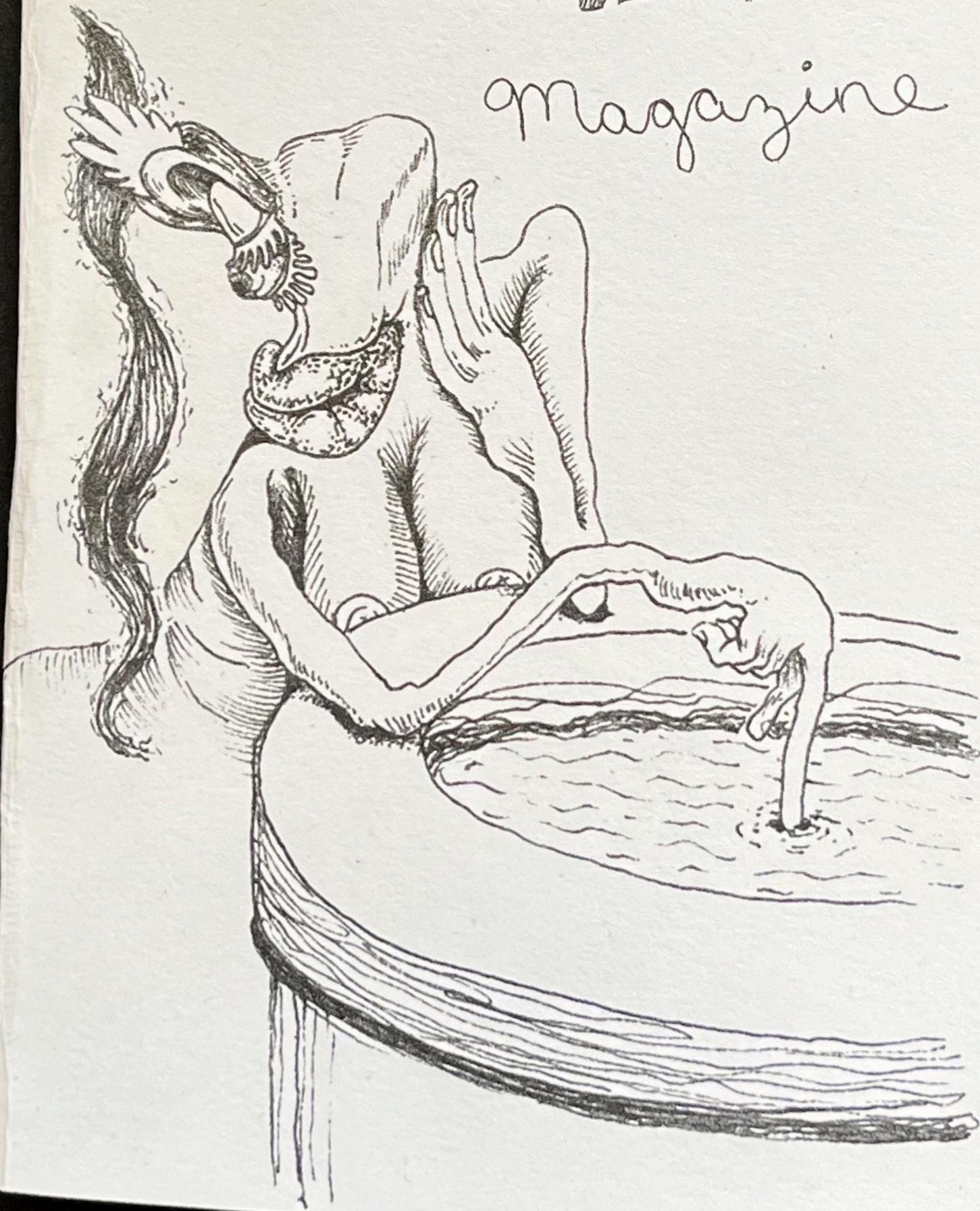
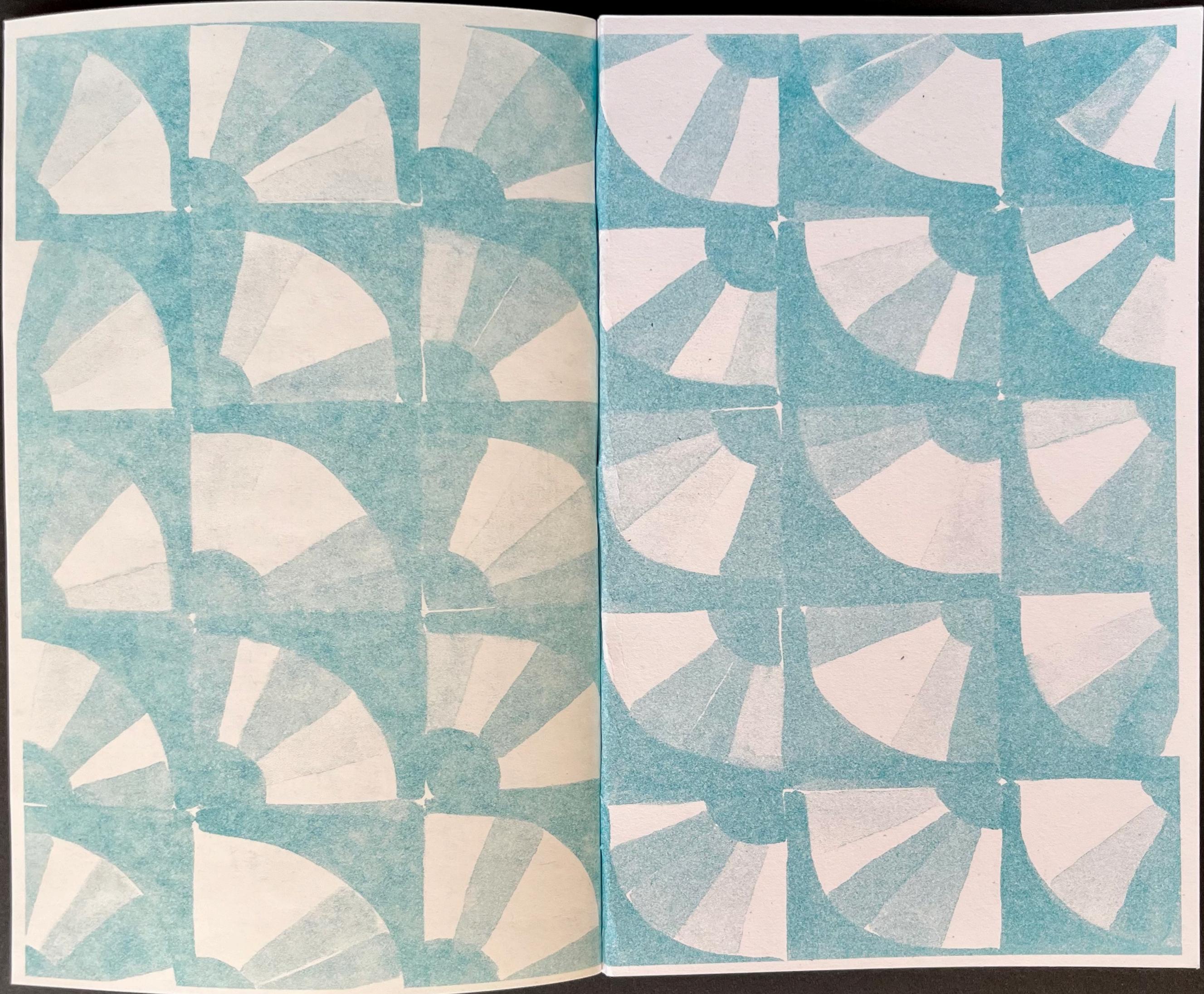


LOOKY HERE

magazine





Looky Here Magazine

Issue 3: Winter/Spring 2025

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Looky Here, founded by artists in 2017, is an all-inclusive, multi-functional, non-profit organization in Greenfield, MA. We are an art-book press, a community Risograph print shop, an art gallery, a secondhand art supply store, and venue for workshops and events.

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Halls Island III (June 27, 2024) Amanda Maciuba

ANGEL STILL FEMININE

for Eliot Cardinaux

In Femme, oiseaux devant
le soleil, Joan Miró bloodies
an egg yolk sun to shunt it
out of the way of the figure.

