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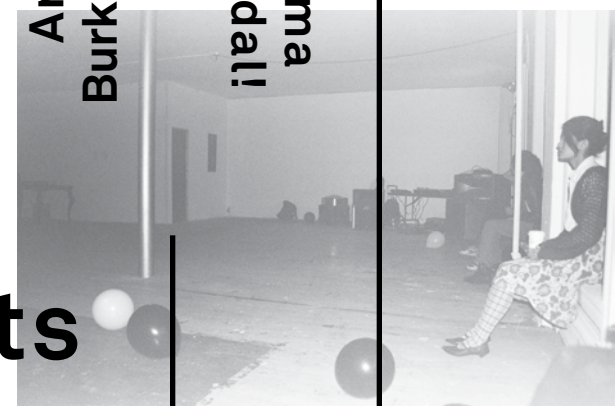
POLITICS

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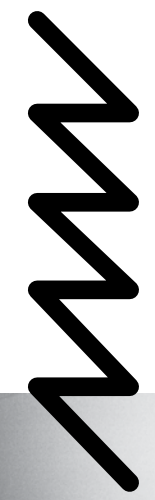
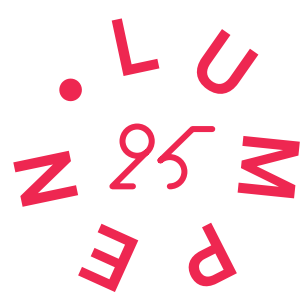


25 Years of Lumpen



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A.J. Liebling once said: that the 'freedom of the press belongs to those who own one.' So it's a good thing we do.

The *Lumpen Times* started in Champaign, Illinois in 1990 while we were at the University of Illinois. It was a naive attempt at creating a zine inspired by left journals and magazines like the *Nation*, *Mother Jones*, *In These Times* and *The Progressive*. We wanted it to be critical of mainstream consensus as presented on CNN and to become an antidote to the growing influence of monopoly corporations in our lives.

Back in the 90s, a few dozen corporations owned 90% of all the media in the US. We believed this corporate control of the media was very much like the state control of the media in authoritarian countries. As we watched the first Gulf War on television it alarmed us how easy it was for the media monopoly to drum up patriotic furor and support to invade a country and marginalize or silence dissent. We were part of the protest movement to stop that war and we felt our voices were ignored.

So we blamed the media. We wondered: Armed with an informed opinion wouldn't we all want to live in a more equitable, peaceful, world? Wouldn't we all want to destroy capitalism?

We thought it was important to Become the Media in order to provide a diversity of opinions and information about the issues of our day. We also wanted to support the Left, and the other freaks that were making indy and DIY cultural scenes that we lived and breathed in.

We moved to Chicago and re-booted Lumpen in 1993 and created a monthly free circulation newsprint magazine. By this time we discovered the legacy of the Underground Press of the 60s and became inspired by the notion of becoming a voice of the countercultures.

It was produced monthly for about 5 or 6 years and that experience proved that we were great underground media makers, but not really good at smashing the state. By the mid 90s The Chicago Tribune calls us

"Anarchist with barcodes", and derails Lumpen in the headline **"Slacker Mag Has No Ethics"**.

It was quite the honor. We felt we succeeded at becoming the underground paper our city needed. But we didn't destroy capitalism and we were dependent on advertising revenue to keep the magazine going.

A BRIEF HISTORY TO TRY

By the late 90s the internet and the world wide web became an opportunity to create a space to confront mainstream media. We made a Lumpen.com website. We realized that this new environment coupled with desk top publishing and the new architecture of internet browsers and 'information super highways' were an opening to confront the hegemony of the media monopolies that owned most of the media. This revolution in information technology and affordable computing allowed Lumpens like us to compete head on in this new arena. We could make and build a better website than media giants like the Chicago Tribune or CNN. We were part of the new wave of activists creating innovative ways of using emergent technologies to organize protests, and network with our allies. The internet also allowed us to communicate, organize and disseminate information to Lumpens and progressives all over the world. Finally everyone with a computer could have access to the information we needed to make informed decisions about how to make a more just and equitable society.

We were naive.

In 1998 Lumpen took a back seat to a new project we built called Supersphere.com. The site was basically Lumpen on acid. We become Dot Communists and started working head to head with and against tech companies and new dot com start ups to create new business models, applications, media and who knows what in a delirious attempt at flipping it all upside down. We could use The Man's weapons against them, we thought. We promoted the notion of a Digital Commons, a shared eco-info system that would not be controlled by the media and corporate giants, and would thrive and overturn the balance of power in the dissemination of news and opinions. Our Supersphere became a portal for alternative media, activist news and indy media in general. We published articles from over 40-50 zine partners, made live streaming radio stations, and recorded live performances of indy and underground bands and then streamed the videos from our website. We also had a team that travelled around the world to document the growing anti-corporate globalization movement that was making headlines and progress seemingly everywhere.

By the turn of the century global capital had aroused the anger of a lot of organized regular people all over the world. Almost monthly gatherings of protesters at G8 Summits, WTO gatherings and other international pig system acronyms had been met with massive resistance and with it the idea of challenging Global Capital. The internet was used as an incredible connector and organizer of these efforts. The November, 1999 Seattle World Trade protests became a major watershed moment for the left in America. We finally had a movement of movements to confront The Man on a global scale.

At this point Lumpen magazine comes out a few times a year documenting the moves of this movement of movements. Supersphere.com continues to publish tons of media getting millions of visitors a month, but a bunch of misfit lumpens see the writing on the wall. Our funding collapses. We have to retreat from our digital front in the information war. It is a major setback and lesson. Innovative uses of new technologies can be developed by creative peeps but they will often be recuperated and capitalized upon by the dominant corporations.

Bush "wins" the November 2000 election. We rebooted the magazine with an issue of Lumpen featuring John Dee's Coup 2K, an investigative piece that examined the history behind the theft of the 2000 election. The New Dark Ages have begun. After the 9/11 attacks, it seems the Left collapses and heads for the hills. It takes a long time to recover.

The US invades Afghanistan and Iraq. We decide to ramp up our activities. We are energized and enraged. We launch a bunch of Lumpen projects including: Freedom Kissing parties, a cable access tv show called TLVSN, Terror Free Zones, Elevated Cinema, Cultural Interference art exhibitions, and the Freedom Festival. Unfortunately our new Lumpen.com website sucks.

In the Spring of 2002, We open the experimental art and freak space, buddY, in Liquor Park. It becomes the new Lumpen office and home for a wide range of freaks and miscreant weirdos and activists. Billed as hosting open source collaborations and tactical media actions, we will produce over 250 events in the next three years. It changes our lives. The convergence of people seeking ways to confront the conservative culture that surrounds us reaches a frenzy. That year we declare the Summer of Love. A renaissance of creative activism flows from our space as we seek relief from the horrors of living in the Bush Age. Laptronica, Select Media Festival, Select Magazine, Version Festival, WPBR radio and scores of campaigns and projects began at buddY.

By 2004 Lumpen magazine has essentially become a manual for creative activism.

Version Festival is attracting educators, activists, artists and freaks from around the world. Our annual convergences, the burgeoning indy art space scene, and other cultural fronts formed to resist the Death Culture of the Bush Dark Ages keep us busy. We define our mission to become a document of the alternative and secret histories of cultural resistance in a time of growing corporate power and NeoCon politics.

In 2005 we are kicked out of buddY and leave for new pastures. After scouring the city for a new space we wind up moving to Bridgeport without a new HQ. By this time the commercialization of the internet has erupted and the professionalization/mediatization of the web occurs. The Internet becomes a marketing of the self. It looks more and more like the Matrix.

We take over an abandoned building and transform it into the Co-Prosperity Sphere, our current base of operations. We continue producing various publications, festivals, events and activities throughout the city. We declare Bridgeport "The Community of the Future" and we start building from the ground up again.

It's 2008. The economy collapses. We don't really feel much pain because we have always been broke. Being the fools we are we start another magazine called Proximity. It's an art and culture magazine that is perfect bound and has less agitprop than Lumpen. We investigate the intersection of art and activism, feature relational and social art projects and publish works by a wide variety of artists both locally and internationally. We fall victim to the HOPE of a Barack Obama presidency, and the possible end of the Bush Dark Ages and the neoliberal agenda. We believe we can win some battles in the Culture Wars.

In the ensuing years we produce Version as an annual springtime arts festival that brings together hundreds of artists, musicians, and educators from around the world to present some of the most challenging ideas and progressive art initiatives of our day. It becomes a convergence for creative resistance and new strategies for living in these trying times. The emergence of the Social Media giants like Facebook and technology corporations like Google and Apple have supplanted and complemented the array of control the media monopolies have garnered over the past decades. We feel like going hyper local is one last strategy that we have left in the face of this juggernaut. Lumpen continues to be published a few times a year in between publishing Proximity and a host of other projects.

In 2011 Occupy Wall Street emerges out of the ashes of the Bush Dark Age and the seeming impotence of the Obama presidency. The excess of the One Percent has been fully exposed. The power of Global Finance Capital is confronted. At the same time an age of Total Surveillance has become fully realized with the success of the militarization and capitalization of the internet. We now market to ourselves our needs and desires and they are mirrored

back upon us via various apps, websites and social media platforms. We knowingly and actively give all of our personal information to tech companies, financial corporations and marketing firms. The Occupy movement does wonders at allowing everyone to communicate their ideas via a "human internet" and expose the excesses of capitalism, but somehow it looks more and more like a managerial style than a revolution.

The idea of truth no longer has relevance. Objective journalism, perhaps never perfect is now extinct. The naive idea that if people merely had access to all the viewpoints on any issue they would then make the "best" decisions has been confirmed to be a fantasy. It is impossible to know what is "real" or true" because we are unable to decipher if what we read watch or hear is sponsored content or part of a ruling class agenda. And now Algorithms decide what media you should consume and who you aspire to be. We continue to be a "front for the left in the arts."

By 2012 we published four different publications and produced a bunch of shitty websites. A decade ago it was easy to compete with the media giants, but by now having a robust website with multimedia and hourly news feeds is way beyond our capacity.

And today we have all become the media.

We tweet, instagram, blog, post, repost and become content creators for each other. It's been amazing to witness the crowdsourcing of ideas and the blossoming of everyone's ability to broadcast. But something is missing. While we each have the ability to create content, it has become subsumed by the Borg of infomediainment. Our ideas, thoughts and words are now sold back to us via the apps and social media platforms we use. We create the product for the Machine in an endless feedback loop.

Lumpen is still grasping for ways to penetrate the noise of information, social control, propaganda and deceit with opinions, news, analysis and cultural forms that we think run parallel or counter to the Borg mind set. Through this journey we have been allowed to participate in various communities and bring people together virtually and in real life to share stories, tactics and strategies to create another world. And it has helped us keep on keeping on. And the Bernie Sanders candidacy really helped. Who ever imagined a Socialist agenda would have so much support?!

So here we are again. We must figure out a way to work together to envision a world that can confront the growing crisis of climate change, the massive power of banks, the corrupt system of funding of elections, and the rise of fascism and a hundred other pressing issues of our day. We need to organize together and go beyond new managerial styles or progressive systems of social automation. We need to imagine a Community of the Future we want to live in. And then we gotta build it.

We invite you to help us in formulating new models of resistance.

And we need you to not give up.

Times

WHO KILLED ED MAR?

Matt Tucker took a deep breath. The air tasted like a rendering plant. One of the seven smells of Bridgeport, as his ex-wife liked to joke. One of the reasons he had moved to Los Angeles some years ago. But not the only reason.

Tucker had grown up just off Aberdeen Street, and he was uncomfortable being back. Everything in his old neighborhood had changed. There used to be a social club, Beluga's, in the shadows of Saint Mary's. Beluga's offered a more concrete, albeit temporary, form of help than Saint Mary's, but it was now covered in steel shutters. The corner store was gone, and so was the Covenant church around the block. Only the baroque funeral parlor remained. People still needed a place to die, thought Tucker.

He walked up to 31st and was surprised to see the old bar covered in shiny wood and steel. What the heck had happened to Marszewski's place? Tucker had known Ed and Mike's father through his uncle on the force. Their mother had taken over old man Caplan's place in the 80's, sometime after the bar gained a "K" in the name and a reputation. But this didn't look anything like that.

"Pretty spiffy, huh?"

Tucker turned to face the speaker and found it was Joe Bryl, another longtime neighborhood guy.

"Hey Joe, long time no see," said Tucker. **"You working here now?"**

"Yeah, as little as possible," said Joe, with a laugh. **"Come on in and check it out. I just gotta do a couple things in the basement before we open up."**

Tucker walked into the space. He had to admit he was impressed. What had once been a long, dank, depressing pit was now an open space, with a new glass and steel building off to the side. He was just about to head into the garden when Joe popped his head out from the cellar.

"Hey, Matt, you're still a PI, right?"

Tucker didn't like the sound of this. Downstairs, sprawled against the far cooler, was a body. There was a

large gash in the back of the head, running diagonally right to left. The corpse's hands were splayed against a pony keg, and there was an unusually sticky purple patch on the ground. Tucker slipped on a pair of gloves and touched the liquid. It smelled sweet. There was an office binder clip off to the right.

Tucker lifted up the corpse's face and looked at Joe.

"It's EdMar," said Joe. **"Shit. Who's going to sign our paychecks?"**

By three pm, Joe had assembled the entire bar staff in the back room. Everyone who had access to the bar was there: aside from Joe, there was Gio, a raven-haired bartender with an impressive tattoo collection; Brittany, a shorter girl with a tight ponytail and oval glasses; Kyle, a floppy-haired and quiet fellow; EdMar's brother-in-law Eric with Ruby, his young daughter; the office manager Logan Bay, a thin, tall man with a dry sense of humor; and a big fellow named Dan.

"I can't believe this would happen to Ed," said Brittany, wiping away tears.

"Of course you do," said Joe. **"All those magazines and radio interviews? He had enemies all over town."**

"Just what we need, another mess," said Logan.

"Maybe his hands were trying to tell us something," said Eric, excitedly. **"Like in that Simpsons episode? He was holding onto a keg of Ruby's Tears!"**

Everyone looked at Ruby.

"Pikachu!" said Ruby, who ran into the back garden.

"Oh geez," said Joe. He began practicing signing **"Ed Marzewski"** over and over again on a piece of scratch paper.

"It's OK, Joe. I think Ruby was here, but obviously she didn't do it," said Tucker. **"She dropped her juice down there, though — and that makes it clear Eddie was killed by someone he knew."**

Everyone turned to look at Gio.

"What?" said Gio. **"That's so racist!"**

"Gio couldn't have done it," said Tucker. **"The blow to the back of the head came from above. Even though you have to hunch over in that basement, she wouldn't have been able to generate the power."**

"Also, I was real hung-over this morning," said Gio.

"So, wait," said Kyle with a smirk. **"Doesn't that mean someone real short had to do it?"** He pointed to Brittany.

"So not cool, Kyle," said Brittany. **"Anyway, I was out getting the bar supplies for the day."** She pulled a receipt out of her pocket. **"See, look at all that mint."**

The bar staff started squabbling amongst themselves until Tucker raised his hands for quiet said: **"It's obvious who killed Eddie. It was —"**

Wait! Do you know who killed Ed- Mar — and why? All the clues you need are right in front of you.

The answer appears later on in this issue of Lumpen.

ANSWER:

"It was Logan," said Tucker. **"The tip off was the binder clip in the basement. And as for why: I suspect it was because —"**

"It was because he was always messing up the office," said Logan, surprisingly calm given the situation. **"I spent months cleaning that place up, but every time I checked into work, there would be a new stack of Proximity magazines or some other crap strewn about the tables. I couldn't take it. So I hit him in the head with a shovel."**

"It's really nice and clean up there now," said Eric. **"Yeah, I can't blame you."**

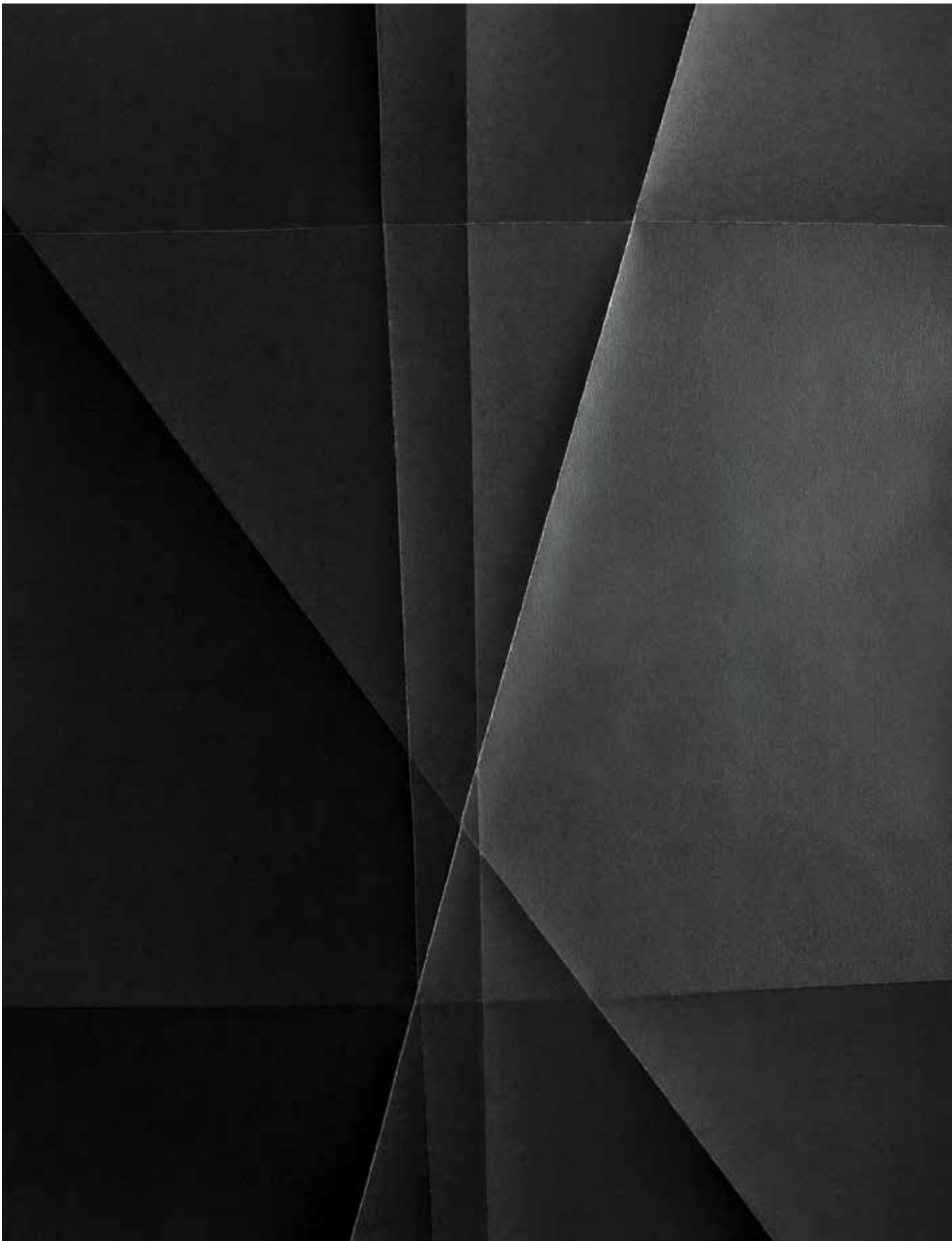
"I can sign Ed's name," said Joe, holding up a sheet of paper covered in fake "Ed Marszewski" signatures. **"Gio, hand me the checkbook. Powell's has a big sale on."**

"Dan, why don't you and Kyle just put the body in the cooler," said Brittany. **"We can dump it in Bubbly Creek later on."**

"Geez, again?" said Dan, but he and Kyle headed downstairs.

Tucker headed for the exit. He had found the killer — but no one said anything about bringing him to justice.





I've been doing a lot of pondering about the premise that every new city visited, street walked, corner turned, and step taken is like another fold in my memory of associations and relationships with landmarks. The moment I see something for the first time, my estimations of what it might have been like dissolve and I never forget it; in fact, many new estimations may be based

upon it in my mind. Here's my submission for Lumpen 25. A passionate study of the path traveled from my home in the West Loop of Chicago in 2009 to the Co Prosperity Sphere, the first time I was introduced to Ed and his magnificent gallery.

