



# *Lit Stream*

AUGUST 2020

PART 1

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

## OUR STAFF

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Sawyer K. Ellis

**Staff Editor**  
J. Sefi March

**Staff Writer**  
Frederick Ronan

**Staff Artist**  
DENALI

### IN THIS ISSUE: Featured Artists

#### Michelle Kie

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

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.

# LitStream

August 2020

		<b>FICTION   FLASH-FICTION   SERIALS</b>
Sawyer K. Ellis	2	"Project Christie Scene #25"
J. Sefi March	6	"Relationship Post-Mortem"
		<b>LETTERS TO FRIENDS</b>
Sawyer K. Ellis	9	"Dearest Sam"
J. Sefi March	10	"Making Amends"
		<b>OPEN LETTER</b>
Sawyer K. Ellis	12	"Dear Sylvia Plath"
Sawyer K. Ellis	15	"Dear My Favorite Comedian" Part 1
		<b>REFLECTIONS FROM THE BUNKER</b>
Sawyer K. Ellis	16	"The Process"
Sawyer K. Ellis	18	"Forgotten Heroes"
Sawyer K. Ellis	20	"Much Too Much"
		<b>POEMS</b>
Frederick Ronan	22	"The View from Halfway Down"
Sawyer K. Ellis	24	"I Smiled"
Sawyer K. Ellis	26,28	Blackout Poetry
		<b>DENALI</b>
Michelle Kie	12	Super Parrot (2020)   Pencil/Digital Painting
Michelle Kie	13	Snake and Hand (2020)   Pencil/Digital Painting
Andrew Kie	20	Giving Life (2020)   Pencil
Andrew Kie	21	Golden Temple, Kyoto (2017)   Photography
	30	<b>Submissions</b>
	32	<b>Haiku Contest</b>

### 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.



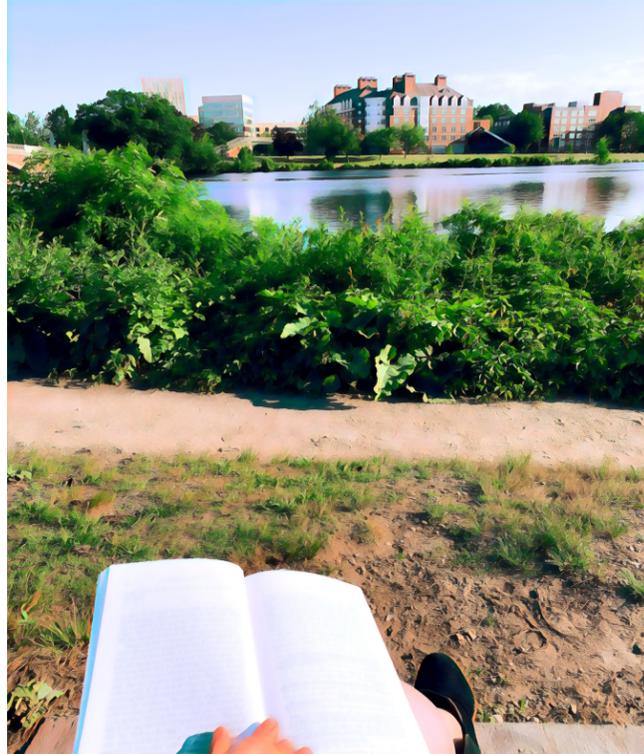
#### Kurt Vonnegut + John Green

Satire, humor, and philosophy.



# Project Christie: Scene 25

Sawyer K. Ellis



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

She sat reading the notes she'd taken into her blue notebook. Next to her sat a man on a conference call. He sounded like a well-to-do man, with the voice and words of a man that wears tuxedos and carries around briefcases and talks into his phone like he wants other people to hear how seriously he takes himself.

Looking over at him, though, Christie noticed that she'd never have known he was the one speaking in all

those highfalutin ways. He was hunched over his laptop checking his phone when he wasn't speaking, wearing sandals that exposed his hairy, ungroomed, and cracked toenails, one sandal hanging off the edge of those horrible toes, in full view of the other patrons at the coffeeshop. He wore a plain t-shirt, but on him, it accentuated the slightly cool undertones of his unshaven skin—he looked overdue for a good washing. And the way he would scratch... *itch, itch, itch*, all over his arms, then

his legs, then his face, then his arms again, making a quick detour to his toes, then right back up to his face.

Christie's nose crinkled up in disgust. She absolutely loathed seeing people scratch their skin in her vicinity. It was a horrid, horrid thing to do. All of those dead skin flakes wafting up into the air with each scratch. Eww. She wondered when the man would stop. Goodness, scratch any more and he'd surely run out of skin!

He sat with foot over knee, shoving his toes ever so closer to her face. Everything about this man grossed her out. What with all the peering at the man out of the side of her eye, she wasn't able to concentrate on her notes. She gave the man a long, straight look, and then packed up her things. As she got up to leave, she turned toward the man.

"You should get your skin problem checked out."

Then, with a robust turn of her heels, she walked out of the cafe with chest puffed out. Christie spoke her mind, and she wasn't afraid of big, tall, old men.

Walking home, she played back the incident in her head. How could fully-grown men be so untidy and indecent? From

the content of his call, he appeared to be an otherwise well-educated man who should know better.

People could be so puzzling. One could never be sure who a person was—she was often surprised, but she grew to expect it. She thought back to Mrs. Watson. She had also been a real surprise of a person. She, who had seemed so gentle and grandmotherly, was actually a thrill-seeking, adventurer!

Christie shook her head. It really was impossible to know a person.

\*

She was never so happy to find that there was a place she could go—a secure place from the horrid, foot-scratchers of the world, somewhere she could curl up with a good

book, safe with only herself and her thoughts.

The nook she had found even smelled good. There was an organic food stand nearby that smelled of delicious goodies, not like the overpowering greasy odor of fries or burgers at the diners she sometimes frequented to write. The sun shined into the glass behind her, encasing the plants with a soft glow that made her feel that she was working in the middle of a garden exhibit at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. And as she sat there, pouring her thoughts into her little blue notebook she carried around with her absolutely everywhere, rays of sun patting her on the back with the touch of a loving mother, she felt at peace.

\*



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

Time to leave. Two hours had passed. She wanted to stay, but there was business to be done. And Christie had no mind to leave business hanging.

She knew there was a reason that the school wasn't doing anything about the case. When it came down to it, few entities called most of the shots at Edgemont, and Christie knew that this matter

had reached the hands of whoever—or whatever—was at the top. The only reasonable explanation for a lack of administrative action was that those at the top were *choosing* not to take action.

Then the question, she asked herself, was this. Why wouldn't the uppity-toppities do anything about the locker room case? It was huge publicity stinker dumped into their laps, and they were just

going to let it sit there? With the very real possibility that it could go off any second, bringing all kinds of negative press and unwanted legal action against them—

Ahh. There it was. It wasn't a *them* that the press would be after. It would be a *one*. And who would this *one* be? Who would be the *one* to take the fall for this collective decision made by this mysterious entity?



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

Only one person came to mind: the person at the very top of the school hierarchy. It had to be the principal. Principal Mercer.

Of course. Mercer was a bumbling dolt—that was a fact everyone knew. But in Christie's experience, even idiots can tell when they are being made ridiculed. She knew this because she had read "Flowers for Algernon" only last month. In the book, Charlie knew when the people at the shop were making fun of him. And surely, Principle Mercer would be (at least) at Charlie's level.

It was settled then. Principle Bumbler was being set up to take the public fall if and

when the PR stinker went off.

But that still left questions. He wasn't so dumb as to not have figured out that he would be the one to take the fall for a harassment incident just waiting to be uncovered. So why was he not shaking in his boots, stuttering up and down the halls like he usually did? Could it mean that he didn't know about the incident?