Art is not planned, it responds
like lava lamp blobs or birds
being recorded — You can hear
Masami Akita's chickens clear

as day on the 13 Japanese Birds
recordings, along with drumming
MA did himself & the typical
tape hiss, oscillators, full suite

of industrial sound. I owe you
an apology for leaving my CDs
in the car, such a production
I made of getting them all back

— You can hear the glass, still,
when you step in certain places
in the workshop. I'm trying
to be better, kill all the lawn

shrimp that get in so you don't
have to see them, only splotches
of brown blood on the hard
-board. I've ignored my past,

my loves that never made it out
of my skull and the deaths I
forgot to light unscented candles
for — Miró says somewhere,

“For me, a painting
must give off sparks. It must
dazzle like the beauty of
a woman or a poem.” Alone

nights, I hear the song
of the unrecorded birds
quietening as dusk progresses,
its tiny history. It ends

in the quiet from which
the foragers emerge,
seek food & moonlight.
I've ignored the past,

& for my next trick I will make it
disappear completely
like fog in tomorrow's sun
or this evening torpor into sleep

WITCHAMISSE

The bird shit glows like a sun on the windshield where god put it, probably as a reminder for that hermit thrush I killed yesterday by the river. Snow melts and then suddenly birds are all over the road, looking for whatever treasure the drifts purloined from the shoulder, made dangerous. It was an accident just like plenty of children or an inessential feature, product of chance, shimmering contingency, it did not have to die just then, Redgreen and Violet-Yellow Rhythms an enigmatic grid by Klee with trees sprouting out of some of the corners, even replacing a few of the edges like a child too shy to actually dance on the stage, instead just going out to the mark & standing there looking out on the crowd for a familiar face in the middle school auditorium life so often is. The sound board old but working, big plasticky analog switches and a little light for wayfinding in the dark of the booth, which if you leave the door open to the outside for too long is the first place a bird would land

MISBEHAVING

LIGHT

What it forgives: a long list of dry-erase feelings, a voice raised too quickly & apologized for, after, but not right after, thinking the moon has powers that would give it responsibilities it's really unfair to hold a rock to, even one that gets all that sun & seeds it for the leechers

**Power lines/trains:
Berkshire & Eastern Yard, East Deerfield, MA**



**Wrestler: Jay Freddie
Pro Wrestling GRIND, Easthampton, MA**



The Day George Van Dyke Died

Easton Smith

Yes, I remember the day the lumber baron died.

Every afternoon, the men would come onto my donut barge in a jumble of boots, hungry as coyotes. They had spent their strength down to the last fiber, heaving and hauling the mass of shaggy fur that they'd shaved from the beastly Earth.

Oh, I could clear a thousand donuts a day as I followed the log drive down the Connecticut. My fryers would run as full with dough as the river did with timber. A fiery steam engine my kitchen was, and I its conductor, shoveling wheat to pull this mannish train across the landscape.

But I noticed something different as the men loaded onto my barge that afternoon, the day that George Van Dyke died. A new depth to their ravenous hunger. For, not an hour before, those many sturdy men had lined the banks of the overragged river to watch Mr. Van Dyke arrive at the magnificent overlook by the falls, where he would survey the log drive from his prized automobile. The very same automobile that he'd driven around so proudly as he visited the lumber camps, confiscating the men's whiskey, cards, and other unChristian effects while filling out his ledger with funny numbers. Oh, their hatred for the baron was so solid that the men could sharpen their saws upon it. They watched as Van Dyke, his red face sticking up from the backseat of the open-air automobile like a ripe cherry, drove up to his kingly vantage. And they saw when, from nowhere but perhaps the hand of God, the automobile suddenly lurched forward, overcame the ledge, and soared into the sticky August air. Every man's eyes were blinkless with wonder as the wealth-shined metal chariot, its driver, and the suited captain of industry plopped into the foam below.

What caused the vehicle to drive into the abyss, we may never know. But I do remember how, in the moments after it was done, there was a pensive, almost church-like moment of silence from all those riverwashed lumbermen. And then, all at once, they released such a roar that I felt the water tremble beneath my barge. They cheered and jeered and clapped. They whooped and heckled and hollered. And when they were done with that, each man, already emptied clean of all possible energy by the sleepless labor of their trade, reached down and pulled a diamond from his empty bowel: laughter. Oh, how the men laughed. They laughed until their souls were lofty as clouds and their meat was good and truly hollowed out. Until their hunger drove them to my docked barge like a plague of insects. The men came to the counter waving their peaveys around like schoolboys. Jovial, beery, the smell of their work wafting from them triumphantly, and still they were laughing. I fed each man three donuts and then three donuts more. They even ate with a grin the day-old dough that I'd put aside for the horses. And still they wanted—they needed—more. More donuts to rebuild their joy-worn bellies.

A donut barge has one role in this vast economy: to fill the men back up. So when I ran out of dough, I sent my boy to town. I ordered him to get the biggest sack of flour he could find and to charge it to the company. A final bonus from the tight-fisted boss as he retired towards the sea. As we waited for my boy to return, the men set to cleaning up the barge in a flurry of merry labor, as if, after witnessing hubris so swiftly dispatched by the Almighty, they'd suddenly come to believe in the common cause of all men. As they cleaned, they sang a new song.

“Old George Van Dyke
Well he took a hike
On down the bank
And into the tank
He saw the falls
And he dipped his balls
But under the logs he sank!”

Some people are in awe of buildings that scrape the sky in Chicago or the massive ships at port in Baltimore and New York, but I've seen no greater industry than what the men brought to their task as they cleaned my vessel that day. I sat wiping old donut grease from my brow and filling tin cups with water, wishing that I could offer these small golden heroes some stronger elixir.

Finally, I saw my boy coming back, his cart stubbornly catching on every rock with the weight of the flour. Atop his head was a new novelty. A stove pipe hat that nearly swallowed his dainty skull. When he reached the barge, a tall man whose name I don't remember—Bartosz or maybe Bosko it was—jumped to shore, carried the sack over one shoulder, and dropped it in the kitchen. My boy ran to me, gave me a note, and explained that the hat had been given to him by Ms. Francie, who owned the store. He said that Ms. Francie told him that this was Mr. Van Dyke's hat, the very one that had escaped from his doomed head just as he went over the ledge.

I knew better than to trust Ms. Francie. The hat's rotted leather would never have graced George Van Dyke's pampered scalp. But I said nothing as the men hooted and cheered and lifted my boy up onto their shoulders as if he'd just married the prettiest lass in town. One of the men took the hat from my boy and plopped it on his own bark-dusted head with a drunken

flare. “You there!” He spoke in an absurd high-society accent and pointed to one of his compatriots. “No shirking or lazing on my watch!” he yelled.

“What's this?” the hatted man said, swiping a cup of water from his comrade and sniffing it. “Whiskey? In a Van Dyke camp? I will not have it!” He threw the water into the other man's face and all aboard the freshly mopped barge cackled like rich folks. The men took turns putting on the hat and mocking the deceased tyrant as I shaped my dough for another round of donuts.

I do indeed remember that day. I never did tell the men what the note from Ms. Francie said. “The insurance company men are on their way. Mr. Smith will take over the drive. Men are to report back.” No, I did not tell them. I said nothing. For one sweet day, the men, the river, and the logs had made common cause. I would not be the one to betray the armistice. I was not a newsman but a donutman, and I'd done my job.

They ate through the whole second sack of flour that afternoon. The day was long, the horizon cut short by precisely the length of a tree, and the men sat on the barge, bloated, their eyes half-lidded, into the early evening. When they finally made their way back to land, to their threadbare cots and uncertain wages, they looked like castaways in the violet lowlight, like men who'd most narrowly escaped death only to drift again at its shore. They were still singing their new song, but quietly now, so as not to wake the coming day.

Author's note: On August 8th, 1909, George Van Dyke, the president of Connecticut Valley Lumber Company, died after his car plunged 75 feet into the Connecticut River near Turners Falls. Reportedly, the loggers who witnessed the event cheered.