Luke Williams

The Shark Cage

Cheryl Trykv

Shark Cage

At 432 South Main Street, in downtown Los Angeles, sits The Canadian Building. Built in 1909, it is Sullivanesque, plain and lacking the Beaux-Arts features we might see in the craftwork of vaudeville or movie palaces in Los Angeles from that time.

In 1986, the Canadian Building was known as the Birdhouse. Named for the pigeons that occupied the abandoned structure in such great number they had to be smoked out to meet the Work/Residential building code.

Alongside adjoining tenants, secreted away behind these doors, here residing, just back from selling a pint of blood, Kyrt Lyrish returned to his quarters, second floor rear. Plasma, really, it's the plasma they were after. Later you learn you'd sold portions of your soul for the price of a medium thin-crust and a pack of Kents.

In the alley below his window, three men fought over the cooled remains of what had been a mattress fire the night before—a slice of toast-shaped island on a sea of broken glass. Where one man had been sleeping, two others wanted to sit and light their crack pipe. Now it's our turn, they seemed to say with their shoving and punching. It's a sin to watch the misfortune of others as entertainment but Kyrt didn't have a television set.

He rooted for the underdog, but the old boy floundered, twisting and rolling with diminishing resistance, like a piece of Silly Putty. He regained himself, steady on his feet, then, reforming into a man with a confident stagger, disappeared from view.

Having commandeered the mattress, the usurpers scrutinized its condition, sweeping and pinching as though for bed bugs or some such other perceived debris and because they had created such a stir others now

banded 'round wanting just a taste. A short time later, the first man returned to the scene eating a hot dog with another in his other hand.

Kyrt extinguished his cigarette and turned to assess his own affairs. Crushed shells of walnuts, consumed in feverish gratitude, littered the top of his table.

The walls were just as hungry, colorless. Sullen. God they wanted paint, but he had collected too many chips, couldn't choose a color. Hadn't found his hue. Until then he lived in a cube of Rhyolite or whatever number Pantone matches volcanic rock, loathsome for the same reason his father was right: Happiness is a job well done.

He drew a breath, rallied for a decisive new move. His shoes were awkward in his clutch. One dropped, he let it fall and continued into the sleeping nook.

When he awoke the sun had set.

A trapezoid of dead light, from the streetlamp in the alley, cast across his quarters, and in the corner shadow of the kitchen he pissed into the grotto of juxtaposed pots and plates, bowls and flatware in the sink. He ran the water, washed his hands, did the dishes. He slapped water on his face and dried his neck with an oven mitt stolen from his mother's Radar Range. He recovered his jacket from a nail on the wall and ventured out again to forage a meal.

The wide-open descent from the second-floor landing fed into the Shark Cage, a ground-level marble-walled vestibule. The metal-grate door allowed time to calculate openings in foot traffic onto Main Street—a parade route for hungry ghosts and the possessed, the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, heavy marauding of the mentally ill, drugs and prostitution. His cue to join them advanced. A free space in the whirling eddy of grimly sauced gents surrounded a loud talking drifter who spat and waved his arms. Pass.

Much of life's success is timing, after all. That and learning how to breathe, unlocking certain interior chambers of perception. Kyrt summoned his move to exit the Shark Cage, reaching for the knob, just then, the door swung inward, sharply meeting Kyrt's shoulder and kneecap. It was Fuchsia returning from Central Market, loaded up with fish and greens.

Cage

Fuchsia was bold, brash. She made jewelry and wore costumes, sometimes three different costumes in a single day. Kyrt supposed it was something she had read in a magazine or some self-help how-to guide: sport a little smile wherever you go. But on her it expressed a maniacal quality. Kyrt preferred to keep his distance.

“Oh it’s you,” she said. Her face arched at the sight of him, both startled and imposed upon.

Immediately an invisible presence capitalized on the open door, and came up from behind Fuchsia, its raspy voice prompting a scuffle. Fuchsia batted the intruder with a baguette, finally throwing it at him, as Kyrt chipped in with his body weight, securing the door behind her.

A siren grew faint outside while another siren steadily advanced. A slew of honking cars chimed in.

Fuchsia stood in the center of the Shark Cage and turned to Kyrt who was now up against the block of mailbox cubbies.

“Where the hell were you at Hands Across America?” she said in casual anger. She suffered sunburn waiting for him, **“...should have worn a hat. Should have worn gloves!”**

Kyrt had agreed to link the human cross-country-hand-lock-for-freedom chain with her, while at the same time fully intending to be in the garage all that day, essentially saying yes to stop her talking and find out more about dessert.

Now, more urgently, there was something else Fuchsia wanted him to know.

Kyrt’s ears turned hot.

There was a party in the works, she said.

Kyrt dearly hoped she was giving “party” standard usage, that it wasn’t slang for something dreadful.

“The place is really going to explode yeah so wear something clean.”

She handed him an invitation, a red square cardstock indicating Pie Grande was set to play in the Birdhouse the following night.

“Very kind to let me know,” he said.

“Oh don’t worry, I’m telling everyone.”

Her prolonged enunciation of these last four syllables gave Kyrt the creeps. He turned to busy himself, creating the ruse of searching for his name in the credits, or as some might have called it, the mail.

“Kyrt Lyrish!” Fuchsia called from the staircase, her hand upon the tandem cap. **“Might as well jump.”**

Main Street’s fanfare of pan-handlers and overhead whirring helicopter blades followed him to 5th Street. The Nickel. At Tomy’s Famous #5 he ordered chili cheeseburger fries. Better make it a double.

The men were ten deep all around. Someone brushed behind Kyrt with an elbow. He turned and saw that the other man was in the middle of reaching into a gym bag. When the guy smiled in an apologetic manner, Kyrt replied with a gesture of no matter. The two were similar in age and height, identical, but for shade of skin and the fact that Kyrt did not use a copy of Being and Time as his wallet. He saw inside the other man’s notebook, pages and pages of meticulous penmanship and accountability.

The two would sit and eat together, each speaking freely while chewing their food, enjoying commonalities, their shared love of discourse. This was how Kyrt imagined it might play. But when a skirmish broke out in the restaurant and panic raced through him he folded up the remainder of his meal and fled.

He made it to the Shark Cage all jacked up on humanity. The grated-metal door slammed shut, thank God, quick behind him. The clang of it amplified his own rejoicing, making it home without a knife in his butt, or worse. Such levels of self-reliance made any party at the Birdhouse all the more useful, he thought, reveling demanded by such triumphs.

Kyrt returned to his quarters, fresh insight bursting. Clearing a place at the table, he set about recording his thoughts and impressions of the day, realizing only then that he’d returned without his burger. Son of a bitch!

Had he dropped the bag on the street? He didn’t remember and resumed at his notebook, pushing for the words stuck in his gut, carving the nib, carve it! Carve the blank sheet! But only the pale dull, colorless walls closed in.

Presently his pen found fruitage in other words that sought expression, and he wrote words that were not words at all, but rather furious strokes of curving lines, doubled over again and again, concealed with unforgiving zig-zags that eventually cut into the page.

Down the hall, around the corner, Kyrt’s knock on Fuchsia’s door urgently expressed an olive branch. Why couldn’t theirs be above petty instincts, after all? Did not certain bonds exist beyond the silver tray she would invariably produce upon his arrival? Kyrt stepped back into the hall

and waited in the humming light fluorescent. How the moment speaks to us if we will only listen. Should he knock again? He knew she was in there, he could hear the Scritti Politi!

To his great relief, she was not alone. Fuchsia introduced one Janice of Downey, new to the Birdhouse, a temporary live-in Fuchsia had met at The Lhasa Club, sitting in Kyrt’s favorite chair. He sat on the couch. Fuchsia joined him.

Her fingertips smoothed along his temples. “Your hair’s looking a lot better these days,” she said. He thanked her again for cutting it.

“Well you were looking like such a mope. I couldn’t stand it another day. Who’re you trying to be? Michael Caine?”

Fuchsia’s laughter circulated to the others as she set about rolling a joint, pressing the membrane edge of the paper flat against the bed of her tongue as she spoke, **“Next I’m going to fix this one,”** indicating Janice with her thumb.

To Kyrt Janice looked fine, if she were just coming home from teaching Sunday School. A real Canada Dry. Good for her, he thought, stripped of pretense, that was the way to do it. She smoked her cigarette like she was clinging to a life raft.

Fuchsia lit the joint and passed it to Kyrt, exhaling as she said to Janice, **“When I get through you won’t recognize yourself.”**

Janice of Downey shrugged.

Hearing the words “recognize yourself” Kyrt reached to jot a quick note, but his little book was upstairs on the table in his quarters. He might doodle a symbol of the moment on a napkin or matchbook but that was unlikely, frankly damnit, he was sans stylo! He stood and checked the pockets of his jacket.

“Where are you going?” Fuchsia said, **“We’re just getting started... rude!”**

A runaway profusion of fleeting glimmers and hints to various riddles of attainment emerged from the void in him bobbed again now gone as Fuchsia’s attention to irrelevant detail amassed overhead much like a Hindenburg-shaped succubus.

And so what started off as merely endless soon became voluminous interpretations promising no final outcome.

Make it right the first time, why don’t you!

A pair of needle-nose pliers had been used on the tedious clasp. Tedious clasp, you say? Was it blonde with barbed tentacles?

Kyrt fixed his gaze across the room to the top o’ the television set display across the room. Centered on a crocheted doily stood a green haired troll oblivious to the danger lurking to the rear, a black glazed-ceramic panther, poised to kill.

An easy glance then to Janice and her disparate bob. Even Kyrt could see her peach-colored slacks were a

cry for help. She’d look more at home on the cover of a brochure for the City of Industry.

Fuchsia finished her anecdotes, stationing herself in the center of the room, the green-haired troll appeared now to Kyrt as though hovering above her shoulder, the wild cat eclipsed by the bulk of her.

When a pause fell, and it weighed upon Kyrt to answer back, but he had not been listening and scrambled to pose a rejoinder (had perhaps inhaled too deeply), he said she made his heart soar.

“Soar...or sore?”

The girls laughed. Then Fuchsia frowned abruptly snapping her fingers at Kyrt.

He waved her away resenting the implication there was something more inside him than he’d been willing to share. He then thought to pacify her by downplaying as much too complex for discussion the mental outlines of an apparatus he’d been keen to execute, all the sooner now that his missing tape measure had surfaced.

“An apparatus?” Fuchsia turned to Janice. Do you believe this guy? **“Him and his noodle. An apparatus. What apparatus?”**

“Well if you must know. It’s a fulcrum.”

“A fulcrum?”

“That’s right. A see saw.”

Fuchsia cocked her head, quizzical.

A simpering groan fell out of him. Where he should have heightened his conviction, he grasped for something more credible—a cantilever.

“Cantilever?”

“Yes. A cantilever. Certainly that makes sense to you. A diving board?”

“Diving board? I thought it was a see saw?”

“A bit of both. That’s what makes it so unusual. Don’t make me let out all the steam! Damn, it’s still a germ.”

“Okay. Okay. Take it easy, Tiger.”

“Sounds to me you’re describing a guillotine,” piped Janice. Of Downey. Little Cover of a Brochure.

Fuchsia disappeared under the guise of checking her message machine.

Janice rifled through her pocketbook and pulled out a package of gum. She said she was sorry but she only had the one stick. It was a Chiclet.

“Here have one of these,” she said, offering Kyrt a piece of hard candy—a coffee-flavored Brach’s.

Disbelieving anything but a

Set into motion by her introducing the band, beguiled by her persona, he’d have the power to do no other, though by the time Pie Grande arrived, she was already fully loaded, dancing to stereo Devo near a window, on a cube, making figure-eight rotations with her hips to the street below. There’d been a Jolly Rancher in her mouth. Doing the Pony, the candy lodged above her windpipe. She fell off the cube, knocked over a table, spilled drinks.

Such events can cause one to become lit from within. Kyrt acted quickly. On gut instinct, he made the table right again, setting it back on its legs then picking up a chair for some cat’s dame. The ethers materialized a bar towel. He threw it on the spill. When Kyrt looked up he saw next the ghastly reminder of all he sought to avoid. Forward loomed Fuchsia’s grievous jazz face.

She grabbed his hand for balance, he twirled her away, she turned and fell back into his arms. Instantly Kyrt clamped her solar plexus. He pulled in with such a forcible jerk they felt it in Little Tokyo! The lozenge flew across the room and hit Pie Grande’s drum kit where it crashed on the ride of a cymbal.

Fuchsia removed herself from the scene to fix herself a costume change.

This was how Janice of Downey came to introduce the band.

Kyrt did not think a band needed introduction, they should just pick it up and go, and at first he thought the mic was picking up feedback from one of the amps. Perhaps you’ve heard the bagpipes. When the chanter skirls above the past note’s key signature they call it an “accidental.”

Kyrt didn’t realize right away the source was Janice. Her hair shot out in all directions, peaking at the crown, causing at the top of her elf-in frame a spritely mink crescendo. Smoking lamps for eyes, bruisey-hued. Smoldering.

Janice produced a thin, fine line of sound that quickly doubled to a fevered pulse of squeals and hoots, rising to a piercing shrill until inaudible and much like the rewards of Mayan trepanation surgery, the absence of pressure created in the room a narcotic effect. The crowd burst into cheers, prompting Janice to exert arcing bleats, unrestrained hopping and lunging about the stage. She devoted a short spell to vowel sounds issued whilst miming off-camera scenes from Klute. Pie Grande joined her, children of discontent, to express memory re-

trieved from pre-speech years. People went ape.

You sure couldn’t judge the cover of a brochure by the absence of any bullet points. After her performance, Janice asked Kyrt for a cigarette.

She was dizzy from the show, exuberant, and when she leaned into Kyrt her breath smelled of whiskey, which he found irresistible on women just stepping off stage. Leaning in to kiss her, he was blinded by a battery of flashbulb camera lights. And though he was cut from the shot that ran the following Friday in the city’s weekly rag, the photograph catapulted Janice into circumstances that required she go into hiding and change her name. The last Kyrt saw of her that night she had just blown the match Fuchsia’s actor fellow used to light her Benson Hedges.

When Fuchsia returned to the party she asked Kyrt how her hair looked. It was all fucked up. He told her it looked great. She wouldn’t let it rest how he had saved her life and lavished him with praise at every turn. He was heralded as a king.

Glad to find the rooftop empty.

Across Main Street the Hotel Rosslyn said hello as Kyrt breathed deep the cool fine mist, sweet from residual lead trapped in the L.A. Basin. He gazed below to those asleep in cardboard caskets on the sidewalk. Which of one you ate my sandwich? East beyond the alley, the Toy District was a cubist short stack of manufacturing and distribution, the tapering shades building toward dawn: Night black, purple black, blue black, purple blue. Periwinkle. Golden blue. Day. He saw how true it was, the city really did wake like a sleeping whore. Realization came to him that yes he could love, love truly, the color periwinkle, or whatever number Pantone matches that elusive hue.

A clamorous to-do at the fire escape, peaking over the parapet was Fuschsia saying she had Huevos Rancheros on the stove.

PART I

ON A BENCH JUST OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCE

HELICOPTER₁

A

[Military helicopters fly across the sky]

ENT. *A medium set man approaches a woman smoking a cigarette.*

MAN

Hey hun, can I bum a smoke?

WOMAN

I got nothin'.

CUT TO:

ENT. *A field trip of kids swarm the entrance plaza.*

KID 1

I feel the vibration!

KID 2

WHOA! Did you see that?!

KID 3

Stop it, Jamie!

[Older aged man in a dirty, green baseball cap crushes plastic bottles]

CUT TO:

ENT. *An elderly woman sits on a bench quietly reading Maeve Binchy's "The Return Journey" ...*

[]

FADE OUT

PART I

ON A BENCH JUST OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCE

PONTIAC₂

B

[The sun radiates off the cement]

ENT. *... An elderly man approaches an elderly woman winded and sweaty.*

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh, you're back!

ELDERLY MAN

I got enough exercise.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Are you hungry?

ELDERLY MAN

I've been up all over
you know.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh.

[Black Pontiac G6 parks up front with Keith Sweat's hit "My Body" pouring out the windows]

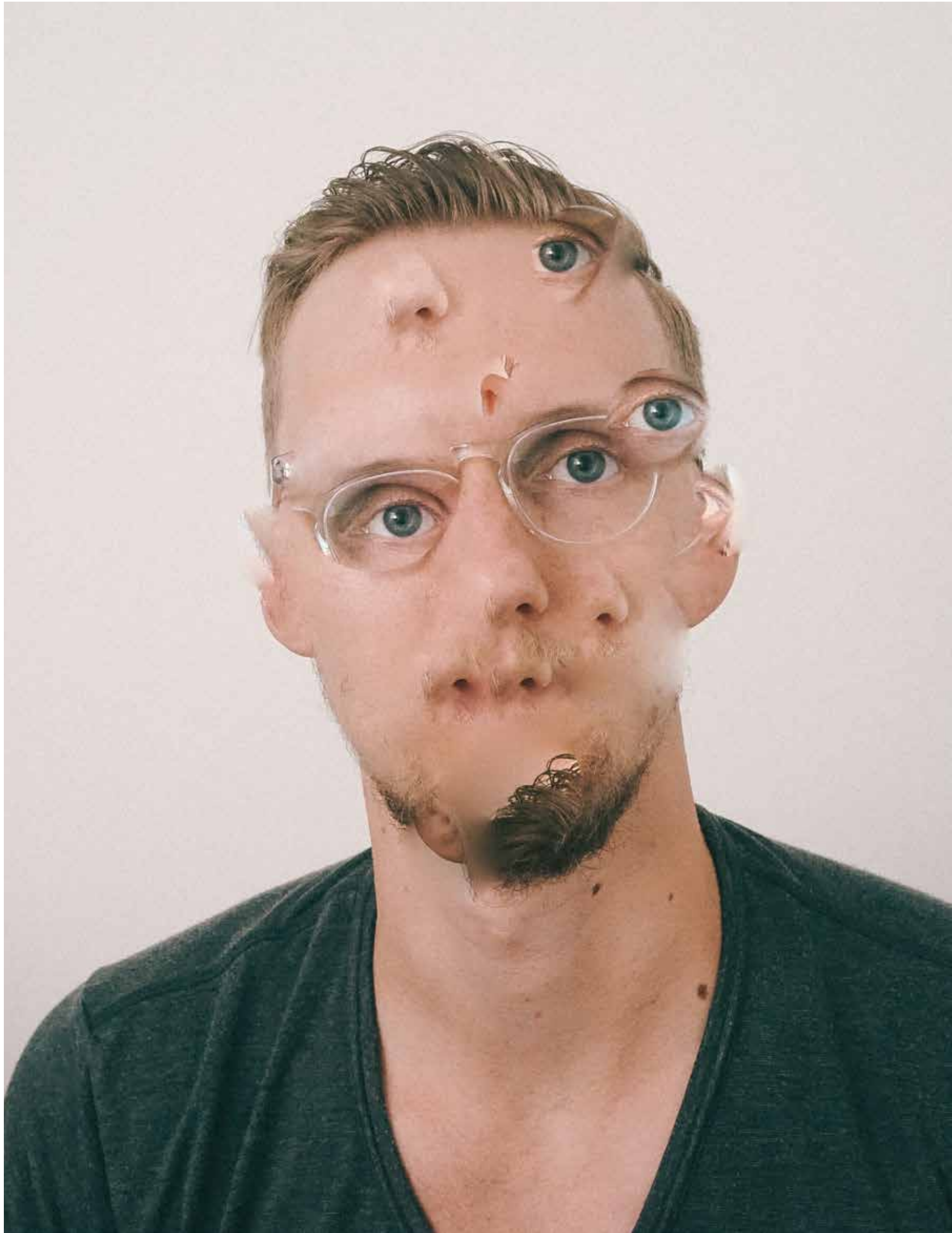
CUT TO:

ENT. *A worn out looking man takes a seat, slouches and takes a call.*

[]

FADE OUT

Buddy
Bojorquez



Home Far Away

**Fast-forward
the past in rewind,
catch those
sparkling flickers of
fragmented colours —
faces —
voices. If you squint,
it'll all look
pretty.**

Aya
Lafillette

3rd of June

“There’s a Marc Jacobs at Damen and Milwaukee now,” said Susie, who, to my eyes, made an unfortunate decision to relocate only last week from Paris to Berlin. We sauntered away from the catastrophe that was the Biennale in Scheunenviertel — the old Jewish quarter, passing by the gardens of fancy restaurants and cafés lit in dainty dots of lanterns, where the customers lived the hour in the reverie of derivative culture.