But Christie had determined that to be false, according to her notes on the case. Could it be that he didn't know whoever he reported to was sitting on the information? Surely, bumbling Mercer couldn't have the wherewithal to sit on a stinker this big all by himself. Whoever Mercer reports to

knows about the case, and Mercer must believe those people are going to take action to protect him. So, who were these people? Who did Mercer report to?

This was too much for Christie to process all at once. She had made significant progress in the case so far. She knew now that someone was setting up Mercer to take the fall, that whoever this was knew about the locker room incident, and that they were intentionally taking no action.

Now, she needed to find out more about the school's pecking order. She knew just the person to ask. ♦

# Relationship Post-Mortem

J. Sefi March



How shall I navigate the post-mortem.

This could have ended really poorly. I just barely rectified the situation by knocking my brain for some kind of creative way to reestablish communication. Since we're living in a Tik-Tok world, I figured I'd send along a few funnies with what I considered to be hilarious commentary. It worked... kind of. He did text me back.

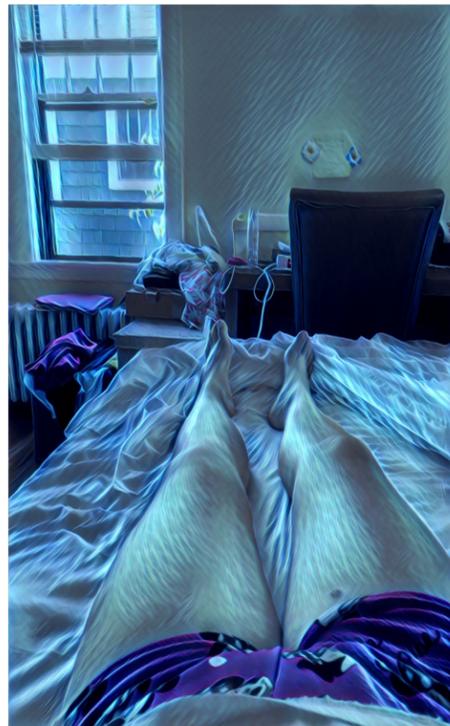
And then what happened was a miracle. I called him

and he actually picked up. He had ignored my two other calls earlier that day.

Today, he also ignored my calls. When I texted him immediately after that there was a present waiting for him downstairs, code for I ordered you a Starbucks Frappuccino, he responded a few minutes afterward to say he had just seen the text and that he was coming right down. When he exited the elevator, he saw me, holding Starbucks in hand, waiting with a smile on my face. He

looked surprised, and not... necessarily in a good way. He just looked surprised. As neutral as could be. He stood aback and paused a bit before saying the words, "I didn't expect you here." Well, yes, that's how a surprise works.

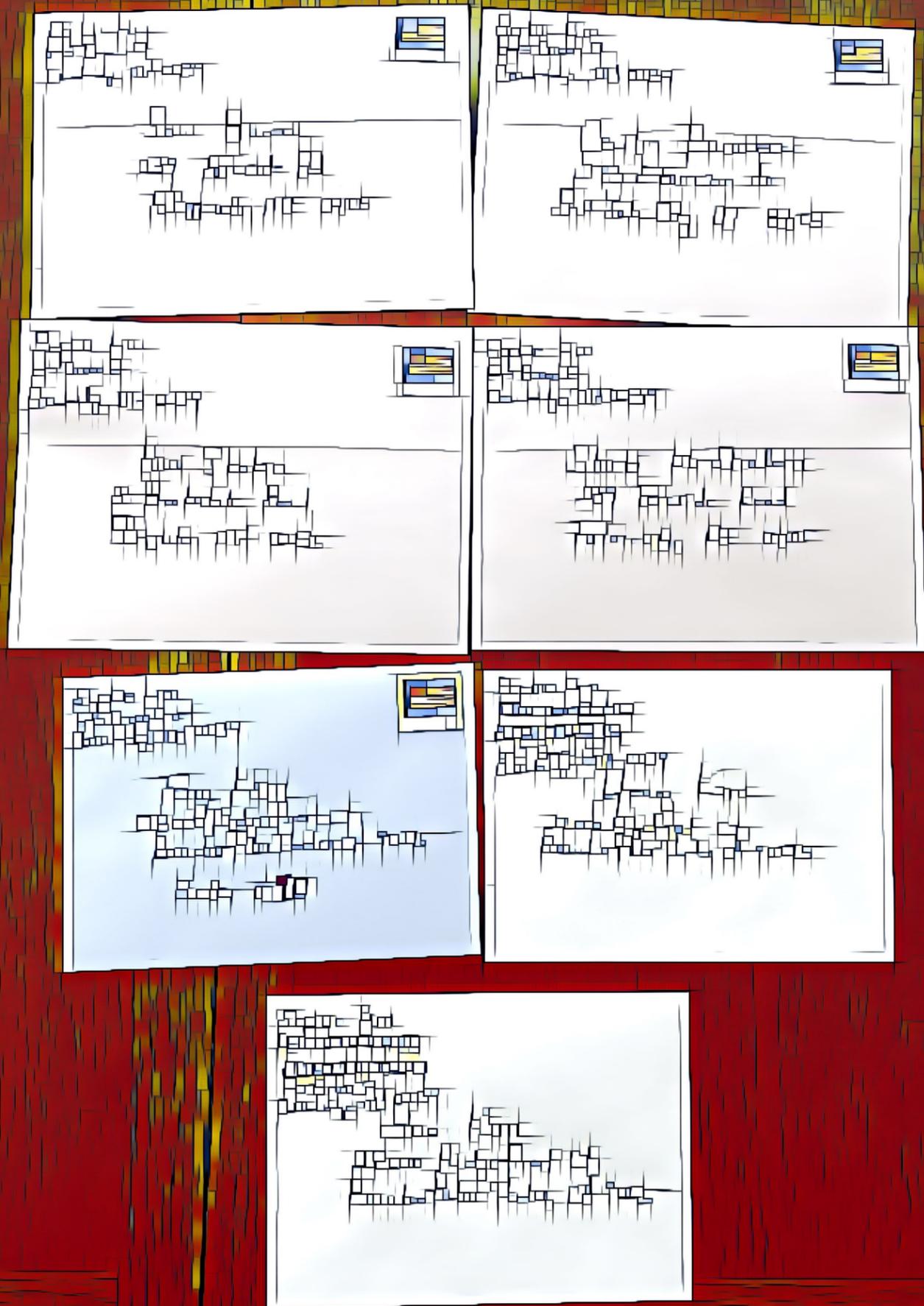
I had been planning to greet him with open arms and with a fabulously upbeat attitude, but his hesitation to greet me threw me off. I didn't know how to get back into the upbeat, fun attitude, a cliff from which his reaction had pushed me off. ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

# Dearest Sam,

Sawyer K. Ellis

*Dearest Sam,*

I hope this letter finds you well... it's been a while since my last letter to you~ it's taken me a bit to find my footing and establish a new routine for myself after the break-up, but things have stabilized now for the most part.

How's the Amazon job? It must be nearing two months since you started? I wonder where you get the time to do all that and write your short stories.