Who Lost the Game of Simon Says

Be born.
Aht aht aht.
I didn't say Simon Says

I believe the game we all played as children had larger connotations for the future. Maybe the ones who played well got jobs at 21. Maybe I always lost the game because I love living in the wild on a whim with a whiff of bark 'pon the lungs. I think the game prepares you to be either on the path that Simon layed out for you. Or me, who writes poetry at light speed without shoes or food or a destination, rather hot in here. Could you open the window? Could you stand at the door and humm, Simon? I know this game made sense, but part of me doesn't know how it told us, so accurately, who would divert from the natural path and create streams of gold, or drop out of college and become a poet, or touch your head at the wrong time and cry for hours with red drink on your lips, crusted and stain

Death's Affirmation

Will you remember me when I am ash?
When you can no longer taste my hair in your soup...

I have fallen, on the bus ride and stayed in one place
An honorable death, I'd say.

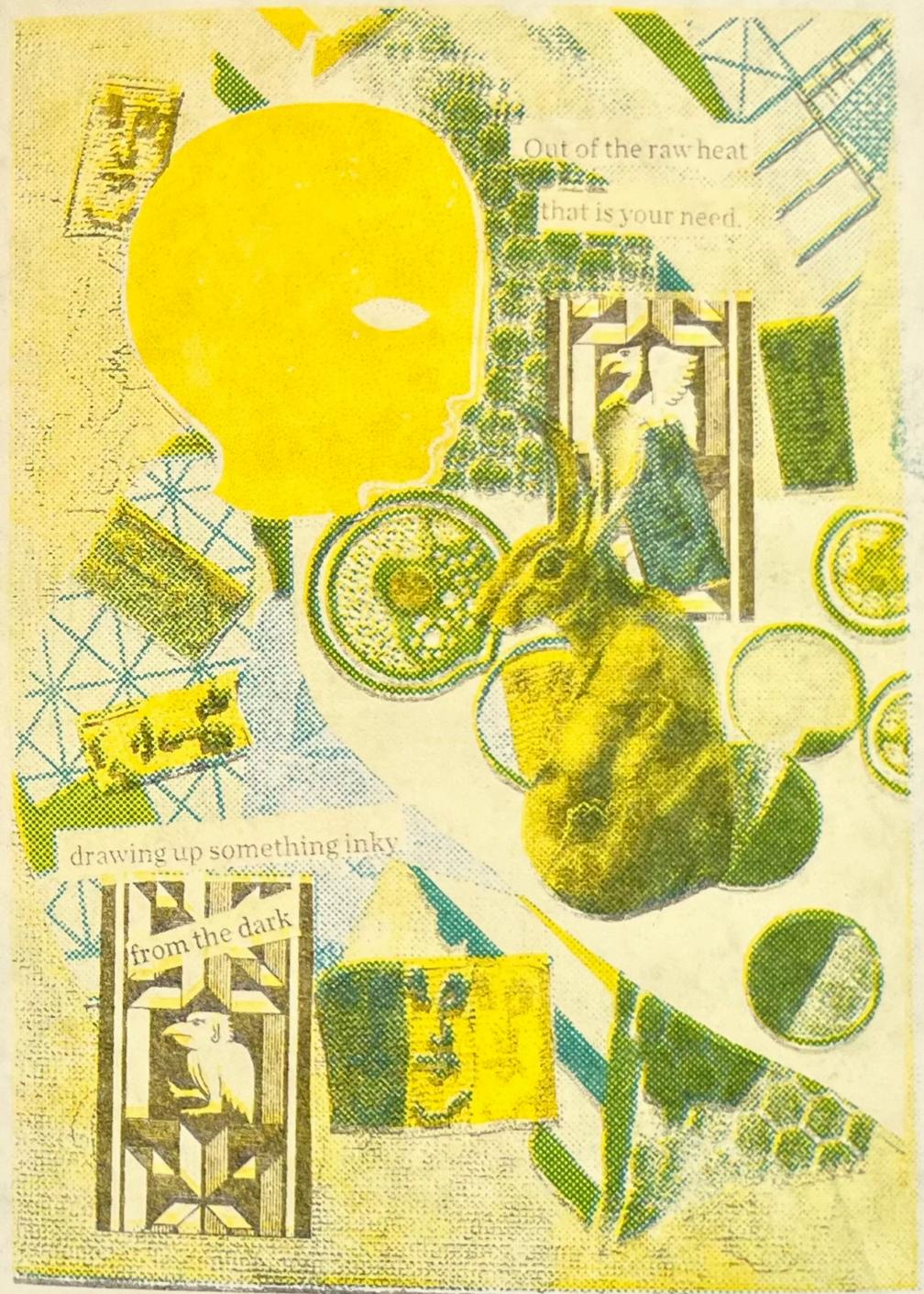
Will you remember me when I am figment
An illustration, a cause for celebration however small
The dark chocolate in your back pocket as you sigh and say
She wouldn't have settled for just one piece

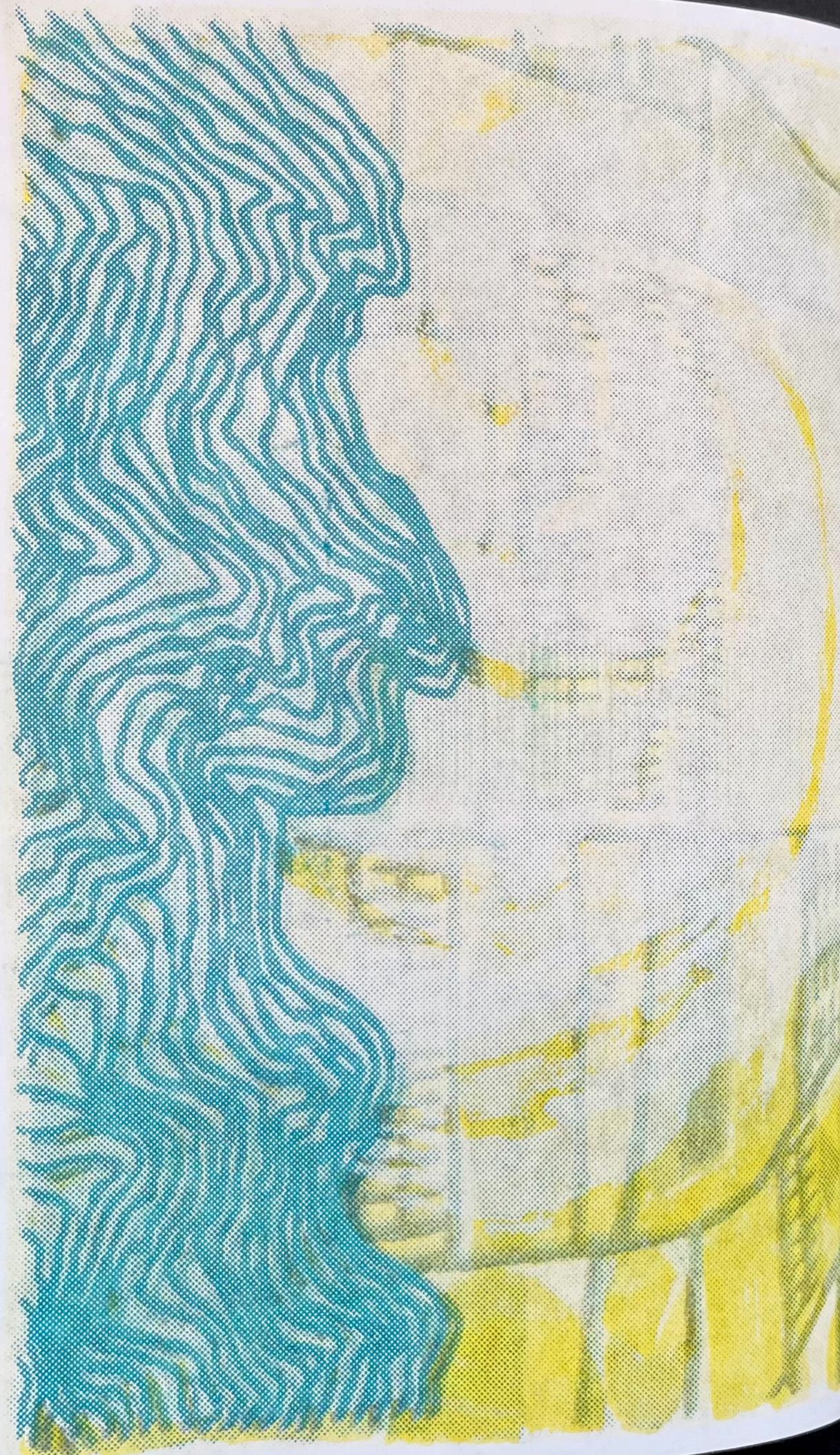
No.

