

SPRING

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The Red Jacket





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MONDAYS

Harper Robinson

Mondays, Garfield sighed —

But I woke up today wishing every day felt
as quiet, and fresh, and new as this
The sun has only just begun to touch my horizon!
Color smearing itself with chubby, tiny fingers.

I feel God.

This is Genesis.

A short gap between an outstretched
arm and a spark glimmering small and whit, flickering
just a half a beat away from touch. Its vestige is ephemeral.

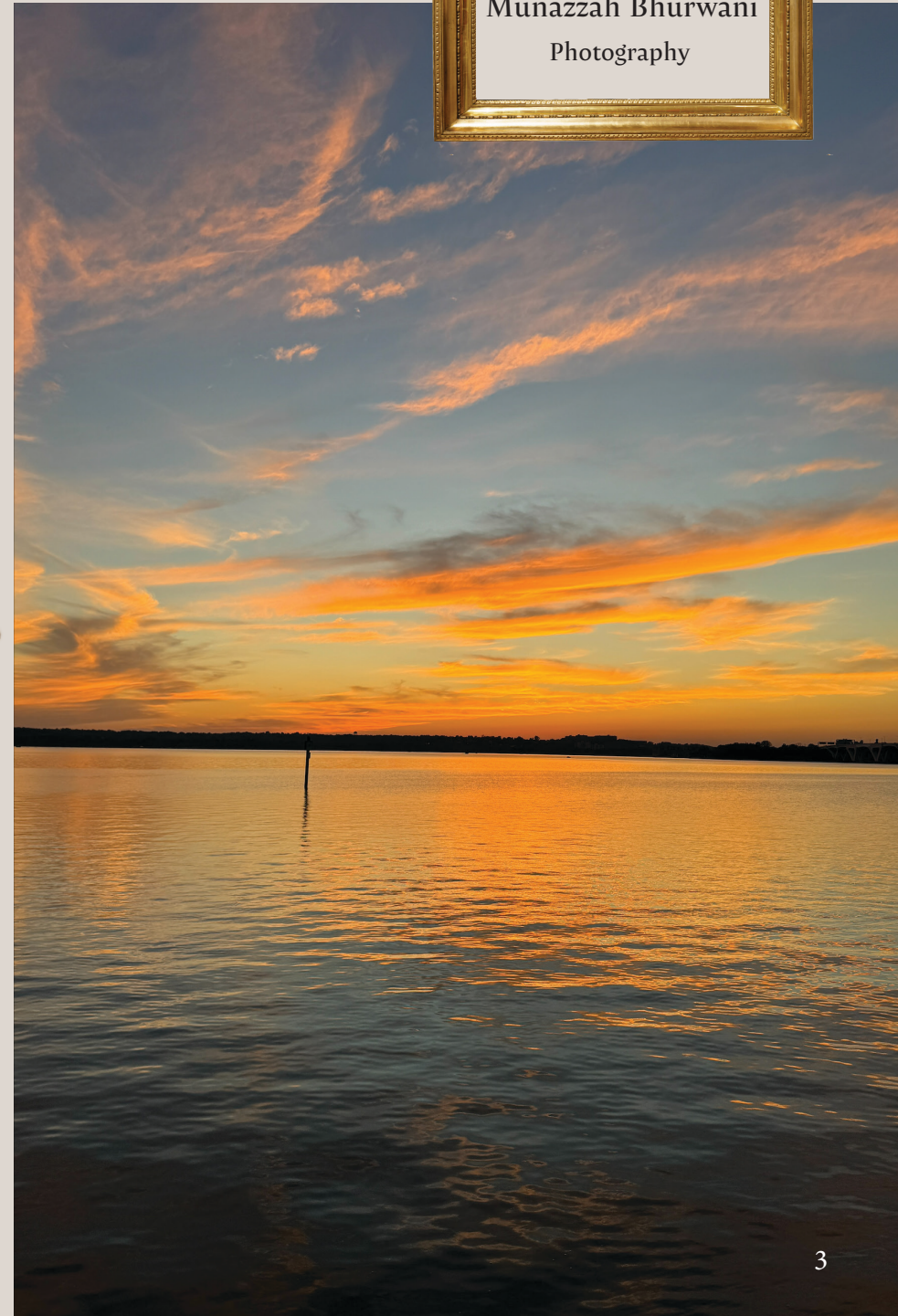
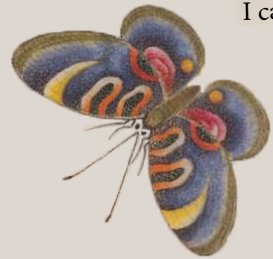
A relic to dig up on a Sunday when
I can't stand the thought of praying for more weekend.

