

# Lit Stream

MAY-JUNE '21



James A. Garfield

gar•gan•tu•an (gär-gän'choo-an) adj. Of immense size; gigantic. [After the hero of *Quixote* and *Pantagruel* by Rabelais.]  
gar•den (gär'dn) n. 1. A plot of land used for growing flowers, vegetables, herbs, or fruit. 2. Often gardens. Grounds laid out with ornamental plants and trees and used for public recreation or display. 3. A yard or lawn. 4. A fertile, well-cultivated region. To plant or tend a garden. [  
gar•den•er n. A city of S CA. a Los Angeles. Pop. 143,050.  
gar•den•er n. 1. A shrub having large, thick leaves. 2. The large leaves of this plant. [After (730?-91).]  
gar•den•er n. (gär'dn-və-rī'tē) adj. Remarkable.  
gar•den•er n. (gär'dēld'), James Abram. 1831-1909. 20th President of the U.S. (1881); considered

nerve cord. [Gk., cyste tumor  
on'ic (-ōn'ik) adj.  
ing'glē) adj. -gli•er,  
iteration of GANGLING  
nk (gāng'plāngk) n.  
as a removable  
a pier. [  
no (gāng'grēn)  
and decay of bod  
nt blood supp  
disease. [  
one v. —gan'gre  
(gāng'stər) n. A me  
group of criminal  
ter•dom n. —gang's  
(gāng'wā') n. 1. A  
pper deck. 2. See g  
d to clear a pas  
area. [  
(jō) n. Marijuana  
(n) n. A large sea  
coastal regions, having white plum  
black wingtips. [  
ont'lit, gānt'-) n. 1. Var. of  
2. Var. of gauntlet.  
(trē) n., pl. -tries. 1. A bridge-  
for a traveling crane. 2. Aero-  
massive vertical frame used in  
or servicing a rocket. [  
den frame.]  
counting Office.  
Var. of jail.  
a wall;



Our goal is to publish early, fast drafts of up-and-coming writers. The purpose of this magazine is to encourage writers to overcome the challenge of the blank page and create.

## IN THIS ISSUE: Featured Writers & Artists

### Frank C. Modica | WRITER

Frank C Modica is a retired teacher who taught children with special needs for over 34 years. He grew up on the Southside of Chicago but now calls Urbana, Illinois home. His work is forthcoming or has appeared in Beyond Words Literary Magazine, Blue Mountain Review, and Raconteur Review.

Instagram: @frankcmodica

### Marie-Kristin Hofmann | WRITER

Marie-Kristin Hofmann is a 29-year-old content marketer currently living in Berlin. Her poetry is inspired by her solo travel experiences, Berlin rooftop nights and the city's lost souls still looking for a home inside themselves. She holds a bachelor's degree in American literature from Mannheim University and a master's degree in Intercultural Communication from Passau University.

Instagram: @word\_enchantress

### Nicole Brooks | WRITER

Nicole Brooks is an author of women's fiction, satire, horror and upmarket fiction that speak to larger themes and sociopolitical issues, with relatable, compelling characters, and a sense of humor. Formerly an Environmental Scientist, now a full-time mother, Nicole tries to fit writing into her life every minute the kids are at school. An artist and nature enthusiast, she lives with her family just outside Calgary, Alberta.

Instagram: @nicolebrooksauthor

## OUR STAFF

### Editor-In-Chief

S.K. Ellis

### Staff Editor

J. Sefi March

### Staff Writer

Frederick Ronan

### Staff Artist

DENALI

## IN THIS ISSUE: Featured Writers & Artists

### Jhazzmyn Joiner | WRITER

Jhazzmyn Joiner is a native of Atlanta, but she was born in Las Vegas, NV. She recently graduated from Georgia Tech with a B.S. in Literature, Media, and Communication.

Instagram: @quotedbyjhane.

### Michelle Kie | ARTIST

Michelle Kie is an upcoming junior at Chadwick School. She enjoys drawing a wide variety of animals to show of their beauty. When she isn't drawing, she loves to hang out with her friends.

### Andrew Kie | ARTIST

Andrew Kie is an upcoming sophomore at Chadwick School. His drawings are inspired by real-world events such as global warming while his photos display the beauty of the world. In his free time, he loves to chat and play with his friends.

### Megan Kirkpatrick | WRITER

Megan Kirkpatrick is a rising poet residing in the northeastern United States where she is a junior in high school. She has been writing for the past two years and is almost entirely self-taught. Above all else, poetry has taught Megan to use her own voice, and she seeks to do so with both honesty and artistry.

Instagram: @meganmadewords

### Christian Garduno | WRITER

Christian Garduno's work can be read in over 55 literary magazines. He is the recipient of the 2019 national Willie Morris Award for Southern Poetry. Christian Garduno is a Finalist in the 2020-2021 Tennessee Williams & New Orleans Writing Contest. He lives and writes along the South Texas coast with his wonderful wife Nahemie and young son Dylan.

Instagram: @letsfly2000

### André van Hooren | WRITER

André van Hooren (1961), born in the Netherlands, lives in Switzerland, started his career as a copywriter, and hopes to end as a novelist. In between, he has held various leadership positions at global professional services firms. Inspired by Philip Roth and Jonathan Franzen-also by The New Yorker.

Instagram: @adrianus.writer

### Harleen Kaur | ARTIST

Harleen is an artist based in India. Professionally qualified MBA, she became an artist out of her passion. She works with mixed media and draws her inspiration from real life experiences and feelings.

Instagram: @harleen\_harrymakes

### A.N. Keerthana Rao | WRITER

A N KEERTHANA RAO hails from Bangalore, India. While she is an academically interested person highly focused on her career of pursuing Chartered accountancy, by all her heart, she is a poet keen on writing some heartfelt pieces. Over a period of 1 year, she has been published in about 10 anthologies and wishes to have her own book one day!

Instagram: @poetry\_love\_08



## IN THIS ISSUE: Featured Writers & Artists

### Shua Cho | WRITER, ARTIST

Shua Cho is happiest when she's in a machine shop or a museum. Her works are often inspired by her experiences with robotics, marine biology research, and personal heritage. If she could only take one physical book with her on her journey to the first lunar colony, she would immediately choose Cannery Row by John Steinbeck.

### Luke Levi | WRITER

Luke Levi graduated from Texas State University with a BBA in Finance. His haiku can be found in Humana Obscura's Spring/Summer 2021 issue. You can often find him sitting outside, listening to birds singing in the Texas Hill Country.

Instagram : @lukelevipoet.

### Unnati Pal | WRITER

Unnati Pal is an emerging poetess from India, Surefire is her penname by profession she is an engineer but her heart and soul resides in writing. She is a deep thinker and can make you escape in her own realm of words.

Instagram: @\_surefire\_

### Jesse MacArthur | WRITER

Jesse MacArthur is a father, a husband, a poet, and a dreamer. He is Canadian born and raised, but currently living in Washington State. He wants the world to see and know love and raw emotion.

Instagram: @j.m\_poems

### Alanna Hammel | WRITER

Alanna Hammel is a 19-year-old student from Wexford, Ireland. Her work has featured in several anthologies, newspapers and magazines. She is currently editing her debut novel.

Instagram: @alannawithafada

### A.N.N. | WRITER

Ahmod Nusaiba Nawar is a teen author who lives in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is a student and mainly a poet who composes delicate, deep, realistic & soothing poems. She is the author of the book 'Perspectives of Love and Life'.

Instagram: @poetrydom.\_.\_.\_

### Faye Kavanagh | WRITER

Faye has been writing since last year. She has written over 300 poems, having recently had one of her poems published. She is 4 years into my recovery of alcoholism.

Instagram: @fayekavanagh7

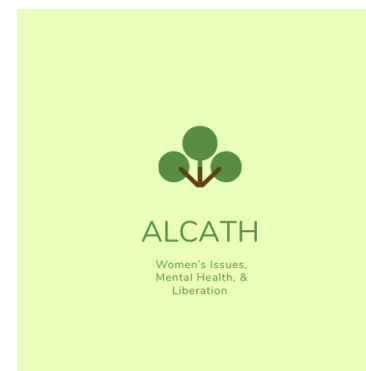
### Trevor Quint | WRITER

Trevor Quint, born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. Ever since he learned to write he has been inspired to write poems and stories.

Instagram: @poetic\_druid

# LitStream

*Is inspired by...*



### Louisa May Alcott + Sylvia Plath

Women's issues, mental health, and what liberation means to the author.



### Aldous Huxley + Ray Bradbury

Social commentary, utopias and dystopias, political analysis or commentary, and op-eds.



### Kurt Vonnegut + John Green

Satire, humor, and philosophy.





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# This Building Will Self-Destruct

Megan Kirkpatrick

I carved my silhouette and sliced  
Dangerously close to vital supply lines,  
Ripped a toenail off  
As a ticket for my feet  
Into last year's dress shoes.

I forgot for awhile  
That I am not fabric,  
I am living, breathing flesh.  
This body is a temple;  
Its walls only cleansable  
By soul fire and pure blood.

I am brittle, hence the label:

WARNING-  
WILL CRUMBLE AT THE ABSENCE OF A CORNERSTONE.

I am plastered in NO TRESPASSING signs  
And WELCOME signs  
And red light, green light, yellow light,  
Nevermind.  
This is now a construction zone,  
Please take the next right.

This temple is not holy.  
These walls are not white.

The day is new.  
Love covers a multitude.





# Two Hands

Megan Kirkpatrick

My daddy always tells me  
A bird in the hand beats  
Two in the bush and  
The funny thing is,  
He always catches.  
Everything.

Forgive me if I've erred in my computing, but  
Do I not have two hands?  
Shall I not tie caution to the tail  
Of the sparrow in my grasp  
And toss her into the breeze,  
A messenger pigeon screaming  
That I made it?  
Shall I not then take my steady hands,  
My trembling mind,  
And catch both birds as they fly at me from the thorns?

Would it still be wrong as long as I promise  
Never to forget  
That I've no more than two hands for holding?





# Whispered Lessons from My Subconscious

Megan Kirkpatrick

I wake up  
To voices in the kitchen.  
I don't smile.

My hands  
Slip themselves out from under my pillow.  
They look...  
Foreign.  
I'm strangely  
Afraid to touch them.

The voices fall steady.  
Not familiar,  
But almost.  
I still don't smile.

My hair  
Falls over my face.  
My hands  
Sweep it away.  
They don't  
Burn my skin like I expected.

Like the voices,  
My touch  
Is somewhere between  
Soft and shrapnel.  
I try  
Not to listen.  
I try  
Not to touch my skin.





# Ever-Present

Jhazzmyn Joiner

I took a walk.

For this once, I did not want the distracting sounds of my favorite tune blasting from my headphones. I wanted to completely immerse myself into this experience.

It was worth it.

I noticed that the same tree I passed every day was one of few that hadn't lost all of its leaves to fall. It was still standing proudly, with strength and courage.

I longed to stand in such a way.

I paused, for a moment, capturing its brilliance.

Then, I noticed the beauty of a couple of Cedar Waxwings with their subtle red tips. A few other birds also passed me by.

I knew nothing of them, so I did not even try to identify them, I just marveled at the way they'd glide through the open air.

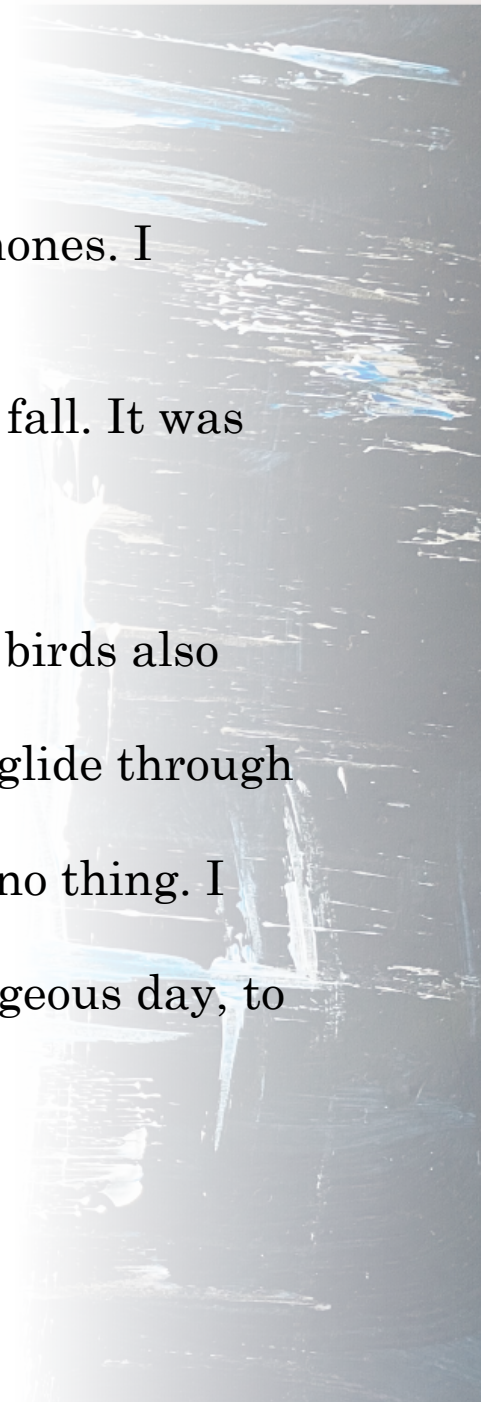
Staring up at their amazement, I longed for that freedom, that sense of belonging to no one and no thing. I noticed several other astonishing things along my journey.