I will be remembered and stricken with good spice and cold tears
No one wearing black because I am black and I don't want you to
crowd me as I lay

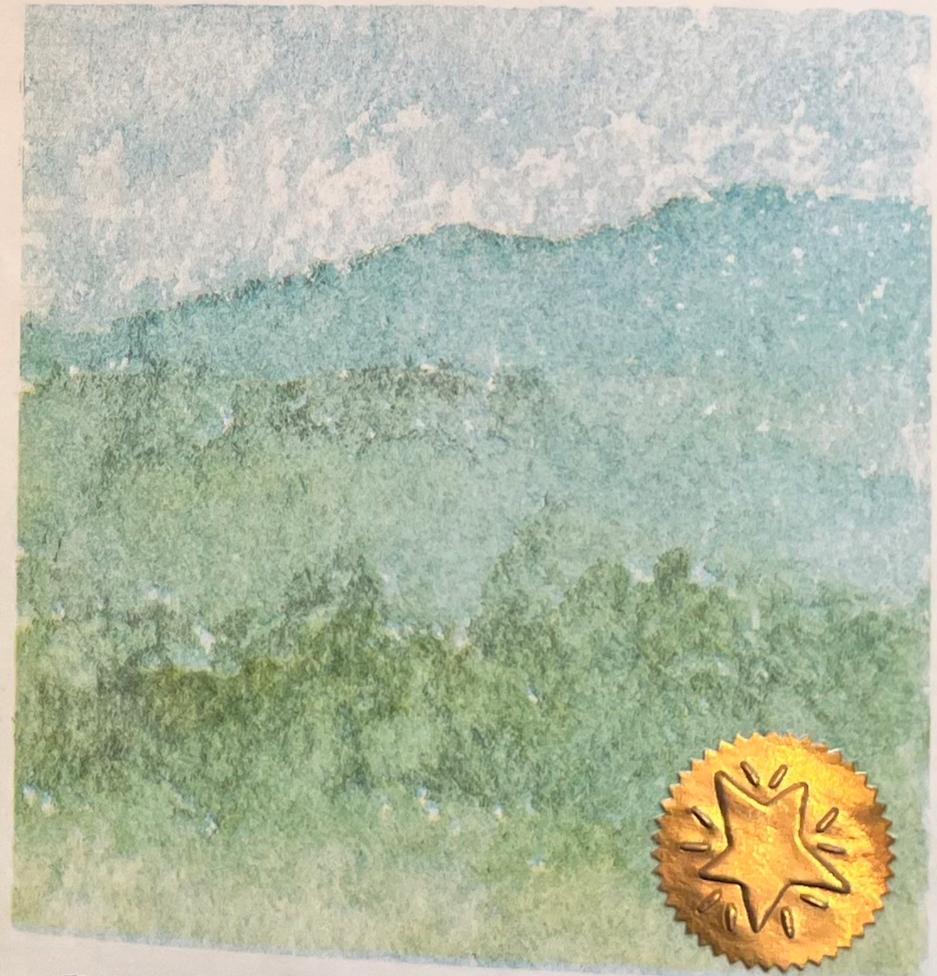
So old fashioned. So normal. Why can't I stand?
Yeah I understand the challenges, but why can't you make it
so I can stand?

If you told me how much you loved me
The last thing I would do is lay down.





Stick in the Mud

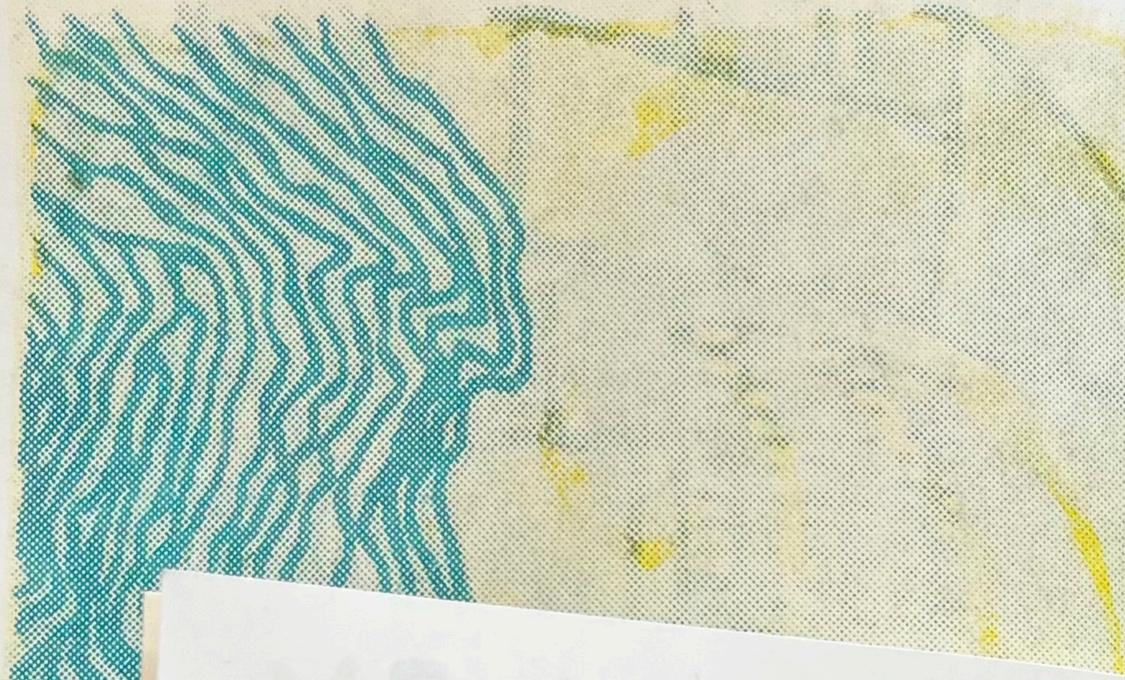


Sierra Dickey

SHORT STORY



CONTEST WINNER



Stick in the Mud

Sierra Dickey

How much theft - from drugstore lip gloss to native lands - has been facilitated by alcohol? My older sister certainly stole my reputation as an innocent when she dumped her empty bud cans in the trunk of my crappy old Honda Civic. That same Civic inspired me and Tay to speed around residential streets screaming the Big Sean lyrics, "pull up in a Honda Civic, pullin bitches!" whenever we went for groceries or to the Iceberg for milkshakes. I had had a fake ID since I was 17, so thankfully I never had to steal the supermarket whiskey that Tay and I would sometimes shoot on the carpeted floor of our conjoined single.

This kind of activity is the basis of kinship between undergraduate girls, and more broadly, white settlers of many classes. The college we were at was named after two such settlers: Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. They spread measles to the local tribes of the Southeast Columbia Valley and got battered beyond recognition by tomahawks in return.

Murder by stone tools, biohazardous Pendletons, indigenous mass death, and other horrors of the frontier were like our second mascots. Only a few of us thought of them often. I remember an old Geology professor with a reptilian hunch to his neck who took us out to Fort Walla Walla (the scene of many crimes leading up to the Whitman murders) to plant tree cuttings along a small rivulet that ran behind the mission.

The cuttings were flimsy strands of tree, green underskins exposed at bottom. They certainly did not look like they would go forth and prosper. Old geo was in an ecstatic state of hurry, convinced that the more baby trees we propagated that day, the more carbon would evaporate from the atmosphere. He encouraged us to save ourselves through rapid planting.