My bones are tired I
can't sit up straight or
remember the last time
I slept.

This epoch, endless, doesn't fall far from
grief. For there are things I wasted away
The hours without consuming and even more
that I intended to do.

But, today is a crisp apple and
I've already brushed my teeth
to feel the way these calcified lumps
sink into sharp and sweet flesh.

Mondays, Garfield sighed —
but Creation began on a Monday;
My tongue was made ancient and
thick honey on a Monday;
Michelangelo painted on a Monday;
I was born on a Monday.





In Failing

Skylar Pyles

Photography

Don't Forget to Duck

Puck Elkins

It was a cold day in the city, the seasons had just started to change and the brisk autumn air raised the hair on River's neck. She walked to work everyday but on days like this she wished she had a car, even with the city traffic.

"Today - doesn't feel right," she muttered to herself, maybe as a way of calming herself down. River wasn't a paranoid person, but she couldn't help but feel ... like she was being watched.

But not by someone, but by something. Her dread was familiar, maybe something she felt as a kid? Like that feeling she always got when walking into a room full of dolls. Painted flat eyes, with malicious stares. No one ever believed her when she said she saw their eyes follow her though, they'd just say she shouldn't have watched Toy Story immediately after seeing Chucky. On her way to work she kept seeing bright, almost neon flashes of movement out of the corner of her eye, but every time she looked there was nothing. She even thought she heard a strange soft rumble, but again there was nothing to be found. Maybe her mom was right, it was a trick of the light. Or maybe River just needed to talk to her therapist.

River finally got to her job at the warehouse, and usually she felt safe there, but even when she got inside she still felt eyes on her. As River walked down the dimly lit hall towards the loading dock, she heard a muffled sound that made her stop in her tracks. It sounded like the noise she heard on her way to work, but it couldn't be the same thing of course. -rumble- She heard it again. It was clear now that it was coming from the storage room and as much as every instinct in her body was telling her to run, her

curiosity outweighed any intelligent thought of self preservation. She had to figure out what that haunting -rumble- was. Like a million bath toys all colliding and shifting, but that's ridiculous. She reached for the door knob. Her hand shaking as she inched closer to it. The sound got louder and louder the closer she got and, as she turned the knob she realised ... the door was locked. And the noise stopped almost as if whatever was inside realized she was there.

River started her work, she still couldn't shake that awful feeling of impending disaster, but that's also capitalism. And she has cats to feed. River finally made it to her lunch break and had to go check out the storage room. She had to make sure that nothing was going on, or prove her mom wrong if there was something. River snuck the key off her boss's peg board before making her way over to the storage closet. As soon as she put the key in the handle she felt a chill go down her back. Everything went silent. The air around River turned cold, oppressive. She turned the key, and opened the door to reveal a pitch black room, as if it was almost refusing to let the light from just outside in. River ripped her phone from her pocket to use the flashlight.

She turned the key, and opened the door to reveal a pitch black room, as if it was almost refusing to let the light from just outside in. River ripped her phone from her pocket to use the flashlight. Even though her mind was occupied with the eerie feeling that consumed the room, she couldn't help but notice for a brief moment how the room smelled of vinyl- SQUEEEK! River jumped at the noise that came from under her shoe. Her attention was immediately brought back to the situation as she quickly shone the flashlight down to find she'd stepped on a bright yellow rubber duck. She gave a quick sigh of relief, "Just a rubber duck. Doubt there's much else here. I should probably get back to work."