Most importantly, I acknowledged the gratitude in my heart for the ability to witness such a gorgeous day, to be in this space,

to remove the veil and see what I had not seen so many times before.

On days when I feel low, I hope to remember this day.

This is a day that made me glad to be here,  
that made me never want to leave.





# Suitcase of Memories

Jhazzmyn Joiner

We leaned into one another, pressing our lips firmly together. A familiar gesture we shared many times before, yet this time was different. There was no electricity.  
It was like our outlet had short circuited.  
There were no fireworks.  
Nothing that made me feel like the Fourth of July.  
There was no fire.  
It had extinguished, leaving smoke to permeate the air.  
That smoke filled my lungs with this suffocating feeling.  
I knew that this was not a kiss of “I miss you,”  
or “I want you,” or “I need you,” or “I love you.”  
This was a kiss of “farewell,” and “it was nice knowing you,” And “goodbye,” and “so long.”  
I knew that we were moving from “somebody I know well” to “somebody that I used to know.”  
Processing this nearly brought me to my knees.  
But I maintained composure and went through with the kiss, like I would any old performance,  
because the show must go on.  
And as this sad ending to our show came to pass,  
I turned around, walked away, and never looked back,  
leaving you in my rearview,  
traveling with nothing but a suitcase of memories.







## PHOTOGRAPHY | ANDREW KIE



# A Woman Who Sacrificed!

A.N. Keerthana Rao

You were the road on which my wheels rolled,  
You were the meandering path where my feet strolled,  
You were the mellifluous tone, to which my heart beats,  
You were the colorful stroke to which my drawing completes!

You spoke adamant promises and sung songs of love,  
You asked me to fly to your world like the birds of dove!  
You enounced your dreams and asked me to play its part,  
My life anchored on your shore for a new journey to start!

Soon I realised I was merrily living your life,  
I had ignored my hankerings being your wife!  
Our dreams were only your dreams , it had only you in it,  
Our sky was your sky, and I happily flew in it!

But can you sometimes ask if I too had some desires?  
Can you sometimes ask if I had wishes that were yet to smoulder  
in my fires?  
Can you sometimes come to my hidden world and listen to the  
untold stories?  
Can you sometimes listen to my incomplete dreams that didn't  
bring glories?

Oh, you never asked but I would still love you,  
As now I have nothing left in my world above you,

But now I simply wonder if a relation can stand without  
compromise?  
But I guess love isn't enough to hold love without sacrifice!

If see ever read this poetry, do think of life from my angle !  
Do think of my unfulfilled dreams that entangle  
My poems too have you now in its rhymes,  
Oh you have replaced everything that was in my primes!



# Yet Again, I Wait

A.N. Keerthana Rao

Yet again, I wait on the banks of HOPE to let the water of FAITH caress my skin,  
Yet again , I wait on clouds of COURAGE to pour down as rain of STRENGTH through thick and thin,  
Yet again I wait on the hill of PATIENCE to blow along and travel with the wind of LOVE  
Yet again, I wait on the branches of my DREAMS to bear the leaves of REALITY NOW!





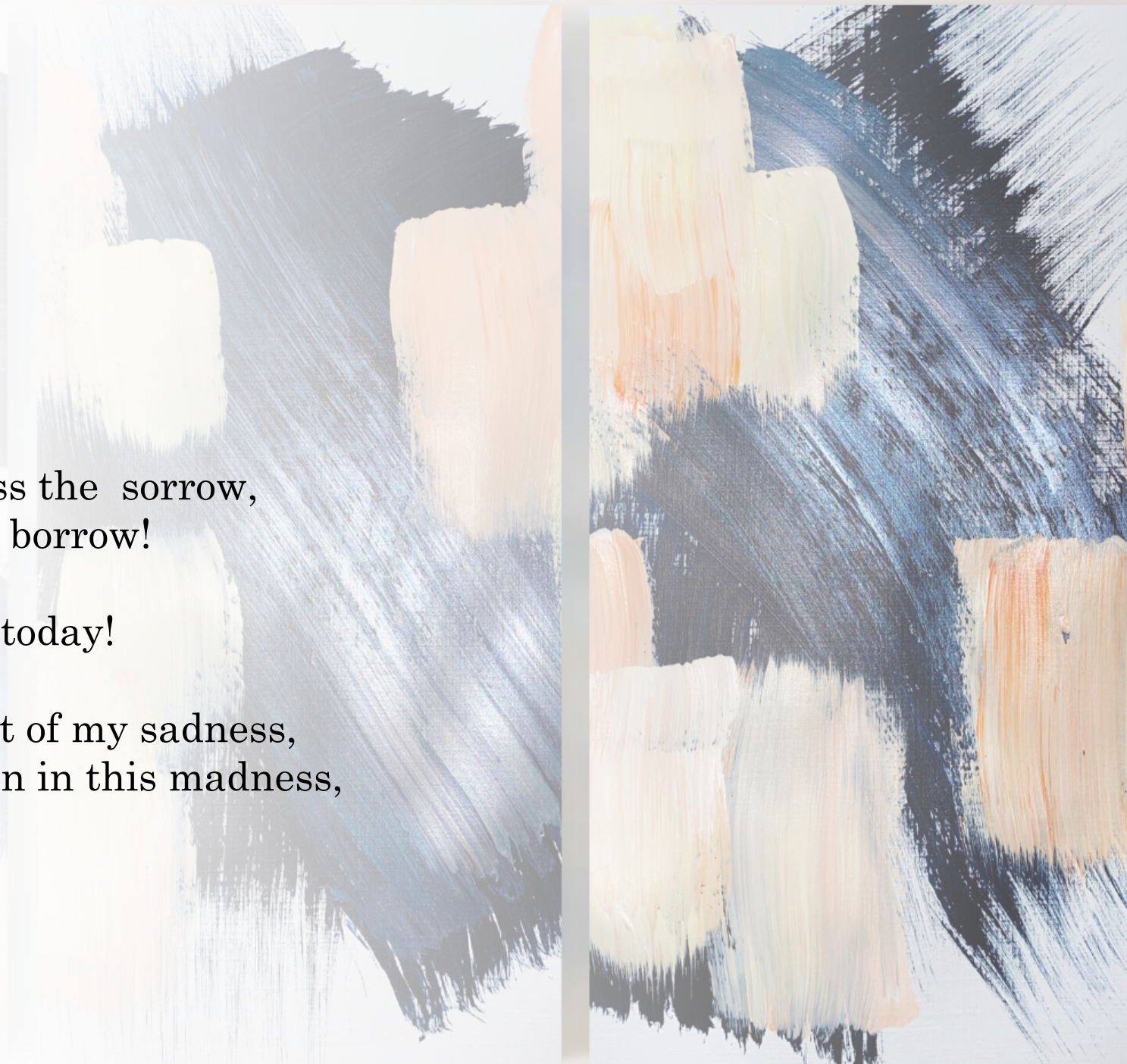
# Pain

A.N. Keerthana Rao

The pain that is forbidden to stay in me  
The questions unanswered lay in me  
Let me breath that pain today,  
Let the tears of my eyes rain today..

As I was in pursuit of success, I forgot to caress the sorrow,  
Smiles, happiness , serenity , I always tend to borrow!  
Let me breathe my pain today,  
Let those despondent thoughts leave my lane today!

Hold me tight, while I cry out with the deepest of my sadness,  
Bear with me as I unload my stonkered burden in this madness,  
Let me breath that pain today,  
Let those neglected feelings gain today!





# How Was Today?

A.N. Keerthana Rao

Today wasn't the same..  
The sun that rises everyday felt like a dark ball, as if it  
didn't diffuse it's light today..

Today wasn't the same...  
My thoughts were too heavy, having the gravity to pull  
me towards it almost like a blackhole..

Today wasn't the same...  
For I felt numb and nothing, and the nothingness was  
to the extent that it could create a vacuum

Today wasn't the same..  
For I didn't know what to do, there was a crazy dust  
like nebula looking black against all my bright  
moments.

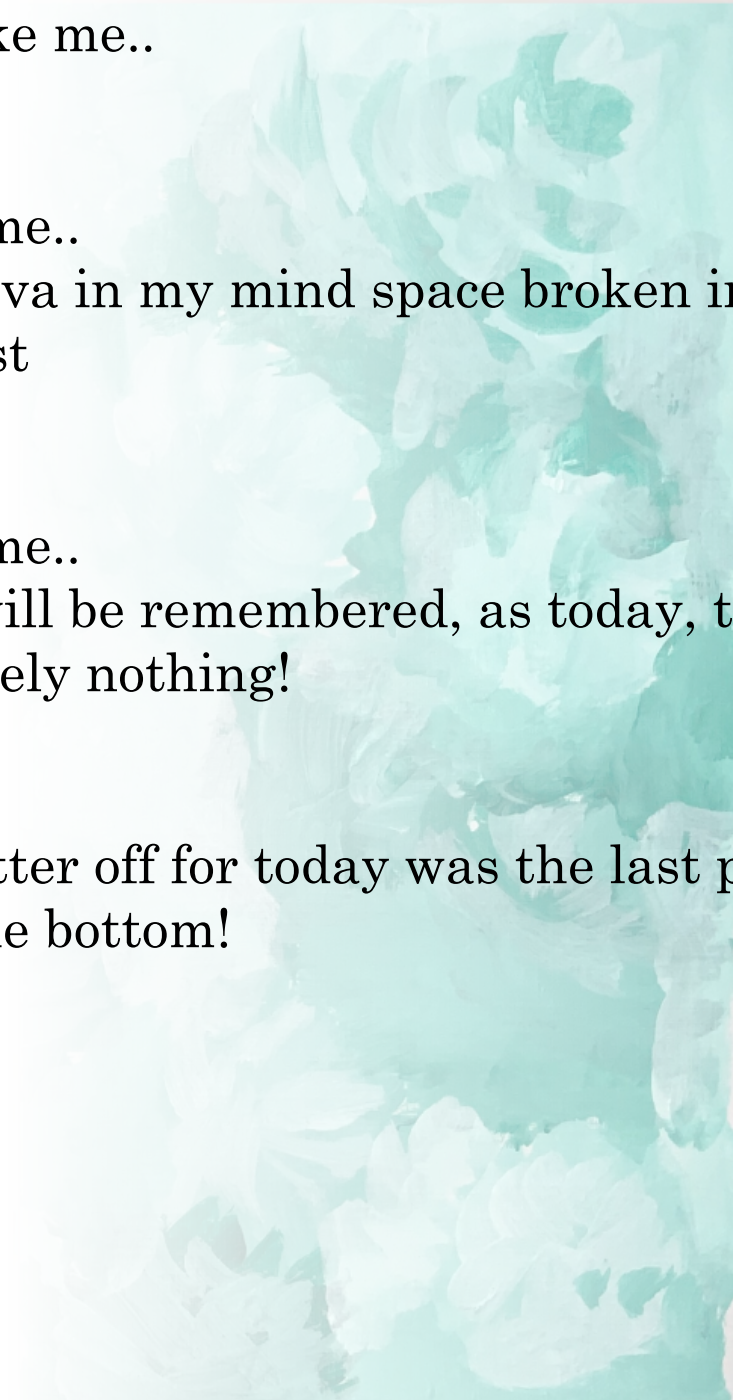
Today wasn't the same ..  
As my mirror showed me a silhouette picture of mine

who didn't appear like me..

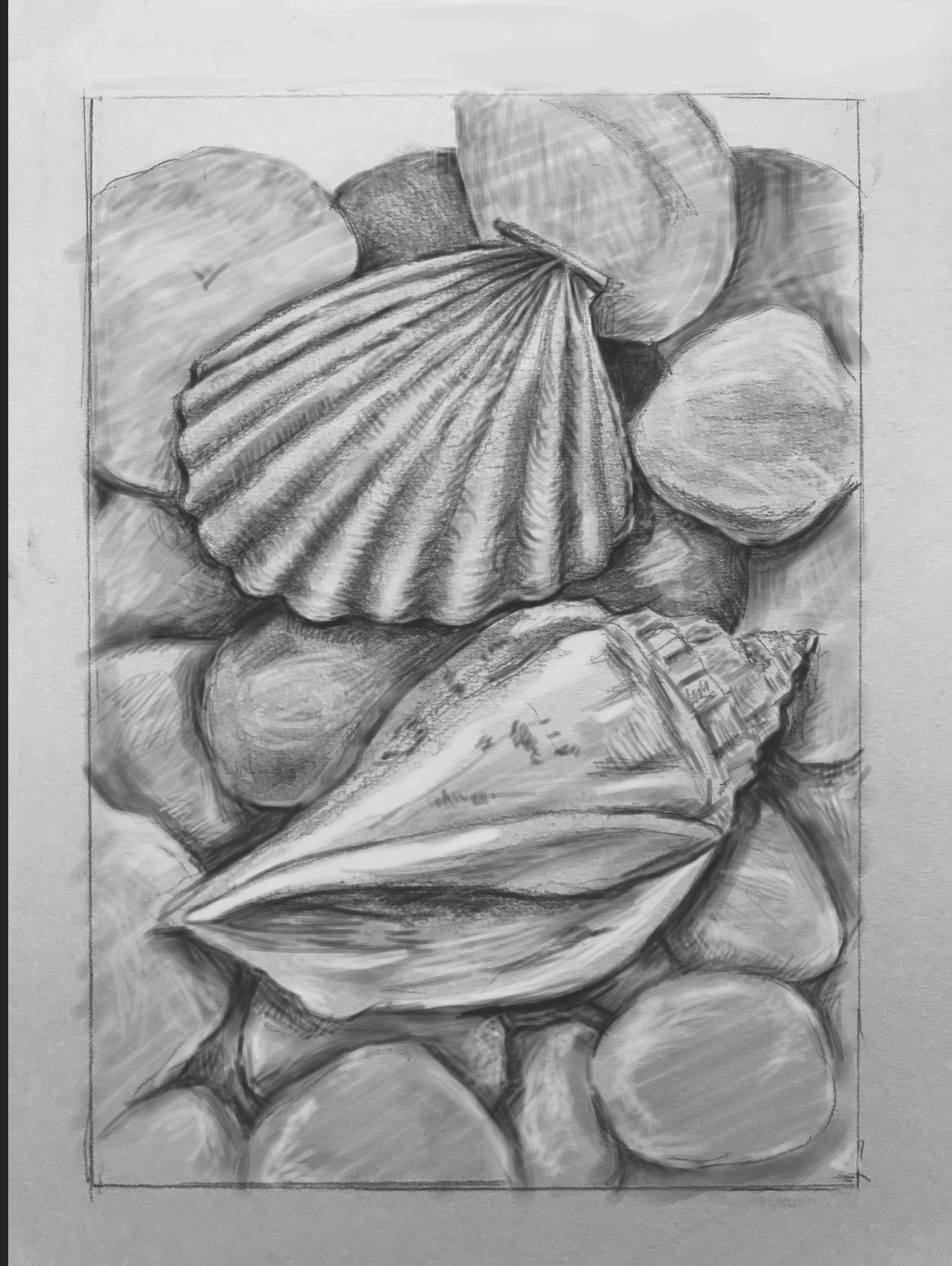
Today wasn't the same..  
Felt like the supernova in my mind space broken into  
particles like stardust

Today wasn't the same..  
But I'm sure today will be remembered, as today, there  
was nothing, absolutely nothing!