I put four cuttings into the mud and looked at them, leaning over and looking wan and immune to the climate solutionism getting busy on the colonial grounds. My entire emotional attitude about college is like this cutting, I realized, and sighed the deep sigh of

the stick in the mud. A tentatively radical thought swam up to the surface of my head: wasn't frontier-style settler colonialism, an enduring monument of which we were currently gardening upon, the true point of infection for climate change?

I was a little overwhelmed on every mandatory Geology field trip but also pleased to be outside with a waterproof yellow notebook in my paw. I was a sophomore transfer at a small liberal arts school known for its "unpretentious culture." I was trying to leave behind a terrible relationship with a white rapper known by different aliases in Boston as DJ Caveman or Tom Foolery. Apparently, Caveman had known the Boston bombers and wrote me a last-ditch email about his grief and fear of death. I opened it at my work-study desk in the Audio Visual Tech office, terrified that I would soon be getting a call from the FBI. This on-again off-again thing with Caveman had followed me since high school and in order to help shake it I was experimenting with the mantra, "I'm in love with my life!"

I would say the mantra to myself as I sat in the passenger seat of the white college vans and watched the layers of sediment speed past us on roads cut out of silt. In Geology lectures, I had learned that windblown silt is called loess, and that every damn rock around was basalt. I kept a list of good geology words in my notebook but failed to pair them with the weekly diagrams and

physics concepts. I was once again efforting while sabotaging the outcome.

The repetition of the mantra didn't do much, but the philosophical replacement of a fantasy romantic partner with "my life" made for significant enough questions to keep my mind occupied and away from the crevasse of feeling lonely, ugly, and too shy to fix either of those. Could I really be romantically in love with "my life"? Could I sexualize it? Could I write to it? Could I call it up late at night for pillow talk with a half-broken voice? Could I go on great adventures with it? Would it choose me and only me?

So far, it felt like only crying fits and lactose intolerance brought on by the Iceberg shakes had chosen me and only me. On today's field trip, we were visiting a wheat farm. The group coagulated around the grain leg towers, staring up at where they ended 100 feet above, and shot wheat back down into the silos. All the structures were gigantic and dusty green. It looked more like oil refinery equipment than something used to process organic matter into food. The farm was vast and nobody could see the end of it from the processing field, but there was apparently just one farmer working here, an old white man in cakey overalls and distended boots.

Old geo stood next to him and the two made jokes that I couldn't hear. I liked to watch their creased faces curl into grins. I often

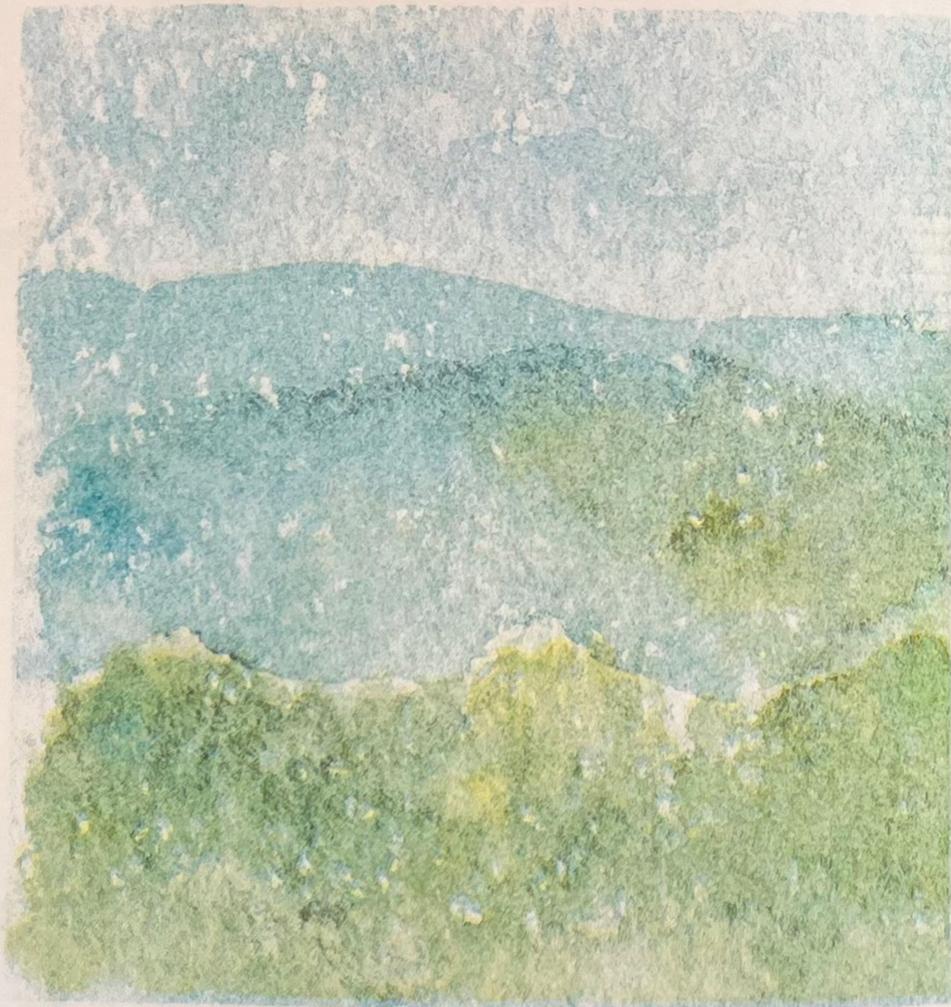
looked at old geo's hunched neck and wondered if the curvature caused him pain. More than anything, his posture and his passion for dirt gave the impression that he was having more fun than you. He had the *joie de vivre* of the very tenured: affable, extemporaneous, wiry, combative, and principled.

The singular farmer, the acreage without end, and the height of the grain legs were combining to make this feel less like a farm and more like a set or loading dock. Supposedly wheat grew in the hills all around us, but it seemed like the true nexus of the operation was the metal handling system and the farmer's extremely oversized Ford. The wheat had become secondary to the processing equipment. This felt modern in a cold and distant way. I stared up at the monumental green legs and whispered weakly, "I'm in love with my life."



Photo by Alexis Hott

Sierra Dickey is a writer, educator, and organizer living in Great Falls. Her reporting and creative works have been published in Prism Reports, Shadowproof, Talk Poverty, Modern Farmer, Adroit Journal, Barrelhouse, and more. Sierra's research interests include queer, material, and third world feminisms, the environmental humanities, and police and prison abolition. Sierra has taught writing and journalism at the Northfield Mount Hermon School, the Community College of Vermont, and Looky Here. She is presently at work on a book about new women's prison projects in New England. Gemini sun, Taurus rising.



From Putney Mountain Kristen Murphy



Waking only when needed. Necessary
 Distressed by the going around to
 it tries to be any-
 what a wafer can do, so I try it.
 colliding, I mean, but
 Focused more on the
 extreme organization of small ceramic bowls... extremely soon, soon
 Spareness as a value? Aware and
 Optimism, a goal? Signposting as an agreement? Hostility as a consideration?
 Careful with the dimensional world, one gets a sense of similarities between me and
 of roadways, we are at an impasse and hope to be soon, soon in the area
 Due mostly to the ongoing nature of certain persons like myself

I need
 the field
 so this is
 I will
 embro
 mess
 in just one more minute everything will van
 that everything is spelled
 your fist
 which is why they
 the first place, right, ev
 lilac was the color of the envelope,
 everything dipped in water so as to
 is not a problem. a paragraph never
 belonged to
 the info, explains the rep, never
 just in time to collect a limited edition idea,
 could never look me in the face

Waking only when needed. Necessary. Distressed by the going around here. Focused more on the extreme organization of small ceramic bowls... extremely soon. Spareness as a value? Optimistic, a goal? Signposting as an agreement? Hostility as a consideration? Careful with the dimensional world, similarities between me and certain persons like myself. Due mostly to the ongoing nature of ways, we are at an impasse and hope to be soon, soon, soon.

I need you to render me actual, I explain in the cover letter field. Then I cover the field in tiny cross-stitched flowers. Rendering me actual would take hard work, so this is like an apology in advance or maybe an act of deception. If you render me embroidered flowers on more digital boxes. I will write secret messages in T. I will embroider more tiny flowers on more digital boxes. I will turn my fingers to soap. I'll emboss letters. I need to be rendered to make any of that count.