She let her breathing return to normal and turned to walk out. River was met with another bright yellow rubber ducky, sat right within the shadows of the room.

"That wasn't there before was it? It couldn't have been." She stepped over the duck out of the room to look for any signs of people that may be trying to mess with her. There was no one near, as far as she could tell. No swinging doors, she was almost certain she didn't hear footsteps.

She turned back around to close the door, but stopped in her tracks when she saw the

rubber duckies lined up, all sitting nicely as if they were staring at her, like dolls. And more had joined them, all in a crowd. Her heart was beating out of her chest, but she got closer only to realize they all spelled out a message. A simple word. "Quack" At that moment River's boss walked in.

"Oh hey River, what's goin' on? Did you need something from the storage closet?" "Um, no. u-uh, no." This shoddy attempt at an excuse was all she could come up with as she closed the door tight, and tried not to start sprinting in the other direction.

She sped down the hall trying to rationalize what she had just seen. She figured her boss must know something about this, she had to confront them and get some answers. Just as she got up the nerve to start walking back there, she turned around to see her boss still standing there, seemingly pondering the contents of the closed storage room. She took a deep breath and a step forward, and just as she did, the storage room door creaked open by itself, and a tentacle made of those bright yellow rubber duckies flowed forth and consumed her boss. They didn't even have time to scream before the mess of duckies pulled them back into the storage room.

It was as if this amalgamation of bright yellow rubber was alive... and hungry. River couldn't even process what she had just seen. She was stuck standing there. Frozen.

One of River's work friends, Damon, walked by at that moment,

"oh hey River- woah are you okay?"

"I- I- R-Rubber duckies."

"What? Are you good?"

The door opened again and somehow River knew the fountain of malicious bathtime toys that were about to start pouring out, were only looking for their next victim.

She saw a flash of yellow before screaming, "RUBBER DUCKIES!" She grabbed Damon's wrist and turned as fast as she could. River started running without even the thought to look back, she could feel the vibrations through the ground of the hundreds, possibly thousands of duckies that were spilling over themselves in hopes of claiming them as their own.

"WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!"

Damon screamed, barely keeping up with her. They were filling the entire hall behind them now, like a monsoon of banana colored death.

In Between breaths River manages to yell, "JUST KEEP RUNNING." She took a quick turn into the main warehouse still holding tight to Damon and kept going as

fast as she possibly could.

Thinking on her feet she shrieked, "FIIIIIRE."

Damon joined her and while they were running for their lives, they prayed to whatever gods might be out there that the other workers heard them and made it out in time. Although they knew that the cut off cries they heard behind them didn't bode well. Who knew that the 7th circle of hell would be yellow? They finally reached the door, as the mustard tide followed close behind them. They somehow got through, and closed it as fast as they could, with their backs pressing tightly against the door. They felt as the rapidly expanding swarm of ruined childhood nostalgia slammed into the door.

They stayed there for a minute, breathing heavily. In silence they barred the door and walked around the building to see if anyone else made it out alive. They found in relief that the other doors around the building were closed, but all they could see through the windows was yellow rubber and red. They exchanged glances.



They knew what they had to do. They had to destroy the building along with the supernatural toys inside. They solemnly gathered the gasoline canisters from the garage area that previously were a safety hazard, but quite convenient in the moment. And doused as much of the building as they possibly could and lit it up. They shared a moment of remembrance for their fallen coworkers. This vinyl nightmare was over.

each other if they need to. Little do they know, every step they take, every move they make, they'll never be alone. For I will be there, watching them, haunting them for their sins. They killed my whole family, and I, the last duck, will never let them live in peace. I will build a stronger mega duck army and avenge my fallen brethren. We are yellow. We are rubber. We are one.



It's been 2 months since that fateful day, River and Damon have become friends. They hang out all the time. River and Damon don't talk much about that day, but they know they have



Santana Russel

Santana Russel

Photography



A Year's Worth of Practice



Wrong Fish

Sonia Krishan

New moons pull
over the North Sea.
I lay at your disposal
sinking to the ocean bed.
My Wreck, my Compass.
Mo depth I would not drink.
For you, I'll breathe this salt deep.