Tomorrow will be better off for today was the last point  
one could reach at the bottom!









# 4 AM Sonic Prayer

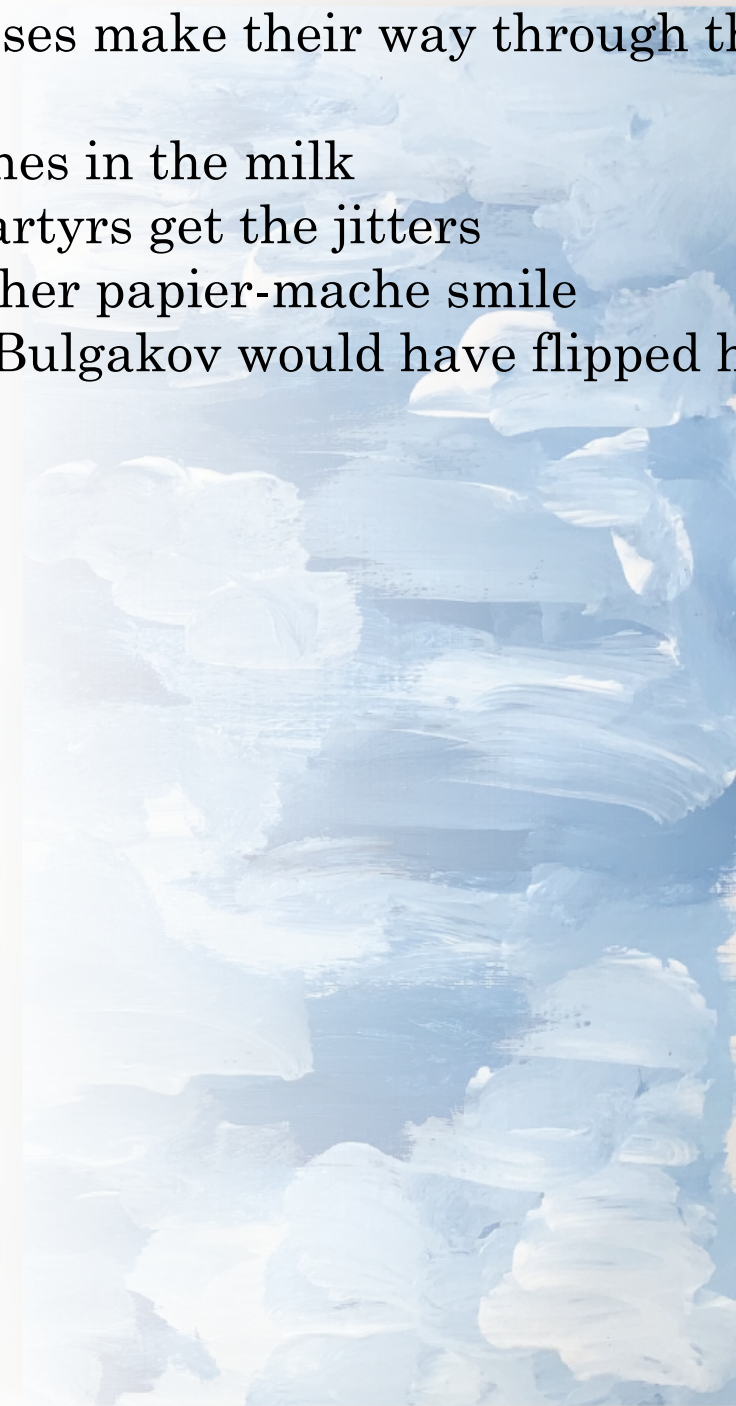
Christian Garduno

Reading Celine in Kensington Gardens  
white lipstick and hip blue jazz  
a Gauloises hanging from the southeast corner of your  
mouth  
It all sounds a bit Chekhovian to me  
The Aristos were very, very stoned, mind you  
Tossing semaphores around in Brunswick Square

Compulsively lighting Woodbines with the Prince of Wales  
here, he says, let's half a tangerine  
They really are much better in Aberystwyth, he bemoans  
by morning, my skin was replaced by porcelain  
No time to argue, he insists, it's time for Brompton cocktails  
by now it's Francoise Hardy albums & he's reciting Byron  
We're considering room service in the Hotel Raphael

Tangier comes up in the most uncomfortable way  
plum out of nowhere  
Heiresses check their compacts  
connoisseurs look the other way  
Yasmin decides on an apricot aperitif

Out of season roses make their way through the servant  
entrance  
Old Galahad ashes in the milk  
inconvenient martyrs get the jitters  
Camille flashes her papier-mache smile  
I'm telling you, Bulgakov would have flipped his wig





# Crush #102

Christian Garduno

Walking across Brookshire Square Park  
we walked each other home twice  
it's starting to get dark  
I think you better walk me home again  
back to Apartment #102 where I was kissed + crushed  
I'm a lush for your love  
and one day you won't have to sneak through my window  
One day we will make our own home  
and you can make the porch-light blue & leave it on all night  
even though I believe it's a waste of electricity  
I don't blow my candles out tonight

You never told me the first apartment you got  
after we split was numbered 102  
Oh yeah, I even painted the porch-light blue  
& I kept it on all night  
& I never blew my candles out  
just in case you were out there trying to find me

Last time I saw Brookshire Square Park,  
they tore down the swings we used to fly off, baby  
You really were the best-  
that one time you jumped off the swings & actually landed on top  
of the tree-  
Oh, the tree is still there

they tore down almost all of the rest of the Park

I took the long way home  
hoping mostly that I'd never make it home

I locked the door behind me when I got into my room  
I crushed my pills up the way I always do  
I lit the candles and turned on my porch-light of blue  
I waste all my electricity...  
listening on repeat to this playlist I made for you  
sighing to myself and oh dear,  
I never felt better than when I was kissed  
and I was crushed in front of Apartment #102



# Juliette's Blues

Christian Garduno

Funny how they thought they were keeping us afloat  
but they were really drowning  
in the space between the shores  
I see we've had to go through our own Reconstruction  
baby, let's be the glitches in each other's Matrix  
escaping under the Snow Moon  
you were about to say something  
It's a trip, because you always get that way when you hear his  
name

No I don't- I just don't see why you always have to put him down  
like that  
it would be the same seven lifetimes from now  
and you know that it's true  
I'm not trying to prove a point anymore  
you swivel around like a Calder  
we eat irony for breakfast  
I listen when you don't say anything at all  
that's when I know you really mean it

Sarina's cleaning up in the kitchen  
and I wonder what any of this even meant  
the ashes are piling up in the tray  
I'll try my best to type it up, but I must say

everyone's used to backsliding, backbiting  
Heaven's in the dregs-  
in order to stick the knife into their heart  
you must be very, very close



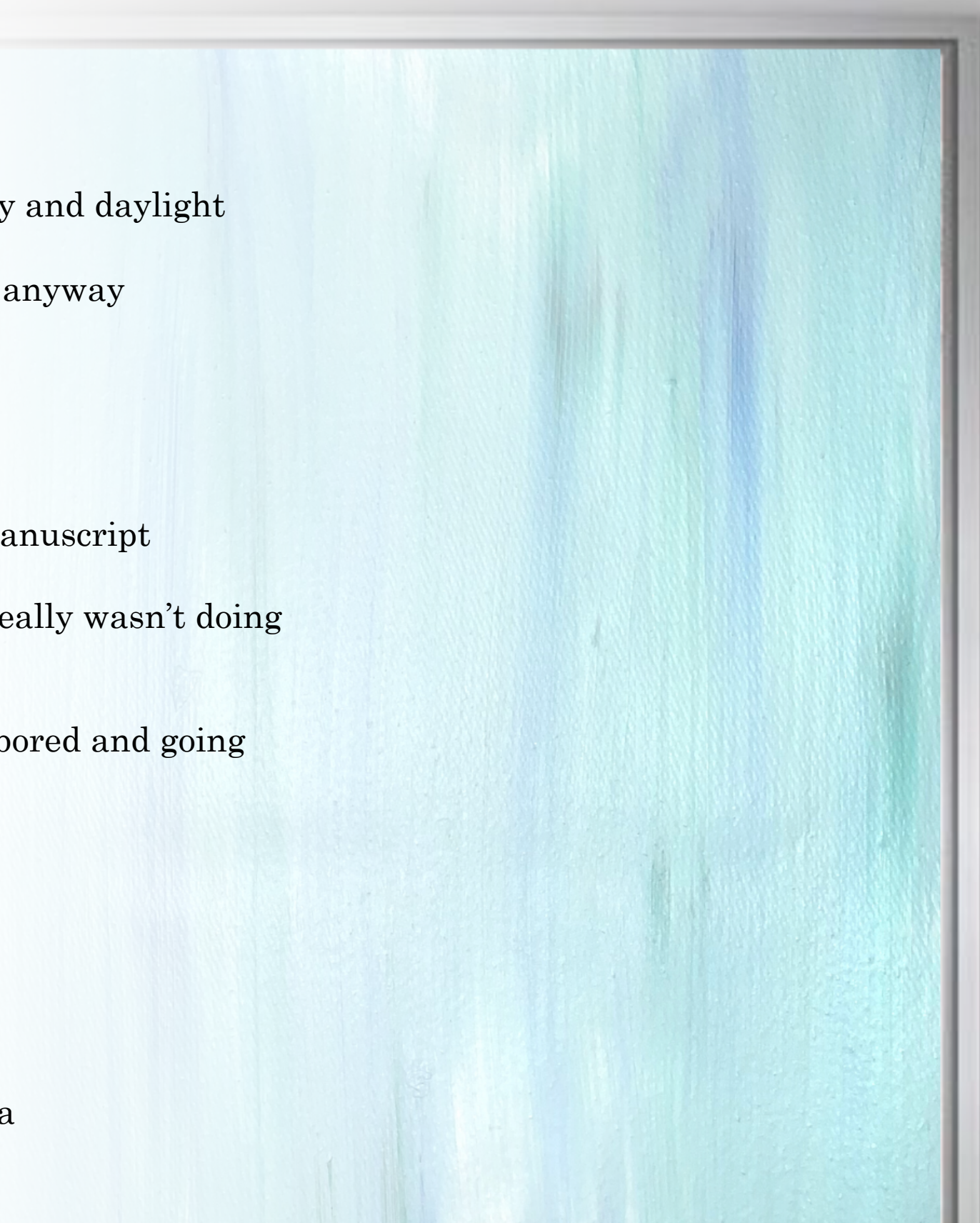
# Last I Heard

Christian Garduno

Last I heard  
you were filming a movie, running out of money and daylight  
last I heard  
you were in some silly play, in your own mind, anyway  
last I heard  
you were still about to drop your mix tape  
last I heard

Last I heard  
you were waiting on some heads to buy your manuscript  
last I heard  
you had some Pacific Northwest podcast that really wasn't doing  
so well  
last I heard  
you were slumming up the Eastern Seaboard, bored and going  
nowhere  
last I heard

Last I heard  
you were on your way back to Katy  
last I heard  
you were leaving Virginia for good  
last I heard  
you couldn't make up your mind about Carolina  
last I heard





415

Christian Garduno

Embarcadero Candlestick North Beach  
Chinatown Barbary Coast Mission Dolores  
SOMA Pacific Heights Coit Tower Telegraph Hill  
The Haight Ferry Plaza Bldg Alcatraz N Judah  
Transamerica Pyramid The Fillmore The Castro  
Bay to Breakers Nob Hill Sutro Tower The Sunset  
Lombard Street Russian Hill Yerba Buena  
Noe Valley Twin Peaks Ocean Beach Potrero Hill