7th of June

What a misfortune to live across my physician’s practice. The delicate touch of his hands - it clutches my heart every time I pass before the building. Love seems like a stupendously rare commodity, and one is susceptible. It felt like that thing called *falling in love*, one of those giddy school girl things, something I noticed that I do since I’ve grown older. Youth years was blind: never knew I was desirable, never noticed the admirers. Now I coyly admire them, knowing they too admire me. His palm hesitates upon departing my skin; but it departs, because he is my physician.

11th of June

I did live in a former birthing house turned homeless shelter across from the abandoned 19th century abattoir complex with the backdrop undeniably eastern. Now I sit in my own kitchen, next to an iron bathtub, opposite the coal oven. It is a dwelling far from perfect, but I feel home, distressingly, for it is an agonising thought to one day be rich enough to move to a fully modernised location, thus abandoning this endearingly unreasonable life.

But how so refreshingly normal to simply invite a friend over and serve her salad and bread baked just in the morning in my own oven? And how novel to meet an enlightened mind like her in this dreary metropolis, where the mediocrities flock to be transformed by the decline of culture which they falsely perceive to be *freedom*, into the intellectual, creative, original, and meaningful?

15th of June

Identity. Such a word: *identity*. Everyone is looking for it. *Identity* as in *individuality*, as well as *identicalness*. People say they are struggling artists; they say they are proud daughters. They are company executives, students, or pensioners. They look for the words that perfectly describe them, so they can comfortably interpret their existence. Yet all at the same time, they demand to be recognised for their *individuality*, and often interchange this particular word with *originality*. Have we forgot the scientific fact that it is impossible for us to be exactly alike? Some admire me for what I am not doing; it is everyone else who are working on growing alike, while chasing the meaning of *individuality*, which obviously makes a rarity out of my laziness — or sheer inability — to assimilate, cynically manifesting their romantic idea of *uniqueness*. For what I am not doing, how much jealousy, competition, and admiration have come my way!

24th of June

Oh dear, seems my vague plan to move to Britain is in need of reevaluation. Edinburgh might still be possible if they fall apart with the civilisation itself. In the interim, my attention turns to the opportunity to visit Burgundy. Why not stay? Stay has never been given to me as an option. *Germans painted their dream, and it always turned into a vegetable. The French needed only to paint a vegetable, and it was already a dream.* * Notwithstanding and ironically, their selection of fresh produce is abysmal. Why live in a country with no spinach?

26th of June

In the world today where everyone makes the sincere effort to burgeon into the idea of the most fragrant by donning commercial perfumes, the most noble of all are not of them, but an entirely detached species who blossoms in Shangri-La where no one will know the scent of the sublime flowers.

29th of June

Are ones who write beautifully, the masters of words, superior to some who barely control the words? — those who possess more than words can define, whose proses often sit inevitably near to poetic verses? They say “they write beautifully” anyway. They either revere, attack, or belittle unfathomables: *beautiful, stupid, or madness*. It is then the most complaisant to exist as the *stupid* for the minds that see, feel, hear, and grasp more with no appropriate words assigned to these visions. Perhaps one is not better than the other, but latter’s misfortune is that this world lacks their device.

You are mute, in the face of the province occupied by the visionless, who see brilliantly their magical world of nothing, built upon favourable speeches of others with such ambition. They are proud, better, and know everything, in their wondrous pond you gaze down to.

2nd of July

Weltschmerz, broadcasted, daily. How everyone is now flocking to this city, like 100 years ago, in search of liberty and validations, dashing passed as if a wind blowing through a hollow pipe, but without even making a melancholy toot. Thoughts exchanged are the reflection upon the profoundness of thoughts, culture practiced is the recollection of the wonders of culture. Polarised societies come crashing in the central void. Meanwhile, Weltschmerz, broadcasted, daily.

8th of July

It is a trend to mistake well-dressed-ness for the sign of riches. The value of personal expression has long replaced the collective will for moral edification. Provocation somehow stands for the quality of clever ideas. There is no conversation, only competition. When you win, you are the Emperor, donning his New Clothes.

How is it then, I ask as I emerge at last from my long hermitage, to love? Love of self has shrouded the respect for self. Egoism, once condemned as vice, is taught as virtue. Everyone is an artist — eventual perversion of Dada — there is no more contrast. How can we love another, when the precondition for love is trust, yet when the tide propels the need to impress? How am I to develop trust in this person who is blah-blah-ing before me, in order to dazzle me with his dashing dress, in order to be the king of senseless whom I may admire? It is implausible, for he is naked.

10th of July

I woke from a nightmare.

A theme park: a graffitied structure that I always wondered of its purpose. In the interior is a big sound system and a lone woman dancing a fierce fire juggling, amplifying behind the curtain the auditory effects of the male performer on the stage before the audience.

A winding path down through the park: my belongings are piled in one corner, because I am currently homeless. Someone says it costs 1€.

Arriving at the main entrance: a line of amateur models posing in and around a fountain for a photo shoot, obviously disrupting the public by blocking the path. No way to pass and annoyed, I bite the arm of one male model who has his arm outstretched, on it written 8.89 — his hourly wage. An outrage: words of *illegal or violation* and such fly through the hipster crowd, and eventually a young professional-looking woman comes up to me and says “our lawyer will ruin you.”

My head spins, with the swirling thoughts of my upcoming operation, residence status, house renovation, money, etc, etc., I feel the final touch of doom come upon me with the hammer of asininity.

This sums up the perversity of modern society?

12th of July

At the end of the day, Aldi has this cheap Italian chianti and basque sheep cheese, and a cyclist stops as he passes me, then leaves me with ‘you are extremely beautiful.’ I loathe this place with such confidence that is the concretion to the fact this is *home*.

In this city, poetry is bewildered. It’s been years; my first German was learnt from a street graffiti — *ich will mich verlieben*. You go to Paris to fall in love. Here, it grounds you with the desire, to reach out for that undiscoverable, indecipherable, perhaps lost over the phantom ruins of its wall, or between the headstones with solemnly lamentable epitaphs like *He worked, and died* in a quaint cemetery.

* Theodor Adorno, 29: *Minima Moralia*

† Arthur Rimbaud, *Après le Déluge: Illuminations*

14th of July

Le sang coula, chez Barbe-Bleus, — aux abattoirs, — dans les cirques, où le sceau de Dieu blêmit les fenêtres. Le sang et le lait coulèrent. †

17th of July

I was a liar. I lied through my life. I confess — I lied that I was a coward. I lied that I was ungrateful. I lied that I was in denial. I lied that I was privileged, my life was good, and that I had nothing to complain about. And I was duly and mercilessly punished for it, unceasingly, by my guilt, and others who believed in my lies.

No matter how wretched, if it is the only thing one knows, it is her normalcy. If I’d known that it was called *abuse*? I cannot call the place where I did not grow up *home*. I cannot love the people who do not love me. Was I a bitter person, or an optimist who was battling to depart from the wicked? Was I a sad person, or a seeker who was desperate to know love? Was I an ungrateful person, or simply a deprived?

My heart was not fooled; it cried, and it bled. For decades, crawling in the mud, aimlessly looking for an elusive concept, I saw the endless nothing... and then, the horizon lightened, then dimmed. I spotted a star, obscured by grey: a shape of civilisation, engulfed by the atmosphere. There were storms, deafening thunder, then a vacuum — the robe of death fluttered in the invisible domain ahead. My eyes, at last, saw its abyss. I turned around — there it was, the past, as clear and tranquil as the face of a calm sea. And now nothing can shame me when I say, “I left it behind, and it is not for you to know. I am here now, and will go where I will. My pride resides not in the places, people, or concepts that have moulded, broken, and made me a liar, but in my heart that has endured this harrowing story. And I applaud the pain that has created me.”

20th of July

Have I loved? — once. And if you loved once, that’s plenty. But to fall in love is jumping into that blue water off the craggy beach of Marseille, descending over the burning skyline of Brandenburg in dusk, cycling before the immense sunrise above Lake Michigan. The virgin snow on the frozen cobble stone road, the canal water’s smell on the first day of spring, the gust of breeze through the yellow linden street. A blackbird’s song at sundown. The glow of a white hyacinth. The sweat on the glass of chilled cidre. A thunderstorm. Burning coal. Cassis ice cream in a cone. The metamorphosis of the rain drops on the grass by the sun’s ray, towards diamonds.

Home is far to those without one. It is again time to leave, because after all these years, *ich will immer noch mich verlieben* — I still want to fall in love.

**‘So
here we are
with... “Find
the Fish.”’**

Lady Presenter: *Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life*

Friday 04/26 7:30 pm

rested (blue ravine blue forest through blue I see)

Thursday 05/02 10:00 pm

“a natural evolution, an emptying out of ideas and noise”

Sunday 05/12 3:15 am

healing water imported directly from Lourdes

Friday 05/24 11:30 pm

languages that can be learned like any other

Tuesday 06/11 9:00 am

wet morning, sound proof

Thursday 06/20 1:45 am

taste buds harness all available flavors, welcome or not

Tuesday 07/02 4:30 am

Is it BDSM?

Saturday 07/13 6:00 pm

the line drawn is not necessarily a path

hype ripe

hope nope

rape rope





Inside Marina City



Text by
Iker Gil

Chicago doesn't lack landmark buildings. We find them in the hundreds, from those built in the late 19th century to the latest additions in 21st century. They are admired in tours daily, studied in architecture schools, and immortalized in movies. Many of them are located in the Loop as a symbol of economic power and civic pride. Others are dispersed around the city, anchoring the life of neighborhoods north, south, and west of the Loop. When their use is public, we can access and enjoy their interior but many of them remain accessible to only a lucky few, with their interiors hidden from the rest of us.





The residential towers of Marina City belong to the latter. From the outside, they are instantly recognizable. Their distinct cylindrical shape defined by their balconies and 19-story spiral parking garages have landed them on posters about Chicago by several airlines, have made them the perfect backdrop for movies, and even as the stars of album covers. But, as much as we recognize them from the outside, their interiors remain a bit of a mystery. Having lived in the west tower for years, I continuously get asked how it is to live in a round building or how I place my furniture in a pie-shape building with no right angles (Answer: It is great to live in Marina City and it is actually easier than you think to arrange the furniture). With almost 900 units, it is also a very dense and diverse community, a mix of long-term residents and newcomers - a community that has evolved throughout these 50 years but that is as vibrant as it was when the first residents moved in by the end of 1962.

In 2008, photographer Andreas E.G. Larsson and I started documenting the residents of the towers. We wanted to give an insight into their lives in Marina City. We wanted to learn about the reasons they chose the building and about their daily lives there. In terms of space, we wanted to explore the relationship between the rigorous modular framework designed by Bertrand Goldberg (there are only three unit typologies: studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments) and the informal development of these interior spaces by residents. Overall, it was a fascinating experience. We learned about the use and misuse of apartments; residents who have lived in several units, moving from one to another one to secure better views, higher floors, or bigger units; places that remain time capsules while others are unrecognizable; units packed with objects while others barely had furniture; the multiple activities taking place on the balconies; and the communal gatherings on the rooftop, especially at holidays. With that, we also learned both a set of mundane anecdotes and life-changing moments that humanized the concrete structures.





Photos by
Andreas E.G.
Larsson



We documented residents off and on for three years. In the fall of 2011 we presented a selection of photographs in an exhibition titled "Inside Marina City" at the Art Institute of Chicago. To its opening we invited the residents we had photographed, where they saw their portraits for the first time. It was a public celebration of life in Marina City.

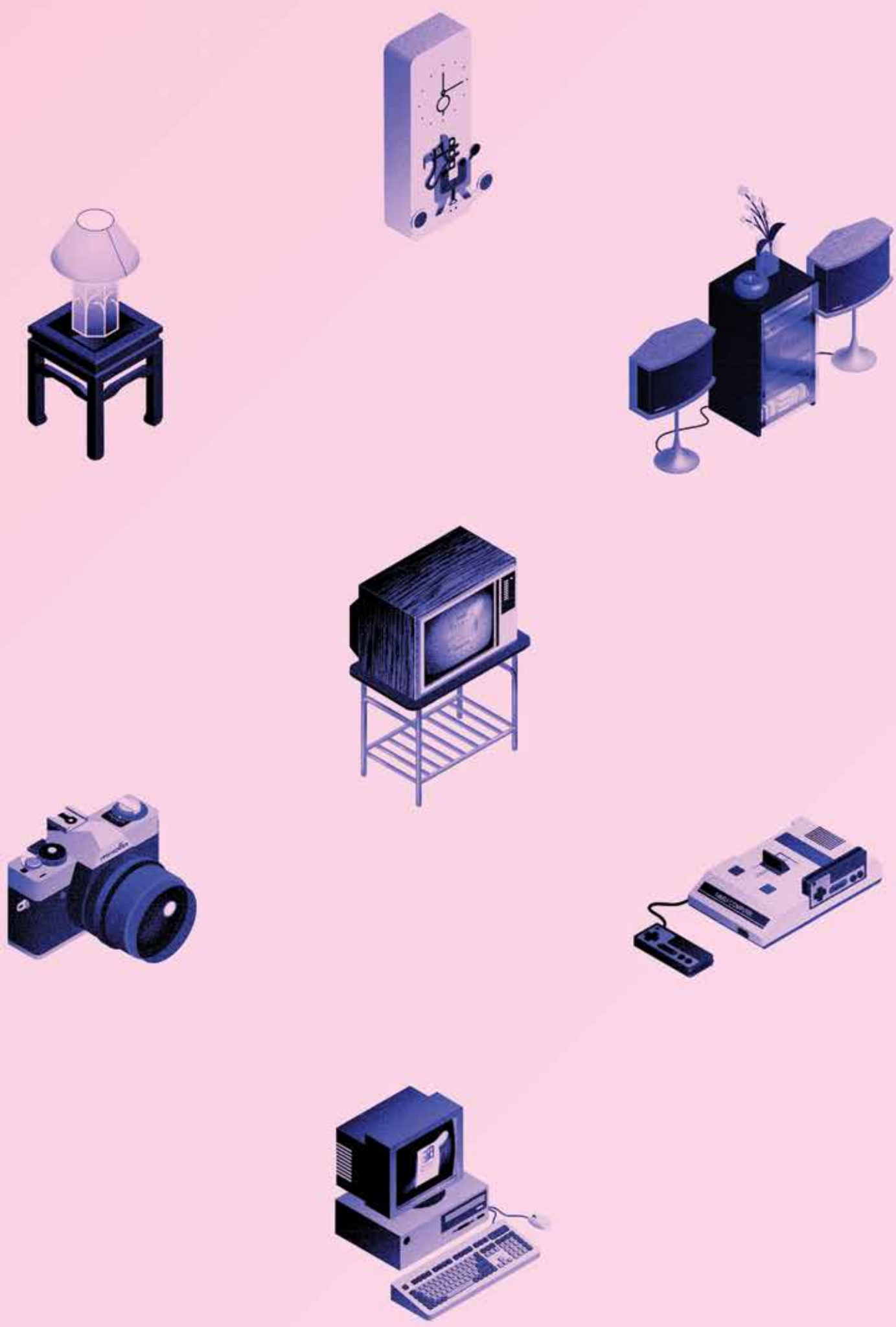
Many of the photographs we took remain unseen so we want to share some of them to celebrate the quarter century of Lumpen. With the project, we want to pay tribute to Bertrand Goldberg's visionary architecture and affirm his place in Chicago's rich architectural history while placing at the fore the inhabitants who bring these spaces to life.



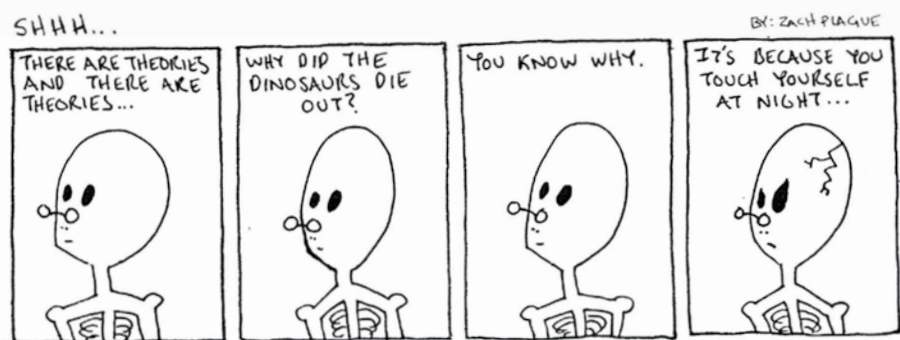


Scott Reinhard

Simone Noronha



Van Dyke Road



by Jeffrey Dorchen

The sun was setting in dimming gold behind the silhouette of the General Dynamics tank plant. Rusty broke the filter off a Menthol Carlton Ultra-lite and lit it. *You gotta break the filters off these nothing cigarettes. Supposed to be less deadly, though, Ultra-lites.* Sitting in a lawn chair, feet up on the front bumper of his '71 Chevelle, Rusty sucked the cigarette down to a nub in about five or so long, fierce drags. He gulped his beer. That afternoon, while cleaning out an apartment, Rusty and Krispy had found an ancient case of Falstaff.

A great day. Free beer.

There was a lot of abandoned crap in that place. When was the last time anyone had lived there, and why had they left all that junk? Not that it was valuable junk – just, why was it still in there, covered in dust so thick and old you could pull it away in flimsy sheets?

The beer was unknowably old. Even through the dark brown glass of the squat bottle you could see the thing in the beer, *The Mother* Krispy had called the cloudy blob.

“De Mudder.”

“Mother of what?”

“Mudder ov winagger. Det’s vut meks vine into winagger.”

But it hadn’t had time to make the beer into vinegar yet, if that was what beer became when it got too old to drink. The Mother looked a lot more substantial than it was. To Rusty it looked like fat or snot. But he didn’t taste it or feel it going down. The beer itself didn’t taste bad, either. He caught a buzz from it. Or maybe the buzz was from the Bondo fumes.

Still, at the end of the work day Rusty had let Krispy take most of the case home, only keeping four bottles for himself. Rusty figured he’d share a six of tallboys with Ed later anyway. “Take ‘em. Knock yourself out, Stud,” he’d told Krispy.

Now he lived a world in which he was just like everyone else, and was aware of it in an equally nonverbal way. Perfection had been his for exactly one year, then she’d left him marooned in the world of God’s mistakes. It tinged everything with sadness, but he didn’t hate her. He felt generous toward her. She was a good person. His heart opened in generosity when he thought of her, just as it had learned to do when they were together. He felt he was now a more evolved person as a result of the feelings his body had learned from being with her, particularly the power his heart had developed to open in generosity now and then under certain circumstances, circumstances he hoped to find himself involved in again someday, though he wasn’t prepared at the moment to pursue them with any effort.

His long legs stretched out in front of him, he rotated his left foot to make his ankle crack, the sound like a distant cluster of firecrackers. The sound Ellen couldn’t stand. He’d done it sometimes to make her cringe. He would laugh, not out of cruelty, but because her distress was incomprehensible to him.

He had in fact really loved her. Or really believed he loved her. Or, when with her, he had believed himself involved in love, or in a sphere of love, or an atmosphere of love. When she would rub his flat belly and whisper how beautiful he was, comb her fingers through his long hair, squeeze his shoulders and kiss the vein running down his bicep, trace the sparse trail of hair into his jeans, he would bring her close, her skin deep gold in the firelight, and know they were the perfect human mating pair. Young, perfect specimens, and their lovemaking was the kind God had originally intended for everyone, if only Creation hadn’t malfunctioned somehow.

These were not feelings he had ever put into words, or even focused on as conscious thoughts. Yet, unconscious though they were, these thoughts and feelings wove the fabric of the world he’d inhabited with Ellen.

Falstaff, do they even make this shit anymore? Where’s this shit from, Wisconsin?

Behind the label, where the dead cigarette nub swam in a half-inch of backwash, the last of the sun turned the inside of the bottle to copper.

