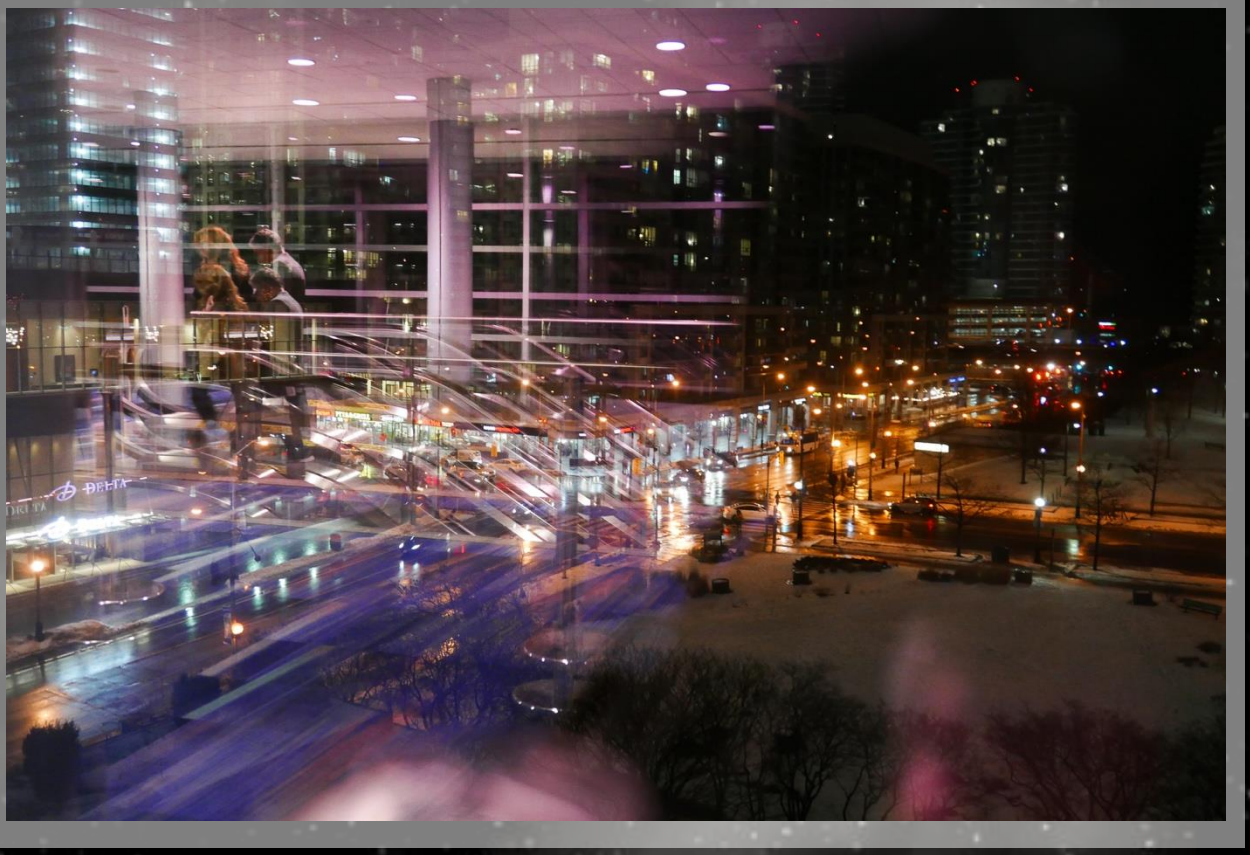
"I have blinded myself from being able to see the beauty in the mirror. I have dealt with a lot of self-esteem, body image issues and I have avoided looking at my body in the mirror for a long time, so this image is to help myself and others realize that there is beauty if we just allow ourselves to see it."