## American K-Beauty Mask

MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO







**MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO**





**MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO**





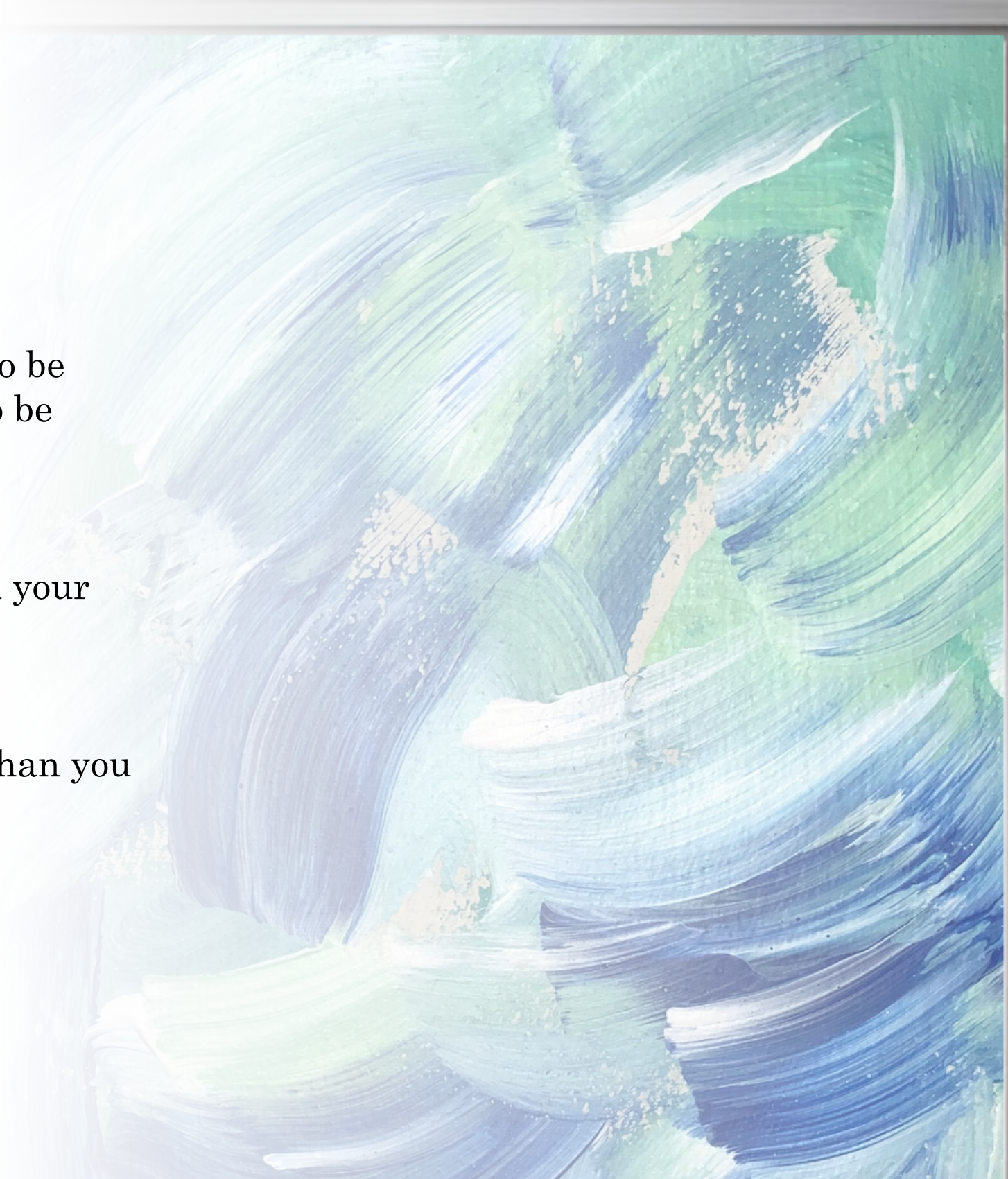
**MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO**



# Don't Come Back to Haunt Me

Faye Kavanagh

Don't come back to haunt me  
The ghost of me in the past  
If you do I'm going to run away fast  
You're all about me and who I used to be  
You are someone I don't ever want to be  
With my old behaviors  
Lots of tears  
Full of fragile emotions and fears  
Be gone with your slurred words and your  
Pity party  
Don't come round here bothering me  
I know what to do  
I have a power now and he's bigger than you  
And to that I'll always pray  
To keep the ghost of me in the past  
Forever  
Away





# Untitled

Faye Kavanagh

For those of us with  
Hurt in our hearts  
Broken trust  
Betrayed  
To the  
Mothers daughters  
Sisters wives  
Them who have fought or are fighting  
Battles of their own  
Look in the mirror  
Beautiful and strong  
We are all warriors.





# Haikus

Luke Levi

pink and purple clouds  
swirl together to become  
an abstract art piece

Sunday morning—  
house finches sing  
the litany in the live oak

how lonely it is to be feared  
by cheerful birds—  
hawk atop fencepost

on an April sky—  
the color of the sea—  
clouds embrace the sun

bee dusted  
in pollen flies  
from the redbud

fading world—  
shadows of the hills  
during sunset

early spring—  
oak trees budding  
yellow as the sun

house finch  
calm as the wind-swept cedar  
splashes water on its wings

in a dark place  
a flower rises  
from dead leaves

in the shape of a scythe  
the day moon waits  
for nightfall

fallen leaves left  
behind for new growth—  
memories

sunlight filters through  
the forest trees to embrace  
the roaming rabbit

upon the blade  
of grass a small blue sky  
within the water droplet

one yellow leaf  
of a dead tree  
hangs onto the past

the red sunset  
welcome early-rising bats  
in droves



# Autumn Hum

Unnati Pal

It was a radiant sunny day  
Those floating yellow leaves  
Caught my glimpse  
while gently touching the grass ,  
I had autumn Hum in my mind  
But I played pink Floyd on Spotify  
because autumn no longer meant  
Those same happy days

.  
With each passing autumn  
Just the like falling leaves  
I am witnessing the constant fall of humanity.

.  
We humans are cruel!  
Have foul thinking  
Doesn't care about anything  
Yet wants the nature to love our misdeeds.

.  
They call it autumnal equinox time  
Ironically sun is right above our head,  
Still we are not terrified it can evaporate the chaos in  
blink of an eye.  
and don't forget the Chaos is us.

How long do you think you will be able to see  
Those lush green fields  
Those bamboo grooves  
Those wine maple leaves  
Those Beautiful black tupelo  
and many more exotic beauties  
When at every step we are miserably failing

.  
That cricket's soft autumn Hum and shades of blue are  
turning into charcoal black  
And we are the edge of breaking  
Sunshine is asking to heal  
Because with every fall  
I see humanity fall.



Immigration Eden





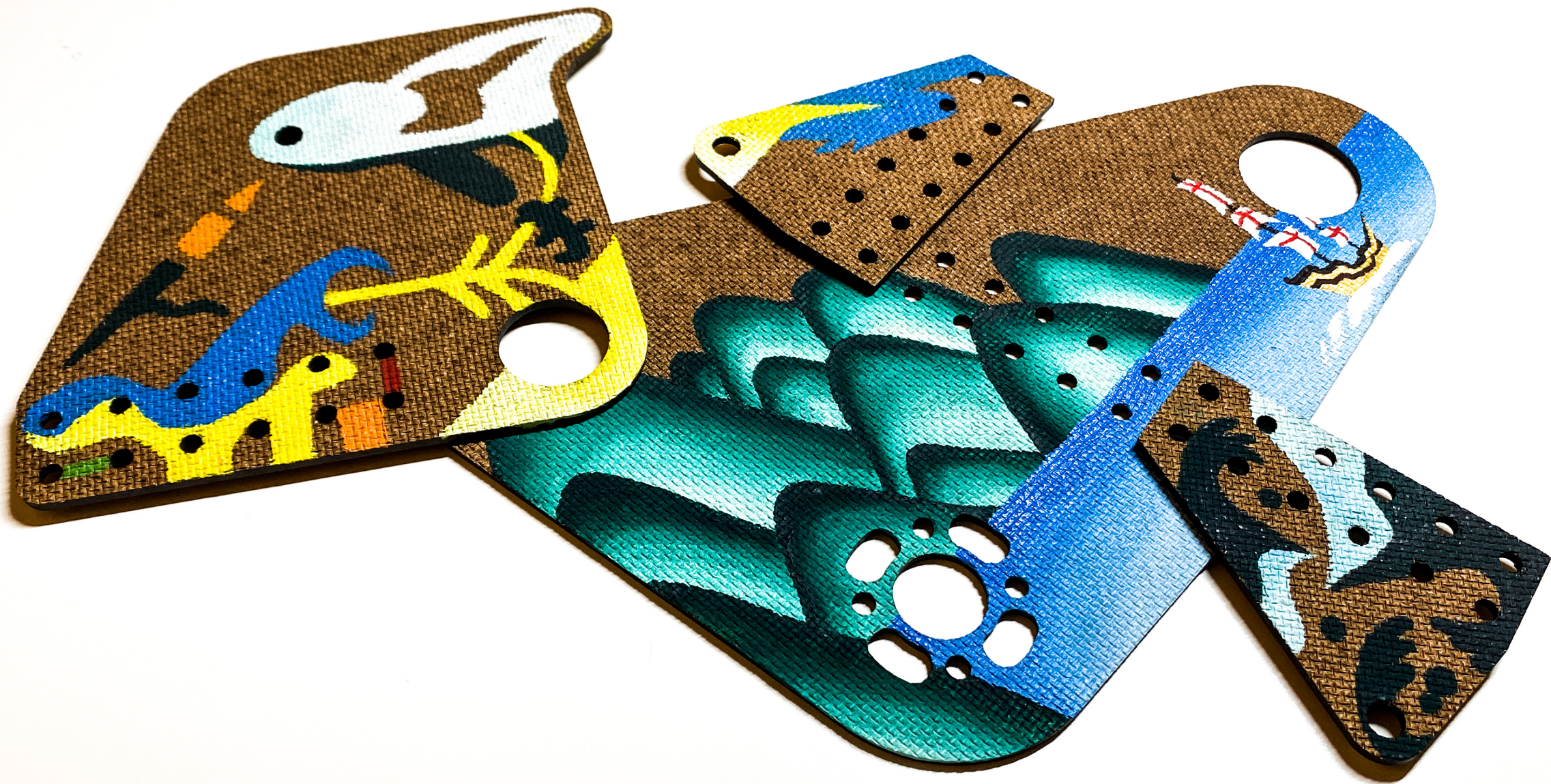
## MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO





**MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO**





## MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO



# Enjoy the Silence

Alanna Hammel

I am infatuated with the idea of having everyone in my life to myself. I don't mind sharing so long as I have the majority. I don't want to be equal in my possessions. Although I am not talking about things, I am talking about people. I know exactly where this stems from.

I had this radical idea when I was a child that my life was solely mine. I wasn't necessarily self-centered. I just believed that every person in my life had been created to channel a reaction from me. Similar to the quote that says "everyone that walks into your life serves a purpose" only more extreme. I held myself responsible for every bad occurrence to ever happen in my life. One night I had a dream; everywhere I went I carried my relative's coffin on my back. I perceived this as a metaphor for me constantly feeling the need to 'fill the gap' he had left. I still don't think I can make up for him.

I also felt responsible for good acts. I forced myself to make other people happy. I don't want to say I sacrificed my happiness, but I practically did. I didn't work on my

emotions, I didn't bother. They weren't important.

I would watch the news and see countries I had never heard of, and I still firmly believe that this world had been created solely for me. I may have been vain, but I didn't care. Of course, I'm full of myself, what else would I be full of? As for as I'm concerned that was my world, everyone else was just living in it.

I used to yearn for lives that I was well aware would never be mine, surrounded by individuals that were too prominent in their own lives to give anyone a spare minute. Let alone me.

My entire future was a chimaera. So uncertain, difficult, a Y-junction connecting to two separate roundabouts. I was driving in the dark with no indicators. My lights were on, but I wasn't home.

I convinced myself that these aspirations must play through or else nothing could. I had no comprehension that people progressed, that people changed, that people grew. I had even less understanding that I could progress, I could change, I could grow.

I wanted so much then. So

long ago now it seems like a fragment of my imagination. My only regret is not wanting more. They say when you come from nothing you are easily pleased. My question is why people who come from nothing don't demand more.

I find myself writing hyperbole that I think is deep and philosophical but doesn't even make sense. I'm constantly paranoid about using the word "it" too often but other writers say vulgar words repeatedly and think nothing of it. I feel as though my brain is covered with a better sack that is preventing me from writing properly. In school, I could sit down and write poetry essays from the minute I put pen to paper. Now I need an excuse to have a pen in my hand other than planning my day. I love the fact I have responsibilities, places to be. I listen to stories every day from people that belong on stages but have yet to even see a play. I tell myself that I'll write a book about them, but I never do. Not only do I not know where to start; I feel an obligation to keep their stories to myself as though I am an ancient Celtic figure that is the keeper of secrets.

When I write I can feel the hinges in my brain now. I could never feel that before. Sometimes smoke comes out. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. I'd prefer smoke to come out, at least that means they're moving. Maybe someday my brain will light on fire; I will come up with a master plan of ideas that will only be burned away. Just like Robert Frost's body of water that represented his creativity, it'll only be soaked up and left dry.

I think this is my descent into madness. I've started to admire mad artists. I see a clear future being one of them. I feel like I'm in a My Bloody Valentine song, or rather I want to feel that way. I want to go back to feeling infinite rather than being terrified for my every move. I live by the phrase "do what you want so long as you're not hurting anyone", but I'm told I'm hurting everyone by doing

anything. I'm constantly worried that I'll lose every element of my livelihood until I'm left with the least realistic parts. That has already happened. I just want a sense of stability. I want to wake up in the morning and know for a fact I will be turning over in that same bed hours later. There was a time in my life when I loved surprises. The spontaneity. Now is not that time.