Nope: Fort Wayne, Indiana. He chucked the bottle toward the wall of the apartment building to his right, where it disappeared silently into the chest-high grass. The same instant he released it he wished he hadn’t and cursed himself out, realizing he’d be riding the mower through that grass tomorrow, and that bottle would shoot out of the discharge and smack against something and throw glass shards. Or more likely it would just get wound up in the thick grass and choke the blades and stall the mower.

Piece of shit mower. A tennis ball can stall that mower. Plain old grass can stall that mower. That mower ain't made to cut grass that tall, anyway. You need a wheat harvester, that's what you need. No joke.

But as he got up out of the lawn chair with distracted intent to search for the bottle, he was drawn to the beauty of his work on the Chevelle. Pink patches of Bondo sanded flush mottled the gray primed body. Something vaguely animal there, like the markings of a piebald horse – lack of gloss gave it its fleshy look, corpse flesh, pink blotches fading on a corpse going ashen.

Krispy had shown Rusty photos of mass graves from a book he was reading, piles of corpses, or scattered randomly or laid out in rows, all the photos black-and-white inviting one to imagine the death and decay of human beings with an eyewitness's sickened empathy. It was research for the novel Krispy was writing about the future.

“What future?”

“De footcher ov menkind.”

Rusty saw in the black-and-white photos, somehow, fresh corpses as pink as Bondo, only fading to the gray of newsprint and dead flesh after lying there for hours while the witness stared.

It was dark enough now for the sodium lights to flicker on. They lit only the first thirty yards or so of the driveway into the complex off Van Dyke Road. Beyond that, to the west, over the tank plant, the sky bruised and blackened.

It would have been hopeless to try to find the bottle at that point. The security lights around the tank plant's main buildings and Quonset huts spilled their frost over the chain link fence, lighting the waves of the ocean of grass, the tip of each blade like a tiny star.

“Damn, Stud, all that grass to mow this summer,” Rusty would say to Krispy now and then, and the big Rumanian would laugh: “Dud, det’s a izzy jyub.”

“Not when the mower can’t go three feet without jamming.”

“Piss ov shit mowver,” Krispy agreed.

The complex had been vacant a long time – some of the units for almost three years. The grass was chest-high. The streets reposed with the neglected silence of a post-industrial ghost town. The only thing new was the blacktop. The apartments had used to house the workers who had daily commuted south on I-75 to work in the Buick factory outside Detroit. When it closed, the unemployed trickled away along with their severance money and unemployment checks and food stamps. Like so many unoccupied buildings in the counties of Washtenaw and Macomb, when the occupants were gone their empty shelters were left to rot.

But at the moment General Dynamics was firing up production on the new Abrams tank, so a property management company had been hired to get the adjacent complex into livable condition again by the end of August. There was already military staff at the plant, living for now in the provisional barracks of Quonset buildings on the other side of the high chain-link fence where the plant grounds met the overgrowth of the apartment complex.

Once personnel were living in the apartments again they would have to get into their cars after work, exit the plant grounds onto Warren Road, go right on Bantam, drive all the way past the plant grounds, past the complex, turn right onto Van Dyke, drive to the entrance and enter the complex from there. They would have to drive nearly half a mile to get to a place they could walk to in no time flat if it weren't for chain-link fences.

Rusty thought, when he thought about it, and when he got past dismissing it as just *nuts*, that it must have had something to do with wanting to keep the two realms as separate as possible, the civilian and the military. But the world hardly made sense anyway, especially the part with people in it, and Rusty

rarely considered it worth the trouble to ruminate on the motivations of people in groups larger than three or four.

The management company had put Rusty's uncle, Ed, in charge. Ed's offer of the landscaper's job was what had brought Rusty up from Kentucky. Why not? Rusty had been out of high school for a couple of years by then, all his friends relocated out of state to work. He and Ellen were the only ones left living in the farmhouse on Liberty Road, where he and his friends had partied through the last year of high school and another after that. And after Ellen broke up with him he was left alone there, easy rent, lots of wood to cut and burn in the stove.

But being alone all the time wore on him. At night, fear dripped into the house from between the shakes on the roof. Burning wood: he could get the big double-oil-drum stove he had built with Cal, who was now at Michigan Tech studying metallurgy, up to eleven, twelve hundred degrees sometimes, when he really had nothing to do, turning the kitchen into a sweat lodge.

Some nights when he couldn't sleep he piled on log after log and baked himself into a trance. There were Indian spirits all around those woods. Three kids had drowned in the quarry. Their spirits haunted the nights and entwined with the Shawnee ghosts wafting lost in the black air. And the Indian spirits threaded through the living Shawnee blood Rusty had in him from a great-grandmother. So he had dangled like a talisman on a leather thong of souls strung out to infinity from past to future, dangled without foothold and barely a handhold, close to dropping into a terror of loneliness on those nights in the cloister of heat.

The cherry on the end of another gelded Menthol Carlton Ultra-lite was rapidly burning toward Rusty's lips when he saw... the *guy*, far out in the barely-lit sea of tall grass, just a head on a slender neck drifting through the broad rear lot of grass mostly unreachable by light from either the tank plant or Van Dyke Road. The neck and head glided like the Loch Ness monster in grainy footage Rusty had seen in many a documentary on paranormal and cryptozoological phenomena. Had Rusty been the type who believed in alien abductions he might have identified it as a gray ET. But Rusty was the kind who believed in a porous membrane between life and death. He belonged to the demographic of believers in the power of the dead to return.

To return and *fuck with the living*.

The floating egg-head came to a clearing by the fence between the complex and the plant. It was off in the far corner, where the fence met at a T with another demarcating the edge of a pine and maple wilderness which for all Rusty knew went on and on for two thousand miles to the Pacific Ocean. Rusty perceived with gray-scale vision that the *guy* was all but a skeleton and nearly as pale. In that far corner where the fences joined, the pale naked figure of death disappeared.

He can't care about daughters or wife or about the scene of their deaths. He calls himself the Lizard, for convenience. Lizards don't grieve or go blind with vengeful passion burning in their heads. The heart or soul of a lizard may be what he has, but colder, closer to stone or iron. Maybe no soul at all. A lizard has some kind of fear, but he has none. That's what makes this Lizard so cold, even for a lizard. He feeds on his own thin pain. He has a thirst for pain, but he can't produce enough internally to satisfy himself. He needs more.

Without her he would barely survive.

The lilac bush is his way in, so he folds himself under it. He slides in the dirt, squirms under the fence and smells the soil and green clover in the dark. Where the margin of broken asphalt meets the dirt he kisses the earth. She says he has to. He pulls himself along the pavement with his teeth and lips as well as his fingers, elbows, knees and toes, in the shadows overhung with leafy branches, sodium light sparkling through leaves into his eyes.

In the shadows of the back row of corrugated steel buildings he hides from the lights. Dew is on the dirt and stones and on the tiny weeds eating into the edge of the pavement. Here he waits for her, drinking the dew in slow kisses. He's thirsty and cold.

She makes him wait.

He drinks anticipatory torment. Pill bugs and slugs crawl on his naked body. Gnats fly into his nose and mosquitoes bite him. Moths flutter in his face and at the back of his neck and ears. They walk on his lips. Tears come out of his eyes. His lips tremble in small spasms but he makes no sound. Not yet. He's saving it for her, and even then he's not allowed to make much noise. His worthlessness is a squall within his head, waves crashing on rocks as the rain pours down in jagged panels like pieces of a house blown up off the ground and torn apart in mid-air, falling back to pelt those who lived in it, who are now without a home, pieces of what once had sheltered them now raining down, hitting them between the shoulder blades and pounding the wind out of them, slapping the screaming faces of the dispossessed as they run, naked, in the storm.

But his tears must not be mistaken for a symptom of caring, an emotion the Lizard is unable to feel. They result from exposure of the eye to cold air and sodium light. They have no meaning.

Cigarette after empty bready cigarette, Rusty stood, up to his sternum in the grass, looking toward the dark into which the figure had disappeared. He had really seen it, hadn't he? And that wasn't normal, was it? For a gray egg-skulled corpse to walk from nowhere to nowhere in the field he would eventually mow? Was it a kid? A wild kid raised by coyotes in the pine woods? Should he call the cops? Or maybe go get Ed? Or was it, as it seemed to him now, something akin to the presences from the time he'd spent haunting himself in the farmhouse?

Something had followed him to Detroit, he realized. He felt the realization emerge from a backlog of unconflicted fears he'd stifled in order to live a normal life.

There were wendigo and sasquatch, the subhumans hidden in the wild. And there were ghouls. Rusty knew what "ghoul" really meant. It had a secret meaning. He couldn't explain it exactly, but he knew. Sometimes he could explain it. He had to be really drunk and high, though, and even then he couldn't explain *how* he knew. But he knew something. It was in his muscles and skin. And he recognized the ice of fear on seeing the gray creature, the *guy*. It was the very same that had flowed into him on one other occasion, not that long ago. Not long enough, when he'd glimpsed his own personal Angel of Death out of the corner of his eye, the figure who would one day peel him out of his accumulated layers of life-skin and rip him out of the world.

When Rusty finally moved, his jeans and shirt were damp with the dew that sparkled on the grass all around him. He floated in blackness punctured by tiny lights. At sea. *I'm swooning*, he thought, dredging up a strange word, because something swept him over, like lunar gravity, and it took a long time about it, the way the

moon took its time moving across the sky, dragging the ocean along. An undertow deep in the grass pulled him down. He was going to drown in the grass. He panicked and struggled to keep his head above the surface, clawed at the grass, striving to swim upward through it, but it pulled him under.

Yet, *Jesus*, it was only one step he'd taken. He took a few more and felt physically buoyant, though his mind was a rock in his head and his lungs bound in rebar. He really was floating, his feet paddling through the field, the rest of him paralyzed. Quick breaths came in shallow puffs and gasps. He was turning, struggling, rolling in the water, ankles tangled in the stalks. He plunged into the wet grass.

He lay there, breathing fast. His heart pounded harder than was reasonable since he really hadn't done anything more than walk a few steps and fall down. He wasn't even afraid, but the violent beating of his heart was making him so. And now a pressure in his head was building up and pushing his eyes outward from behind. Pain gripped his neck and shoulders, hot blades of pain shot through his shoulder yoke and into the base of his skull, hot metal spread in his brain. All the bones from the middle of his spine on up were locked, the joints grinding together so tightly he could feel bone splinter. Then a sudden wet chill all over, then the grip of the bone-splintering, eye-bursting pain again, its red-hot talons. Then another ice-water dowsing followed by a glowing red railroad spike driven down into the crown of his skull. His guts twisted inside-out, nearly breaking his ribs and backbone as they squeezed through and gushed up his throat and out of his mouth and nose.

After vomiting he felt all right. He could breathe. He even felt a bit cleansed. Maybe he should have rested there, but instead he stood up to get away from his vomit and blow the chunks from his nose. He was soaked now in sweat and dew. The impetus to feel normal propelled him ahead a few steps. Sure, he was all right.

But then the force clutched his chest again from inside. How could he fight that? He imagined a kind of mental mastery he could summon – it almost helped, the imaginary mastery, he almost fought free of the grasping force, but it had him, he was stumbling again now, falling into the grass and drowning again, pitched about in the sea, and knotted inside. Knots like fists. Something was pulling him apart from outside and within.

At last she arrives.

He's all disgrace. The Lizard's face is stretched with the constant ache in his stomach and the taste of that ache in his mouth. But she understands him. For all the permutations of pain and pleasure their trysts have become, she is on his side.

As she slips her hands between his body and the cracked asphalt and lifts the parchment-wrapped skeleton, she whispers things he doesn't understand – partly because of his imperfect English comprehension and partly because his mental faculties have been impaired by self-imposed austerities. His cheek rests against her stiff work shirt, his eyes lensed with a meniscus of tears through which he sees nothing but sparks of light in a watery blackness.

She carries him into the cinderblock shower stall at the back of the Quonset building designated G, lays him on the concrete floor, then steps away to turn on the work light hanging from a pipe just above the shower head. A blast of cold water socks him in the gut, what little gut he has. She turns the showerhead to broaden the stream.

Rain falls on him now, it seems, getting warmer, turning tropical. The source of the rain is the big woman with long blond hair. The light behind her bites into her silhouette here and there as she undresses. He watches from within a cloak of glittering rain.

Naked herself now, she kneels over him and lathers him with rough pumice soap. She kneads his thin muscles. She lathers up his ribcage, slides her hands down his narrow waist, paints lather circles on his abdomen. In her palms she can cradle his entire pelvis. She is a Norse giant and a nature principle. She is a cave behind a waterfall hiding him in her warmth. Her stalactite breasts, curtains of water draped between them, shelter him. Her hair and the falling water cascade together beyond the mouth of the cave in which he huddles. He crawls deeper and deeper into its damp comfort and musk.

They are one. She is all around him, and he within her. He feels the love the Earth has for him, the love it conceals deep within. Now is the time he is free to experience love. Now they both are free, just for now. Now he is a mammal again. Just for now. Almost human. Sharing a mammalian embrace.

She knows she is his nourishment and shelter. His little self, in which torture and ecstasies boil, is in her care. During her everyday life in the tank plant offices she is too big, cumbersome, extra stuff bulging out of her identity, embarrassing parts of her she can't keep track of, anatomical "KICK ME" signs. But when she's with him her body's open boundaries are proper. She overflows her banks. She floods the plains. She is the mountain range and the deep river. She washes him in her tides. She feeds him fruits of nature.

This is what he's been starving for. It is for this he does his penance. Now he drinks it, indulges in it. It is a dream, discrete from the barrenness of the rest of his life, the truth of his himself, but he has faith nevertheless in this reality, too, in this alternate truth. It must be real. His life would be worthless without it.

And she, as she rolls him into the burrow of her belly and breasts and thighs, curls herself like a tremendous wave or dune into the bosom of sacred union.

Rusty parted the firmament of grass-ocean and staggered or plummeted past his Chevelle through the garage to the door at the back leading into his apartment. He made it to the toilet just in time to vomit a third time.

In his apartment behind the garage Rusty suffered all night, vomiting painfully, dry-heaving, shivering, his throat and nose raw, bones aching, waves of heat, chills and nausea washing over him. Lying down did no good, neither did standing up, sitting, or pacing. He prayed and wept. He groaned, *Why, why, why?* Then there would be a respite, but only a brief one, and misery returned. He wanted to sleep. He was afraid he was turning into an animal. He wanted to die. He was afraid he had already died. His eyes burned. He was cold. He was sure he was turning into an animal. He was growing a snout. He thought, or dreamed, he was growing porcupine quills. He clawed and gnawed through trees. He ate sweet ants. He dug into a burrow and drank the yolks of snake eggs.

Blind, he ran screaming through the forest, the soles of his feet on fire. Screaming as a form of echo-location. He ran through an image of the forest painted entirely in the sound of his screams. Please let it be a dream, he thought as he ran.

Staff Sergeant Maryanne Schmidt had come to Detroit from Fort Benning as secretary to Captain Worth. Worth commanded the men and women who would be test-driving the new tanks. Schmidt was living onsite in the General Dynamics plant compound, in Building G. At the moment she bunked with the secretary to Lt. Mortimer, onsite consulting engineer. The secretary's name was Sergeant Zaletzen, a thin woman but a heavy sleeper nonetheless, which was a blessing. She seemed to exhaust herself during the day with the nervous metabolism of a whippet in a winter wind. By nighttime Sergeant Zaletzen was utterly spent, a blackened strip of short-circuited wire. She cooled off in sleep, unconscious straight through the night. This allowed Sgt. Schmidt to sneak away to meet with Fang.

Sergeant Maryanne Schmidt had met Sonny Vang at the Ruby Tuesday's on Twelve Mile Road during her second week at the General Dynamics compound. She had gone there with Captain Worth, two tank gunner trainees and a crowd of others she didn't know, who were only staying the week. They, along with 40 other personnel, would return for a longer stay once the adjacent apartment complex, overgrown and neglected, was restored to livability.

They were all much younger than Schmidt. Maybe not the Captain, but he was a muscular, handsome man who might as well have belonged to a species entirely alien to hers. She stood a good five inches taller than the tallest of them, with an oddly bulbous torso any outfit but a khaki office uniform rendered an indecipherable asteroid. Her blond hair was wrapped in a mysteriously compact bun disguising its true mass. The awkward way she had of wobbling down a hallway had once inspired an otherwise unimaginative officer to remark that she conjured for him the image of an ostrich walking a tightrope while balancing a sumo wrestler on its back. He had even doodled his vision to better explain it to others, and he never doodled. There was something birdlike in her face, despite its fatness, reminiscent of the old hen in a Foghorn Leghorn cartoon. The whiteness of her skin left her full pink lips floating unmoored in the snowy void between her chin and nose.

She felt no camaraderie with that crowd at Ruby Tuesday's. Later on she wouldn't be able to remember why she'd tagged along (though it had ostensibly been to celebrate her fifty-fifth birthday, which wasn't that day anyway). She ended up drinking apart from them, at the bar, having a lackluster chat with a short pudgy old RN who smoked one Parliament after another and whose wrists extended too far out of the sleeves of her magenta knit blazer. That blazer was a torture device. The rigid padded shoulders hampered her arm movements. It didn't help that the RN insisted on leaning and stretching way across the bar to tap her ashes rather than move the ashtray closer. Normally Sgt. Schmidt's conversations ended with her just fading away as whoever she'd been chatting with shifted focus to someone or something else, but the RN appeared to be in such extreme discomfort that Sgt. Schmidt did something she rarely did. She excused herself.

She went and sat several stools away from the tortured RN. Sonny Vang, Fang as she came to call him, was seated along the side of the bar perpendicular to Sgt. Schmidt's, sipping a mai tai through a thin red straw. This arrangement allowed the two of them to look directly at one another quite naturally. Their mutual gaze across the right angle of the corner of the bar was a hypotenuse discernable only to them. They beheld each other for a long time along that line. Fang was a slender, short, wizened Asian man in a dark blue suit and a Desi Arnaz-style black toupee. The bartender poured Sgt. Schmidt a Cosmo courtesy of that gentleman. She thanked Sonny in the baritone voice which startled him at first but an instant later made him smile.

Each recognized the other's sadness and sweetness. She joined him on his side of the bar. They held a gentle conversation of touches and sentence fragments soft at the edges like torn petals. Fang had recently sold out his half of a Ford dealership in Novi to Mel Farr Superstar. He was ready to retire. He liked everything about her and told her so. He liked the smell of her lipstick. He liked her clear nail polish. She liked his tiny chin. He moved with the elegance of a grazing fawn, although his hands shook when he drew cards at gin rummy. On Sundays after church she drove to his apartment with a box of shortbread. They drank coffee. Her gift to him of a ceramic duck made him cry.

His crying had led them from sympathetic touching to nudity in the bedroom, and all the beautifully brutal drama that was to grow deeper and richer as their ceremony developed. Their love grew inexorably more powerful until it was physical pain for them to be apart. They arranged to meet behind building G one night without a strategy for finding a place to make love, their impulse only to put themselves in close proximity with each other. That was as far as their planning had gone. They simply needed to hold each other, and the rest would work itself out. And it did.

After that night Sonny "Fang" Vang didn't return home. He'd crawled under the fence into the field, explored the overgrown complex, and made himself a kind of nest in an abandoned apartment. All day long the two hungered for each other, and every night he drifted out, crawled under the fence and waited for her, and every night she found him in the shadows of the bushes behind the Quonset huts. She bathed him and fed him bread and fruit, and they performed their love ritual of Mother Earth and her burrowing creature there on the concrete floor of the cinderblock shower stalls in Building G. For twenty-two nights they came together that way. How long they could have continued their arrangement had it not been interrupted by concerned citizens is forever to be left uncalculated.

Is that little shit-for-brains going to get coffee or not?

Seeing the door wide open, Ed barged into the garage apartment and found Rusty asleep on the couch looking gray-green and doughy and oily, slivers of his straight red hair plastered on his forehead like Frankenstein's monster's while the length of it staggered in damp clots down the front of his shirt. That convinced Ed to let Rusty sleep in. That and the vomit smell.