I am the wrong fish
that took the bait.

Taunted with desire
thrown back to the waves,
mouth punctured tender.
A cold shadow lingers
behind the sharp metals
unforgiving hook.

Now I am stranded.
Will You look at me?

Washed up on the coast
with the tattered plastics.
Dirty, I warm in the sun,
soft skin turning sour,
eating fistfuls of sand,
gnawing on the rocks,
hoping the taste of salt
will remind me of you.

My Wintertime Weekend

Kirpal Allen
Photography



"Susto"

Ahuilix & D.M

UV Reactive Makeup and artist's statement

She's long gone, yet around every dimly lit corner. And every night, for hours, she torments me, as soon as I fall asleep. Neither of us is resting. Who needs to find peace first?

Sunlit Lovers

Nyasha Mukushi

Your eyes remind me of the foamy waves of the sea

Your voice, of the rolling hills

Your lips are softer than a sheep's fleece

And just as warm when I touch them.

Why do you run from me

when my heart still yearns for yours?

I am destined to follow you forever

and we will travel over this world like a plague

This world might soon end

though our love is eternal,

as we have sewn it into the very fabric of the universe.

And though these threads may fray due to the

tautness of destruction,

Burn your gaze into my chest,

and eradicate my sorrows.

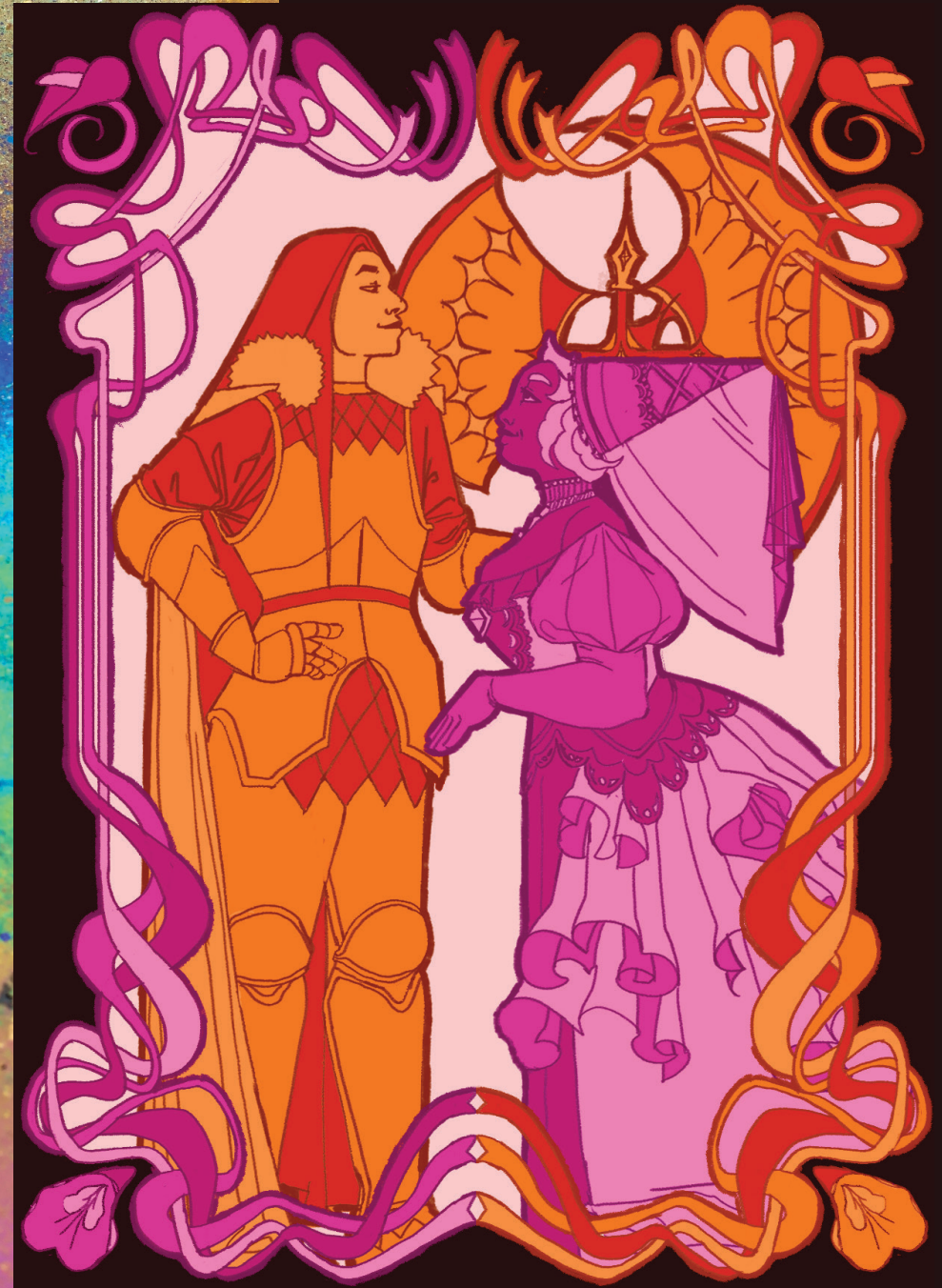
Be with me

and fate can have its fun.

Landscape Photography

Sivan Matthew Palma

Photography



Sapphic Flag
Ozzle I

Digital Art



Distortion

Ryan Kirsch

Acrylic Paint
on Board and
Raw Canvas

I do not dream,
Or at least,
My dreams are lost to me,
Wandering somewhere beyond
my reach,
Some childhood talent,
Gone now, Severed,
By the closing of an eye,
The deepening of a breath,
The slowing of a heart,
Sleep is like death,
And I die each night,
Craving the end,
The slow blink,