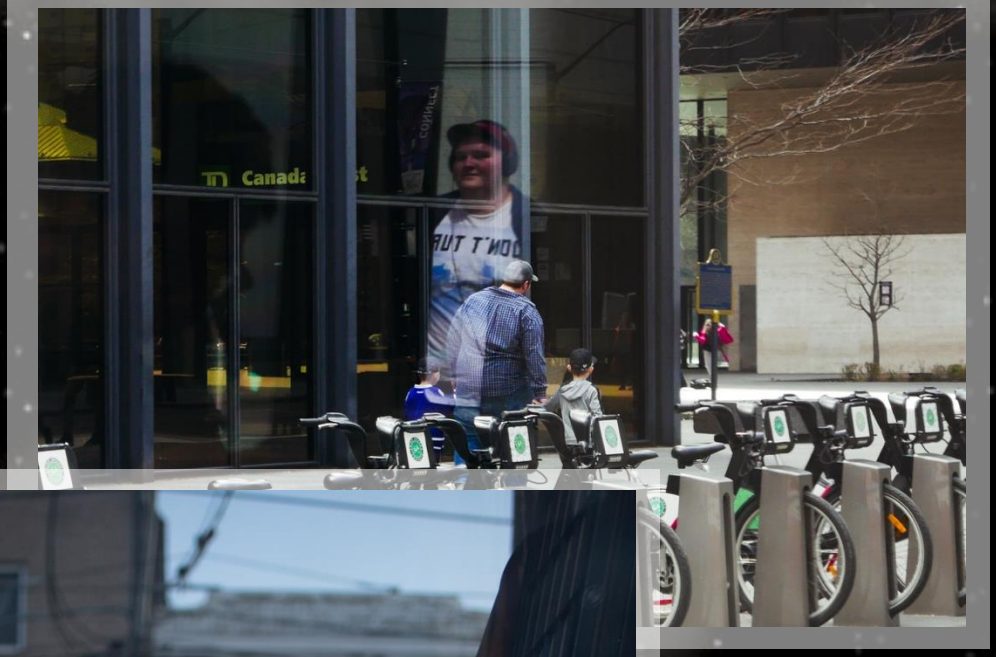
FUT

URE
SCAN ME

RUN INTO YOU

Chenxi Bao




Canada

The Thoughts That Bind

A Letter to Myself

Samreen Maqsood

“Look at your cousin, she got accepted into medical school.” “Isn’t your friend going into dentistry? Maybe you should apply somewhere where a job is guaranteed.” “You had so much potential, and you’re going into journalism? Such a waste.”

I guess people are right when they say that words hurt, and you never really forget what someone says to you. As a kid growing up, hearing criticism really hurt you no matter how much you were told it was to “help you improve” or “make you stronger.”

Growing up in a Pakistani household, this was that much more difficult. You only had a limited amount of options for a career choice: a doctor, professor or anything medical-related. Anything else, and you were never going to hear the end of it.

You wanted to pursue a career in medicine first, maybe a surgeon, then switched to becoming a professor. Then in Grade 11, you wanted to do something biology-related, studying cellular biology. Then in Grade 12, you decided you would do dental medicine, taking extra classes in night school and online to meet the application requirements.

You had never been a math or science person, but you excelled in all things writing-related. English class was your favourite, you got perfect on quizzes and tests, your essays were always strong and powerful, with multiple people asking you to share your work and edit their own. You made amazing notes that people wanted, with teachers showing your work as an example of the perfect assignment. Writer’s Craft was the only thing you looked forward to on Day 1’s of your schedule, where your imagination and love for words took over, with words spilling on the paper before you could even form a proper thought.

You just never came to realize what your talent and passions were until it came down to university application deadlines. You felt suffocated underneath the pressures of your family, relatives, and community. You wanted to make your dad proud, make his efforts and sacrifices worth it when he came here with nothing to make sure you had everything. You wanted him to be proud of you when people

asked him what his daughter was going into, rather than having to listen to people mock fields like journalism that had nothing to do with the options you had. You wanted to make him proud when you went into society and made a name for yourself, letting people know that your dad's efforts to provide an education didn't go in vain.