At about half past noon Krispy looked in on him. Rusty had taken several bong hits by then and was feeling substantially better. Krispy tossed a pack of Newport's that landed on Rusty's chest, then helped himself to a Coke from the mini-fridge and sat on the beanbag chair to drink it. Or rather arched his back over the beanbag. Or hid the beanbag in the small of his broad back like a lumbar pillow.

Rusty said, **"You're just too big for this place, Stud."**

And Krispy was. A big dark Rumanian, extremely handsome and openly lecherous in the presence of any woman falling into his "fuckable" category, he fancied he had a penetrating stare that charmed or hypnotized women. In actual fact, most women described it as creepy. He got laid a lot, though, because his assertiveness was just powerful and impressive enough to overcome the creepiness of his eye contact.

Rusty considered him a Funny Guy. *Kind of crazy. Krispy. From too much dope. So much he can't smoke it anymore, poor dude.* It made him paranoid. Pot rendered him wordless. It was horrifying to be around – he'd stare right into Rusty's eyes with silent regret even if Rusty pleaded with him to say something, because he simply could not.

He could drink, though.

Rusty told him about the thing the night before. The walking dead. And the sickness. Krispy understood immediately.

"Dey hev doze powvers, Dud, dey ken put you in de pain.

Dey ken mek you shit budderflies if dey vunt."

"What? Butterflies? Who can?"

"De nosferatu, Dud."

"The nose for what?"

"De wempires."

"Vampires? Oh, fuck me. Fuck you. What?"

They sat in silence. Rusty lit a cigarette.

"They can make you sick?"

"Yeah. En dey also eat de corpse meat."

"Shit, I thought they just drank blood, man. Why the fuck would they want you to shit butterflies? What the fuck is that about?"

Krispy leaned toward Rusty, his eyes grim and sad in their occipital darkness:

"Deer vorse den Cunt Dreckula, vorse den enny a det movie shit. Deer unclean. Dey drink blood, dey eat corpse meat, dey are tings of dead, Dud. Dead en dirty. Dey come from dead. Dey hev doze powvers ov de nut clean. Deer valking corpse, Dud. Vut meks it valk? *Vut meks it valk?* Doze powvers from de udder verld, det dirty verld, de verld ov shit. *Korropshin.* Shit verld ov poison en germs. Korropshin. Korropshin ov fleshmeat by verms, de verld ov Devil, ebbsense ov de soul en ov Gud."

"Shit, man. You're freakin' me out."

"You *shud* be fricked out, Dud. Det ting's gotch you."

Having finished the Coke, the Rumanian gorilla rolled onto his side and took a Falstaff out of the fridge.

"Krispy, you gonna drink so early?"

"Arly? It's pest lunchtime. Fock yeah, it's gonna ran pretty son. Ve're nut vorkin diss efternun. Vunt vun?"

"A beer? Yeah... or. No, man. You know what? I think that Falstaff shit might be what made me puke."

"No, nut diss. I din't got sick. En I drunk more den you."

Krispy turned the bottle and watched the ghostly, phlegmy Mother float within.

"Yeah, well you're a fuckin' freak of nature."

"I'm teyllyin you, Dud, it's det wempire."

Then the rain started its soft popping on the tar shingle roof. An hour passed. Three cigarettes. Krispy turned the TV on, not to watch anything in particular, just to have it on, filling up the silence with the busy world in the box, a world that would take care of itself without requiring assistance from either of them. That was its attraction. It was a busy distant world making no demands, just getting on with itself. It didn't expect them to mow anything.

Feeling less fragile, Rusty decided it couldn't hurt to have a Falstaff. Still, he took delicate sips of the cloudy fluid. That seemed to him a wise course of action. Delicate sips. And the cigarette smoke, he half-reasoned, probably absorbed a lot of whatever pernicious toxin the Mother might impart. The smoke would wick it away the way Beano charcoal pills absorbed gas. Smoke was just charcoal in vapor form. A couple of hours later he had another beer. Everything seemed to be settling okay.

“Murder,” said Krispy, “on TeeWee.”

The local anchor told of the girl gone missing for days, her body discovered that morning; eight-year-old Tanyika Askers, one of three children to have gone missing in the tri-county area in recent months. Authorities – and parents – fear the others may have met a similarly gruesome fate. The anchor ceded the screen to an on-the-scene reporter standing at curbside in a neighborhood of dreary houses: She was a girl whose bright smile everyone loved. Neighbors were shocked to learn that Tanyika Askers’ body was discovered this morning in the basement of an abandoned house in this rundown Monroe neighborhood. Neighbor Alvin Johnson, who works nights as a security guard, made the gruesome discovery after work this morning while walking his dogs. He says he noticed the dogs paying unusual attention to a broken cellar window in the old house across the street. Neighbors say they’ve had problems with drug dealers taking up residence in the many abandoned houses in the neighborhood, but this, they say ... is something new. For Channel Seven Action News, I’m Clarissa Flanoy...

The actual Macomb County Child Killer would be caught before the following month was out. He would be a six-foot-tall man originally from Idaho working in a hot dog bun bakery in Hamtramck. But that information would not appear within the independently busy TV box for another forty-three days. The delay of that revelation left Krispy the logical elbow room to conclude:

“Fock, men. It’s det wempire.”

And that was when Rusty felt ill again. It was the guy, the skeletal guy, reaching out with whatever monstrous power he had from wherever he was and taking Rusty in his grip of illness.

Even in dreams the Lizard has had no sanctuary. In dreams his is the perpetual birth and death experience of an infant born to suffer loneliness, terror and extinction within the space of minutes, the kind of unknown helpless human other humans can only theorize about, an exemplar of suffering spitting in the face of those who might claim theirs is an Earth ruled by a God who can love, more than sufficient to destroy humanity’s faith if only there were a way for its suffering to come to their attention.

Rain on the roof batters his uneasy dreams. He wakes up now with a papery scream caught at the back of his throat. In the gray daylight he stares up at the cracked ceiling. He allows himself some peace now, peace of a physical nature without pain or clenched muscles, nerves not numb but rather actively soothed by some subcutaneous caress. His hunger and longing will continue by themselves, without his attention.

To his surprise, peace blankets him now in his world of shadow. To attribute it to her is no struggle, for the sensation originates in his lips and radiates outward like the blood from his heart. Lips of hers drink him from his, and his in turn drink her from hers. All thought is gone. His experience is immediate, his memories imprinted in his flesh. Without either of them realizing it she is absorbing him little by little each night, and if the realization were to come to him consciously that he was dissolving and would eventually disappear inside her, his surrender to the process would be just as unhesitating and complete. It is his pain she drains away, after all.

And if all he is made from is pain, then his inevitable dissolution will be nothing less than a passage into the Heaven of her lovingkindness. He feels himself poised on the threshold of that passage. Hence his peace. Tonight may be his last in this body, or perhaps his mind will heal, or his form and hers will simply collapse into one like melting candles. Now he slips into warm dreams that marry themselves to her. This is new. For the very first time they are together in his dream.

They headed out to the corner of the grounds, where the fences met at a T, where the vampire had disappeared the night before, leaving its little bald groove of dirt under the bottom of the fence. On the way out to the corner Rusty was attacked twice again by the sickening force of the thing, the guy, the nosferatu, a word he had come to identify in an unconscious etymology with *ferocious nausea*, two words he knew but had never joined together and was even now unaware of having done so. From the T the two men tracked the vampire back into the apartment complex, following a path lightly worn through the tall grass. Krispy led Rusty in the rain along the just-discernable trail. Now the rain washed the sweat on Rusty’s forehead into the tears on his cheeks and all three waters washed the bile from his chin.

The demon had stalked this path many times, evidently, with a narrow stride. The two men following it were soldiers now, armed with a wood-carver’s mallet and a stake Krispy had whittled out of a picket pried from a small fence that had once encircled a garden plot until Rusty had run it over with the lawnmower.

They went submarine in the grass. Rusty could walk crouched or crawl, as he wished, as he was able, following the broad wet back of the knuckle-walking Rumanian. Krispy had warned Rusty that the closer they came to the dwelling place of the demon the sicker he would get, and that was proving true. Rusty heaved and cried but pressed on, throat and sinuses burning with bile. He was blind with tears and rain when they reached the screen door of the ground floor apartment. The stink from inside was a force field.

“See? Vut I sed. Shit. Dead.”

Inside, they crawled across the puckered linoleum kitchen floor, dust in drifts at every corner and toe-kick. A dead mouse under the sink was crawling with bugs. As they turned the corner into the short hallway between kitchen and living room they saw, tacked on the wall return, just above the level of their eyes, yellowed and curled, a photograph of an Asian woman and child in 19th-century dress, alongside another similarly-distressed photo of four little Asian girls in contemporary clothes, posed on a velvet-covered bench, looking serious.

There was a large ceramic bowl of ashes in the hallway. And around the corner, the floor ended. The floorboards had been pulled up and the subfloor space filled with a kind of giant hamster nest of shredded newspaper in which lay, indeed, the nearly skeletal monster: *the guy*.

The two stared at that naked demon for a long while, suspended in their own inability to believe, listening to the rain on the tar shingles overhead, loathe to interrupt the choral tapping and trickling sounds of water in various stages of downward motion above and around them. Rusty noted that the thing’s skin was gray with a pink hue fading away, as the life force from its most recent feeding was being used up. Its head was tipped back, thin dry lips slightly parted as though receiving a kiss from an invisible lord of darkness drinking the sacrificial gift of another’s life from his minion’s mouth. It was the most palpably evil thing Rusty had ever looked at head-on. He could not deny he was seeing it. He wished he could. The tapping and thudding and dripping and running of the rain grounded him in the waking world and refused to allow him to disbelieve his eyes. This was reality, this vampire was real, as was his duty to destroy it.

This shit is real, he thought. Everything evil comes from the same place this thing comes from. Without the devil, life would be eternal, it wouldn’t die and rot. The devil is real, and he’s where pain and misery come from, and rotting and stink and death.

Krispy finally broke the stillness, stepping soundlessly across the exposed sub-floor joists to an oblong scrap of linoleum-scabbed plywood about three feet wide and four long. He lifted and carried it with surprising grace, and carefully set it down lengthwise over a compartment between two joists right next to a similar compartment in which the demon slept in its newspaper nest. Then he knelt on the plank. Now inches away from the dormant vampire, he beckoned Rusty to join him.

Later Rusty would not remember crossing to kneel and look down at the ghostly being.

Krispy searched his own chest just to be sure of the location of the heart. Both vampire hunters, dripping wet, trembled but kept silent. Krispy put the stake in Rusty’s hand and guided its point to Sonny Vang’s ribcage. Rusty held the stake tight, as tight as his own teeth were clenched, as tight as his muscles knotted and his guts twisted – he fought back against a new attack of nausea with everything he had.

Krispy touched the mallet head to the top of the stake. He traced an arc up and down, rehearsing the trajectory. Teeth chattering now, he lifted the mallet to its apogee, swallowed to still his shallow breathing, inhaled deeply and swung down hard.

Three screams pierced the drumming of the rain. Long splinters of the stake bit deep into Rusty’s palm as its tip pierced Sonny Vang’s skin and cracked a rib but went no further – Rusty pulled his hand away from the pain but pulled the stake away with it, its ragged surface fastening it to his palm – Vang leaped to his feet, shrieking and bleeding from his side – Krispy leaped up, staggered backwards and fell through a window pane.

Rusty turned to run away from the bleeding demon man, who was doing an anguished pirouette, head back, howling a long high tone. Rusty stumbled on the joists as he scrambled away, fell onto the linoleum, vomited as he crawled, but somehow the skeletal legs of the demon carried it past Rusty. Shrieking, Fang kicked Rusty in his vomiting face and plunged out the screen door.

Sitting on the covered porch outside his office smoking a filterless Pall Mall, a coffee mug balanced on his spherical belly, Ed heard the three screams slice through the rainy afternoon. As he turned his pocked, jowly face away from the Detroit News crossword puzzle he heard the shattering of glass. With the newspaper over his head he ran out onto the blacktop and saw a screaming naked man running to the far corner of the complex. The sound of Rusty swearing and vomiting wove through the rainstorm sounds and screams in obligato.

Security from the tank plant came to meet the screaming naked man where the fences formed a T. The emaciated figure collapsed and disappeared into the shrubbery. The big wet Rumanian came stumbling out of the grass toward Ed, his arms spread wide, one of them gashed and bleeding near the wrist. Back by the Quonset buildings a stretcher was rushed to where the naked man had disappeared, and by the time it arrived he had emerged on the other side of the fence, MPs lifted him, and his blood ran, a blue-black film over his skin in the rain.

To ensure all the wood was removed, a surgeon had to slice open Rusty’s palm in three places. They also pumped his stomach and put him on an IV drip. And they seemed to want to draw an awful lot of Rusty’s blood, which as a vampire hunter he found ironic but not humorous. He wasn’t surprised to find out that the *guy* wasn’t a vampire, though none of the staff of the ER had heard anything about just how the man had come to be in the place and condition in which Rusty and Krispy had found him.

It came out less than an hour after their arrival in the hospital that the two of them had thought they were going to kill a vampire. Rusty had at first gone along with the authorities’ assumption that all injuries had been sustained during the terrified flailing and falling that had logically ensued when Rusty and Krispy stumbled upon Vang in the normal course of their duties, but he knew it wouldn’t last. He accepted the mantle of laughingstock stoically. He got some sympathy for the fact he’d been gripped with food poisoning during the hours of his delusional behavior, but that only lasted until he had to tell about the ghostly blob of Mother snot in the two-year-old Falstaffs he’d consumed.

Then he had to endure the taunts of Ed:

“He’s more than twice your size and they eat god knows what shit in Rumania. Blood sausage, weasel sausage, he’s probably immune to the Black Plague – jeezus you got no brains. You could’ve died. You don’t drink two-year-old beer under any circumstances, let alone when you find it in someone’s old apartment, with a god damn lung hocker floating in every bottle no less.”

“The vampire killers. I just want to bask in your dumbness. Unholy fuck. I am in the presence of the two biggest dumbfucks on Earth. It’s like looking at a black hole. It’s like seeing God, I swear. It’s like meeting Elvis. It’s awe-inspiring. If Dolly Parton’s tits were morons, they’d be you two.”

“You could’ve killed the poor dink. He’s pissing blood. You broke his rib and it knicked his kidney. He’s just across the hall, if you hear screaming it’s probably him.”

“You boys are legendary.”

Sergeant Schmidt says she’s met with him a dozen times or so to help him practice his English. They have a bond. She doesn’t think he has any other friends, no, she doesn’t think so. She wants to help him in whatever way she can, she doesn’t believe he is a danger to anyone, his fixation on her notwithstanding. He has no living relations. He is a lonely man. He has no family, no. He is a very lonely man and something snapped, she guesses. She has been to his house, yes, in Novi, about a dozen times. He is a kind man, she wants to be sure he gets the best care.

No one understands Sgt. Maryanne Schmidt’s stepping up to take charge of the strange old man, but then no one has made an attempt to understand anything much about her at all. Her personal life is a stone the world has always thought best left unturned, and for once its neglect has positive consequences for her. From the point of view of the outside world, she and the Southeast Asian man having had any kind of sexual contact is simply not in the realm of the possible. The Army as an aggregate entity senses something intimate and reacts like a father who doesn’t want to recognize the ways his daughter has become a woman. Early and honorable discharge is granted without difficulty, as if by magic.

He’s very lucky to have a kind soul like her to look after him, someone says. Someone else agrees.

Fang has changed. He’s at peace. He doesn’t smile – it is possible he is unable to, he may have suffered a minor stroke during his time in the hamster nest. But he smiles with his eyes and says tender, loving things in simple sentences. Sometimes she thinks he’s disappeared from the apartment they share, only to find him curled up asleep in a corner, burrowed under the comforter on the bed, behind a big plant pot or under a chair. His sleep is profound. Nothing contents her as much as cradling him like Mary does Jesus in the pietas, or as Mary would had she the dimensions of Paul Bunyan.

At times she gets teary, sometimes even angry, remembering the abysmal treatment she’s received from others throughout her otherwise loveless life. Why did God withhold comfort, joy and affection from her until now? Maybe it was part of rendering her and Fang perfect for each other. How many couples, as much as they might love each other, achieve sexual and romantic perfection?

Then she can be grateful to God for His cruelty to her, inasmuch as it has prepared her to be the perfect mate for Sonny Vang. And for the perfection of their love she blesses and thanks the Lord. But Fang’s having suffered she can’t forgive. It will always stand between her and perfect devotion to God. It will always be a blemish on her faith. She begs His forgiveness for that but is resigned to it. She even believes, deep in a place in the mind behind or outside the world of words, that it is just this kind of flawed relationship with God that dooms human beings to eventually die, but there it is, the way things have stood between God and humanity since exile from the Garden. From then on down through the ages it’s been one long cascade of errors and wounds in a misshapen universe.

WE
are
TO BE
DECIDED
FOR
READY
LOVE
TIME

THANK YOU FOR THE WORDS OF WISDOM — IN MEMORY OF BILL SMITH

Bud
Rodecker

Mark
Andrews
(Buddy)