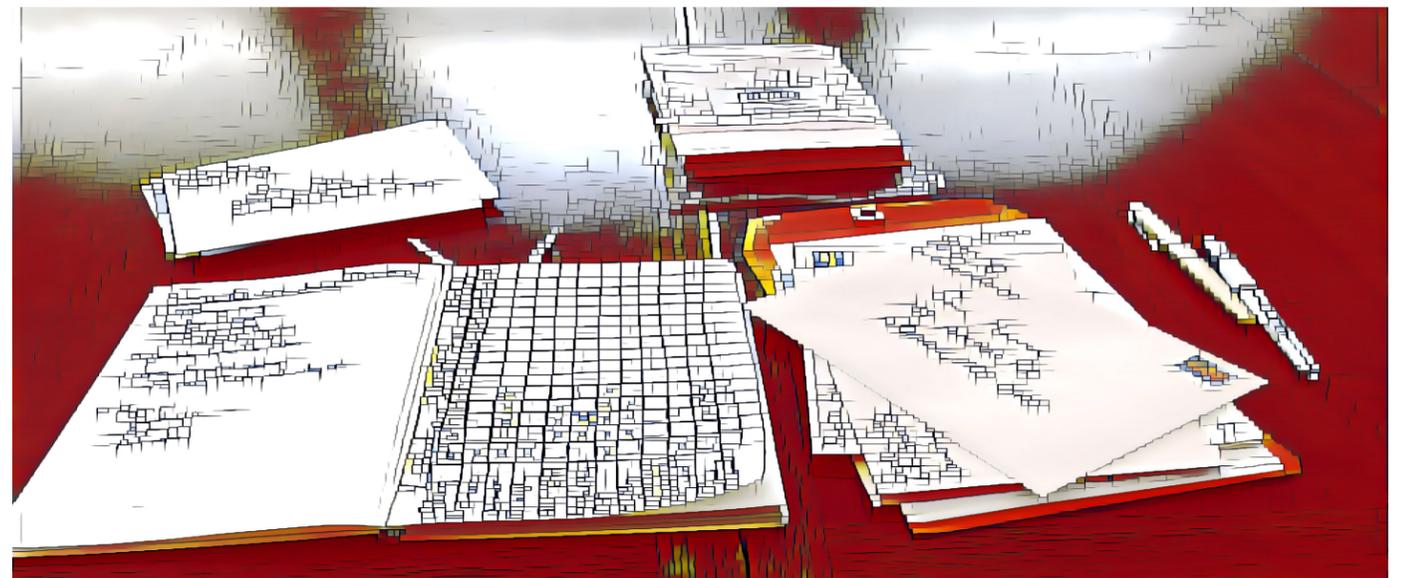
I've been feeling a bit of cabin fever lately. This COVID madness has finally gotten to me. I've been going

on properly socially distanced dates, mainly to get out of the house, but it's not the same as before. Not just for corona reasons, but also because the damn New England summer is so hot and humid. How do people live here? Is Maine this unbearable, too? I miss the west coast. I live here for its winters. The last time it was "93 degrees," it was actually 102 degrees in my room—I just about had a meltdown. Our duplex has no AC and now that there are no coffee shops to escape to for the cool air and writing ambiance, I haven't been able to crank out those 50,000 words like I did in a mere three weeks last July. Wow... to think that was a year ago...

I've decided to refuse to think that I—that we—are old. I feel like we say and think that every yea, regardless of the age, and later we look back and realize how young we were. I don't want to have that realization, yet again, when I'm actually old—whatever age that might be. I choose to embrace the glass half full and, dare I say, welcome denial with open arms. I choose to feel 23. Indefinitely. :)

Send my love to your family. Tell me how the notorious outdoorsman is holding up indoors!

Love always,  
Sawyer ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



# Making Amends

J. Sefi March

*Dear Alexa,*

**H**ope you're staying safe and happy during the quarantine. I'm writing this as I feel I've wanted to have a conversation about our friendship over the years. I feel grateful to have met you and to have had all those fun moments that brought us closer together sophomore year of college. And though many years have passed since then, I will always treasure the times we shared.

Since then, I feel that our friendship has become distant and a bit strained.

I wonder if it began in part because of the end of sophomore year when I did not say a proper goodbye to you before you left abroad. For that, I've continuously over the years looked back, and it's one of the few things in life I regret. I had been in a terrible mood and was frustrated with Megan for no good reason than my own mood swing (which of course is no fault of hers), and I remember leaving the room in a huff. If that was the start of our emotional distancing, I'd like to make it clear that it had nothing to do with you or

Megan or Julie, who was also in the room with us. I was working through my issues, which I continued to do straight through Stanford and up til very recently. I feel much more fulfilled and at peace after getting the right kind of psychopharmacological treatment; turns out much of the problem in my case was biochemical.

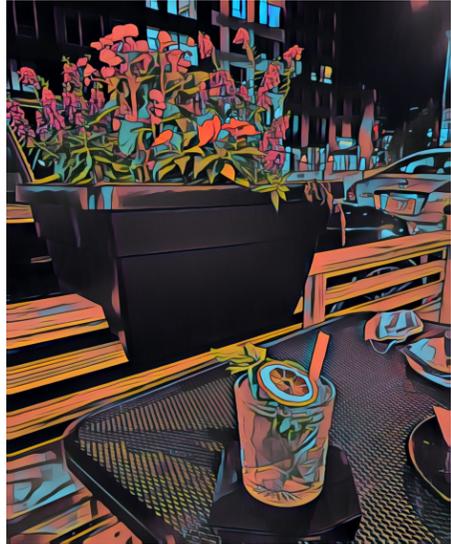
**I**t's taken me years to talk to you about this, something I wanted to bring up on my visit in February 2019, but I didn't feel it was the right kind of discussion to have in the company of Zac. I've since gotten treatment for my crippling depression and anxiety, which is partly how I'm about to write this now.

Though it's taken many years, it's something I want to address since I don't want our friendship to be as distant as it has been. You've meant a lot to me over the years, and I feel grateful to be able to call you a friend. Though I don't know if you've felt quite the same way, I've always held you in my mind as one of my closest friends from college.

**I** hope what I've written doesn't upset you. I only

mean it in the most honest way with the best intentions—to work toward being friends again. I would love to have a little more Alexa in my life.

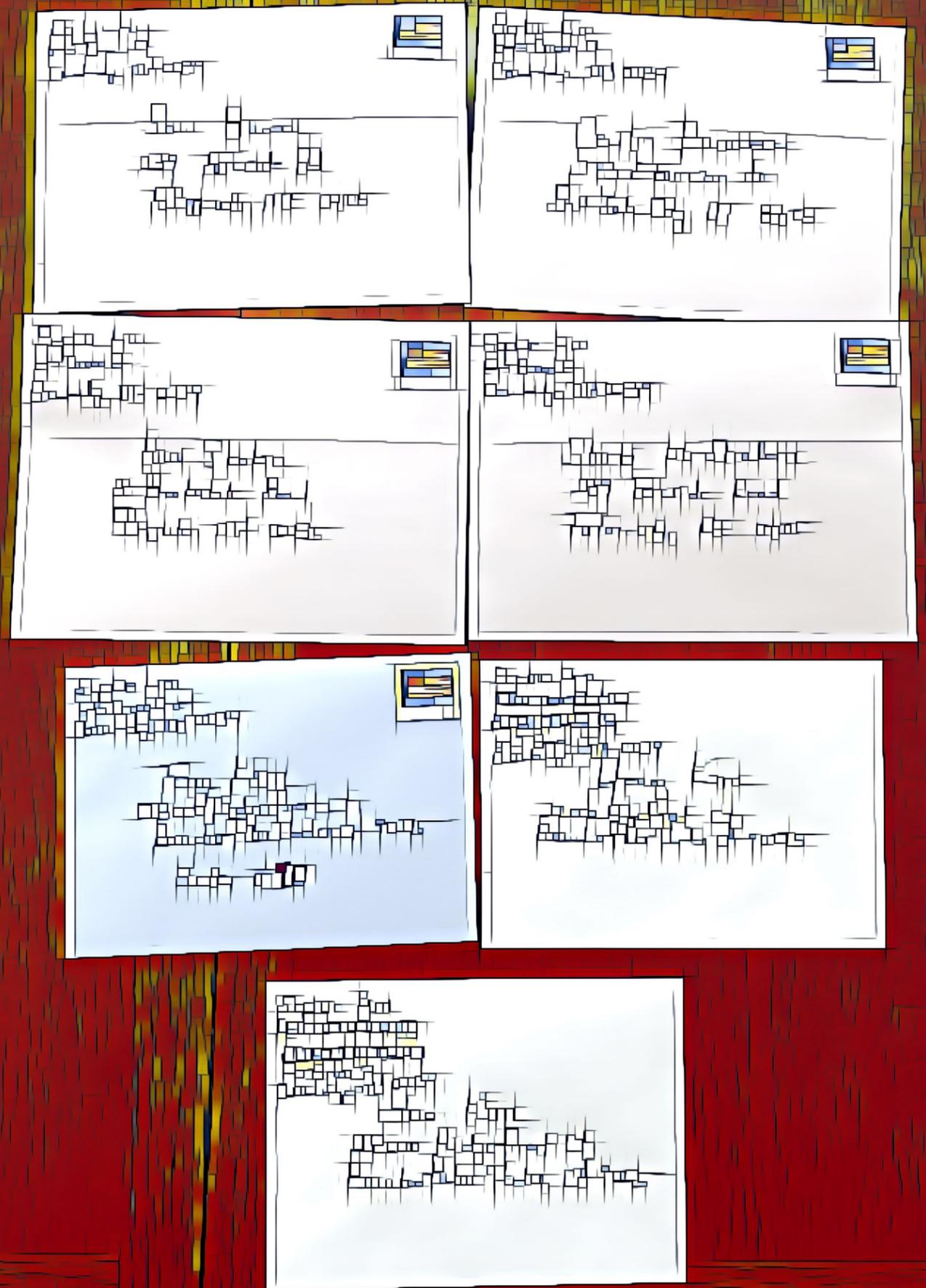
**W**ith love,  
Sawyer ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