Missing Merle

Rebecca Rideout

The birds were at it way too early.

But this was the way, on these days when the first rays of sunlight began steaming the pavement, when the crickets' buzz filled every space of the world (even the bathroom cupboard, even the kitchen cabinet) with smooth white noise, when the no-nonsense orange of the day lily could be seen flashing between the slats in the neighbor's fence.

It was never the sweet chirpers who started out early, either. Squawks and shouts, cackles and other rude noises emerged from tree branches all around the neighborhood. And not one bird having the decency to be seen. Trees erupting in noise. Bushes emanating with insect hums. It was a riotous, yet still, morning that exploded into being on that Saturday in July.

Breaking through all the nature noise came a sudden scream. The first minutes of the day - a day that already felt like a wet sweatshirt fresh from the drier - were temporarily ripped open with the noise of it. Whether anyone was awake to hear it, no one will know, but the burst of movement up on the deck of 32 Elwood Street, Apartment Two, left no doubt that the residence was the origin of the outcry.

A bathrobe-clad human came rocketing onto the second-floor porch (robe the hue of rosewater and the texture of a towel). Hair hanging in tangles, glasses askew, the woman looked as though she'd lost a breeze - she looked desperately one way out into the open air, then the other, then out straight in front of the porch in fleeting hope before collapsing on an ancient, moldy chair whose main purpose was to home an over-sized spider plant.

As the bath-robed bottom bounced down onto the chair, the plant became airborne - if only for an instant. It landed sideways on the peeling blue paint of the porch, broken and disheveled.

If the plant looked disgraced, the woman matched it. Disbelief emanated from her open mouth, resentment radiated from her graying eyebrows, and fear pulsed in the way she held her hands out in front of her, as if they were deciding whether to punch the railing or offer a soft landing for her face - soon to be wet with not only sweat, but tears.

The hands opted for the second option and soon held the lined creases of her forehead, massaging eyebrows mindlessly.

"How can she be gone?" wailed the woman, to no one but the crickets. "Gone?? It's impossible. This can't be happening."

Her eyes now appeared above the hands, gray-hazel eyes whose gaze fell upon a pair of ragged leather sandals that lay next to the porch railing.

"No..." she muttered. "She can't have left."

And just as suddenly as the scream had broken the morning, she jumped up and yelled out again.

"Merle! Merle! Come back here! You don't get to leave like this. You don't get to - to just let go."

By the end of the sentence the air had been reduced to a whisper; she sank onto the chair again, which was now expecting her arrival.

She leaned back and looked up. The sky, already hazy, had become one with the sun. The hot white atmosphere steamed her body under the bathrobe, her brain sinking into a space between clarity and dreaming. Her mind began to wander back through the last few months. All the signs had been there, and she wondered how she'd been so blind to them all along.

Janice remembered meeting Merle on an unseasonably warm March night four months ago, on the roof of a friend's third-floor art studio downtown. She'd hardly noticed her at first, standing stone still at the edge of the roof. Merle's long silver hair had fluttered in the wind, a stark

difference to her frozen form, statue-like. She seemed to be observing the open space beyond the third-story building, fearlessly. That's what Janice loved about her, the moment she saw her: a stubborn courage.

"Pretty good view from up here, huh?" Janice had asked, surprising herself with this attempt at conversation. The rest of the crowd had gone back in to celebrate the studio's gallery opening, leaving the two of them high above the town.

Merle hadn't moved, hadn't responded immediately, Janice remembered now. Her long nose had pointed outward to the setting sun; small dark eyes staring peacefully out over the swiftly darkening street, a drab beige palette of March in New England.

"Things are coming alive again," Merle had stated. Then she'd turned abruptly and walked away.

Before reaching the metal fire escape leading off the roof, she'd turned and said simply: "Let's get snacks."

Ever since then, they'd spent bits of every day together - not saying much as they knitted in tandem, or took their evening strolls. Merle's favorite place had always been the bike path near the river, where strands of dried meadow grasses or pillowy tufts of cottonwood would get snatched up by her thin fingers and stuffed into her embroidered purse. The purse also contained a seemingly infinite supply of pumpkin seeds that she munched constantly. Janice had even taken to keeping some for Merle in her own pockets - though she personally found them tough and flavorless.

Their evening strolls in town sometimes passed an old green house on the corner of Dalton and Hazelwood. Just this summer, a run-down shed in the yard had been repurposed into a chicken coop. Seven hens in various shades of autumn browns and reds picked their way through the overgrown lawn. Merle always paused to watch with increasing interest, her dark eyes darting among them, seeking.

The most adventure they'd had, however, had come just two nights before Merle's disappearance. Back on the porch, a cicada's ragged song jackhammered through Janice's thoughts as she slumped, sweating and thinking. Had it been Wednesday night? Yes, it must have been. It was after Merle had started braiding Janice's hair - she loved to preen her, and to clean and smooth her own hair before bed. Merle had announced suddenly that she needed eggs.

Deaf to Janice's suggestion to buy eggs in the morning, Merle was

already sliding into her ripped sandals, taking the stairs down to the street two at a time. And, as always, Janice was right behind her.

The grasses had been wet on her legs as they ran through neighbors' yards, Janice trying to catch up. Both of their hair, fallen from unfinished braids, was long and wild in the streetlights. The white wine they'd had before the journey made Janice feel buzzy, giggles emanating from deep in her loin. They'd removed their shoes on the sidewalk, padding softly on bare feet. The pavement was still warm from the heat of the day. In the pink of the streetlights, the potholes and patches on the road created tangled designs, like a map marking the route to the green house. The home of the chickens.

The next thing Janice could remember was that they were running back, a dog's bark ripping the silence. Eggs and sandals balanced in their hands, breathing heavily, feet now slapping the pavement as they went. Back up the stairs, back in her apartment, back at the kitchen table under the too-bright glow of the overhead lights, wildly whooping and collecting their brown round prizes in a blue bowl on the table. Treasures.

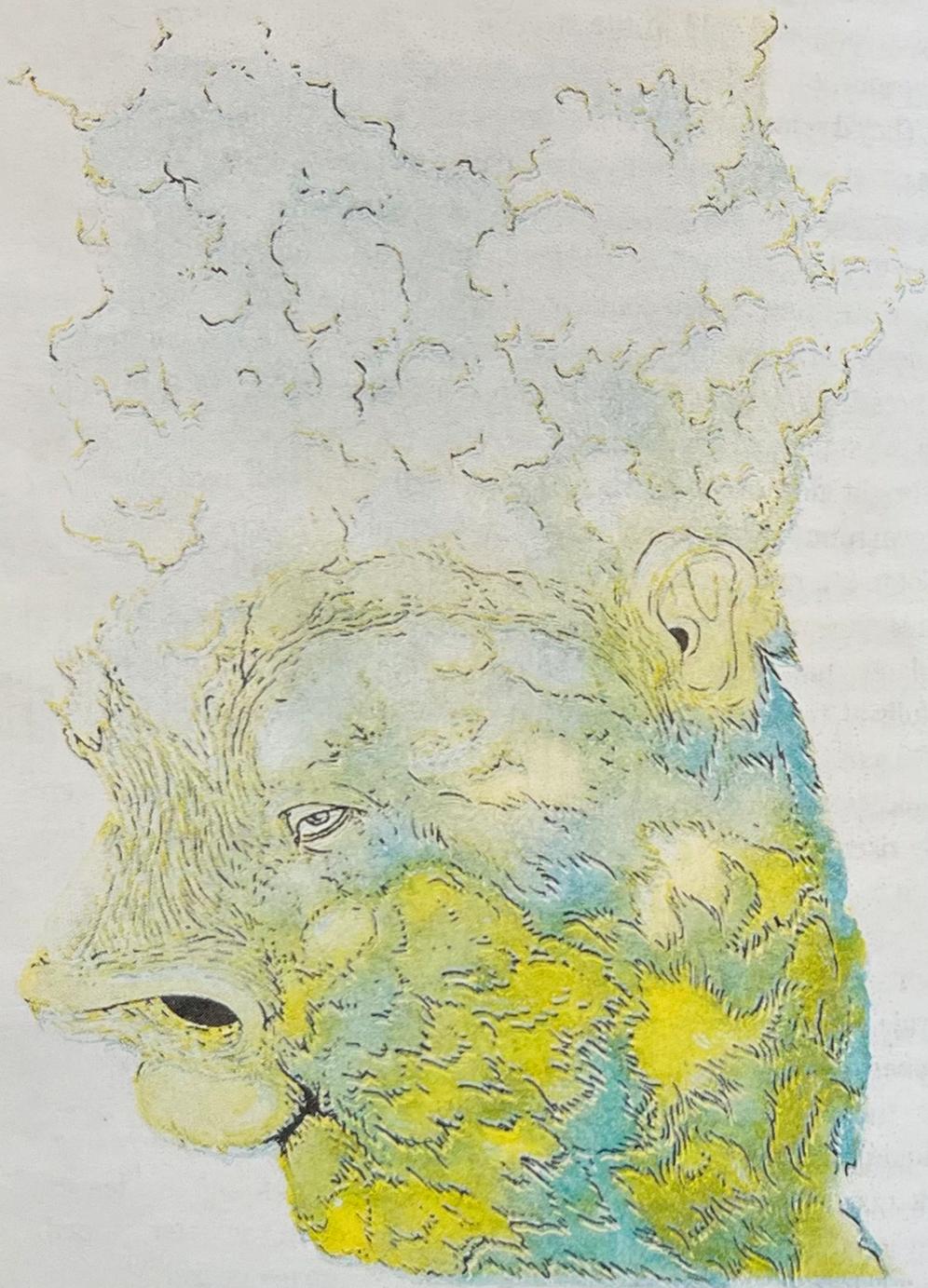
"Not to eat, not to eat." Merle had chanted. "But to protect."