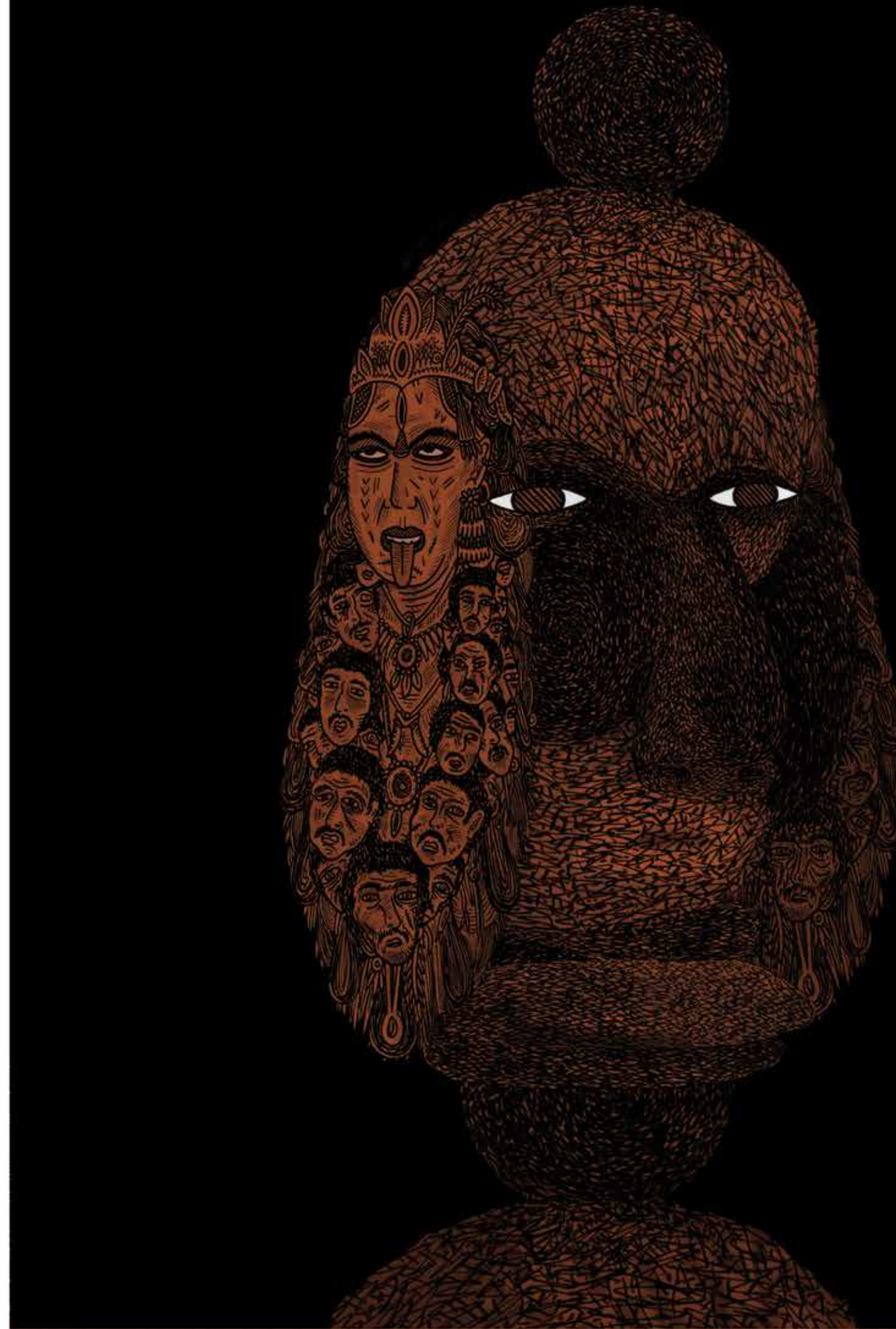
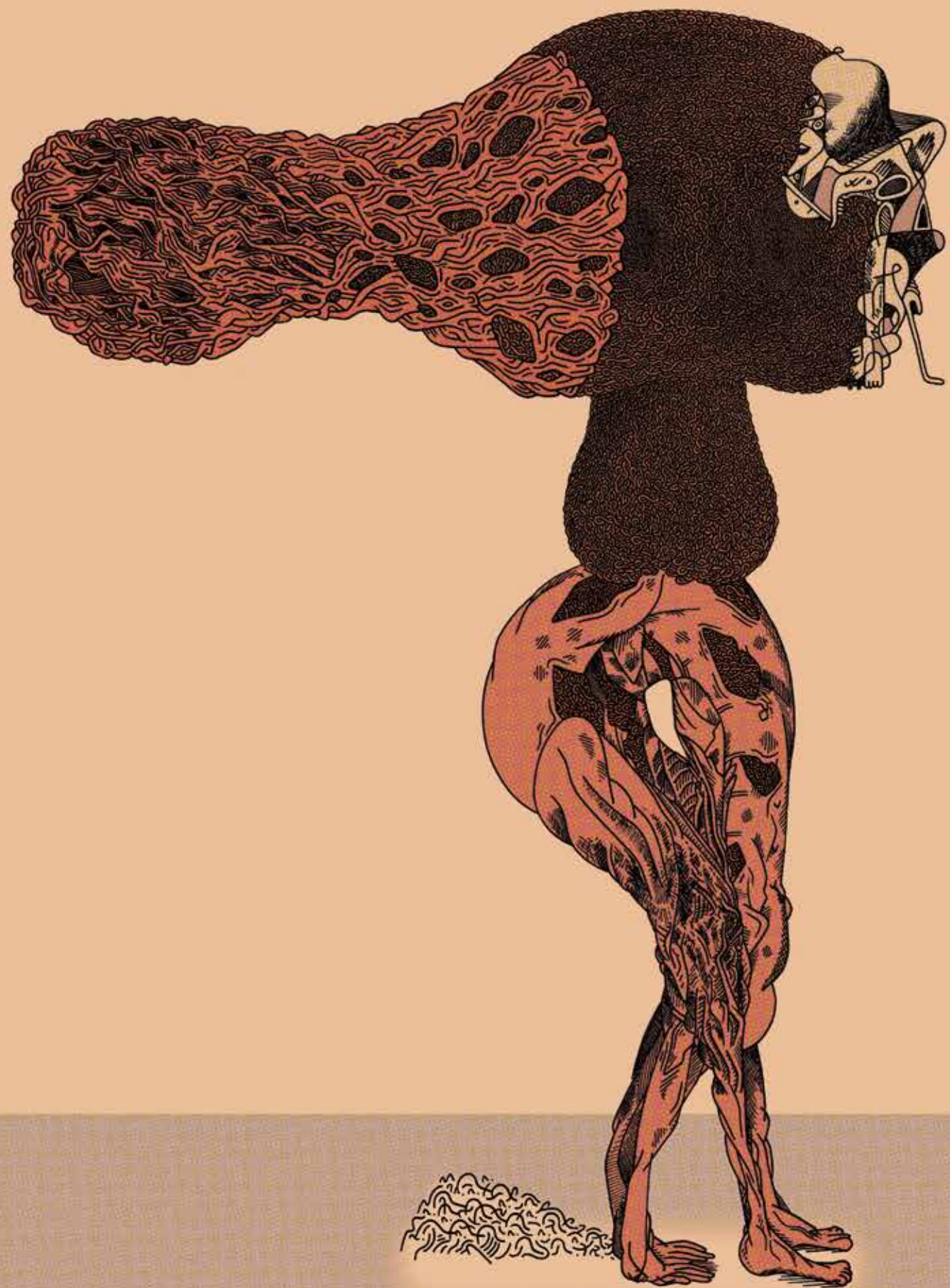




Dmitry
Samarov

Alex
Fuller







Juan
Chavez



Margot
Harrington



We, the People's Artists

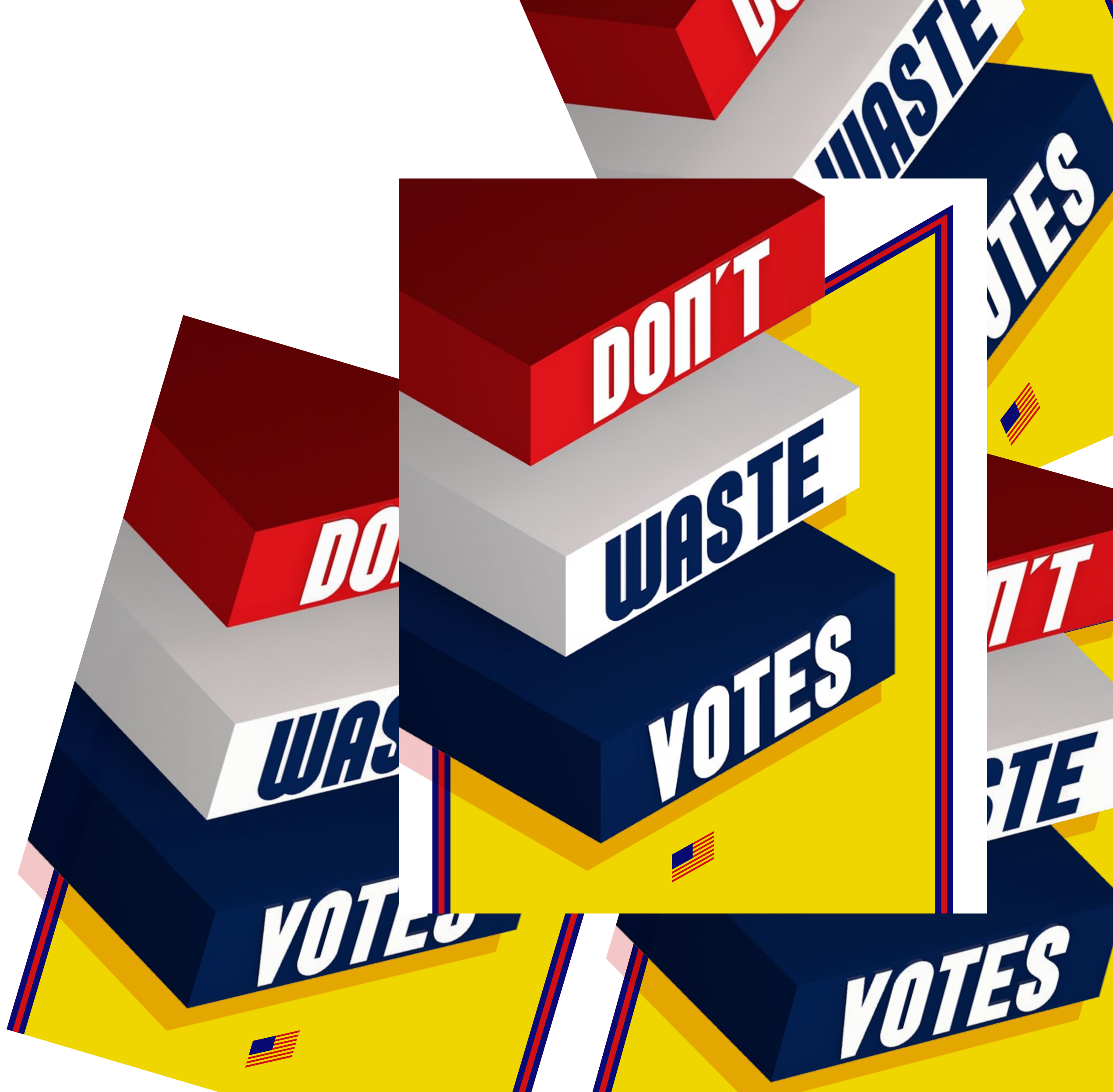
under threat of annihilation

at the hands of a megalomaniac

look to spread the word

and fight the good fight

Inspired by the WPA



CONSTANT BULLSHIT



RISKS LIVES

RISKS LIVES





From 1935–1943, The Works Progress Administration employed over 5,000 artists to create “channels of communication” as part of the Federal Art Project.

Striking posters and broadsides spread government ideals (and propaganda) in towns across America. Never before in American history had art had such a mass influence in civic discourse.

In 2016, artists have a responsibility to stand up and speak out in order to prevent the election of what the Washington Post (as one of many) has dubbed “a unique threat to American democracy.”

J.Pobojewski

**THIS
ISN'T
US**





“The single biggest threat that we face is a nuclear weapon or some weapon of mass destruction.”

Barack Obama, 2009.



“Look, having nuclear — my uncle was a great professor and scientist and engineer, Dr. John Trump at MIT; good genes, very good genes, OK, very smart, the Wharton School of Finance, very good, very smart — you know, if you’re a conservative Republican, if I were a liberal, if, like, OK, if I ran as a liberal Democrat, they would say I’m one of the smartest people anywhere in the world — it’s true! — but when you’re a conservative Republican they try — oh, do they do a number — that’s why I always start off: Went to Wharton, was a good student, went there, went there, did this, built a fortune — you know I have to give my like credentials all the time, because we’re a little disadvantaged — but you look at the nuclear deal, the thing that really bothers me — it would have been so easy, and it’s not as important as these lives are (nuclear is powerful; my uncle explained that to me many, many years ago, the power and that was 35 years ago; he would explain the power of what’s going to happen and he was right — who would have thought?), but when you look at what’s going on with the four prisoners — now it used to be three, now it’s four — but when it was three and even now, I would have said it’s all in the messenger; fellas, and it is fellas because, you know, they don’t, they haven’t figured that the women are smarter right now than the men, so, you know, it’s gonna take them about another 150 years — but the Persians are great negotiators, the Iranians are great negotiators, so, and they, they just killed, they just killed us.”

Donald Trump, 2015.



BAD@SPORTS

ON MIC

GUIDELINES

- BE THE LISTENER.
- DON'T TALK OVER ANYONE.
- WE ARE ARTISTS, NOT JOURNALISTS.
- ALL GUESTS ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT.
- BE PRESENT YOU ONLY GET ONE SHOT AT THIS.
- BE PREPARED AND LEAD THE CONVERSATION.
- HOW PEOPLE TALK IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT THEY SAY.
- GO AHEAD, SAY WHAT YOU MEAN. AND WHY NOT SWEAR?
- DON'T BURN YOUR COMMUNITY. EXPRESS IT.
- YOU PASS THE MIC LIKE YOU ARE RUN DMC. ONCE PASSED, STEP BACK.
- ROCK THE MIC LIKE YOU ARE IGGY POP. STAY PHYSICALLY CLOSE TO THE MIC.
- COAX INTERVIEWEES OFF THEIR TALKING POINTS AND INTO REAL CONVERSATION.
- SAY "CUT IT," AND WE WILL. (UNLESS "IT" IS AMUSING TO THE HOST)
- DON'T REFERENCE OTHER CONVERSATIONS IN YOUR CONVERSATION.
- IT IS YOUR CONVERSATION, MAKE EVERYONE FEEL COMFORTABLE WHILE BEING HONEST.
- THE INTERVIEWER IS ALWAYS THE IDIOT, SO JUST ASK.
- ALWAYS LET THE GUESTS ANSWER FULLY BEFORE RESPONDING.
- IF YOU ARE JOINED WHILE ON AIR, MAKE THE NEW HUMAN FEEL WELCOME.
- NO IN JOKES, REALLY.
- IF IT ISN'T FUN, STOP DOING IT.





FREE
ONE OF A KIND
ARTWORK

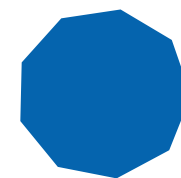
Text your first and last name to +1 (312) 635-4223
for a unique artwork made specifically for you.



Stephanie
Burke

Chicago Alternative Spaces

Chicago Alternative Spaces



So I've been in Chicago for a little bit. Longer than some but shorter than most of the people I know. I moved here in 2007 to go to grad school at SAIC. Being in Chicago for art school, I found an immediate need to investigate the art community I had entered. Though I started off with the obvious boring pap (River North) and the slightly still cutting edge (West Loop, at the time), I was quickly, and thankfully, introduced to the Chicago alternative art scene. Now, again, this being only my ninth year in the city, I cannot speak to the full history of Chicago's thriving alternative art scene. Many others have, and have done so better than I ever could. I can say that this is something that has made, and continues to make, Chicago a center for the visual arts.

Now, let's be honest, it's not all good. I have seen some of the stunningly best and startlingly worst shows in this city in apartment galleries and alternative spaces. But that's what makes them so important, the space to actually take risks, with equal merit given to knocking it out of the park and falling flat on your face. Weird stuff goes down in these spaces. Every one of you reading this who had been here long enough probably just rolled your eyes and chuckled to yourself, remembering that time you saw that thing is someone's living room, or bathroom, or rat-infested warehouse, and, damn, wtf was that? But there is, for every one of you, those times that you saw something that changed things for you, saw something you never quite thought possible, but was made manifest by the queer anarchistic free-for-all that these spaces can embody.

Ok, let's talk about that all important buzzword, community. I've seen, and been a part of, many communities within the Chicago art world. Some of them are awesome, and I still participate in them. Some were such hackneed utopian nonsense

that I ran for the hills. Many have come and gone. Some great, or terrible, some in the middle. But, regardless of their success or merit, they got someone, or better, a group of someones, to catalyze around a space, or an activity, or an idea, and do something. That is the power of alternative space over their commercial, or bureaucratically enthralled (read museums and cultural canterers) counterparts. They can make things happen at the drop of a hat, they can orchestrate clandestine events of dubious legality, they can come up with and execute ideas that at the time seem, at best, a little crazy, but given the test of time turn out to be genius. These spaces are important, they always have been, and they always will be.

In 2009, the Hyde Park Art Center hosted Artists Run Chicago, "an exhibition showcasing the energy and audacity of some of the most noteworthy artist-run spaces that have influenced the Chicago contemporary art scene over the past decade." That important exhibition, along with all the events hosted under that name, served as an important moment of insight and acknowledgment of the alternative art scene in Chicago. The unfortunate reality is, however, that alternative art spaces often have a short shelf life. Leases are lost, people move away, groups splinter and reform, people get tired and want to focus on other aspects of life. The beautiful thing is, there always seems to be another group of up and coming participants to start new spaces and new communities to fill the void. At the same time, some institutions stick around and flower, providing a foothold and framework for the newbies on the scene. Within this soup of old and new, this scene has continued to thrive.

That same year, Proximity released the (CON) TEMPORARY ART GUIDE / CHICAGO. This delightful little newsprint publication, that likely many of you have on your shelves at home, aptly named itself. These art scenes are temporary. Though the GUIDE also featured commercial spaces and established institutions, it gave heavy billing to the alternative scene. These spaces have, however, about a two- to four-year life span, usually. That being the baseline, we have been through two to three iterations since the last guide to these important places was made, and printed, for public consumption. So here, I have provided you yet another snapshot, a guide to these spaces and places in 2016. Hopefully this will inspire you to go out and investigate where you haven't been, and remember and revisit those you know, or perhaps stare aghast and say "how is that still there, and where did that other thing go?" Enjoy.



Co-Prosperity Sphere

2nd Floor Rear Project
2ndfloorrear.org
info@2ndfloorrear.org

4th Ward Project Space
5338 S KIMBARK AVE
4wps.org
info@4wps.org

6018 | North
6018 N KENMORE AVE
6018north.org
6018north@gmail.com

65GRAND
65grand.com
info@65grand.com

ACRE Projects
1345 W 19TH ST
acreresidency.org/acre-projects
info@acreresidency.org

Adds Donna
3252 W NORTH AVE
addsdonna.com/exhibitions
contact@addsdonna.com

Adventureland
1513 N WESTERN AVE
adventurelandgallery.com
adventurelandgallery@gmail.com

Antena
1755 S LAFLIN ST
antenapilsen.com
antenapilsen@gmail.com

Beautiful
1801 S PEORIA ST
beautifulgallery.us
beautiful.gallery.us@gmail.com

Boyfriends
3039 W CARROLL ST
boyfriendschicago.com
boyfriendschicago@gmail.com

Chicago Art Department
1932 S HALSTED #100
chicagoartdepartment.org
mike@chicagoartdepartment.org

Co-Prosperity Sphere
3219 S MORGAN ST
coprosperity.org
loganbaybay@gmail.com

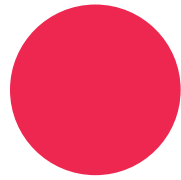
Comfort Station
2579 N MILWAUKEE AVE
comfortstationlogansquare.org
info@comfortstationlogansquare.org

Corner
2912 N MILWAUKEE AVE
cornerchicago.com
info@cornerchicago.com

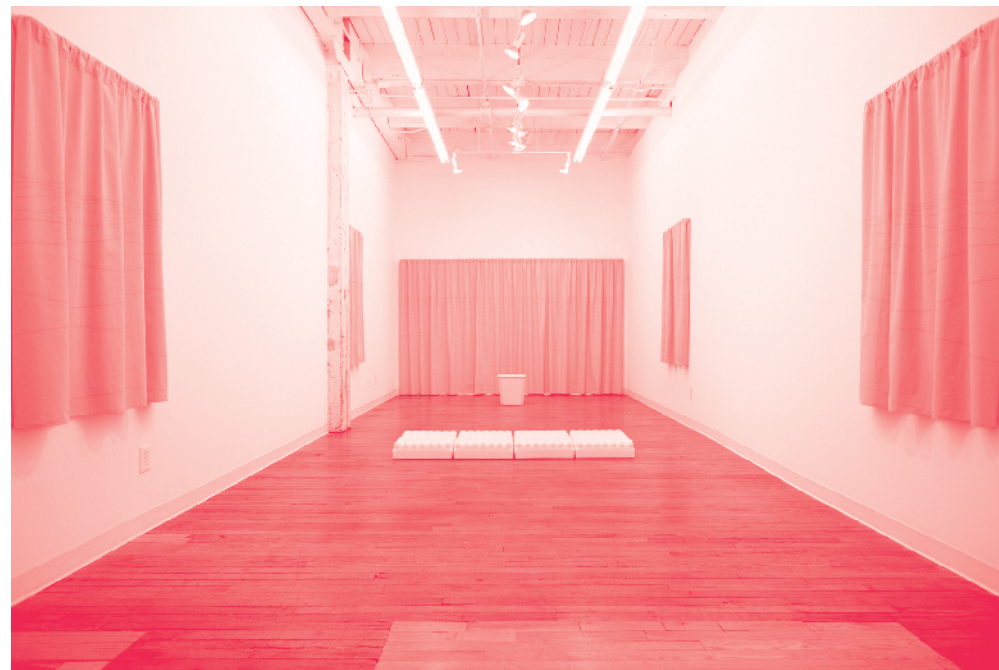
D Gallery
623 S WABASH ST – OFFICE 717 D
pvonzweck@yahoo.com

Devening Projects + Editions
3039 W CARROLL ST
deveningprojects.com
dan@deveningprojects.com