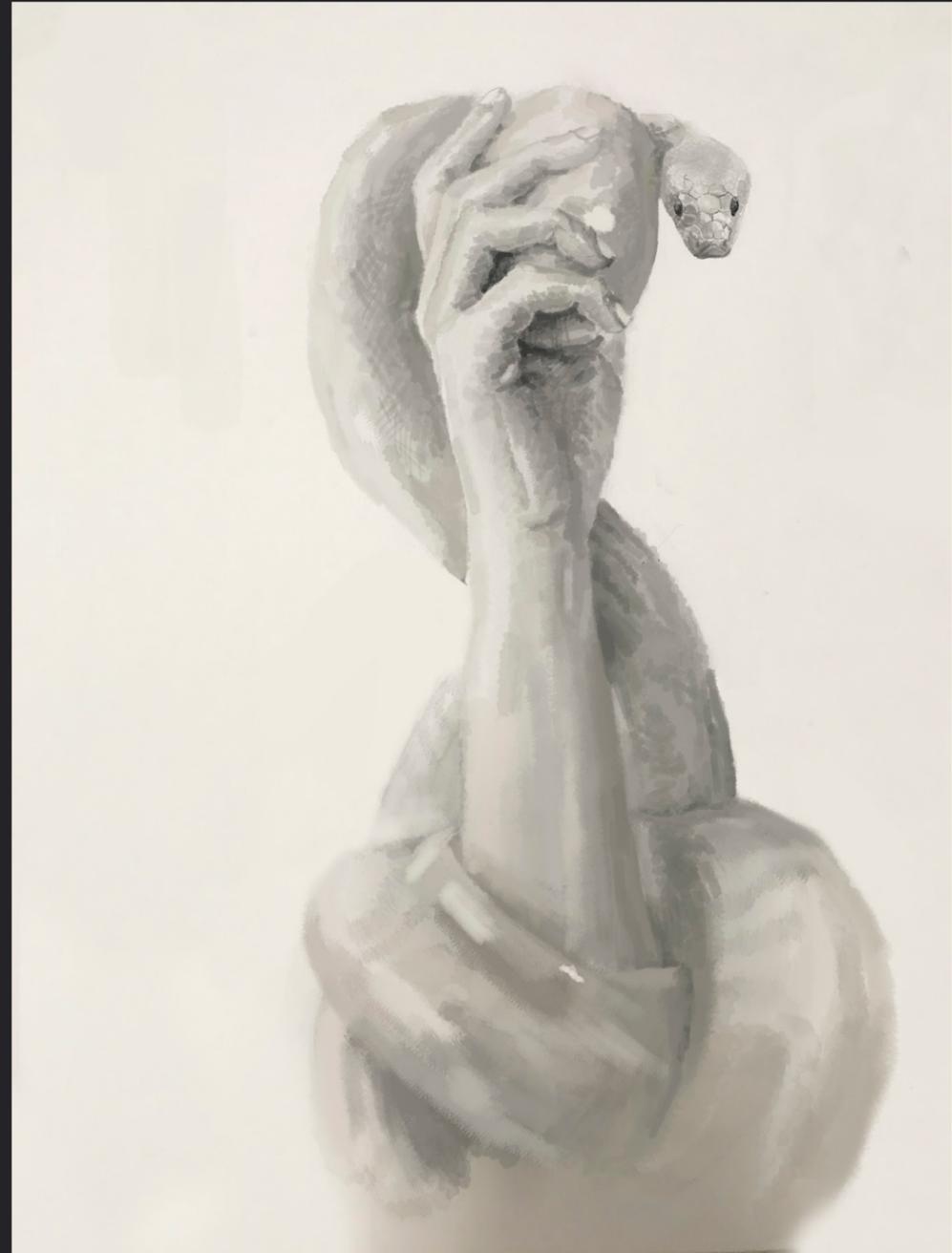
2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

# Superb Parrot



2020, Drawings by Michelle Kie

# Snake and Hand



2020, Drawings by Michelle Kie

# Dear Sylvia Plath,

Sawyer K. Ellis

*Dear Sylvia,*

In your short 30 years, Sylvia, your wealth of work has encouraged me to write—write furiously, as if running out of time, but not just being chased by some measure of time or anxiety, but toward something; something grand, an idea that I can continue to dream that I can strive for, even after reaching one milestone, then another, and another.

The Bell Jar has clearly spoken to a lot of people over the years, and I can't compare its impact on me versus on other, but it is important for you to hear, even if it's for the thousandth time, that your book has been especially touching to me. I picked it up in the good times and the bad, though mostly during the bad, I admit. Frankly, it helped to relate to someone who could so delicately articulate the dull feelings of the pits of depression. In every attempt to bring myself out of the rut, on the days I crawled out of bed, put on my sweatpants with hair in a ragged mess, to walk around the neighborhood, I held your

book in hand—not to read necessarily, but simply for emotional support. It was as if you were there in spirit, the only friend, the only soul who could understand my experience... or so I felt.

Resting in the knowledge that many other readers have felt what you've described helps me put my life into perspective. Maybe I should continue moving forward. Maybe it's okay to stop and recompose myself. Maybe it's fine to not be moving, moving, searching, searching, all the time. I learned to stop. I learned to breathe. And I learned to be calm despite the compulsion to do something productive and "make something of my life" as I would often tell myself, a motto driven into me by all those around me who expected me to go on and accomplish great things... me included.

And so I write this letter to you, mostly for me, but also because I believe you deserve to hear it, from wherever you may be now. With much undue pain and sorrow you left the world, and from your

experience I feel my own echoing within me, my heart wrenching with the thoughts I used to have and those that come back to haunt me from time to time. And each of those times, I pick up your book: to read voraciously, to read a few pages, to reread and reread and burn into my brain my favorite lines, and simply to hold dearly as I would a loved one.