There is nothing more beautiful than being a mad artist. Few of these mad artists are women. I would be honoured to be amongst them.

I keep hearing my friends say that time moves fast. I can't even come to terms with the concept of time anymore. I used to manage it well, I could just never tell the time. Now I've completely changed. I check the clock and expect time to stay the same ten

minutes later. Instead of being productive I sit and stare at blank walls for hours on end. This is my downtime. A moment to rearrange my thoughts. I often had to multitask, but now I can't even speak while listening to music.

I feel tacky discussing a global occurrence at length only to bring it back to myself. There is something so beautiful about being locked away with your thoughts. Unable to act on them. There is something so beautiful about blaming this occurrence on why you are a certain way, look a certain way or act a certain way. I'm almost definite that future generations will romanticise our current situation. A reason to escape any event? The introverts will envy us. Even the constant uncertainty has some elegance. Enjoy the silence. ♦





# My Commitments

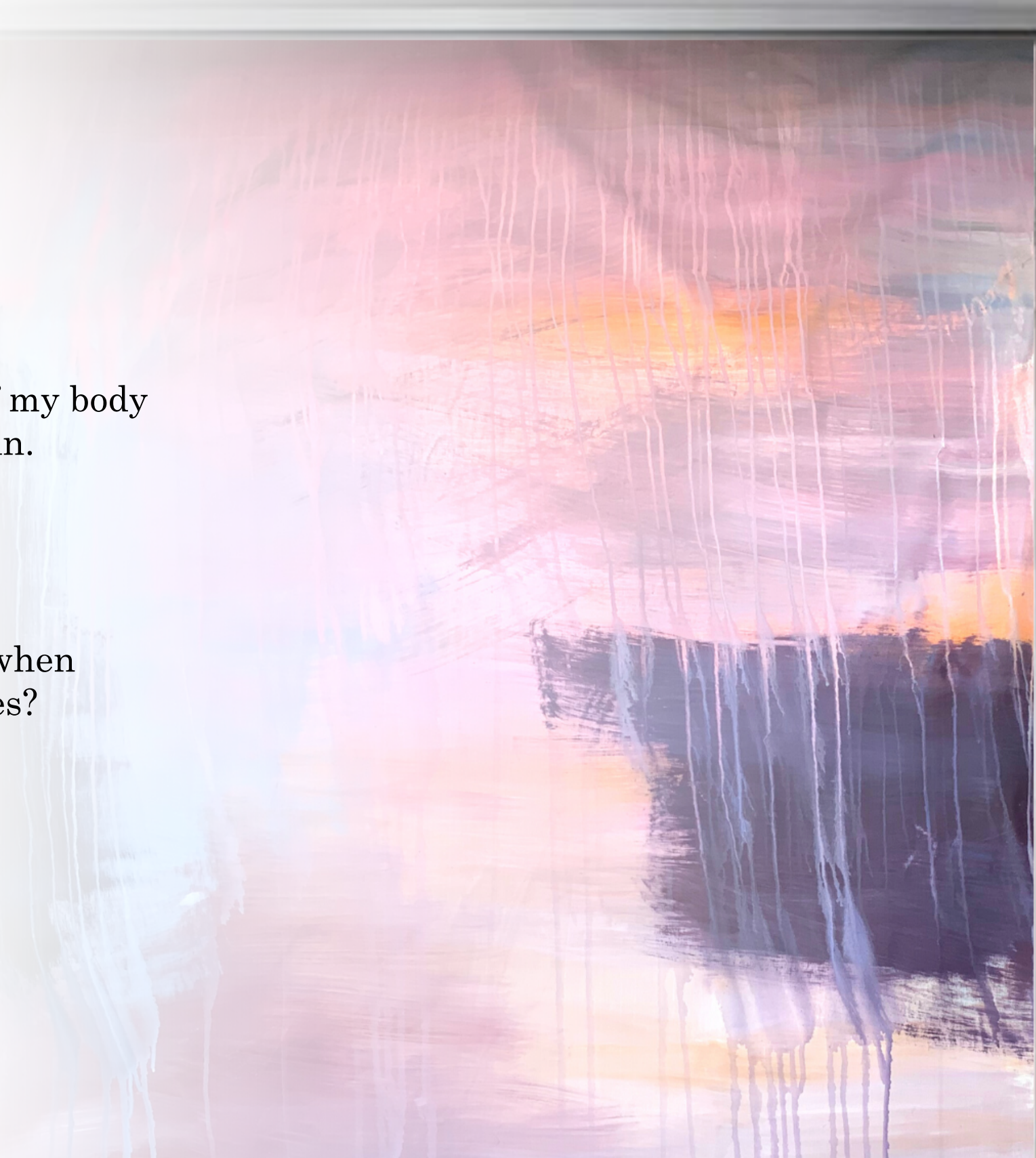
Frank C. Modica

I won't bow down to the temple of my body  
or beat this old, stubborn ass again.

How can I esteem a bruised reed  
when it fails me countless times

or loathe this sorry sack of dung when  
it will become food for purple irises?

Don't want to worship it.  
Don't want to hate it.





# Deeper

Frank C. Modica

We pass through the last of the 3 Gorges.  
Floating leaves churn under the twirling

propellers. Gliding into the last lock,  
we cruise into another urban sprawl.

People on holiday wave to us,  
my wife waves back to everyone.

We are never alone as we voyage  
deeper into the countryside.





# Reaching

Frank C. Modica

Sitting alone for a moment before  
the wake I hear the ventilation hum

around me, feel his tears and sweat run  
through the sewers under my feet.

Lost in the love of my dead father  
and the fecklessness of children,

I think about strangers, how many times  
we pass on city streets not seeing

each other. I tally all my missing  
yesterdays, hope for a better today.





Ladylike: I am like other girls













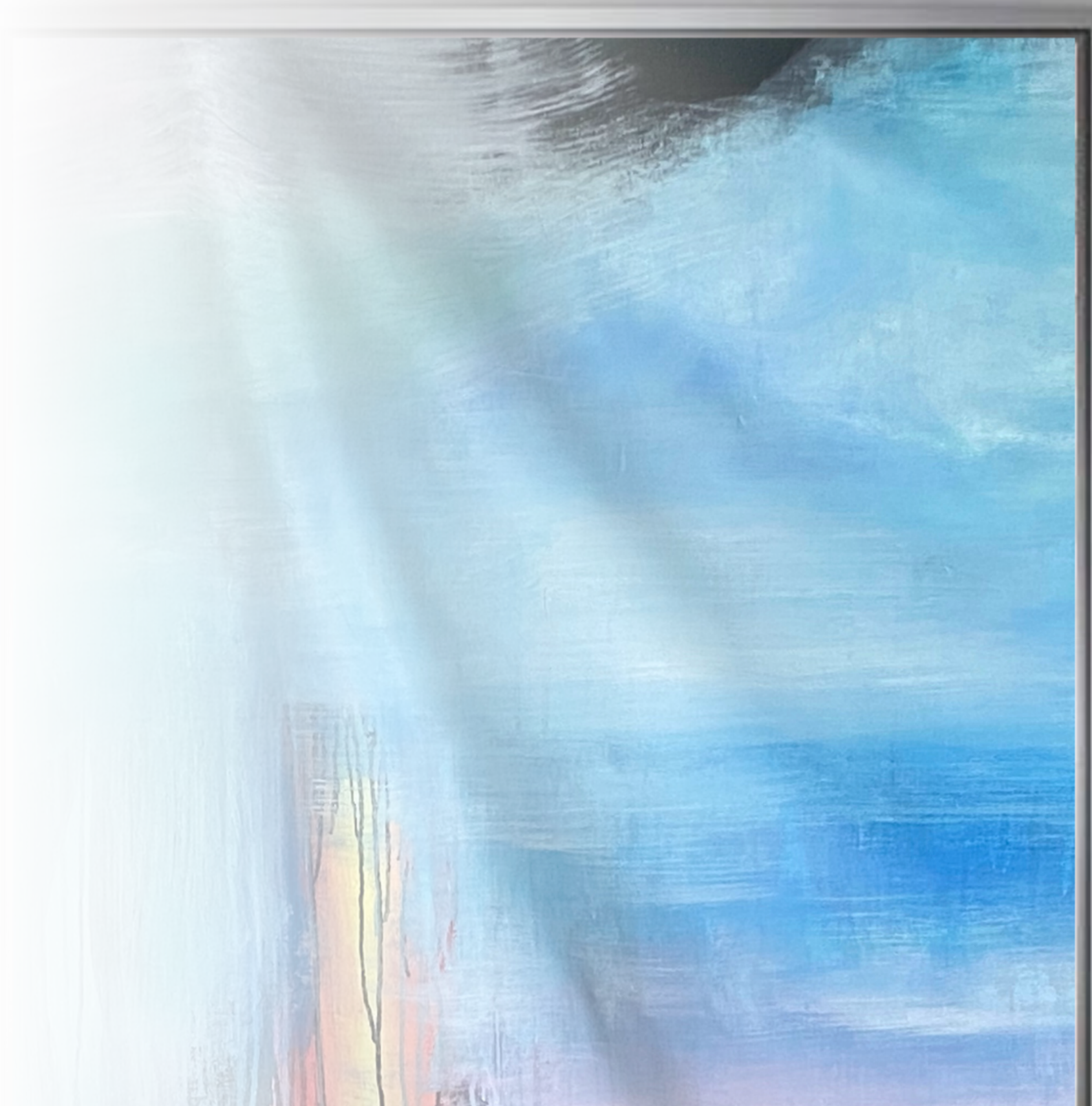




# Berlin Souls

Marie-Kristin Hofmann

People on trams  
read books and  
breath stories they  
don't share with  
strangers and yet  
they ache for it  
in their loneliness.  
Each day they  
fade a bit  
with autumn and  
dawn, with the  
cold and the  
not-wandering.





# The Sky is the Limit

Marie-Kristin Hofmann

I turn skyward where  
vapor trails aren't  
white roads or clean  
slates for a new  
home but distance  
that doesn't stop  
spreading.  
Do you hear the paper  
birds sing? I'm still  
a summer silence  
going nowhere.

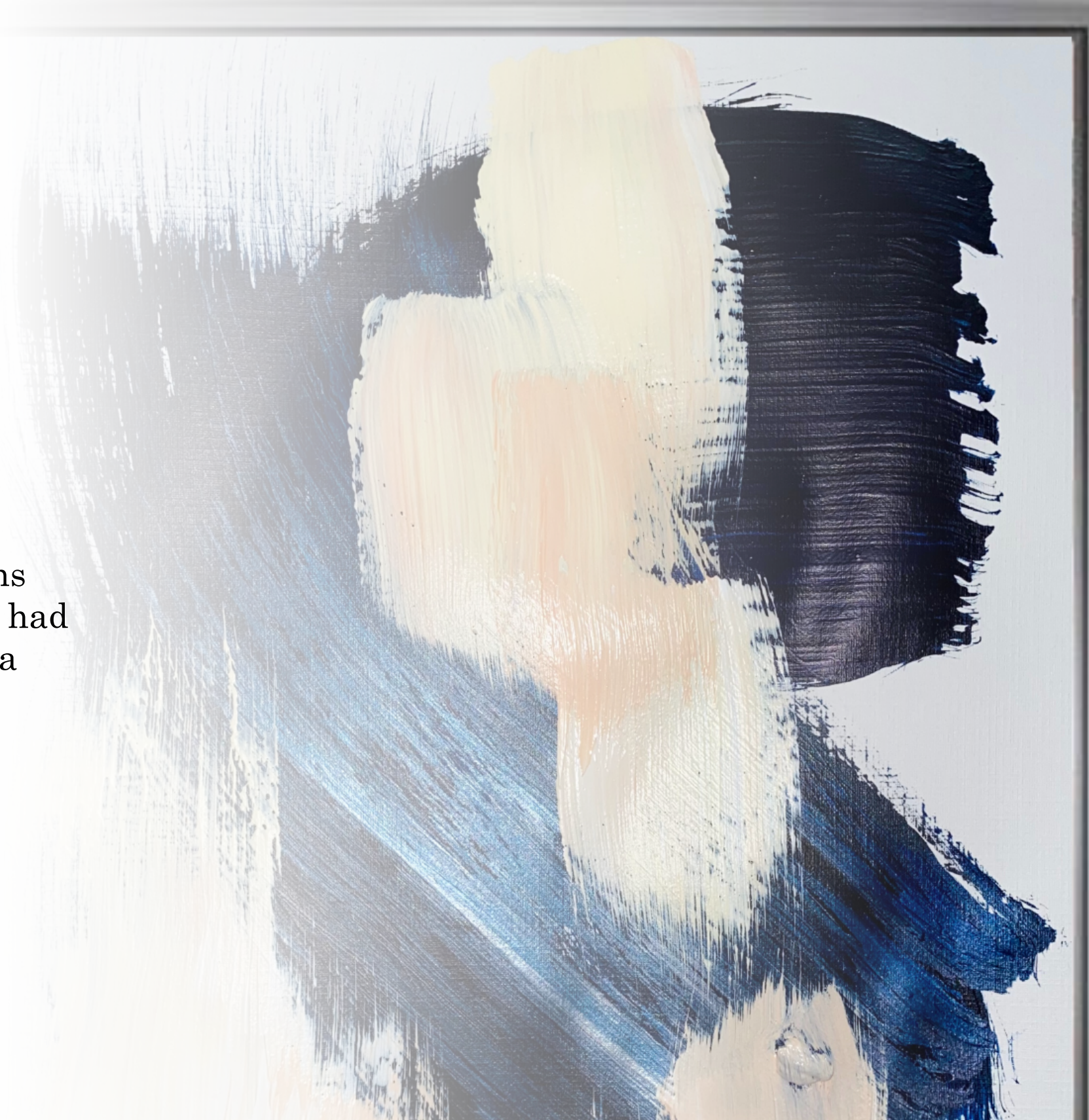




# The New Normal

Marie-Kristin Hofmann

It was winter all summer.  
The sun wasn't gold but  
yellowed like worn-out  
cocktail dresses and I bathed  
in the memory of seaside skins  
and love songs and light that had  
left me and the world and so a  
life lived not even in halves  
but quarters was the  
new normal.