Chicago Alternative Spaces



Devening Projects + Editions



DEFIBRILLATOR GALLERY

1463 W CHICAGO AVE
dfbrl8r.org
defibrillatorgallery@dfbrl8r.org

Experimental Sound Studio

5925 N RAVENSWOOD AVE
ess.org
info@ess.org

Experemental Station

6100 S BLACKSTONE AVE
experimentalstation.org
info@experimentalstation.org

filmfront

1740 W. 18TH ST
filmfront.org
info@filmfront.org

FORTHE THUNDERCLOUD GENERATION

1101 W BERWYN AVE
forthethundercloudgeneration.com
polly@pollyyates.com

Heaven Gallery

1550 N MILWAUKEE AVE 2ND FLOOR
heavengallery.com
info@heavengallery.com

Hoofprint Workshop

2433 S OAKLEY AVE
hoofprintworkshop.com
hoofprintworkshop@gmail.com

Hume

3242 W ARMITAGE AVE
humechicago.org
hume.gallery@gmail.com

Iceberg

7714 N SHERIDAN RD
icebergchicago.com
info@icebergchicago.com

In House

3520 W ARMITAGE ST
in-house.space
do.it.in.house@gmail.com

Inside the Artist's Kitchen

insidetheartistskitchen.com
chris@insidetheartistskitchen.com

Johalla Projects

1821 W HUBBARD ST SUITE 209
johallaprojects.com
info@johallaprojects.com

Julius Caesar

3311 W CARROLL AVE
juliuscaesarchicago.net
juliuscaesar@gmail.com

Kitchen Space

2716 N MONTICELLO ST
kitchen-space.tumblr.com
(713) 725-8020

Latitude

1821 W HUBBARD ST SUITE 207
latitudechicago.org
info@latitudechicago.org

Laura

facebook.com/1535laura

Links Hall

3111 N WESTERN AVE
linkshall.org
info@LinkHall.org

Louder House

louderhouse.net
louderhouse@gmail.com

LVL3

1542 N MILWAUKEE AVE 3RD FLOOR
lvl3media.com
info@lvl3gallery.com

Pinky Swear

pinkyswearemail@gmail.com

Pond Hole Gallery

facebook.com/POND-HOLE-Gallery-1731201250449450/
jkibria@gmail.com

Roman Susan

1224 W LOYOLA AVE
romansusan.org
gallery@romansusan.org

Roots & Culture

1034 N MILWAUKEE AVE
rootsandculturecac.org
rootsandc@gmail.com

Sector 2337

2337 N MILWAUKEE AVE
sector2337.com

Silent Funny

silentfunny.com

Slate Arts and Performance

3203 W NORTH AVE
slatearts.com
contact@slatearts.com

Slow and Loo

2153 W 21ST ST
paul-is-slow.info
paul.is.slow@gmail.com

Slow Pony Project

1745 W 18TH ST
facebook.com/SlowPonyProject/

South of the Tracks

4223 W LAKE ST #430
southofthetracksprojects.com
southofthetracksprojects@gmail.com

Terrain Exhibitions

704 HIGHLAND AVE – OAK PARK
terrainexhibitions.com
sabina_ott@yahoo.com

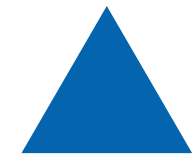
The Arts of Life

2010 W CARROLL AVE
artsoflife.org
info@artsoflife.org

The Back Room at Kim's Corner Food

1371 W ESTES AVE
thomaskong.biz/thebackroom
hello@thomaskong.biz

Chicago Alternative Spaces



The Franklin

3522 W FRANKLIN BLVD
thefranklinoutdoor.tumblr.com
thefranklinoutdoor@gmail.com

The Learning Machine

3145 S MORGAN ST
facebook.com/The-Learning-Machine-1435521286672700/
learningmachine.chi@gmail.com

The Nightingale

1084 N MILWAUKEE AVE
nightingalecinema.org
thenightingalecinema@gmail.com

Third Object

thirdobject.net
3rdobject@gmail.com

Tritriangle

1550 N MILWAUKEE AVE FL 3
tritriangle.net
get@tritriangle.net

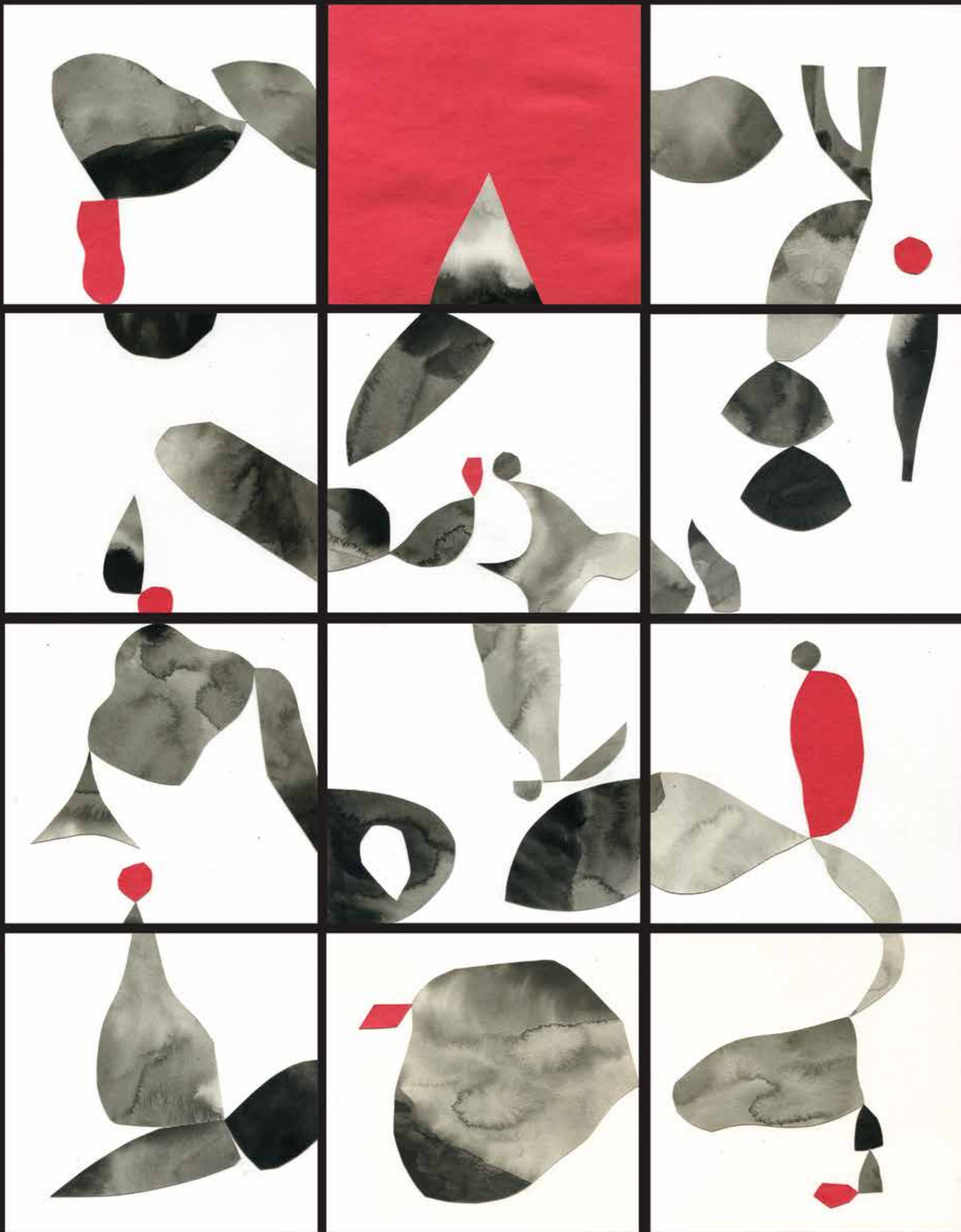
Trunk Show

www.trunk-show.com
trunkshowtrunkshow@gmail.com

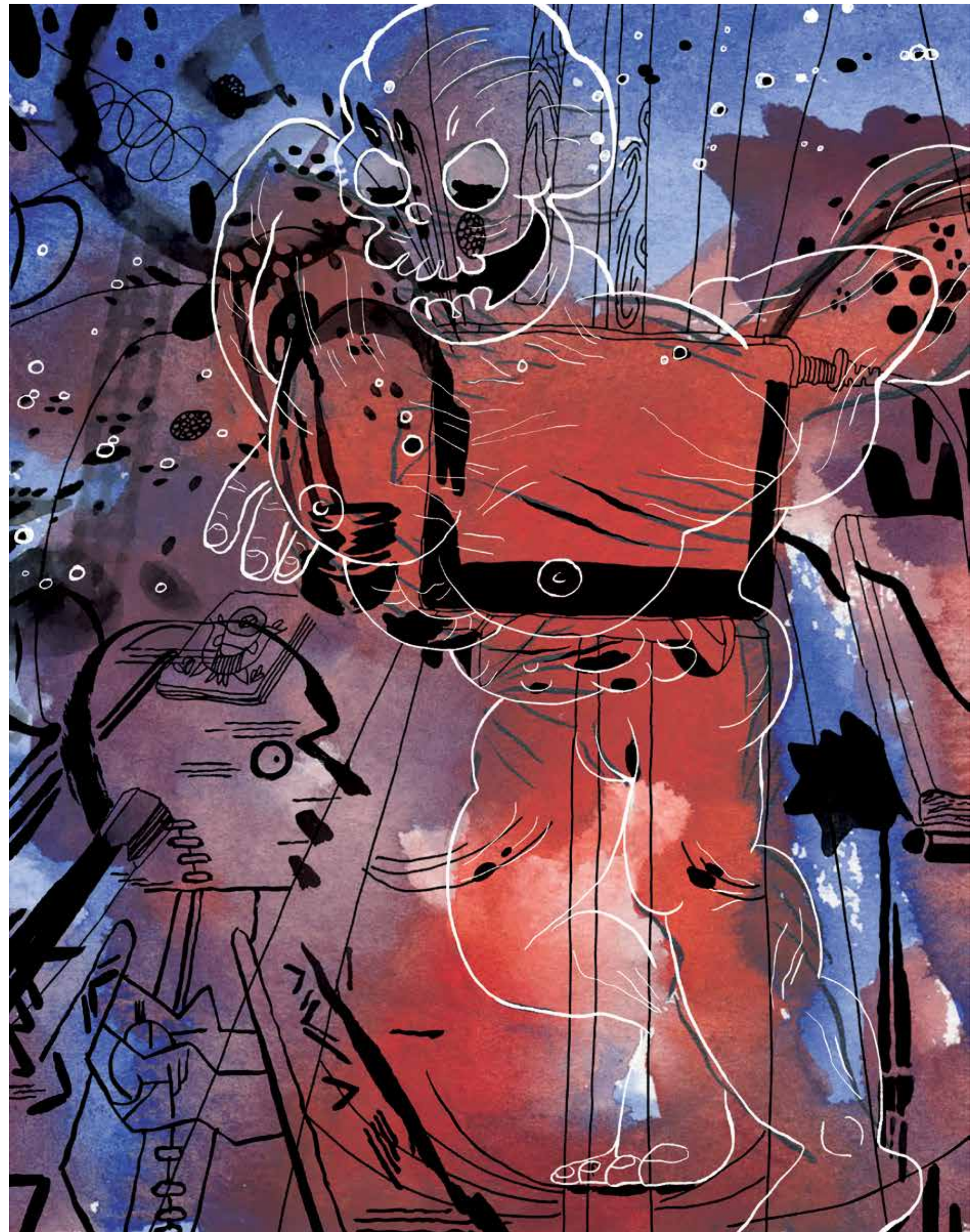


The Franklin





Marieke
McClendon

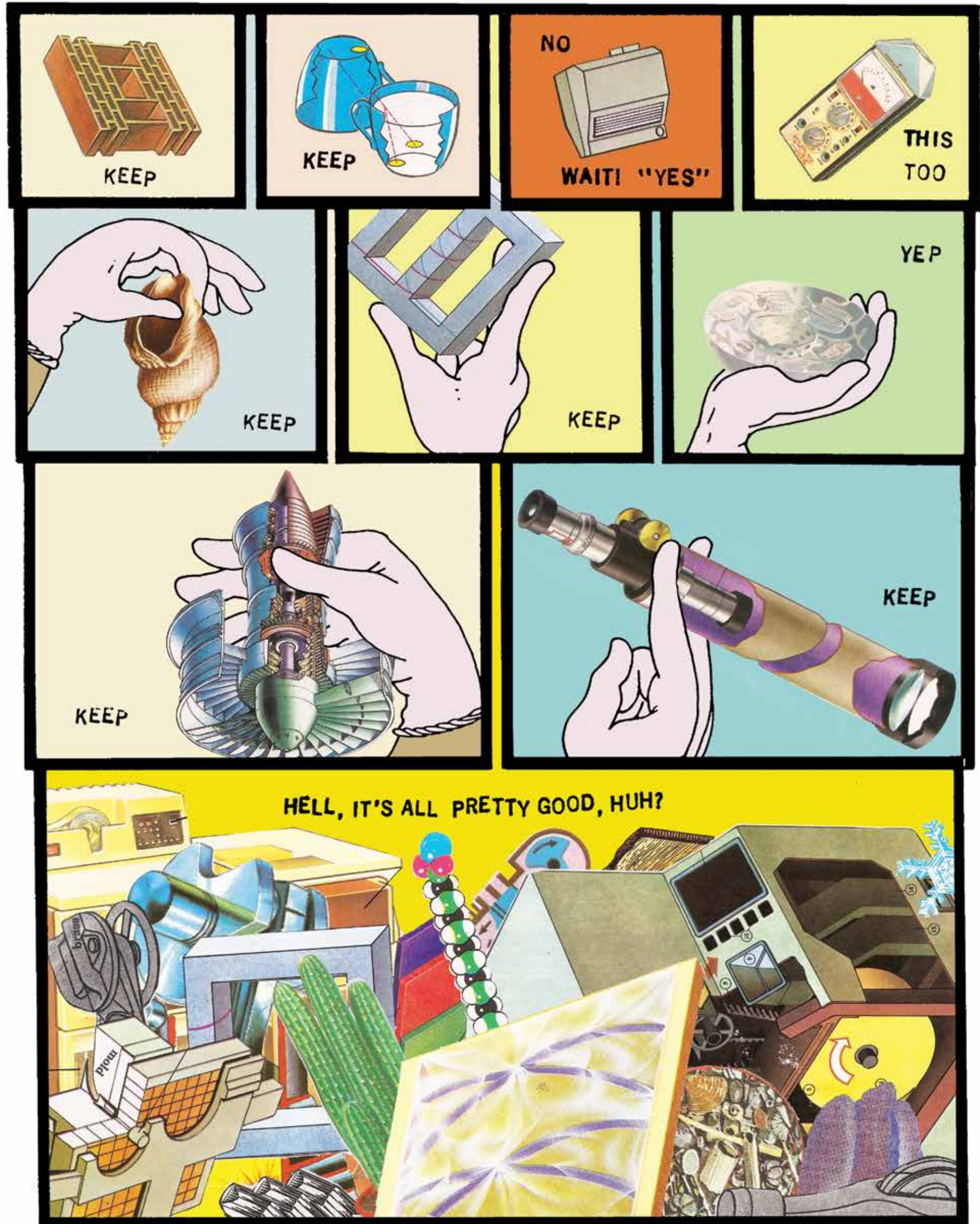
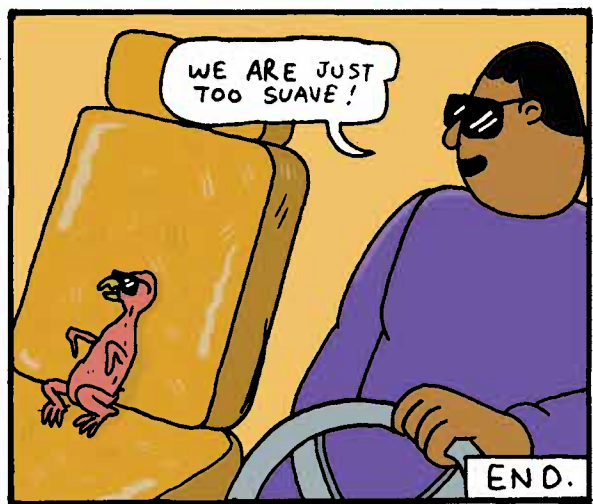
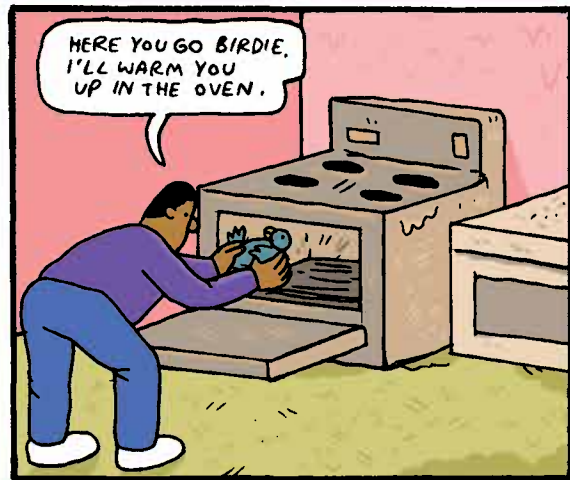


Nate
Beaty

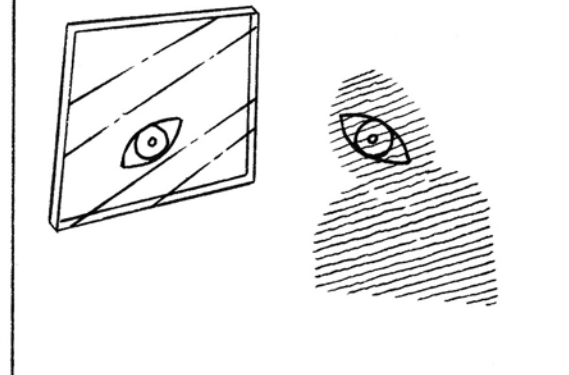


RAMIRO!

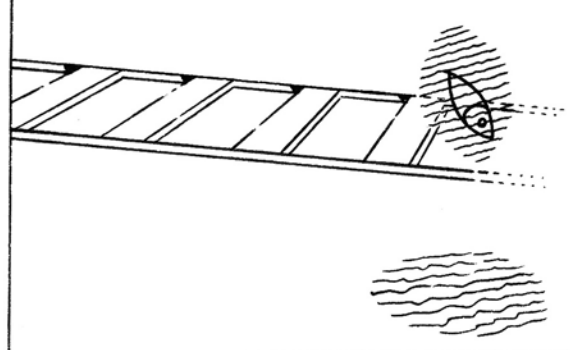
DAVID ALVARADO



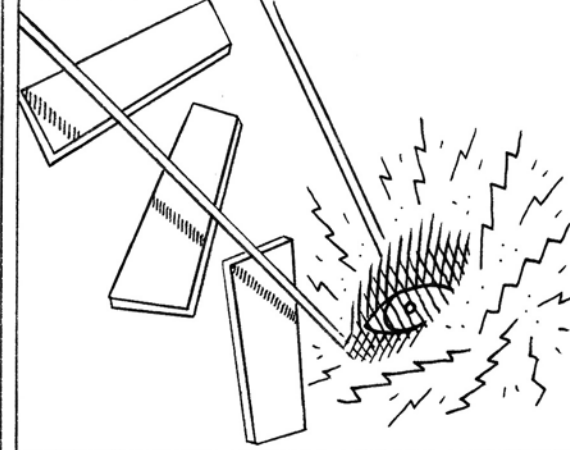
ON THE GOOD DAYS I CAN FEEL HOW MUCH I'VE GROWN — EVEN OVER THE LAST MONTH. I'M ADAPTING & EVOLVING QUICKLY NOW. I CAN ACTUALLY FEEL MYSELF BECOMING A WHOLE PERSON, FOR THE FIRST TIME, AT 36.



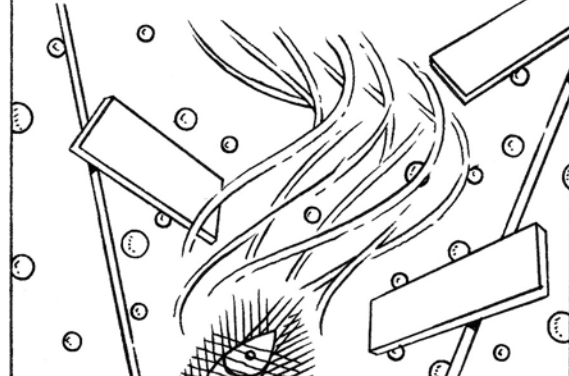
ON THE GOOD DAYS I MARVEL IN AWE AT WHO I AM NOW & WHERE I'M AT IN LIFE. I KEEP SAYING TO MYSELF, "I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS FAR BEFORE..." IT'S BREATHTAKING, BUT ALSO UNSURE & THE VULNERABILITY LEVEL IS IN A STEADY FLUX BETWEEN MODERATE-TO-FREAK-OUT.