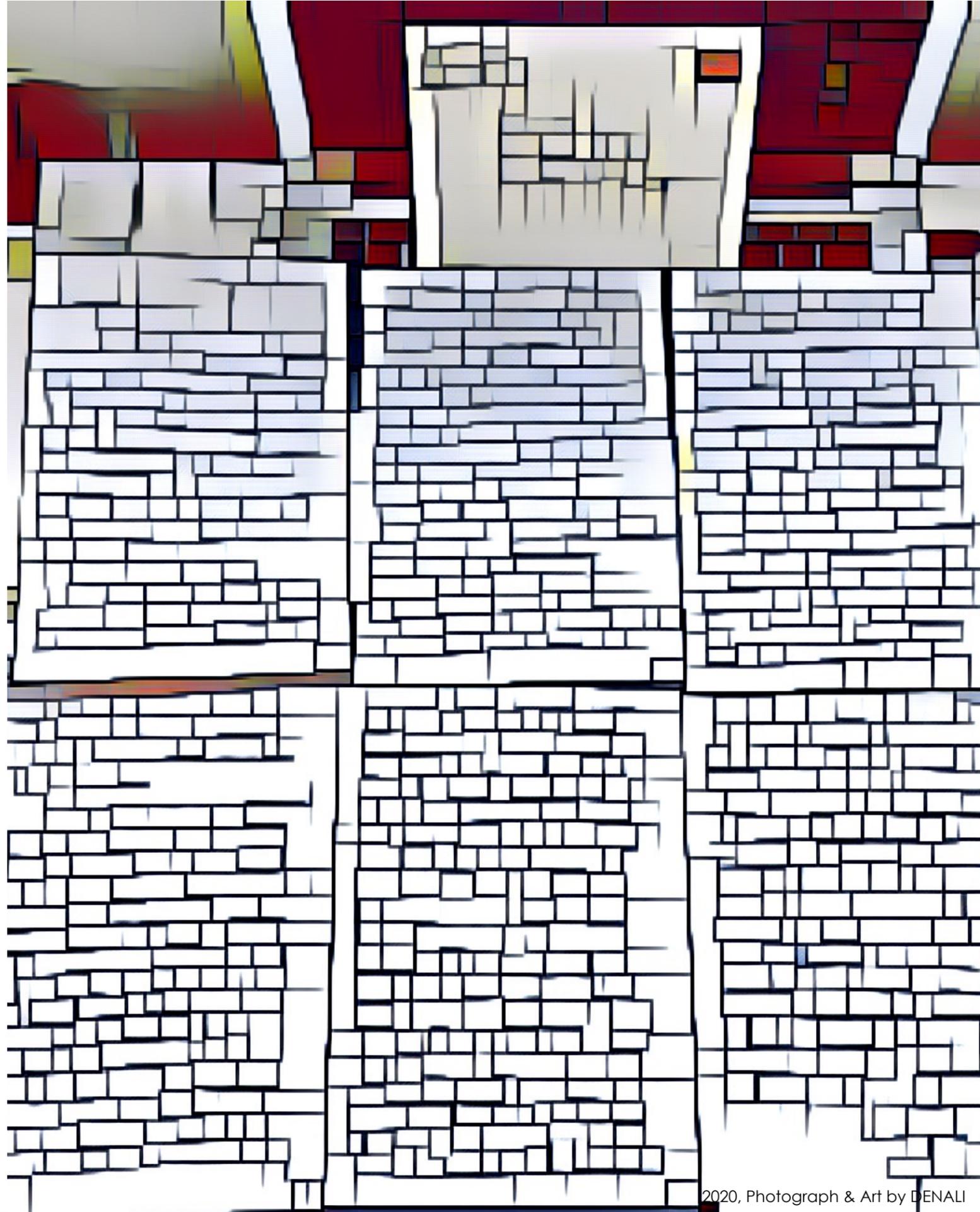
Thank you for your truth. Thank you for courage to write. Thank you for it all.

With love and gratitude,

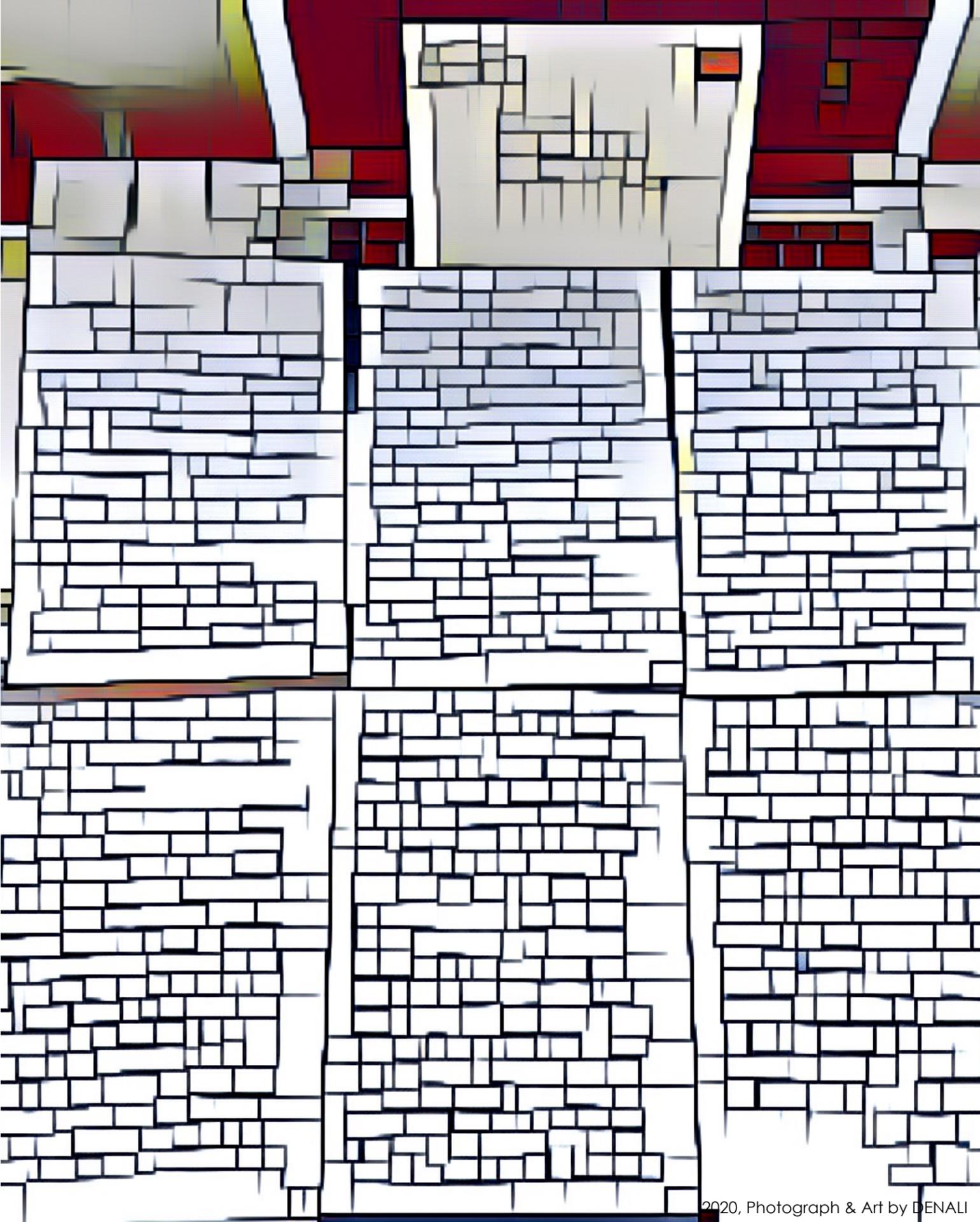
S. K. Ellis ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

Open Letter | Art by DENALI

# Dear My Favorite Comedian Part 1



Sawyer K. Ellis

*Dearest Maria,*

You have been such an inspiration to me for the last four to five years. This letter is so long overdue. I've started and restarted this letter since 2017.

At that time, I was in a really bad place—I couldn't get out of bed for ten to eleven days at a time and living in my parents' basement after quitting my job after college. At the time, the only thing that kept me going was watching your comedy

specials, stand-up clips on Youtube, and rewatching over and over again The Maria Bamford Show, the cinema-verite masterpiece you created when you, too, went back to your hometown.