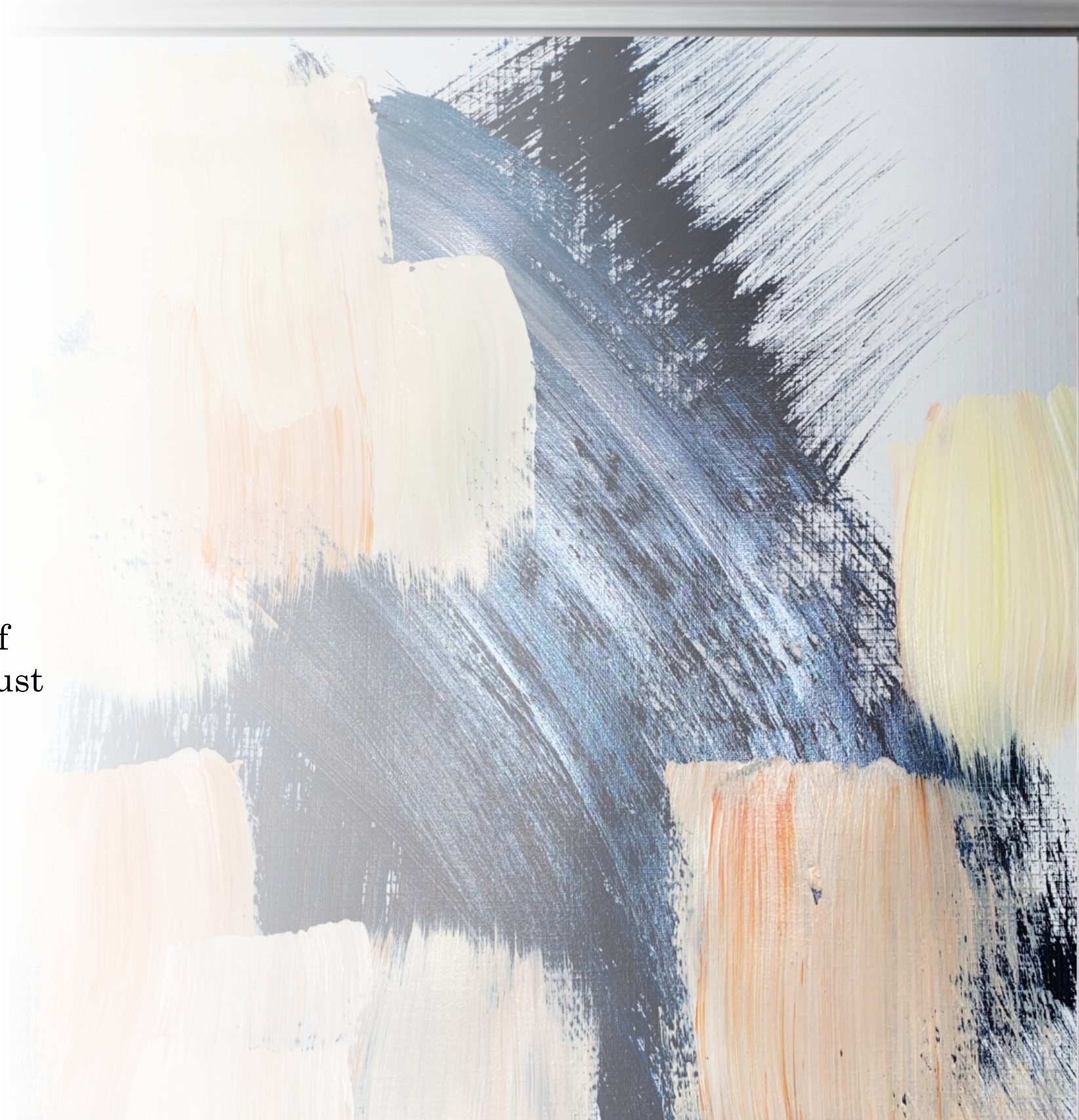




# Man of Glass

Marie-Kristin Hofmann

The way he lies there  
his bones stone-cold  
staring at me like I'm  
the abyss of loneliness,  
still, reaching for me with  
his hand not his heart only  
to pull back right before the  
final touch out of his fear  
of tenderness because what if  
he did feel something, even just  
a tremor of soft-heartedness.  
There would be too much  
warmth and going back from  
warmth to coldness  
hurts.





**Artist: Harleen Kaur**

**INK & WATER | HARLEEN KAUR**



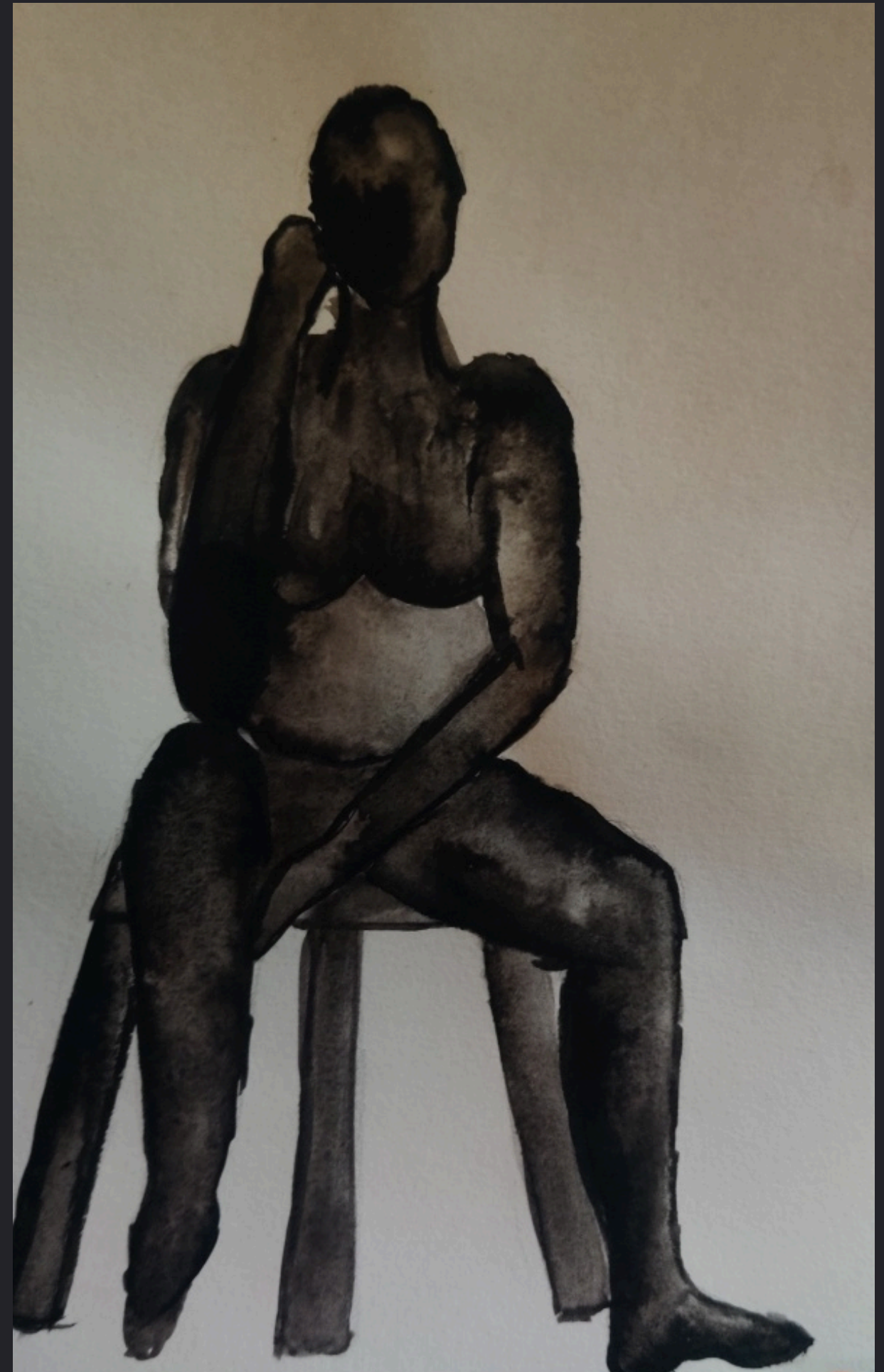




**INK & WATER | HARLEEN KAUR**







## INK & WATER | HARLEEN KAUR



# Foot Ferry

André van Hooren

The village is small and feels deserted, a desolation that seems to increase with every village in the Sitter Valley he passes.

"So you're really going to buy an old farm?" Simone had asked this morning. She stood against the counter in her gray dressing gown, clutching her coffee mug with two hands: 'You've already gone running, cycling, you joined a gym, you had a screen installed in the garage, to watch your beloved *Mad Men* episodes while on the treadmill ...'

Her slightly mocking tone annoyed him. "I know Siem, I know it all, I've tried it all before, I had a personal trainer send me to a lawn at 7:30 in the morning to stretch my body ..."

"Well, not just any lawn, at the lake, by your boats."

Since he had sold his shares in the agency, he kept track of the wind force.

"I think we have an average of 25 days a year on which to sail," he told his wife one evening.

"Do you feel like it all those days? Or would you have time?" She had laughed at his reasoning and barely listened to his calculation of the cost per day of sailing. When he

mentioned a motorboat, she had left the room shaking her head. Days later she kindly asked him about his anxiety. Whether she could help, maybe think along.

"It costs nothing, such a mansion, far away from everything." "You bet." She watched him finish his coffee at the kitchen table and when he put on his denim jacket, she asked, "What are you going to do in that house?"

"Farming, thinking... getting creative again."

In the end there are no more villages and the road winds through the fields, deep into the hills. Reto clicks on a playlist of Americana and focuses his gaze on the vanishing point. That's where I have to be, he fantasizes and drives faster.

"You must go," Simone had said, nudging him in the lower back. "If it really is an hour and a half drive, you will be late again."

He was always late; it was a habit he no longer apologized for. Copywriters were sloppy with time; they had a valid excuse. The realtor and the farmer would probably not mind waiting for a buyer of a dilapidated country house,

solitaire on a mountain river. "An object that is clearly ready for the next phase," he had heard when making the appointment. Those were words he repeated, waiting by the elevator. "We are that next phase, Siem." He thought she was smiling, balancing her past mockery and renewed pity.

"Watch out, boy," she said without looking at him.

He calls her from his car, wants to tell her that he already feels the emptiness.

"What is it? I'm busy, it's Saturday morning, the store will open in a minute, so what do you want? "

"I was wondering if you were still in your dressing gown?"

While waving goodbye, he saw that she was wearing a loose white shirt under that gray robe, nicely edged with lace on her breasts.

"No."

He liked to look at her, complimented her daily on her appearance, fed himself like a child with the attention she often gave him; he also felt the distance that had developed between them, a distance that seemed to be increasing. Her goodbye laughs were a habit, as she used to do with the customers of her jewelry store.

He had long stopped telling her everything.

She thought fatherhood was difficult for him, an easy reproach, automatically making it a sensitive topic. He certainly lacked the natural sense of parenthood. The spontaneity he showed in his work, was much more difficult to find as a father. When there were three of them, he remained an outsider, the weakest link in a family trying to form.

Once again, he passes the Sitter, the green in the fields becomes unmistakably duller. Just a little while longer, a few more kilometers.

She wanted to get to know his daydreams, "just like your renewed fanaticism and your rashness." She wanted him to be honest about the space he wanted to escape into.

"Would you like to come with me and get an impression of the farm," he had asked her.

"You don't want that."

"I'm asking, right?"

"For the wrong reason, Reto."

Amused, his eyes wander over the messy yard, he feels the desolation in the stables, even in the kiosk by the water.

"Already there, already starting to be happy", he texts to Alexandra, but he regrets it immediately. His desperate message from earlier that morning had gone unread.

She came from here; her parents still had a summer

house in the Sitter Valley. And despite her negative attitude to rural life, he could hear the warmth in her voice when she spoke of that summer house, a veiled love he never felt in her references to the private banker she married.

"Why don't you live there", he asked her during their first dinner at a *ristorante* in the old town.

"The house needs a lot of maintenance".

"Which seems a good reason to start living in it".

He heard himself talking to her, how he began to play on her feelings. She responded deliberately by praising the lake view of her spacious penthouse: "I have beautiful nature in front of me and the city nearby, the kindergarten included."

"Life in that valley has done you no harm, has it?"

"It wasn't satisfying either."

At one point she stopped protesting the pouring of wine. Impulsively, Reto took her hand and said: "I want to go there, I want to see it, with your eyes, the house, everything, the whole environment."

Her chubby cheeks began to color, and after a few seconds of silence her fingers started to play with his.