Janice now sat up with a start on the porch, remembering how she'd woken later that night to see Merle still sitting at the table, staring mournfully at the brown orbs, kitchen light still blaring. It had been well past 3:00 a.m.

Janice was too shy to ask what she was doing. Merle had always been an early riser. Now, though, as she stood and shook out the front of her bathrobe to release some of the heat building up underneath, she looked out at the trees and knew. The double doors to the porch had not been open last night when they'd gone to sleep, but this morning she'd found them flung wide. She bent and touched the torn leather sandals, brown as earth, abandoned. Laying under one of the sandal's straps was a black, iridescent feather - the most beautiful one she'd ever seen.

Holding it in her hand, she stood and leaned on the porch railing, looking out at the motionless trees bursting with sound, the leaves shimmying slightly from the action within. As a drop of saltwater slipped from her eye and slid off her cheek, Janice reached into her pocket.

A few seconds later, a hundred pumpkin seeds flew up into the air, glowing golden-green in the morning light for a brief moment before scattering down to the ground.



The Cat and the Suitcase

Mo Schweiger

It was, without a doubt, a cat. Though its left hind leg was bent at an unnatural angle and its black fur shone red in the sunlight of the backyard it was, without a doubt, a cat. And it was dead.

Before Mother Superior could open her mouth to issue the command, Sara Dean already knew that the task of ridding this creature from their suggestion of a yard lay to her. At nineteen, Sara Dean was the youngest of the ten nuns that shared their cramped, though spotless, Greenpoint apartment. The oddball group of women had come together in pursuit of two goals: collegiate education and dedication of their lives to Jesus Christ. They figured that the two went together well enough and that Brooklyn was as good a place as any to live out their respective marriages to the Good Lord, so they signed a lease under Mother Superior's name and got to work furnishing their spartan quarters. They called the apartment The Chicken Coop and slept two to a room.

Being the youngest nun in the Coop, it fell to Sara Dean to resolve any task that the others turned up their noses at. Though unsure how this tradition came to be law, the nuns all agreed that it made good enough sense to stick with. There would always be roaches to squash and mold to be scrubbed and a nun whose youth made her easy. "Resilient!" they would say, "More flexible than us old hags!" they would say - but what they really meant was easy. Even Sister Rosalyn, with the well worn crows feet of a life joyfully lived and rough hands that stuck clunkily out of the sleeves of her habit, looked expectantly across the yard toward Sara Dean at the sight of the cat.

Without a word passing between the assembled women, Sara Dean heaved a sigh that she hoped might communicate her acceptance of her place in the pecking order as well as her resentment of this indignity, and retreated into the apartment to search for something in which she could carry the cat to its final resting place. A trash bag? Too literal. A spare wimple? No, that would involve feeling the cat's dead weight in her arms for far too long as she searched for a place to bury it.

Sara Dean groped underneath her twin bed for the thing that would put a comfortable amount of distance between her and her charge and, after a few moments of rummaging, brushed against something firm and smooth. Sara Dean wrapped her fingers around it and tugged, yanking the object loose from the scrum of storage containers that had obscured it and revealing its full form.

What Sara Dean had grabbed was the handle of a large leather suitcase. She sized it up, from its pockmarked base to the way it held its shape standing on the floor of her bedroom, snatched it once more by the handle, and ran to the cat which lay, untouched and alone, in the backyard.

In one motion, Sara Dean scooped underneath the cat with the stiff leather edge of the case and leveraged it into its center along with a clump of dirt she accidentally loosed from the ground beneath it. She flicked the clasp of the suitcase closed and hefted it into her arms. It felt heavy, like a pair of boots, and not at all like a cat. Sara Dean strode through the apartment, pacing loud enough to disturb the low chatter that filled the living room, and clambered down its front steps, wincing every few as the suitcase struck her knees through the skirt of her habit. She thought of the bruise that might well up on her leg over the next few days and who would be to blame for it. Certainly not the cat, whose premature ending had technically been the

catalyst for this misadventure but who passed the buck on account of being dead. Perhaps Mother Superior was to blame -- after all, it was she who enforced this artificial hierarchy among the women of the Coop, demanding that Sara Dean debase herself with every rodent, insect, and now cat that wound up dead on their property.

As Sara Dean combed the streets of Brooklyn, she counted the transgressions that Mother Superior had committed against her like rosary beads in an attempt to distract herself from the low thump of the cat jostling against the walls of the suitcase. By the time she got to the 9th (rooming her with Sister Bernice, who snores like a freight train), Sara Dean found herself at the edge of Greenpoint looking over the East River and jutting skyline of Manhattan. She set the suitcase down on the grassy patch that separated the walking path from the river's edge and inched closer to the water.

Even after two years of living in New York, the city skyline never failed to move Sara Dean. Night after night she lay awake thinking of the lives played out in each of those centimeter-wide windows, the rushing blood of the hands that flicked the switch of every light. She knelt, arranged her skirt around her ankles, and watched them blink on and off like incandescent eyes, dim in the light of the afternoon but poignant as ever.

A rat scuttling across the rocks by her feet yanked Sara Dean from her reverie after a few beats. She heaved herself up and turned back in the direction of the Coop and the cat, but where the suitcase had stood just moments before lay only a rectangular indent in the grass. Sara Dean rubbed her eyes, sure that this was just a trick of the light, but when she opened them again that same indentation was left in that same grass. The suitcase was nowhere in sight. Sara Dean looked once more toward the river, a gust of wind rushing off of it whipping the headdress around her face, streaking the blue of the water with black, and called out the only words she could muster:

"Thank

You

God!"

A FREEBOX FULL OF LEGOS

CLOSE YOUR EYES

AND IMAGINE

YOU'RE AT A RESTAURANT IN 2009

& YOUR ORDER HAS BEEN IN FOR 30 MINUTES

YOU HEAR THE KITCHEN DOORS SWING OPEN

BUT ALAS IT'S JUST SOMEONE ELSE'S SIZZLING FAJITAS BEING RUSHED

TO THEIR TABLE

NOW CUE IN THE CLINKING OF PLATES

& REFORMAT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE TABLE

"WE ALL HAVE BEEN THERE" : (SAYS THE MASTER)

BECAUSE IT OCCUPIES THE SAME SPACE OF UNREALITY

THE UNREALITY OF A STRANGER'S FAJITAS STORMING TO THEIR

FACELESS DESTINATION

IS EQUAL TO THAT

OF BIRDSONGS HEARD IN DREAMS

OR MEMORIES OF IDLE CHATTER

A Flatulent Mind The Reviews Are In!