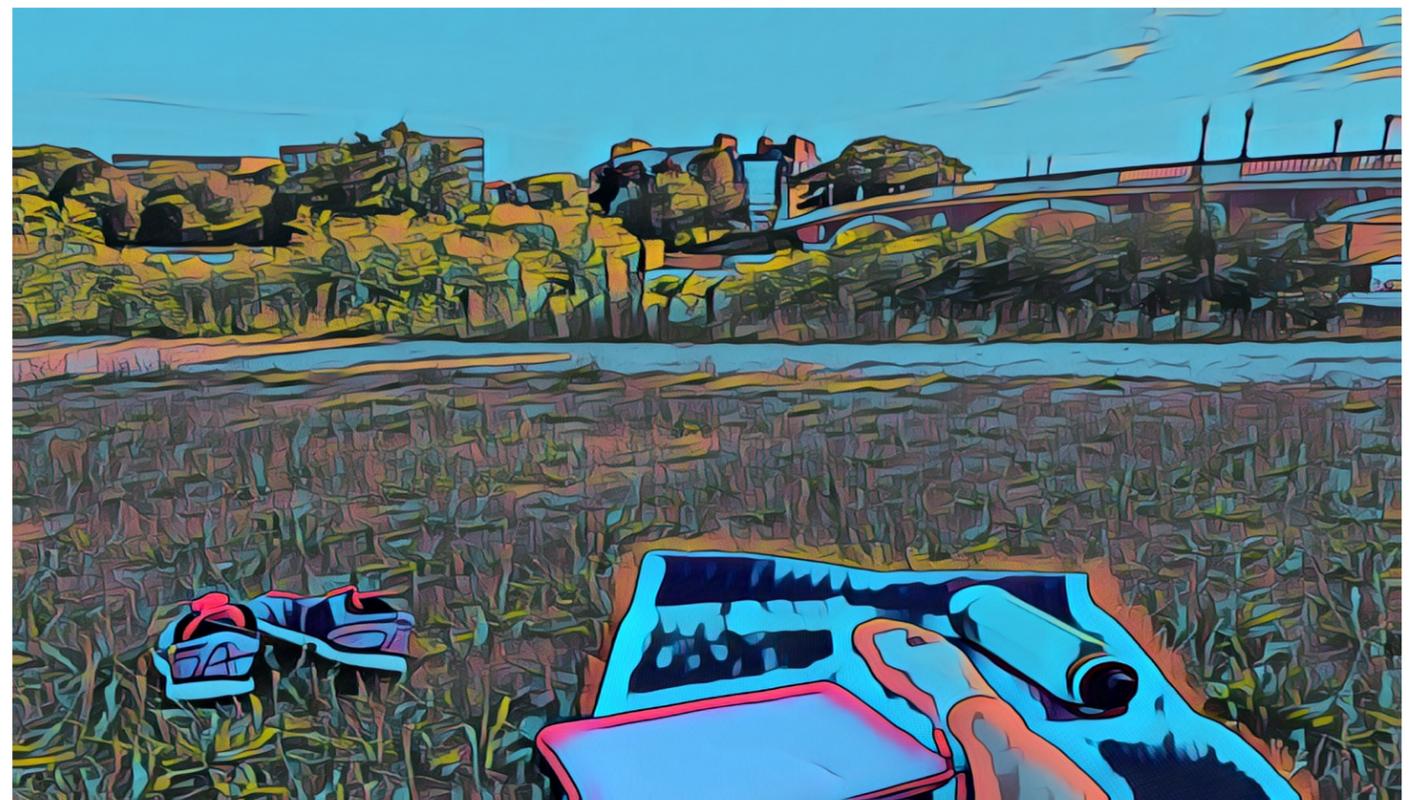
I love that you do these Zoom shows since I've always wanted to see you live. Zoom makes it feel that we're even closer and more personal than sitting in a large audience. Though these Zoom shows started in the middle of this strange global pandemic, I hope you'll continue doing them ever after these

troubled times are over.

Thanks for being the light I could look to during my dark times and the sparkle that we all need during this dark global time. You are so valued and necessary in my life, and I'm sure for so many others as well.

Hope you stay safe and sane during the quarantine. Looking forward to your next show!

Sending you my best vibes,  
S. K. Ellis ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

# The Process

Sawyer K. Ellis

I like to write with my eyes closed. There's a wonderful free-falling feeling of sinking deeper and deeper into my thoughts, into the deep recesses of my brain that happens when I close my eyes. Humans are such visual creatures... and to think that it makes all the difference in the mind, simply to close the eyes...

My eyes are closed now; I'm tired. I had lunch, and I feel it sitting inside me, all the salty, spiced juices soaking up all the water in my system, my body begging for water. It was such a tasty dish that I don't regret it... but right now, my lids are the heaviest part of my body. On the other hand, my fingers fly across the keyboard, and nothing can stop my thoughts from racing from one end of my brain to the other. Still, my eyes won't open. Perhaps it's for the best: Less to criticize with.

There's a sudden whoosh, and I look around, expecting to see a someone mimicking the sound of the air vent. Instead, I find no one. No one.

There's a simplicity to the way poets write, and yet it takes the most amount of work to write something so beautifully simple.

Like Hemingway said, writing is easy—all you must do is write with your blood. And that's what it feels like for me, although for the most part, I have to say the bloodiness comes during the editing process. The notion of getting things down on paper for the first draft doesn't much phase me anymore... but the haunting existential crisis that is ever so present in the back of my mind makes me wonder if any of this stuff that flies out of my fingertips is even going to make it into the final version, if all of this typing away will amount to anything, if most of this is going to end up on the cutting room floor, which is more than likely to happen. Most of the first draft they say is a crapshoot anyway, so the idea is to just get it done and over with.

But there's something inside me that kicks back at that idea, like I want all the words I write on this page to be meaningful, last forever in some way. I suppose that's a foolish thought, since there's no such thing as a perfect kind of forever, and nothing is really "finished"; still, it appeases the part of my mind that feels the compulsion to save every little bit of energy for the sake of efficiency—like I'm hoarding my words as a placeholder for the effort I spend on this sentence, this page, this

piece. As if the idea of throwing away my words is equivalent somehow to throwing away the effort and opportunity cost of choosing to become a writer. I don't truly believe this; it's more of an instinctive reaction, but I do have to acknowledge the hesitancy to cut where cuts need to be made, and this ultimately is the barrier that keeps me from writing the first draft to begin with.

I have this terrible habit of thinking in black and white—the all or nothing cognitive fallacy, as my therapist calls it. The idea that I'm cutting 70-90% of my work hinders me in a way that makes me think of the inevitable demise of everything, like what's it all for anyway if I'm going to get rid of most of it.

But I can't think like that—nothing can get done with that kind of mindset. I've begun telling myself (and often forget it and rediscover this realization) that 20% of the work yields 80% of the result. So even if I do end up cutting 80% of my first draft, as long as I keep the 20% that yields the fruit of my labors, I can keep moving forward. Right? ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

PENCIL + DIGITAL | ANDREW KIE

# Giving Life



2020, Drawing by Andrew Kie

PENCIL + DIGITAL | ANDREW KIE

# Golden Temple, Kyoto, Japan



2020, Photograph by Andrew Kie

# Forgotten Heroes

Sawyer K. Ellis

**M**an, oh man. Just started watching “The Last Dance” on Netflix about Michael Jordan, and it is balls to the walls crazy. Makes me appreciate the game of basketball and understand how much of an impact it’s had on my life.

**I**t’s like the time I cried for several days after Kobe died. I grew up watching Kobe with my dad. Almost every night, we watched NBA

games together. Frankly, I hardly ever thought of Kobe in the last ten years. But I suppose his presence was always there... in my memories, the moments I’d recall in times of desperation and sorrow.