"We rent that summer house for a day of brainstorming about the new campaign. Just to start somewhere! But we can also live there. I can feel it!" Three weeks later they drove together in his old

Jaguar to the Sitter Valley, a completely deserted area between the lakes of Constance and Zürich, between two urbanized areas. Reto immediately found it beautiful: the emptiness and the roughness. During a walk in the vicinity of the summer house, she playfully walked away from him, raising her remarkably long legs high, without shame drawing his gaze to her buttocks.

"Welcome to this beautiful place", says the realtor and Reto immediately feels resistance to the tone in which the man speaks. "I know you are curious; I can see it in your face, and I can assure you that we have enough time to see this unique object, but first coffee with homemade apple cake. That's how they do it here."

The farmer sits inside at a wooden table. He doesn't get up, suffices with a nod and silently pours the coffee. Nap stands for a moment and looks around. It was old, an almost dilapidated kitchen, visibly cleaned for the visit, a crooked door leading to the large hall, peeling paint, a rusty lamp on the ceiling.

There was no wife and no child either, Reto recalls from the conversation with the realtor. "So don't get your hopes up too much", the man had added, laughing.





“Come and sit down,” the realtor said and pushed back a chair, “no hurry, right?”

When Reto puts his mug back on the table after the first sip, the farmer starts talking automatically, as if the realtor is pressing the button of the cassette recorder.

“I have worked here for fifty years, first together with my father and since 1981 on my own. We kept cows, not for milk, but for meat. Lots of cows. I have always loved the work and the animals. There was no better sound in the morning than the mooing of cows in the barn.

His words sound heavy and monotonous. He speaks them without looking at anyone, keeping his eyes on his hands.

“I got older of course and slowly started to reduce the number of cows. If one died, I didn’t buy a new one. The cattle market became too far and too crowded for me. I sold calves to a farmer a little further down the road.”

In his mind Reto begins to make notes, for a possible story about this farmer, a story for his never published book *Personal Encounters*. Aliza would get a place in it too, he told her in that Italian restaurant, that night he first heard about the Sitter Valley.

“If only you’d let it,” she had said, “what’s interesting about me?” “A story about the meaning of eye contact is

always interesting.” Here it could be, he thinks, here in this farmhouse he would have the peace and quiet for writing stories, for all his ideas, everything that kept lying around. He notices that he hardly listens to the farmer anymore.

“And then you started a foot ferry,” he asks, bringing himself back into the conversation. It was an aspect of the farm that had fascinated him immediately. “For years I noticed that a lot of cyclists came here. They had missed the turn and were disappointed to hear that they could not continue. Then they have to return 15 kilometers to take the previously missed bridge. That gave me the idea to open a ferry and ask some money for the crossing.”

“Interesting,” said Reto, “what a marvelous idea.”

“It’s just a rowboat, with a long pole to push you away from the riverbank. You are on the other side in two minutes. Do you want to see it?” They saunter outside and Reto takes a good look around. He is considering saying something about the dilapidated state to keep the price down. Even if it doesn’t bother him. He experiences the property as a large American ranch, where he hears his cowboy boots, which he bought a year ago, scraping over the grit. A loose-fitting buckle makes a ringing sound in his fantasy. “Maybe something for the weekends or holidays,” he had said casually

to Simone.

“I have a shop, remember. And it is open on Saturdays, when my sales are the same as on the other days of the week together.”

“Then you might want to take a rest on Sunday, and we can also stay until Monday, because then your shop will be closed.”

“Benjamin has to go to school after the summer. I also want him to see other children, join up. Besides, I have a lot to do on Monday: administration, stock, purchasing.”

It didn’t sound reproachful, rather resigned. Reto no longer knew what to answer, his mind drifted to Alexandra, as if she had already read his last message.

“But go on,” said Simone, “you want something, you have money to roll. It might be an ideal place to do chores on your motorboat. But let me out, it’s your idea, your whim, not mine”. After which she mocked him for a moment: “Oh no, sorry, your sailboat. There should be enough space there to park that sailboat for the days when you can’t sail.”

She looked at him intently and after a long pause asked why financial independence did not make him happy.

“Looks like you panicked about all the money you got from the sale of your agency.”

From the new owners of his agency, Reto had to give up his role as team leader to focus entirely on copywriting,



he heard one Friday afternoon. He was the best copywriter in the agency, they needed him for their big clients, felt he was wasting his time by endlessly consulting with staff.

It had hit him, the idea that there were now bosses telling him what he had to do, or especially what he shouldn't do. Still from the office, he sent Alexandra a text message. An hour and a half later, they were sitting together over a glass of wine. She was dressed simply, in a tunic over tight jeans.

She let him talk, about his annoyances, about where his anger came from, about his need to be alone. She smiled, made him feel like he was listening intently, stroked his folded hands with regularity.

"Come let's go eat something," she said. She knew a nice Italian in the old city, where she often went. Her private banker was at home watching the children.

Outside, he immediately put an arm around her shoulders and felt her snug gle against him. Her upper body was slender with small breasts, there was a graceful suppleness in all her movements. They kissed, a short soft kiss, lips falling together effortlessly, a tender caress of tongues.

'What am I doing,' she said, and immediately kissed him again, full of devotion. Their

lips worked like magnets until they got their table in the restaurant and she started talking about the Sitter Valley, about the beautiful Swiss they spoke and the fun of playing outside. Only after he challenged her did she tell how she eagerly escaped as a 17-year-old by accepting a job in Zurich, how she started a marketing degree; how she met the private banker at a party and married him.

She showed him her wedding ring without asking, after which he ordered another bottle of *Amarone* and felt the gloom return. According to him, the world of advertising had become meaningless. Real advertising, real creative work, was only done by independent agencies and they were all disappearing.

"In London, power-hungry thinking has ruled for a long time, and in the end, it is killing all creativity, just as it is in New York, with all the big agency chains and egos."

"You're a leading agency here in Switzerland," Alexandra tried. "Leading, leading? Only the banks are really leading here, you only count if you are a banker. Not that it represents anything, that work, bankers can't do anything in the end, they just follow detailed protocols, no room for creation, they aren't capable either. But they do drive a Porsche. And they marry beautiful women like you!"

At the tram stop he reached for her lips and instantly her lower body ignited. She pulled him into the tram, her crotch pressed to his thigh.

"Just one stop," she said, "just a minute," and stared at him, with those beautiful eyes that kept seducing him even when he was already outside; a woman like Juliette Binoche in her *unbearable lightness of being*.

His phone rang without him noticing. In a voicemail, Simone wondered where he was. She had wanted to open a bottle of wine with him, the sale had gone well this Friday, it had put her in an exuberant mood for the always busy Saturday. He knew Benjamin was with her parents, she wrote, "We have the kingdom to ourselves."

"Restless," he wrote back, "I have fallen into restlessness." He turned off his phone and walked home. He saw Alexandra's face with every step, so different tonight from when she was in her office.

Never before had she allowed him so much access, her eyes cheered on, letting her inner beauty shine.

Three weeks later, on the bank of the Sitter, she hesitantly took off her pant ties from under a thin summer dress and let him smell the numbing scent of her skin. When she brushed her hands gently across his chest, he lost

any remaining resistance.

"How many people do you transfer per day?"

"It's hard to say," replied the farmer. "The record is 46, on a sunny day in May, but there are also days when no one reports."

"What do you charge for each crossing?"

"One frank per person. That is not the earnings. More important is the ice cream sales and coffee with apple cake. Soon cyclists asked if they could have a drink. The crossing became a logical break in their cycling trip. And so, I gradually became the small café at the foot ferry."

Reto stares into the mountain stream, no more than five meters wide, shive ring, feeling her skin against his as she made him move with the sloshing water.

"You dipped me," he had said, panting, "like a fetus in a first bath."

The realtor coughs and asks if there are any thoughts, wishes, doubts. "To be honest, I wonder if I want that kiosk obligation, if that will fit my idea of living outside," he says, turning his gaze to the boat. The farm is for solitude, for the absence of money; he wants to be able to write his stories here and hear the river flow, maybe start some light farming activities.

Last New Year's Eve, Simone had invited three of

her best friends and their husbands. During the main course she asked everyone what the past year had brought. When it was his turn Reto said with a triumphant smile: "I finally bought real cowboy boots this year."

Simone asked him later whether it had been too much to state what everyone expected, that he had earned a small fortune by selling his agency.

"That it gives us enormous freedom."

"The freedom is in buying cowboy boots, sweetheart. And I didn't need that money for it. All it took was a switch in my head. And I made that."

She thought it was nonsense, making it clear to him how much she had been annoyed by his remark that he was "just a farmer."

"I thought men your age took a mistress," one of the friends said that New Year's Eve, "but you take cowboy boots. You become a farmer instead of a cheater. Wow!"

Everyone laughed.

"A farmer with a sailing yacht," said Simone, "he wants everything. He must have a mistress too."

At the end of July, Reto picked up Alexandra for a second visit to the Sitter Valley. It was the last week of her vacation, her husband had already started working again

and she was "in desperate need of a diversion. Immediately she noticed his boots and smiled endearingly. "You were sensational," he said, as they drove up to the thicket where they had made love. "There, in that spot, really sensational."

"How do you figure that? Only because it was outside, in the wild." "That too. But I thought you especially were sensational, or being with you, your skin against mine. It felt like a rebirth."

"I think it's mostly something to be ashamed of." For a long time, she looked out her side window. She did not answer the hand on her thigh.

Reto found her that afternoon much more experienced in physical love than she had said she was. That her ease during lovemaking was because of him, he still couldn't believe.

"Did you feel sexy that day, did you really want to be sexy for me?" She nodded, glanced at him, then turned back. Maybe his eyes meant to her what her hands and skin became to him.

In the summer house she was silent for a long time, a little cranky at first. He made coffee and sandwiches and talked endlessly about his work.

Only after the sushi and a bottle of sake did he ask her about the lengthy messages, she sent him from her vaca-



-tion address, about the private banker's described inability to celebrate a holiday.

A befriended couple had come along, she said, who had gone to therapy, believing that breaking up was the worst possible option. She had seen how deep the man's emotions were about his own divorced parents, how horrifying it was, the fights between two people who once wanted a child together.

"I've listened to it like a sermon," she then confessed.

"Also, because my father took me aside after the last Christmas dinner and started talking about me having children now, about the value of a family. He had found life with my mother difficult but staying together had proved valuable."

Again, they went out for a walk, which for Reto included the promise of making love on the banks of the Sitter, but she held him off. Only in the house, after the last sip of sake, did she surrender. Half lying on the red sofa, she caressed his chest and his face, knowing how much animalistic lust she evoked in him. Without hesitation, she surrendered to the feral look in his eyes and whipped him up, forcing him to say how beautiful and sensational she was. Tenderly she played with his fingers for a while longer, until she got up and took a very long shower.

"I always get sad in this

place," she said, already fully dressed again. "Though I don't know if sad is the right word."

Her voice sounded timid, no longer like that of the woman who could shamelessly seduce him. He mused that her dependence on the perfect life pinched, perhaps a lack of adventure.

On the way back to Zürich she spoke fanatically about the growth of the telecom company, about how she was going to convert the advertising campaign into sales, "something that no one can help me with."

"Am I not developing a campaign for you, or with you, the very reason we met?"

Somberly he stared at the ferry again and began to see Monet's Painters' Boat, *Le Bateau Atelier*, a simple impressionist painting that had moved him long ago, at first sight. If he builds a simple hut on this rowing boat, he thought, he will have his own little writer's house and he can feel the water flowing beneath him. No better place too to be with her.

Her attitude had changed since that afternoon, a change he continued to resist, stirring anger in him. She knew the childish reaction her skin evoked in him; she had seen him cringe at his orgasm. Unnoticed, she had become to him much more than a good-

looking client, in his daydreams he lived with her, with the self-knowledge she had given him. "And now you leave me grasping at no thing", he had reproached her in a long message, "you deny my loneliness".

Would she blame him for that last lovemaking, sex to which she gave herself completely, until after a shocking orgasm in the shower she washed off all shame. Would she have rubbed fear into her body as she dried off, of a man who gave her goose bumps when he put his hand on her neck, of a man who pursued a nonsensical daydream.

It wasn't until four weeks later that he first mentioned to Simone about a second home in the country. "Why there?" she had looked at him in amazement. "Why in the Sitter Valley, I didn't even know it existed. Who ever thinks of that region for a second home? Who told you that the Sitter Valley is an attractive area? Well?"

He had no answer, not an answer he wanted to hear himself. Desperately, he drove there this morning, only to end up staring mostly at the foot ferry. He wanted a bench with cushions in it and a small table with a simple chair. Perhaps an anchor was needed, for when the current suddenly became too strong.

"It's in the guidebooks," the farmer says, "people count on it."

"I'll think about it, just until you drop the price."

In his imagination, he sees himself pushing the writer's cottage away from the shore,

from the place where he lost her and wants to find her again. When the realtor calls him, it's clear that the farmer wants to get rid of it, keeping the foot ferry in operation is no longer a condition.

He pulls the car over and keeps staring ahead for minutes, caught in the little boat, in the smell of her skin. Then he calls Simone. "It's ours," he says dryly. ♦





# Last Letter

A.N.N.

Dearest,  
I know, there will be no reply of this letter.  
Cause, if you are reading this  
Then I'm not anymore alive.

I know, you just skipped a beat  
And perhaps, fell down on the floor.  
I'm sorry!  
I never wanted to start a letter like this!  
Never ever wanted to send you this letter.  
But I'm helpless!  
Just wanted to share my last words of feeling with you.

I know, tears shedding from your eyes at this moment.  
And maybe, this letter is soaked with your tears.  
So am I!  
This letter is a token of my tears also.