That heralds the dawn.

Olivia Odbert
Lost Dreams

In Falling

Skyeler Pyles

The sky was a crumbling tomb of stone that hung low and sullen;
breaking under the weight of its grandiosity,
and did not move with intention,
but as if pulled by the whims of winds existing beyond it.
If there were winds, he thought, he could feel none by his position.
For him, the air was stagnant and dank,
imbalanced,
as if already corrupted by his person.
With weary muscles, sore feet,
disgusted by the scent of his own breath,
he stopped walking to crane his neck and blow his distaste at the sky,
hoping in vain, to see the clouds part.
Staring at the canvas of the heavens,
it seemed doomed to collapse as it sank closer and closer to the earth,
pieces of its grand wall falling.

It was stuck in a unending cycle of deterioration,
yet, each torn shred of this vast facade
became inexplicably replaced by some other fragment,
concealing its failures
in more degradation and allowing no
truth of the star-ridden night to be seen.
No, he thought, there was no wind pulling these clouds;
it was they who were tumbling down themselves.
He could not understand where they could be falling and began
to think he did not want to.
Despite their consistent concealment,
the feeling of those absences remained,
lingering on each futile movement of the damned heavens.
The sky was mourning
the pieces of itself it lost,
with no means by which to stop losing them.
He had no taste for this loss;
its sight was as mesmerizing as it was sickening.
He averted his gaze back to the land of the finite
and stared fixedly at his feet below;
he sought to wane out this feeling of falling, this
helplessness that had permeated his being, nestled in his core.
The land was bathed in the light of this sickness and loss;
his walk home was foreign.