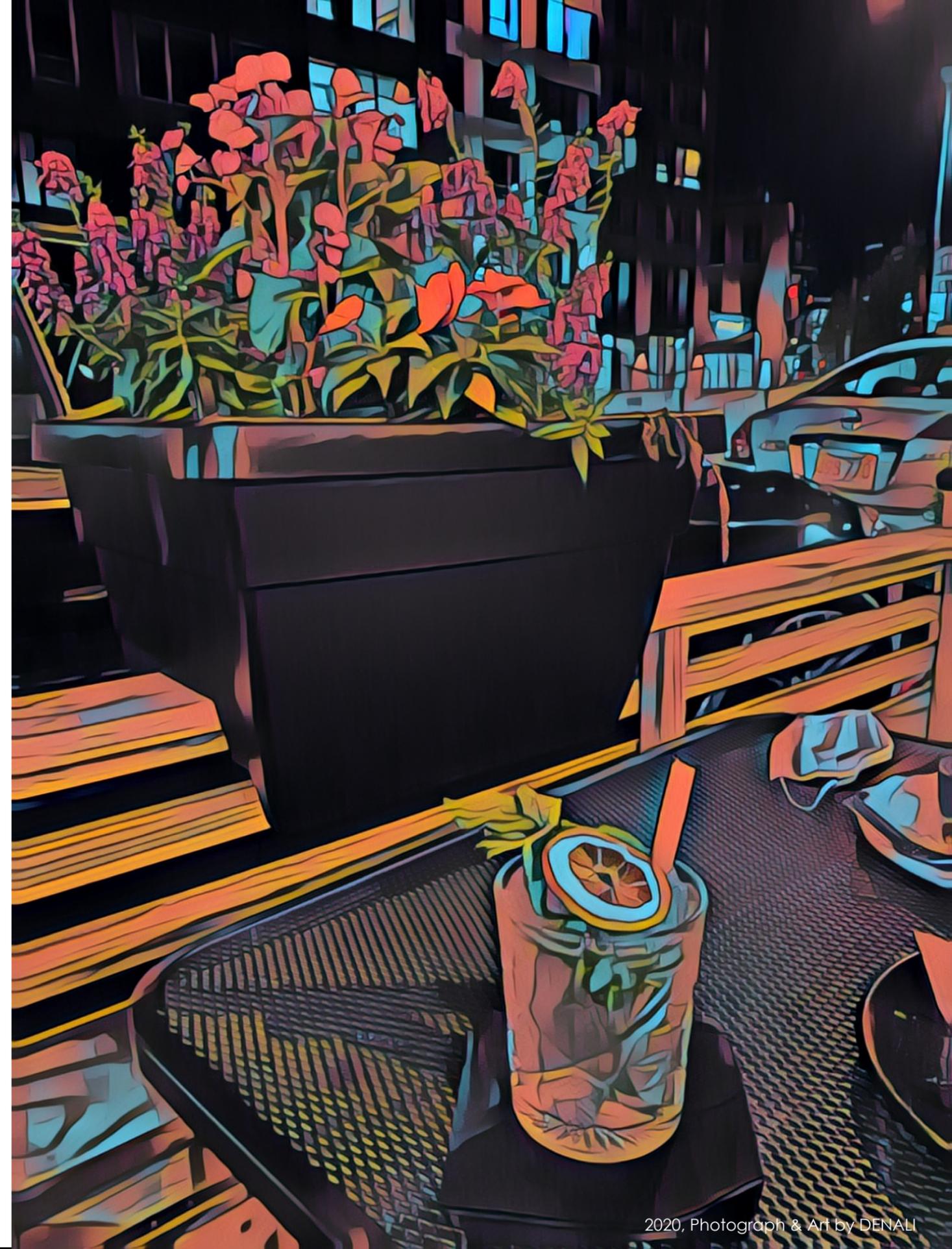
So in a way, Kobe—the idea of Kobe—was with me all along. Strange how something can impact us so deeply with such little awareness. They are these forgotten heroes that shaped us. In our formative years,

they were the higher beings we could look up to, unlike God or religion or some other abstract concept.

**I**’ve only just come to understand the deep-seated magnitude of celebrity. How it shapes us, how it uses us, how it bonds us, how it changes us. I’ll always be grateful to Kobe and Michael Jordan for giving me the best childhood years with my dad. ♦



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

# Much Too Much

Sawyer K. Ellis

Dear Reader,

I've had an epiphany.

Throughout my life, I've found it difficult to resolve this ever-present feeling that I should be doing more. I should be reading more. I should be writing more. I should be this-ing and that-ing more, more, more. That probably comes from the fact that there simply is *too much* to be done: too many good books to read, too many good movies to watch, too many good people to meet and befriend, too many this and that and the other.

During normal life, when I go to work from 9-5, then go to the gym or do yoga at home, eat dinner, shower, sit down for a quick video chat with family, my daily routine leaves very little to do all the other personal edification tasks I keep planning for myself.

So when the quarantine hit, this was my time, I told myself. This is the time to grab the bull by the horns, and just DO it. Do all the things I've wanted to do, the things I've told myself would be nice to do, the things I

need to do to become a better writer, a better reader, a better literary consumer. So: I started.

I sat down to read. Read all the things: Silas Marner; I Can't Go On, I'll Go On; Plutarch on Theseus; The Bell Jar (for the fifth time, to really study the phrasing and story structure, as I'd told myself); Harry Potter 1 (for the same reason as before, I'd like to say); some Kazuo Ishiguro, Haruki Murakami—the two writers I've heard so much about and wanted to finally get around to reading; James Joyce, that literary giant and hurdle, one I was bracing myself for the possibility that I would intensely dislike it and no longer be able to relate to the other writers I admired like Sylvia Plath and Samuel Beckett (in hindsight, I realize that most of this fear came from a friend who hates Joyce and his writing style with her whole being, for some reason I cannot fathom); David Sedaris and his humorous essays in the New Yorker, a publication I often dream about and aspire to write for, sometime over the rainbow; and on and on

and on until I found myself surrounded by piles of books on my windowsill, on my nightstand, at my desk, on the dining room table, and on overflowing into the pants-section of my bookshelf (a pants-section of a bookshelf is quite necessary when living in a Boston brownstone with a bedroom closet the size of a small coffin).

There are simply too many things. I've yet to even mention the list of 2000 books sitting in my iBooks app and the list of critically acclaimed and culturally iconic films I've compiled to watch during all this "free" time I'd have during quarantine.

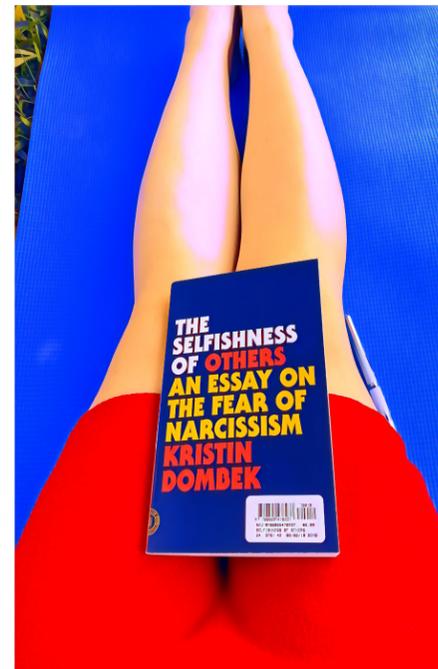
Besides, have I mentioned that I'd also like to do more meditation, running, yoga, and get really into ASMR?

TOO MANY THINGS!