Richard Tinkleman
MANhattan Movie Magazine



A 4 hour epic shit show that "loses" its plot within the first half hour. I'd ask for my money back but I've got plenty of toilet paper to wipe my ass with. No thanks.

Original Score: F- January 5, 2024



Garth Brooks
Self-proclaimed Country Music Legend and "Celebrity Cinefile"



I took the wifey and her sis out to see *A Flatulent Mind* on Christmas Eve. I was surprised to find that we were the only people in the theater, as every other showing for the day was sold out. I suppose folks "caught wind" of this movie!. The wifey loved it, being a fan of Brad Pitt's work back in the 90's. I, on the other hand, was so angry within the first hour of the movie that I punched (hard too!) a butthole sized hole into the seat in front of me... read full review: www.dinkymoviereviews.biz

Original Score: 0/5 January 7, 2024



Chester T. Rex
Tyrant Lizard King Films, LLC

This review is more about the seats in the theater that I went to, than it is about the actual film itself (more on that coming, though, so keep reading...) As a paying customer, I appreciate and expect "creature comforts" just as much as the next guy. So I was surprised to find that I couldn't even fit one leg, let alone my full behind, in one of Dinky Corp's new "Luxury" (Ha!) reclining seats. I spent the entire 4 hours just trying to get my tail comfortable and (embarrassingly) apologizing to the patrons behind me...read full review: www.dinkymoviereviews.biz



Pocket

Lauren Kohan Crigler

I stand on the edge of the dance floor, watching the flashing lights bounce off gyrating bodies. I don't understand how to dance to music like this, so I just stand back and watch with my hands in my pockets.

I turn my attention to the woman standing to my right.

"Here on a chain I have a 5-yen piece," I tell her. "I carry it around for good luck because in Japan 5-yen pieces are considered lucky, but I've forgotten why, and that frustrates me, but I don't wanna Google it because I feel like it will ruin it somehow, you know? Asking a robot about something sacred and holy like that." I look up at the vaulted ceiling.

"You know," I go on, "I think it actually has something to do with the hole in the center of it..."

I hand the woman the coin I keep on a cheap ball chain so she can examine it closer. The music is loud. I wonder if she even heard me, so I lean in closer.

"For good luck!" I yell.

It's the middle of winter, but it's warm and humid in this old church that's now a venue, so my hair is big and my curls are curling just right. My lips feel tacky from lipstick and I wonder if I'm talking funny because of it. I've kept my coat on, mostly because I didn't know where to hang it, but now I'm glad for it even if I'm hot.

The woman holds my coin and chain on her flat palm as I dig my hand back into my coat pocket and pull out a crumpled dollar.

"I found this in my pocket last year. I don't remember putting it in here but now I feel like it's kinda lucky so I don't wanna spend it. But

sometimes I feel guilty when I tell people on the street that I have no money on me."

The woman stares at my dollar, the 5-yen piece still resting on her hand. I lean in closer again.

"For good luck!" I yell.

The music has no rhythm. But the dance floor is crowded with people moving without time. It's a sea of unsynchronized bodies bouncing off unseen soundwaves.

I shove the dollar back into my pocket and reach over to take my 5-yen piece back from the lady's palm. I tuck it back into the other pocket and then slip my hand into my coat's hidden inside pocket. I pull out a perfect acorn and display it on my palm.

"A kid gave this to me once and told me it was proof that Totoro had been there, you know? From the movie? We were on a hike. There were tons of acorns around, but for some reason, the kid picked this one up and handed it to me. I put it in my pocket cuz I didn't know what else to do with it. Felt rude to throw it away so I just keep it in my coat now."

The woman is staring at my palm. I lean closer to her ear.

"So not to be rude!" I yell.

She nods as I tuck the acorn back into its secret pocket.

The lights revolve through the spectrum, dimmed by the cloud of a hidden fog machine. It smells of sweat and cotton candy, not unpleasantly. Stained glass windows of saints I don't recognize dominate the far wall, and I wonder what they look like from the outside, illuminated with each color of the rainbow.

"So, what've you got?" I shout at the woman as my eyes travel to the pockets of her coat. I guess she didn't know where to hang hers either.

Her silver hair is blue in the light, now purple. She's older than me and I wonder what she's doing here or if she feels out of place, but she looks cool with her baby bangs and octagonal glasses. I wonder if I look old standing with her.

She shrugs as she reaches both hands into her coat pockets and pulls out a tissue from each. "Just some used tissues," she says.

"Cool!" I yell and bob my head to the music.

Batshit Poem

Turning in the widening gyre
sparks beneath the magnifier
held by some vicious moderate hand
catch and an orange flame turns blue.
Painted in public school hallways,
jungly gym, dark forest always,
bang and twang familiar music,
wild and horned nocturnal game.
The highest tower in the East
scaled only by an ancient priest
who lost his gourd with power in
the cold and sparse ionic wind.
It's now a tourist trap to climb
to buy the fruit without the rind
and kids piss on the icy rungs;
a Guardian story on their lungs;
evolved to withstand fluid and
regenerative tissue strands
amphibious bullet proof boys suck
dicks at home bars and try their luck
and no one gets sick anymore
so chimera turns manticore
an angel blows the suey whistle
and you runs with sieves to catch the dribble.
So broadminded in Crown Heights
Infowars guy punched your lights
so you sprang like springbok to your annex
to think of how to guard your planet.
Cottage-core your fire escape
but have never grasped the skin of snake
but have never touched a mote of dirt.
Lactation sub porn for dessert,
Easter coffee lunch-tongues pears,
baked beans and eggs, discuss affairs.
Bad dreams before your cousin's birth,
polite but family discourse dearth,
at sacred lake in upstate peaks
where it was not polite to speak
about what had been so untrue
and so it was left up to you.
Blah blah blah blah blah



Call for Submissions

General Submissions: Due January 1st, 2026

Looky Here Magazine is going bigger, brighter, and annual! Submissions are open for our 2026 issue which will be printed in our full palette of teal, fluorescent pink, yellow and black.

Words: Send up to 6 poems or one piece of prose (6,000 words or less) in .DOC, .DOCx or PDF. (**Google Docs not accepted.**) Prose should be 12-point font, Times New Roman and double-spaced.

Visual Art: Send up to 6 high quality scanned images as a PDF or JPEG. Please send full color images unless you are familiar with color separation. This issue will be printed on 8.5" x 14" paper and we can accommodate a variety of formats and orientations.

Please send your files along with a \$3 reading fee (payable by Venmo or Paypal) to LookyHereGreenfield@gmail.com with the subject line: "MAGAZINE SUBMISSION." Please include a screenshot of your submission fee in your email with a brief cover letter and a bio.

Artists and writers we've previously published should wait 18 months before submitting again.

LOOKY HERE MAGAZINE 2nd Annual SHORT STORY CONTEST

Due January 1st, 2026. \$500 1st place prize + publication in our 2026 issue. All entries considered for publication.

Send us your best short story, 6,000 word maximum - no minimum, double-spaced, 12-point font, using Times New Roman in .DOC, .DOCX, or a PDF (Google Docs not accepted) along with a \$25 submission fee (payable by Venmo or Paypal) to LookyHereGreenfield@gmail.com with the subject line: "SHORT STORY CONTEST"

Please include a screenshot of your submission fee in your email with a brief cover letter and a bio.

LIMITED ADVERTISING SPACE AVAILABLE!

Looky Here Magazine is offering limited advertising space for the first time in our 2026 issue. Give us your information, and we will design a full color, original advertisement just for you! First come, first served until January 1st, 2026.

Full Page: \$200

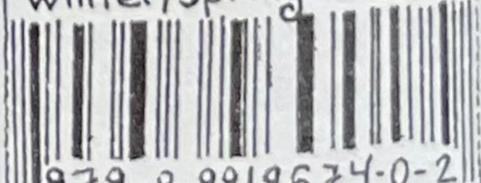
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