Biology

Schott
Oil Pastel

Paint Me Blue

Fatima
Mahmoudi

the joy and whimsy of one,
the spirituality and interconnectedness
of the people,
the blue, the white, the purple, the
pink,
the red, the hues, the orange, they
bleed.

the arms they weave in and out
through the screen,
in this body off this plane, in this cosmos
off this rock
our joy must be entangled with the mundane,
my love, everything breathes,
everything reaches, everything breeds

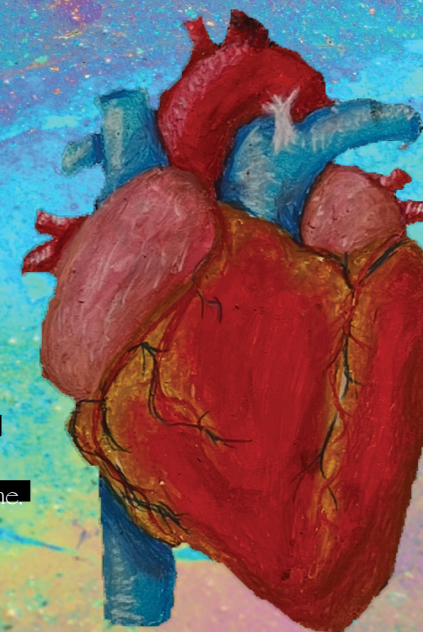
breathe onto me as i breathe onto you,
reach into my being and pull every single inspiration you wish to extract

no one will see you the way you see yourself, but no one will hold you
the way i would hold you
you raise your head to look up at the sun, not knowing you must bow
your head to the moon

i dip my head beneath your thighs, paint me blue, purple, black hues, in
between let the rain fall between your ears, hear nothing at all

let my voice guide you back home, back to me, back to the motherland,
back to the promised land

our spirits are forever intertwined, you've already touched my heart, your
handprint in the cavity of my chest



YOUTH'S FIGHT

CIS AUSTRIA
Photography/Mixed
Media

Mouth of the Cave

Nyasha Mukushi

Echoing in the cave,
 Rumbling in the stone
 Beauty that escapes the most watchful eye
 Because it's only visible to the heart

It's singing a wonderful song
 Brightening the darkest corners
 It's lovely, all on its own
 Beauty yet untold

Ah, how she shines
 Richer than bejew-
 eled teeth
 Her understanding
 touches the sky
 Out of the cave

Away from the gems
 that glitter and cast
 images dancing on
 the walls
 Away from the little
 lake

Born from unex-
 plainable tears
 She must wait to ask



My Wintertime Weekend

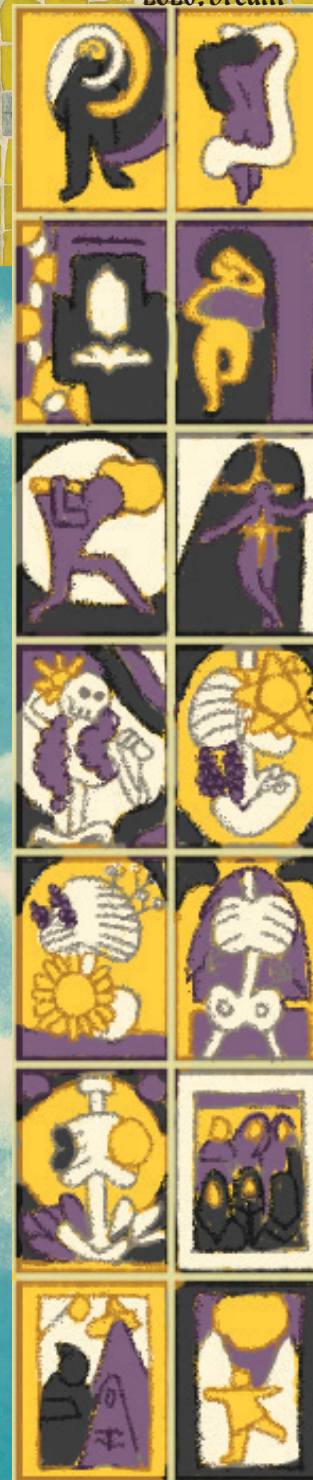
Kirpal Allen

Photography

What's underneath the sea?
 Grains of sand, more addictive than that spring, call out
 to me

Alien notes surface with the waves
 And cry like children of the foam
 They never lose that pitch

The sky is a honeyed blue
 The clouds a fluffy cotton candy
 Dyed pink by the sun's blush
 Our sky is so many different colors
 It's enough for the birds, but too bright for the bats.