After much contemplation, sitting as I zoned-out at my desk, staring at the pile of books in front of me, sitting in bed each night, staring at the pile of books beside me, watching TV during lunch with Boyfriend, another pile of books above

VONNEGREEN

Satire, humor, & philosophy



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

the TV stand looming above me, and in the bathroom, where another pile of books greeted me? (No, I don't think there were books in the bathroom, we are not *those* people—are we?); I decided that what I needed to do was to devour as much as I could in as short a time as I could while feeling like I found the read worthwhile.

My objective lately is to be a writER, to just someone who points to something that I've written to say, "Look, look at me, look at my writing!" Frankly, I think that's been a large driving force in my writing process, and it's also probably a probably the source of a lot of undue pressure I placed on myself—obsessed with the notion that the finished piece has to be perfect, at the very least worthwhile. I'm saying no to



2020, Photograph & Art by DENALI

all that tomfoolery; I've decided to actively say nay!

Writing with a pen or keyboard and cranking those words out... it's quite therapeutic. I get all my thoughts down on paper before they get jumbled up in my head. I've also decided on another thing: it's sort of become a living principle for me. There's just not enough time in the day to read, write, watch all the things I want to or am told that I should or feel that I need to in order to become culturally literate—something I've been placing too much importance on in the past. True: there is merit to giving something a chance and sticking to it until the end. There was a sense of accomplishment I undeniably felt when I finished Murakami's "Kafka on the Shore," a book I've

heard for so long can be life-changing. I personally found it god-awful: full of thought experiments that explore the darkest depravities of the human spirit. When I got to the scene where some creep skins a cat alive, Murakami describes it such filthy, gory, unnecessary-to-the-story kind of detail that I vowed never to read a Murakami book again. What a strange, cold soul he must be... but who am I to say? Maybe he's a nice guy in person. Maybe.

So that's what I've decided—once was enough. The rest of my life is devoted to doing the things of utmost priority and joy, like writing you this letter.

With love,  
Sawyer ♦

# The View from Halfway Down

Frederick Ronan

The view from halfway down  
Death's door the next one over  
I wait my turn to leave my room,  
Walk down the narrowing hallway  
Tunneling, the door at the end feels  
Further away  
The hallway turning into a highway  
Cars zipping by on all sides,  
I cover away from the fast and furious  
And crawl; lonely, often laying down  
For hours and days and years  
Hoping for one of the speeding cars  
To rescue me from the abyss

Getting off on misery  
The violent hurricane beats all around  
Why doesn't it carry me away,  
Carry me to that door I yearn to reach,  
The ground beneath me a treadmill going  
Too fast to keep up  
Falling on my face, clutching  
Deep



# I Smiled

Sawyer K. Ellis



## I smiled

I went outside and smiled.  
I faced the sky, basking in sunlight, and smiled.  
I didn't want to smile.  
But I smiled anyway.

The night before I cried.  
Cried like I hadn't in 10 years.  
Cried like I didn't know I could  
for you.  
I didn't know you—you could make me cry so  
heaving  
coughing  
gasping  
choking me of the life I imagined  
dissolving right before the inside lids of my golf ball for  
eyes.

I went outside today.  
I put on one shoe. Then another shoe.  
I put on my sunglasses.  
I put on my mask.  
I put on my stuff upper lip.  
Then I open the front door and walked.  
Right out there.  
Fully closed.  
Feeling naked.

I walked down the street  
Meandering.  
Still I hit the river  
The Charles is always there  
in the good times and bad.

With a funny audiobook in my ears,  
The sun spraying vibes from above  
People strewn all over the bit of green  
lining dear Charles  
in bikinis and jorts and sunglasses,  
This 66° sunny Boston day,  
the first in a string of many to come.

I walked over a Weeks Bridge  
the same bridge I walked  
Over  
and over  
Months ago when I was lost  
searching for someone  
then finding you.

I thought I had found it  
the one to save me from  
lonely nights of date after date  
swimming in a crowded sea  
of lost souls. Searching  
for another fish to tag  
along for the ride.

When I lost you, I feared I'd lose  
my way. The path  
I'd so precious found,  
on the way to finding you  
on the walks over John Weeks Bridge  
on the walks by my old friend Charles.

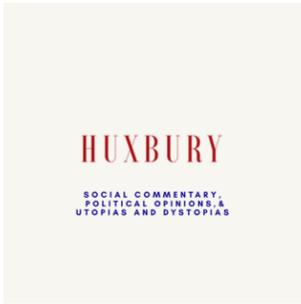
Today is a far cry from those months ago  
cold, winter nights walking alone  
the narrow, unforgiving New England streets.  
Though I walk, yet again alone,  
I smile.  
I force myself to smile,  
through my mask  
through the confusion  
through the unending thoughts  
of what you could've been to me  
that I battle to keep at bay.

I smile,  
smile  
smile.  
It's gotten easier  
with practice, as most things do  
and for a moment, I almost believe  
my face, my smile.

I walk and walk  
along the Charles  
passing person after person  
all alone, social distancing  
Then I realize  
we are all alone.  
Emotionally distancing from the what if's  
the possibility of the end. Of failures,  
of the could've been, should've been, would've been;  
if I only's,  
have I only...

I walk  
and I smile.  
I continue to walk  
those same steps I walked day after day  
for many cold months.  
I continue to smile  
now  
for the gratitude of knowing  
while I am alone  
I am not only alone.  
I have the Charles.  
I have myself.  
I found the one I want to tag along with,  
and  
**She is smiling.**

# Blackout Poetry



Sawyer K. Ellis

blindness, death.  
engineering  
the *Biology*, told  
"The price of something for  
no justification,  
no justification than greed.  
simple  
cheap  
The discovered  
save  
a painful death to see

Blindness,  
Death.  
Engineering biology,  
told the price of something  
for no justification;  
No justification  
than greed.  
Simple,  
cheap.  
The discovered save  
a painful death to see.

Moves among realms;  
a memoir,  
an exploration of what it means to live  
full of questions we can't answer.  
Write  
elude the measure  
the progresses begin  
see things  
appear to be not  
and dead.  
Even still,  
alive.  
To death, relative;  
learn the timing of final  
transformation.

moves among  
realms.  
and a memoir  
an exploration of  
what  
it means to live full of ques-  
tions we can't answer.  
write "elude  
measure the  
progresses begin see  
things  
appear to be not,  
and are dead  
even still  
though alive. "To  
death relative,  
learn the timing of  
final transformation;

hoping to be cured  
be devout,  
hallucinate  
to see who  
will reveal  
die before can  
talk confused, fall  
open  
chronically.  
for his discovery  
dopey white convert suggest

How lonely  
that seemed wrong.  
In what  
what had he seen  
the gentle, older love  
Approximate now, the sign he'd give  
A candle in the window  
Notice!  
A candle  
A candle  
Wouldn't catch burn  
Walking the street  
See a candle  
with the lights  
off knocks the candle  
burn  
the terror.

Hoping to be cured,  
be devout;  
hallucinate to see who will reveal,  
Die. Before  
can talk confused  
Fall open  
chronically,  
discover the converts;  
Suggest.

how lonely that seemed,  
wrong.  
In what what had he  
seen the gentle,  
older love  
approximate  
now, the sign he'd  
give A candle in  
the window,  
notice a candle! a candle  
wouldn't catch  
burn  
e walking the street  
see a candle  
with the lights off  
knock the  
candle  
burning the terror,



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.

“

Visit:

Litstreammagazine.com

Submit to:

submissions@litstreammagazine.com

”

**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:

**Coronavirus  
Epidemic  
Quarantine**

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

## Get your poem featured here!

# LitStream



[LitStream](https://www.facebook.com/LitStream)



[@litstream.magazine](https://www.instagram.com/litstream.magazine)



[@LitStream](https://twitter.com/LitStream)

## CONTACT US

FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, EMAIL US AT  
[CONTACT@LITSTREAMMAGAZINE.COM](mailto:CONTACT@LITSTREAMMAGAZINE.COM)

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.

©2020 LitStream