Your Grade 12 journey will be rough. It won't be easy trying to convince South Asian parents that a passion for what you do is more important than the salary you will make. That enjoying what you're going to be studying for the next four or six years was more important than putting in 12 more years to "secure your future." There will be countless nights where you cry while making notes or studying, countless days where you doubt yourself and your talents, countless times where you reevaluate your future choices and wonder whether what you're doing is right or not.

You will hear criticism, lots and lots of criticism. You will hear off-handed comments, supporting you but putting you down at the same time. You will have fights, not just with your parents but yourself internally. You will ask yourself and your friends a hundred times over and over again whether what you were doing was right or not, whether it was worth it.

And I'm here to tell you that it was and it is. One year or even two years down the road, it was all worth it. When you've aced all your assignments related to your major, when you thought your passion might die down in a year or two but it's only gotten stronger, when you've landed an editor's position and countless others that you've daydreamed and prayed about, you will realize it was worth it and you did it.

Everything you went through is going to feel like forever ago when you're finally in the place you prayed for a year ago. Without your hard times, you would not be you. You're going to stop comparing yourself to others in the engineering, business, and medicine departments. You're going to stop feeling sad watching people get internships and jobs and know your time is coming. You're going to realize that just because you're on a different journey doesn't mean you won't be as successful as your friends or the people around you. You will realize that you set your timeline, and everything meant for you will come on its own time.

Yours truly,
Your future self,

Samreen

SPECULAR

Seerhana Tarannum

Models:
Ramis Tarannum & John Ahn

2 0

this year started off with loss and so ends in gain
i lost the opportunity to graduate with all my friends
i lost you, when you looked me in the eyes and i saw *“this is not what I want anymore”* reflected back at me
i lost myself when i looked into the mirror and could not recognize the face gazing back
i reached a point where staring into the past was not acceptable any more

so i shattered the mirror

i did not try to fix it, because it is common knowledge that once something breaks it will never go back to what it once was

i stopped looking in mirrors altogether

i threw myself into anything that would not remind me of a life i have no more control over
and thus i birthed forward a new version of myself

20

she has tattoos now, art on her body that tells a beautifully devastating story
she is louder, since in the quiet she hears the last time you told her you loved her and she cannot bear the sound
(although she will never admit it is her favourite)
she smiles more, and this time it is genuine, this time it does not hurt

she struggles, that she does, but she no longer looks over her shoulder
hoping to find the answers
everything she needs is right in front of her

all she has to do is look ahead

by Julia McGolrick

Flag Bearer

Fatemeh Saba Forouzan

SCAN ME

Reflections

Shea Pilon

Silver Linings

Jesse Reid

It's funny, I hung a mirror in my room this year
If only I knew, the hall of mirrors soon to *be* this year