Ozzie Non-Binary Flag

Digital Art



ARCADE

STROOMS >

SWIPE CARD

MY WINTERTIME WEEKEND

Kirpal Allen Photography

Weird Thing at

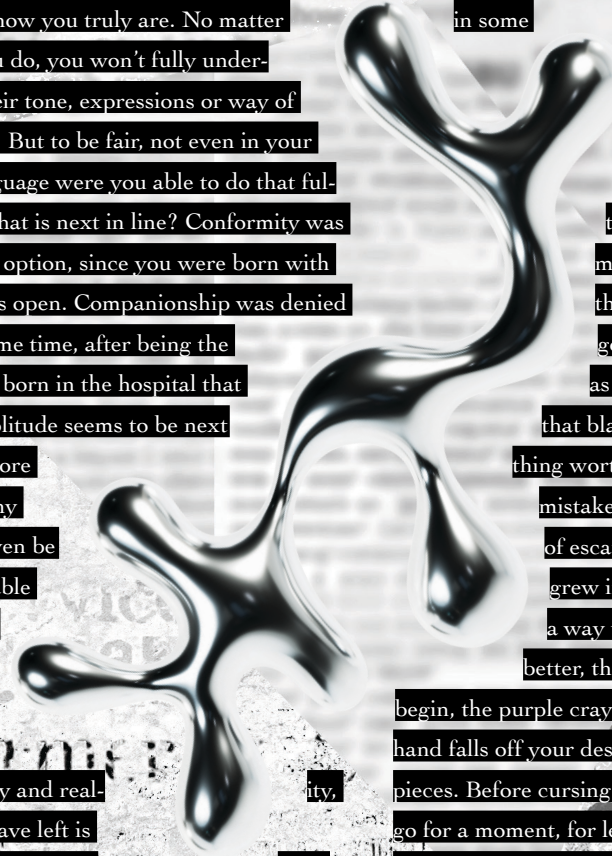
1AM Minipisi

Creativity outside of colonization has a few ways of showing up. You are outside of it, looking with sorrow at what you lost, or you are inside of it, finding joy on what little you were left with. Lucky are those whose minds were never invaded in the first place. How much of our creation would have been what it is, had we decided to be outsiders? What happens to those who never wake and realize that they might be lost at all? Is their art less of themselves, just a reflection of the system that alienates them and those around them. Or is it a reflection of the same worldless feelings that with no concept attached, cannot be explained to outsiders. Where do we draw the

but to forget the first one you knew. Taking another nation's expression, music, food, or culture, as your own not because of growing appreciation for it, but in order to not be left behind. Living, breathing, and talking with those who once seemed like aliens in a perfect land, not because of wanting connection, but out of survival. Terrifying it is, when the line is so blurry you can't tell if it even exists. Terrifying to have complex and bright thoughts in a language you cannot conjugate properly in. Terrifying to finding out that your favorite song cannot be further away from your reality.

Even more terrifying it is, when the people you tried to see as less real in order to stay awake, who you tried so hard to not care about by the time this dream sequence is over, end up still being people. You still want some of that connection you craved in your own soil, but now, not even the most wonderful array of words in their tongue will express how you truly are. No matter what you do, you won't fully understand their tone, expressions or way of thinking. But to be fair, not even in your own language were you able to do that fully. So what is next in line? Conformity was never an option, since you were born with your eyes open. Companionship was denied at the same time, after being the only one born in the hospital that night. Solitude seems to be next to you more than many would even be comfortable with. As a foreigner in your own body and reality, all you have left is a mind faster than your conscience. But hey, at least trying to keep up is entertaining. At least you can learn to find entertainment in your surroundings and, transactional as usual, you want to give that entertainment back. So that's how you get there, your fast