My love, you remember that night?  
The last night before I joined war.  
That night; I made love to you that much as if it's my last time-  
I'm with you and you're with me.

My heavenly intoxication,  
In this exhausting atmosphere of blood, gunpowder and dead body  
My body only wants to go back to you  
And get lost in your blue eyes.  
My soul only craves to reach your soul,  
To get drowned in the waves of your long brownish wavy hair.  
Scent of your hair has always been my dictation here.

Just feeling nostalgia!  
I wish I could see you one last time.  
Now, in my eyes;  
The moments of our intimate days are floating.

You've always been a supportive wife.  
Even More than a wife!  
A best friend and a lover.  
I can never forget that scene-  
Before coming to war how you wiped your tears  
And encouraged me to go and save my nation.

I received your letter where you wrote down-  
You haven't counted; being frightened-  
How many times you had to take shelter at the underground chamber.  
Forgive me. Please!  
I never wanted to leave you alone during your pregnancy!  
I've always wanted to be by your side.  
But I guess, I'm unfortunate.

Promise me, my love.  
You will now wipe your tears.  
I'm watching you and will always be by your side.  
Remember; you've always been my source of hope and bravery.

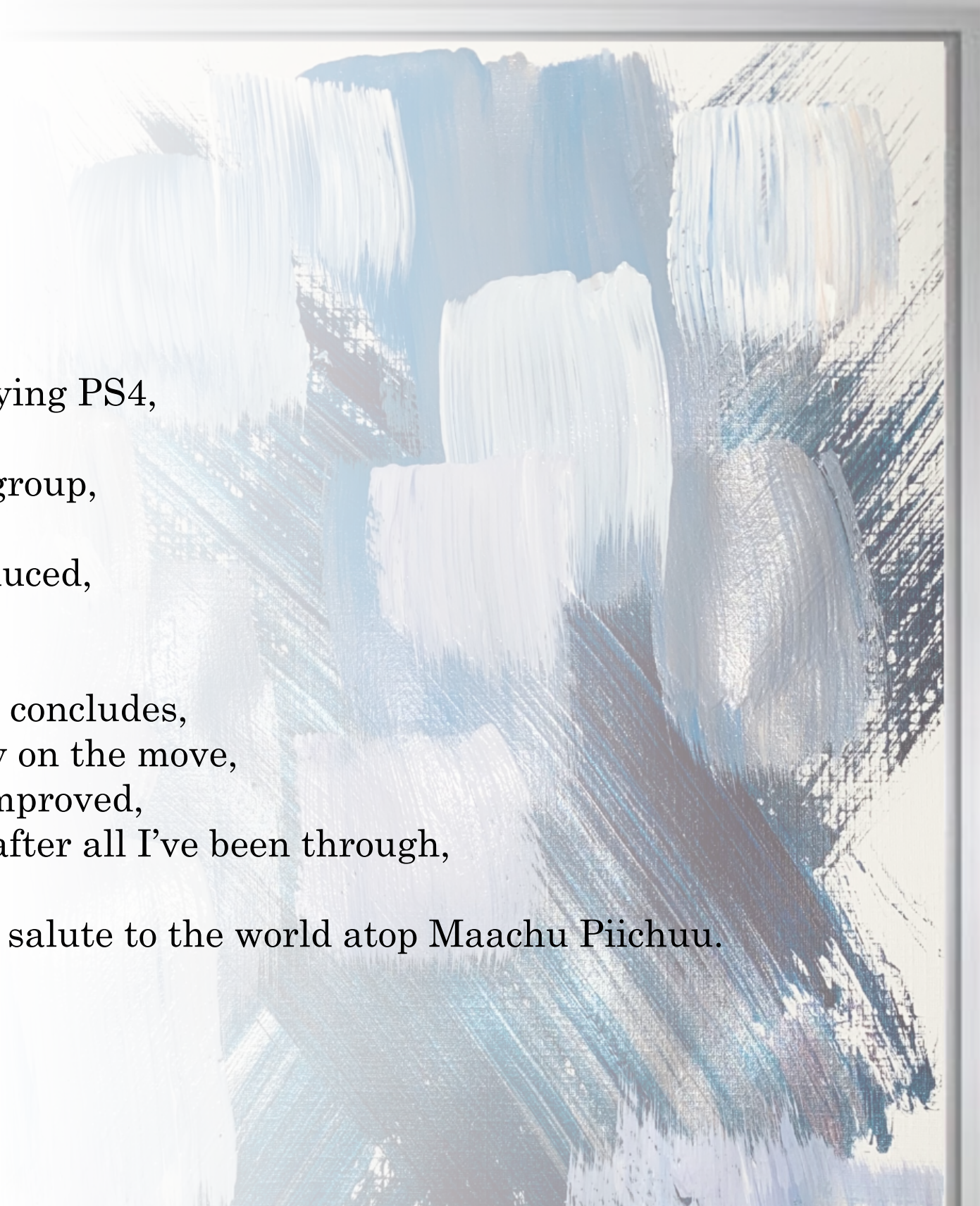
People will know me as a martyr.  
Nobody will know about your struggle and sacrifice.  
But believe me, you're more than a warrior.  
My love for you- always and forever.



# Forever Fascinated

Trevor Quint

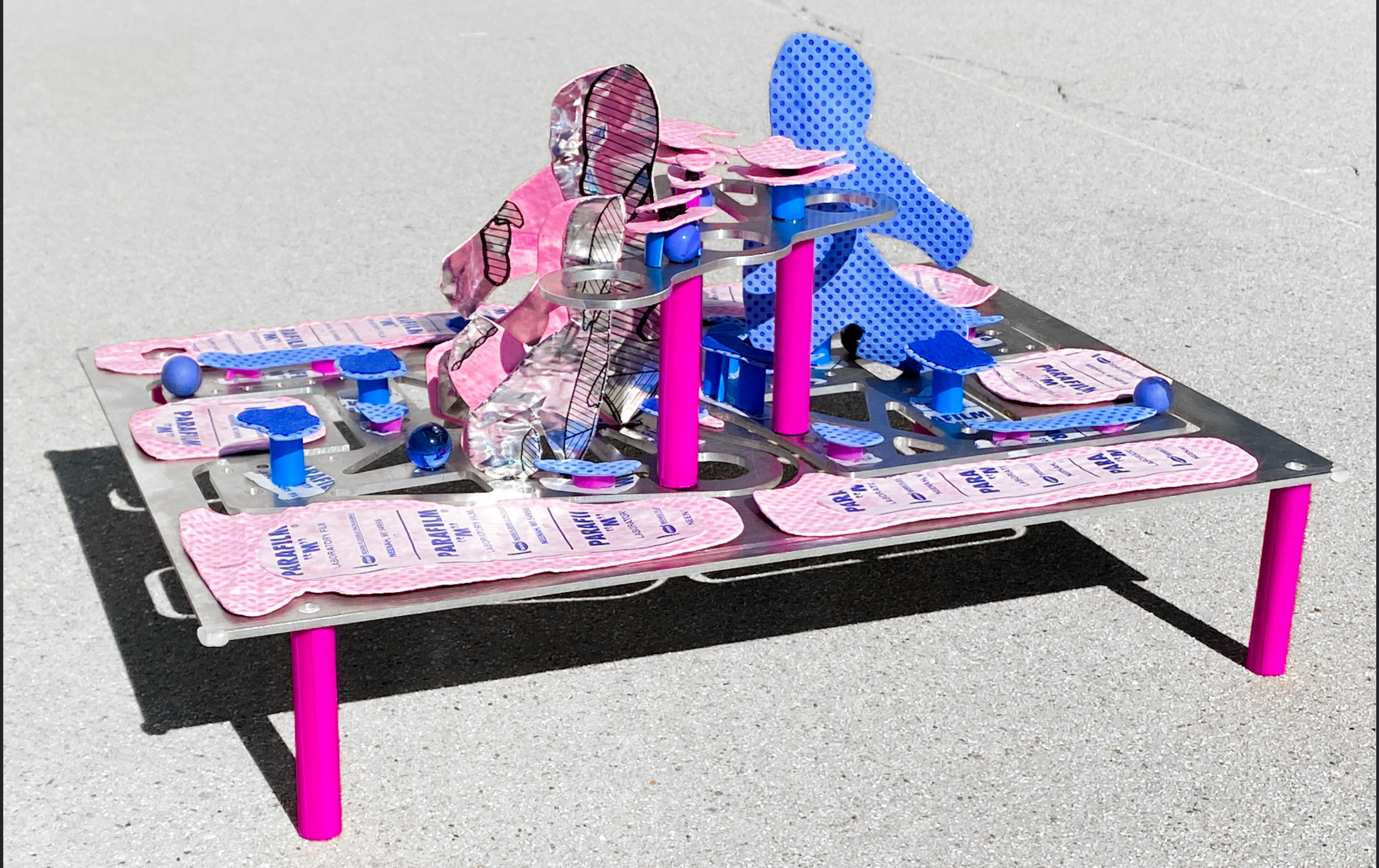
Reclusive habits of an introverted soul,  
Stay up all night writing rhymes and playing PS4,  
My heart is loosely bandaged,  
Tighten the knots when I take time to regroup,  
Inspiration comes from everything,  
In my seclusion is when creativity is produced,  
They'll find me a corpse at my desk,  
Pen in hand,  
Half empty coffee mug when my life force concludes,  
I can't live life paralyzed, so I tend to stay on the move,  
From project to project, my process has improved,  
I'm at peace with the person I'm become after all I've been through,  
Forever fascinated by life,  
I long for the day I can stand and make a salute to the world atop Maachu Piichuu.





## Machined Gender





## MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO





MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO





MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO





MIXED MEDIA | SHUA CHO



# Marrow

Jesse MacArthur

Keep me in the marrow of your bones,  
In the deepest parts of you.  
So that even if you bleed,  
I will still be yours.





# Sisyphus

Jesse MacArthur

Life cheated me,  
So I cheated death.  
Two times before,  
As Sisyphus.

So on my hill,  
I did atone,  
And every day  
I'd push this stone.

I rolled and rolled,  
To no avail,  
And by days end,  
Could not prevail.

I cheated death  
But twice before,  
The stone and I  
Forevermore..





# Life in Depths

Jesse MacArthur

It was in the ocean  
That I found myself.  
Diving deep into its waters.  
As my life wrenched  
From my lungs,  
I found reason to breath.





# Woman

Jesse MacArthur

Woman. Go forth,  
In strength and beauty.  
In hushed tones under candlelight,  
In loud roars from mountaintops,  
In visceral cries within your soul,  
Go forth.





Poem

2020, Acrylic Painting by DENALI

# Growing into Myself

Nicole Brooks

Abandoned  
Unlovable  
Unseen  
Loner  
Outsider  
Isolated  
Separate  
Excluded  
Outcast  
Apart  
Uncomfortable  
Stray  
Companionless  
Recluse  
Friendless  
Bookworm  
Unattached  
Different  
Individual  
Weird  
Uncommon  
Introvert  
Creative  
Thinker  
Deliberate  
Unique  
Contemplative  
Empathetic  
Reflective  
Nurturing  
Pondering  
Accepting  
Rare  
Loveable  
Grateful  
Me





Submit Your Work!

# Submissions

submissions@litstreammagazine.com

**Please include the following:**

A short bio of approximately 3 sentences.

Word document (.docx preferred)

12 pt font, Times or Garamond, double spaced, 1 inch margins

**Optional:**

Name, Age, Location

Multiple submissions are accepted.

Feel free to use a pen name for all work.

Editors may revise entries for length and clarity.

**Writing:**

- Flash Fiction: must not exceed 100 words
- Short Stories: must not exceed 4000 words
- Prose of any kind accepted for review. Examples include and are not limited to:
  - Screenwriting, image-based prose, letters, non-fiction, personal essays, memoirs, first-person journalism, opinion editorials, etc.

**Poetry:**

- Long-form: must not exceed 100 lines
- Short-form: must not exceed 20 lines
- Poetry of any kind accepted for review. Examples include and are not limited to:
  - Black-out poems, image-based poems, sonnets, haikus, etc.

**Artwork:**

- Must be signed
- Greater than 300 dpi
- Indicate which parts of the artwork can be cropped if necessary
- Artwork of any kind accepted for review. Examples include and are not limited to:
  - Photography, painting, sketches, cartoons (strips and single cells), videos or images of sculptures, etc.
- Preferred: topical content; commentary of a political, social, cultural nature.

“

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**Film and Video:**

- Films and moving picture artwork of any kind are accepted for review.
- Examples include and are not limited to:
  - Short films, creative social media-inspired clips, claymation, animation, documentaries, mockumentaries, etc.
- Preferred: submissions shorter than 30 minutes.

**Mixed Media:**

- Any combination of the above categories are accepted for review.
- Examples include:
  - Artwork accompanying poetry; poetry in the form of art; spoken-word poetry; readings of written work recorded on film; film based on submitted screenplay; etc.

**Open Letters:**

- Must be written to a specific person (dead or alive).
- Letters can be written to a group of people (e.g. dear english majors, etc.).



Haiku Contest

Enter Our Haiku Contest!

Each issue, we publish the winners of our haiku contest.  
While all entries are accepted, preferred are those on the following topics:

SUMMER  
RENEW  
FRESH

Please email your entry to [submissions@litstreammagazine.com](mailto:submissions@litstreammagazine.com)  
with the subject line:  
“Haiku Entry”

Get your poem featured here!



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We accept letters to the editor. They may be published in the next issue. Editors will reach out to you and may modify for length and clarity.

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