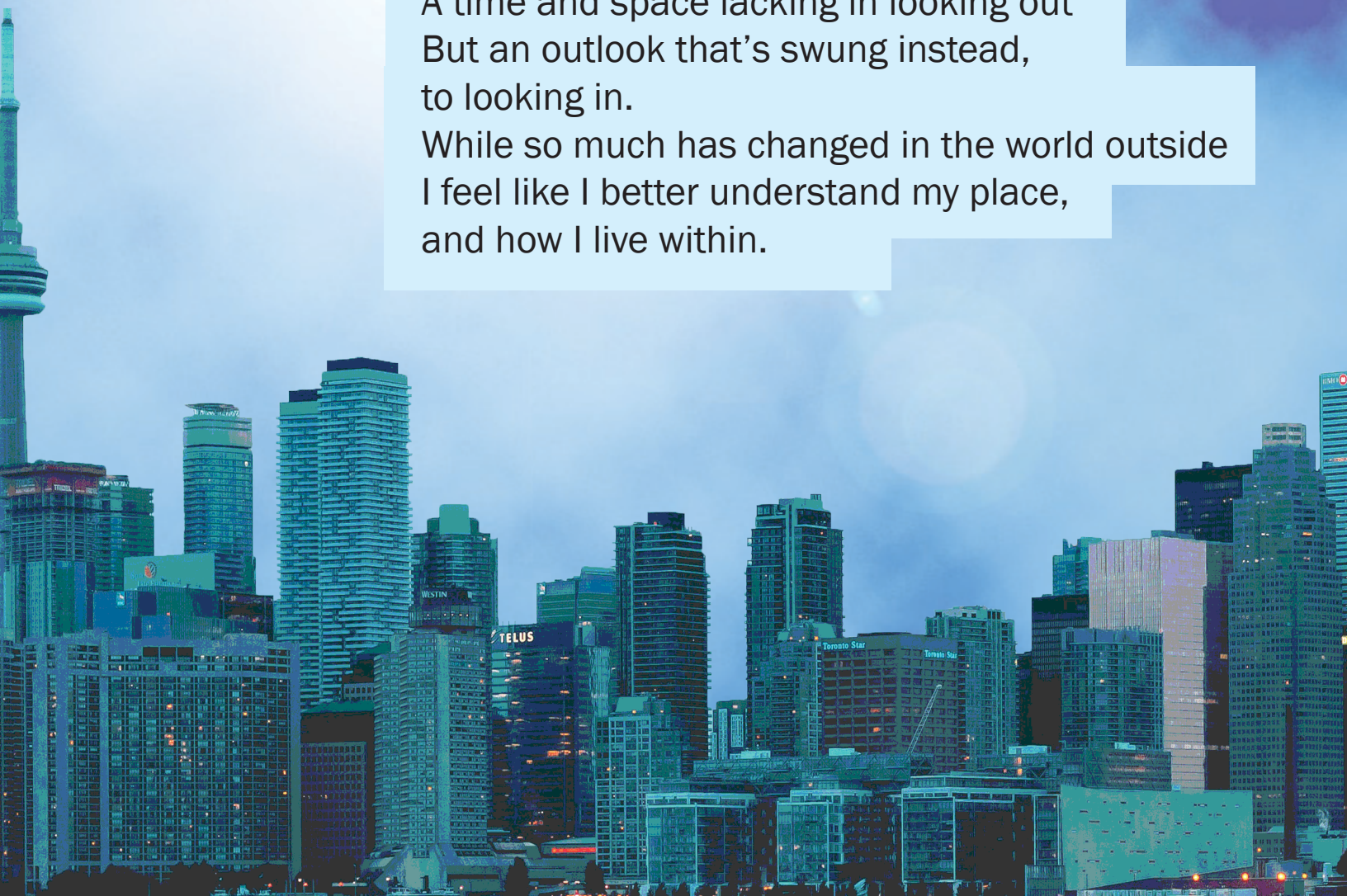
Only one mirror hangs

But I've had a thousand hours to reflect
A thousand thoughts to digest

I *know* I've had the space to reflect

And maybe even, a world worthy of neglect.

A time and space lacking in looking out
But an outlook that's swung instead,
to looking in.
While so much has changed in the world outside
I feel like I better understand my place,
and how I live within.



Have I enjoyed these reflections?

The lighting may be a little harsh,

The mirror just too close

More so sterilized bathroom, than spare-the-eyes change-room,

or Instagram-filtered pose.

But a mirror at least shows us something which, without, we couldn't see
And the silver lining of this mirror,
Is that the reflection has shown *me*.

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HALL OF MIRRORS: THE ALBUM

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Chapter-Themed Playlist Cover Designs by
Seerhana Tarannum

Can’t get enough of the Hall of Mirrors soundscape?

Check out the full album on our Soundcloud, Bandcamp, and YouTube:

SOUNDCLOUD BANDCAMP YOUTUBE

Check out our Spotify for playlists curated to enhance the Hall of Mirrors experience:

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