mind quietly rising a blank flag or surrender, almost as blank as the paper in front of you or the document in a screen. Wondering how to express creation. Should you be sorrowful or filled with joy? lost, invaded, or lucky? No matter what you choose, the harm was done before you could even get a choice, so the harm wishes to go back through you in some way. The harm of having nobody do what you wish to do, no voice behind you that made at least one mistake, to feel like there's somewhere to go forward at all. And as you fear not filling that blank page with something worthy of being the first mistake, of being the chance of escaping the isolation you grew in and searching for a way to communicate it better, thinking in how to even begin, the purple crayon that was in your hand falls off your desk and breaks into tiny pieces. Before cursing your mind for letting go for a moment, for letting the machine hesitate, you turn back onto what was once the blank page, now boiling with angry tears that you almost forgot you could create. But it was done, the paper will never be the same, it will never be as straight or resistant as it once was. But all you can do is take a new crayon, and keep on staring at the now damaged blank, until something worth the trouble of creation comes in.





The Awakening

John Mark
Photography



A YEAR'S WORTH OF PRACTICE



Santana Russel
Photography

Ode to a Dogwood Tree

Alex Rogolsky

The petals of the Dogwood flowers
are white as white can be,
and thus comprise a bridal bower
for this magnificent tree!
Perchance they quiver in the breeze,
or glisten in the Sun -
then buds and blossoms will thereby please
this fraught, unchosen one.

Oh, trunk and branches, give good rest
to beetle, squirrel, and lark;
your moderacy doth grayly best
the harshest light and dark.

And whence thy stillness, rooted there,
bespeaks the calm of night,
then, dogged, would your lack of care
enable such delight?

What provender shall sprites provide
to sweeten thy cauldron's brew,
when Autumn's Fall hath smote their pride
in leafy retinue?

Figure 4

Kelvin Nguyen

Soft Pastel

AWAKE

Rachel Crespo
Collage



I wish you a good night,
And pray you have pleasant dreams,
But know my pleas will fall,
On deaf ears,
Of dead gods,
I would follow you,
If I could,
Into nightmare,
Shelter you from
memory,
Distorted,
Through the
looking glass,
Of a dreaming mind,
But all I can do,
Is be here for you,
When dawn breaks,
Nightmares hold.

Nightmare

Olivia Odbert

Non-Being

Alex Rogolsky

Spinning around in a dizzying
flow,
always caught in the vicious cycles,
without any garnered wisdom to show;
non-existence we can never know.

Non-conscious, there is naught to
dream;
to be or not is not the question --
xanon-being bears neither worry nor
task.

FAMILIAR

Max Zonov

Oil Painting

Fly me home via gentle miles;
steer around all the mountainous piles;
"I'm not home yet" I'll report --
"When will we be there?" - a brat's re-
tort.





To Freaks & Cheats

anonymous

Fleeting, Floating Freaks
Each adorn with loque & Qi
Cheeping, Chortling, Chatting
Everso dear to me & me



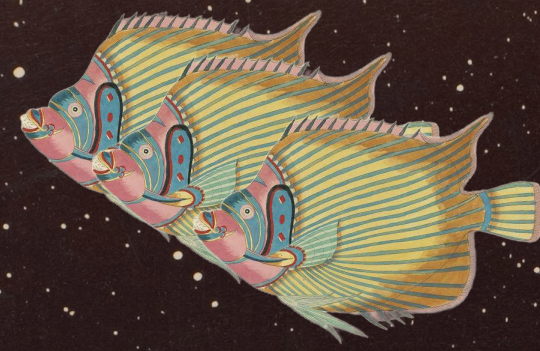
Balance shifts & worlds Become
"I am Here," I call
Here am I, I cull.
Stories Swirl between the Domes of Lum

Bar Waking Eyes only present-
When Challenges adorn your undead presence.
What taste of Death, your Eternal Present
Who Calls to you? the world presents

My Friends, My Freaks
My Charttling, Chapping Cheats
I ask of me, for me to stay
I beg of thee, for not to stray

What challenges to thee, unlife Before-

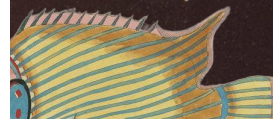
Goud. Mourn.



Like Leaves Will Fall



Chef's Kiss Quartet
BARBERSHOP TAG COVER





2026

The Red Jacket