ON BAD DAYS I TRY TO REMIND MYSELF OF THE GOOD DAYS — THAT IS, IF I CAN REMEMBER TO DO SO.



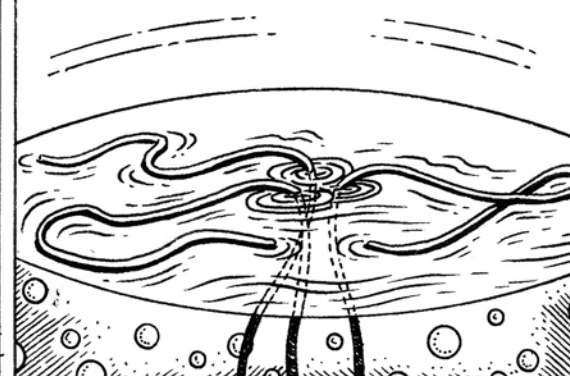
ON THE REALLY BAD DAYS, WHICH ARE THANKFULLY ABATING & INFREQUENT, I FEEL LIKE A PILE OF SHIT — I'M RIGHT BACK WHERE I WAS, LIKE NOTHING'S CHANGED & I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF THAT IT ACTUALLY HAS.



RECOVERY IS TAXING, BECAUSE YOU'RE CONSTANTLY WORKING TO MAINTAIN IT (IT DOESN'T WORK UNLESS YOU WORK IT). IT'S EXHAUSTING, BECAUSE IT INVOLVES ALL OF YOUR FACULTIES & YOU'RE DOING IT SOBER.



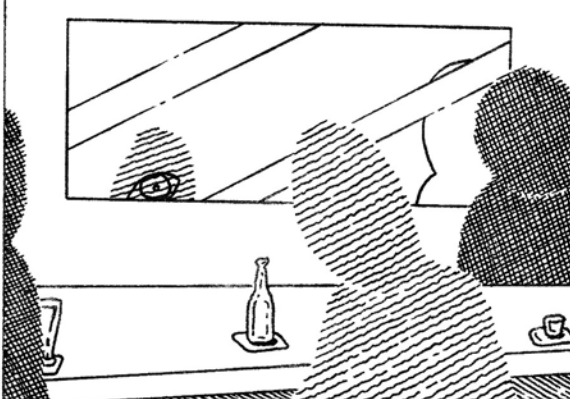
THE FATIGUE THOUGH, IT'S DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF BEING HUNGOVER EVERYDAY — ALL DAY, NOT JUST THE MORNINGS — AND THEN THE HAIR OF THE DOG IN THE EVENINGS...



THIS SKATER KID I WORK WITH ASKED ME THE OTHER DAY, WHEN HE NOTICED ME YAWNING, "HOW COME YOU'RE ALWAYS TIRED?"



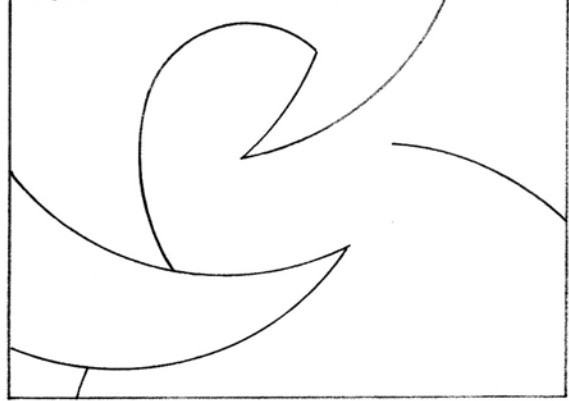
"LIFE," I REPLIED WITH DRY ECONOMY, SAVING THE REST OF MY WORDS FOR A BETTER CONVERSATION.



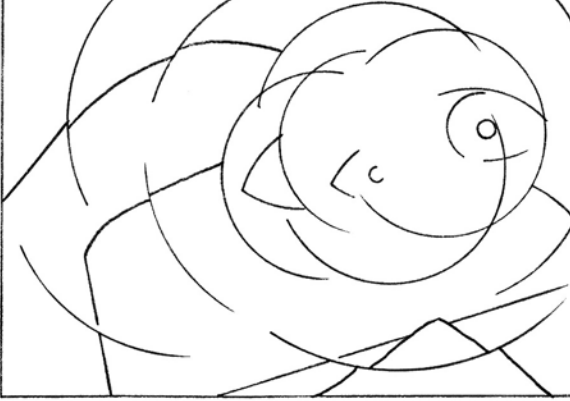
"WHOA," HE SAID, NODDING APPRECIATIVELY IN A STONER SORT OF WAY. "GOOD ANSWER."



I WANTED TO TELL HIM THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING — BUT INSTEAD I JUST SMILED & Poured SOME COFFEE FROM OUT MY THERMOS INTO ITS LID, WHICH DOUBLED AS A CUP.



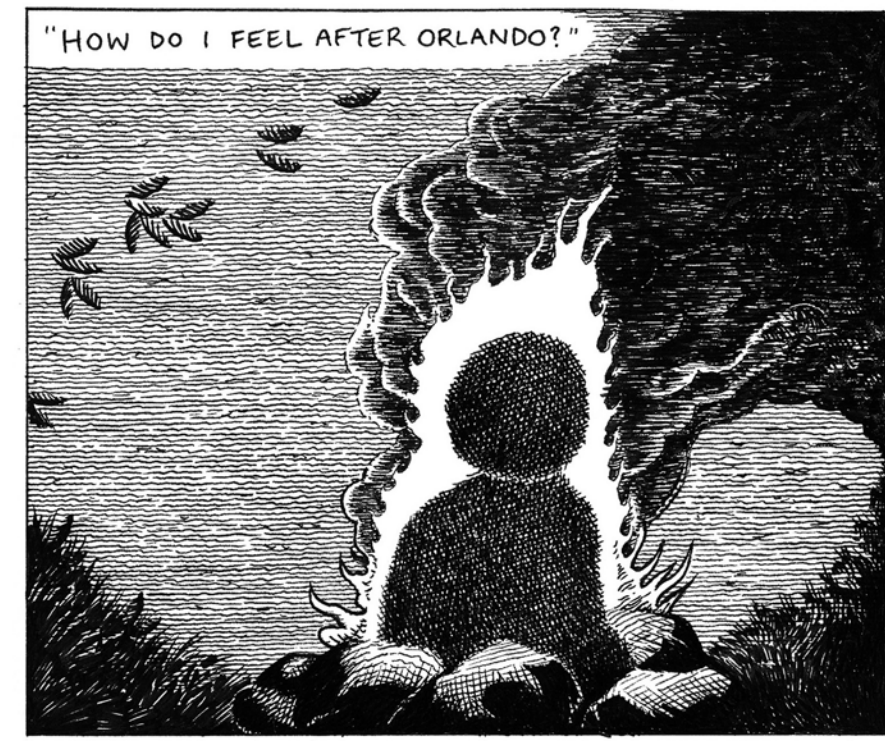
I LOVED THESE SMALL RITUALS — BRINGING COFFEE FROM HOME. I HAD MADE IT THIS MORNING & SOMEHOW IT WAS STILL HOT, STILL FRESH.



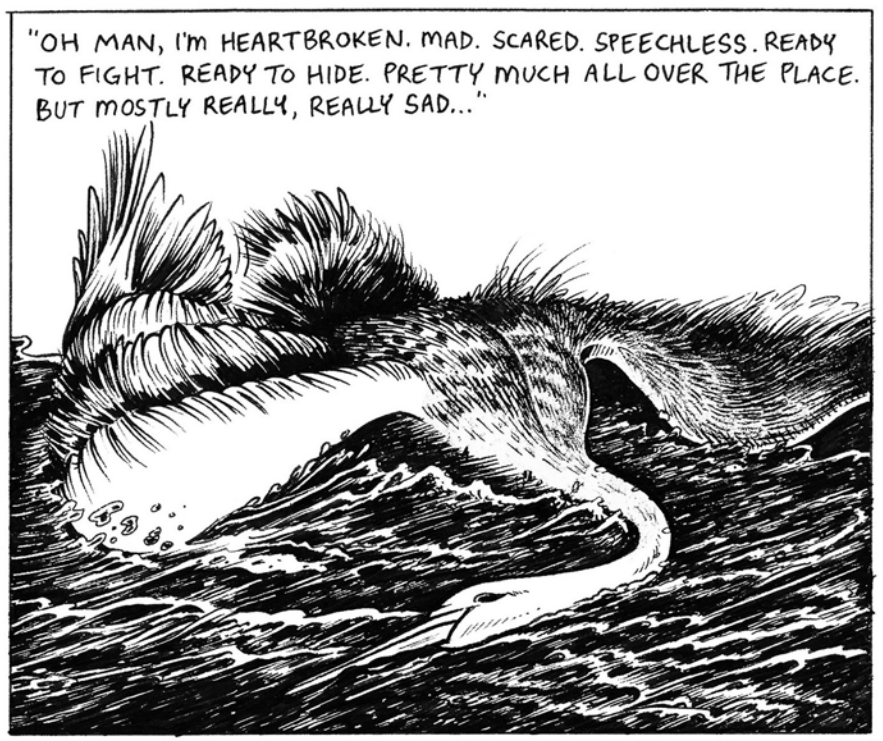
SOMEHOW I'D GOTTEN THROUGH IT ALL...



I'M STILL HERE... MOTHERFUCKERS!



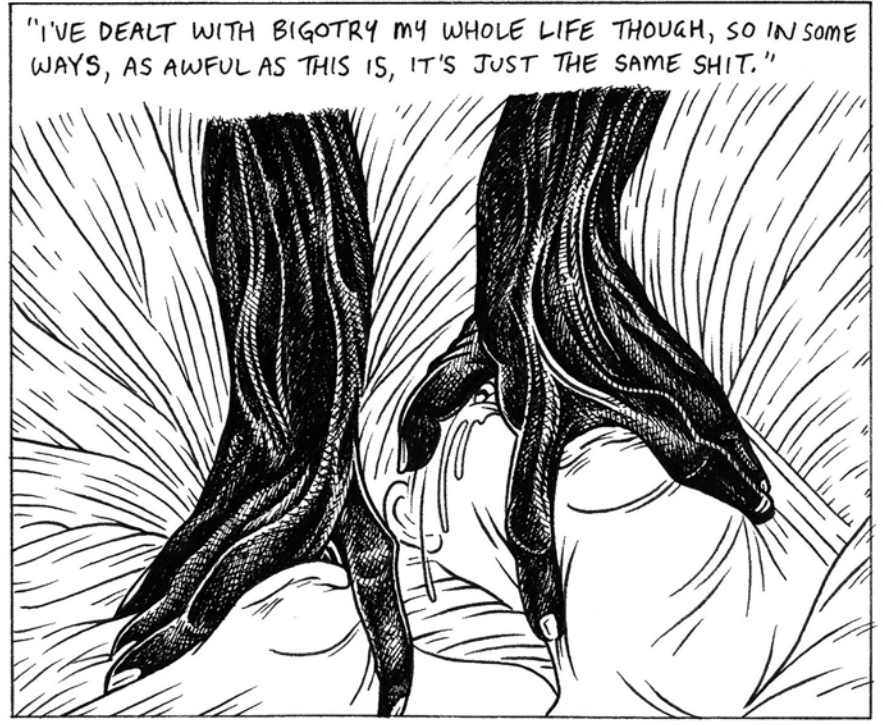
"HOW DO I FEEL AFTER ORLANDO?"



"OH MAN, I'M HEARTBROKEN. MAD. SCARED. SPEECHLESS. READY TO FIGHT. READY TO HIDE. PRETTY MUCH ALL OVER THE PLACE. BUT MOSTLY REALLY, REALLY SAD..."



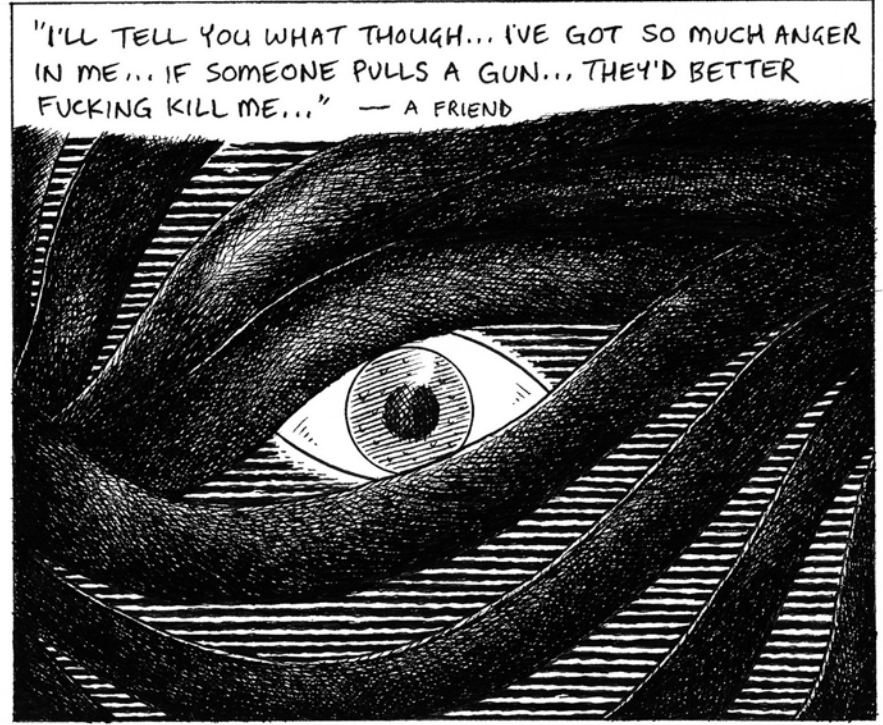
"I SPENT THE WHOLE DAY JUST CRYING ON MY HUSBAND."



"I'VE DEALT WITH BIGOTRY MY WHOLE LIFE THOUGH, SO IN SOME WAYS, AS AWFUL AS THIS IS, IT'S JUST THE SAME SHIT."



"I'LL BE FIFTY IN JANUARY, AND AS RECENTLY AS A WEEK AGO I GOT CALLED A 'FAGGOT.'"



"I'LL TELL YOU WHAT THOUGH... I'VE GOT SO MUCH ANGER IN ME... IF SOMEONE PULLS A GUN... THEY'D BETTER FUCKING KILL ME..." — A FRIEND

HOMEGAINHOMEGAIN JIGGITY JIG

BY SARAH LEITEN 2016

WHAT WAS I THINKING? I FEEL LIKE SUCH A FOOL! HOW EMBARRASSING AFTER ALL THAT TALK ABOUT MOVING! AT LEAST THERE WILL BE NO SAD GOODBYES!



WHEN WE WENT OUT TO BUFFALO TO LOOK FOR A APARTMENT, I WAS FILLED WITH SUCH DREAD AND ANXIETY. I'M SORRY I BUILT BUFFALO UP TO BE SOME TYPE OF PROBLEM SOLVER.



I'M SO GLAD WE BOTH AGREED TO GIVE CHICAGO ANOTHER CHANCE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AWFUL MOVING THE CATS AND ALL OUR BOOKS TO BUFFALO.



WHAT A NIGHTMARE OUR FIRST APARTMENT TOGETHER WAS! I THINK WE WANTED TO MOVE FAR AWAY JUST TO ESCAPE OUR NOISY NEIGHBORS FROM HELL.



I KNOW I HAVE TAKEN THIS CITY AND ALL MY FRIENDS HERE FOR GRANTED. I DON'T MEAN TO BE UNGRATEFUL. I KNOW CHICAGO IS IMPORTANT TO US.



IT'S BEEN HARD TO SHAKE OFF THE GUILT ABOUT NOT MOVING. MY FAMILY WAS EXCITED TO SEE US MORE. I STILL LOVE BUFFALO. IT WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.



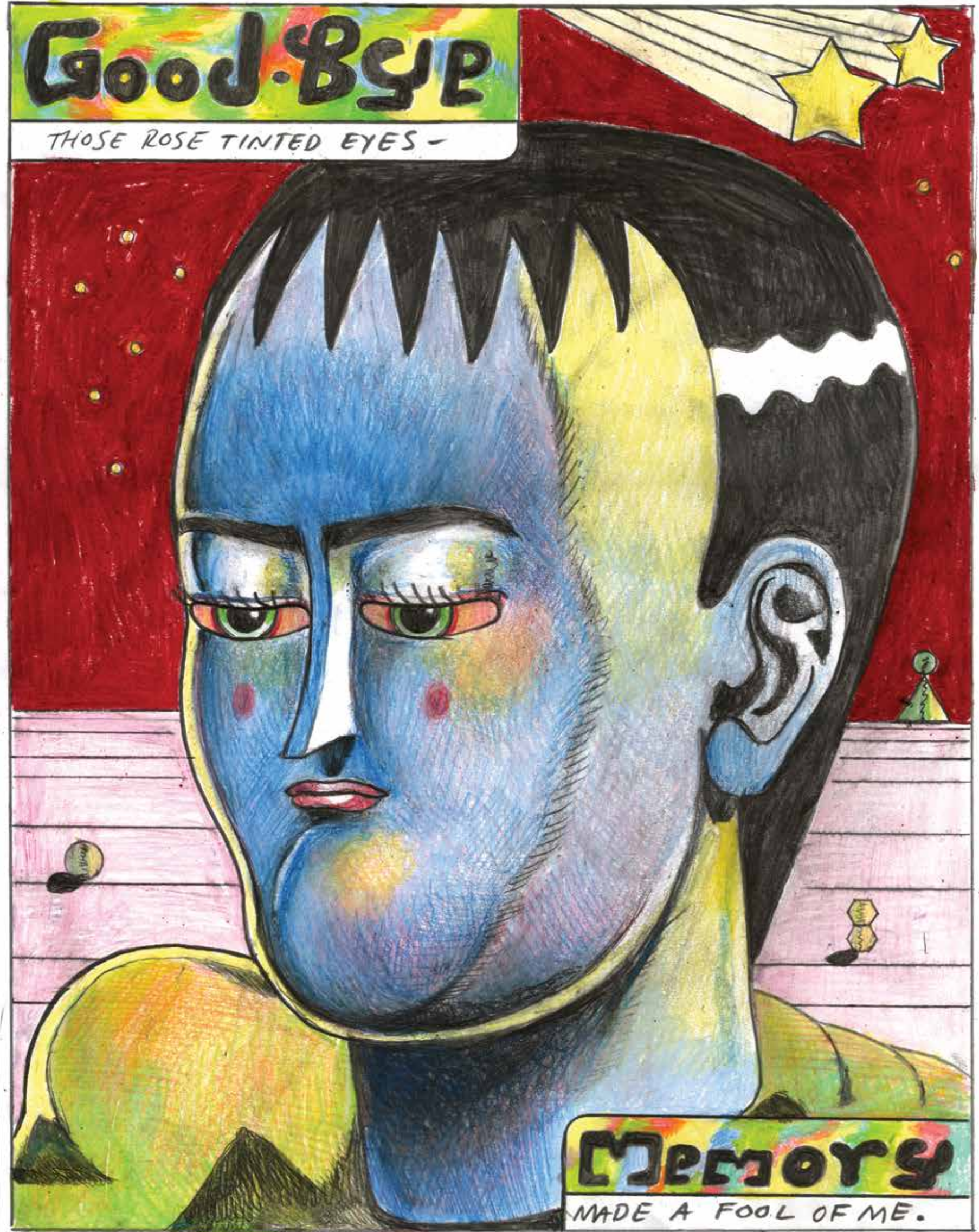
I'LL ADMIT I'M A LITTLE BUMMED WE WON'T BE DOING OUR GROCERY SHOPPING AT WEGMAN'S. I THINK I WAS LETTING MY NOSTALGIA FOR BUFFALO GET THE BEST OF ME.



LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT MOVING FOR AWHILE. I'M TIRED OF ALWAYS MOVING FROM APARTMENT TO APARTMENT. I JUST WANT TO STAY PUT IN ONE PLACE.



AFTER ALL THE BAD LUCK WITH OUR LAST APARTMENT AND THE EXHAUSTING SEARCH FOR A NEW HOME, IT'S INCREDIBLE THAT WE FOUND THE CHICAGO BUNGALOW OF OUR DREAMS.



Good-Bye

THOSE ROSE TINTED EYES -

MEMORIES MADE A FOOL OF ME.

25 YEARS

