



LABYRINTH

THE LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE

T.C. Williams High School
Spring 2015

2014-15 Staff

Ella Ainsworth, Editor-in-Chief
Amir Shareak, Art/Layout Editor
Oscar Barrios, Graphic Design Editor
Kim Kelly, Photography Editor
Tori Cook, Writing Editor



We look forward to next year, which will be Labyrinth's 50th year in print at T.C.
Labyrinth will be welcoming several new members to the team.

Incoming 2015-16 Staff

Tori Cook
Philomena Fitzgerald
Emma Caraway
Fatima Chavez
Savannah Ring
Jack Mackey
Grace Asch
Sadie Frymire



Labyrinth Magazine is created by students in the *Journalism II Magazine* class at T.C. Williams High School. Students used Adobe Lightroom, Photoshop, and InDesign to create the magazine.

Labyrinth Magazine aims to showcase and celebrate the work of all the students at T.C. We accept all forms of creative expression at any time of the year. To submit to next year's magazine email us at labyrinthmagazine@gmail.com or visit our website at www.labyrinthmagazine.com.



Art by Cynthia Boat

*“Art enables us to find ourselves
and lose ourselves at the same time.”*

-Thomas Merton

Editor's Note

Creating art is a way for people to discover themselves, but also to lose themselves in what inspires them. This is true for painters, poets, composers, photographers, dancers, performers, and everyone in between. T.C. Williams is home to so many creators that are channeling their vision every day. The Labyrinth magazine aims to foster this creativity by publishing the work of our best and brightest. We gather up the best poetry, art, photography, and graphic design, and put it together for the whole school to see. Everything in this magazine was created by students of T.C. We were so impressed by all the submissions we received. Thank you for a great year!

-Tori Cook, Writing Editor

Photography by Lesly Alvarenga





PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLETTE THOMAS



Once Upon a Time by Grace Asch

Once upon a time
We were a full moon
I thought
I was one of them
But one by one
They left
At first
It wasn't a bother
Because we were still
shining
We were still we
But one day
I found we were waxing
Never to be whole
Just a crescent of what
was
Begging for the day
Where everything
Returned

But one day
The remains
Of what shone so bright
Left
And I whispered
'Don't go'
But no one listened
And I found
That I was nothing to
them
Because all alone
I was a new moon
Once upon a time
We lit up the skies
But now
There is I
And there is nothing
But darkness.

Art by Audrey Dervarics



3/3 "Girl with Cat" Emilia Degradi



1/3 "Untitled" *Paige Vondenkamp*

Art by Paige Vondenkamp



1/8 "An Ordinary Girl" *Summer Edwards*

Art by Summer Edwards

UNTITLED
by Ella Benbow

There is a woman in Elliot's dank room when he wakes up. She's crying completely without reservation, as if it could somehow make her feel better. Elliot looks around, confused. He pieces together that he's in a hospital pretty quickly, as any mentally stable adult would. Where else would the flimsy paper of a sheet be considered a wall or the rhythmic beeping of an EKG considered easy listening music? Besides coming up with where he is, Elliot is completely in the dark about his circumstances. He looks at the crying woman, and notes that her tears make little rivers in her heavy face makeup. He wonders if she's his mother.

"Elliot?" she asks. He opens both eyes. The waterworks begin again, but quieter and more in control. Elliot thinks that if cries were instruments, hers would be a trombone. Or a french horn. Definitely not the ideal harp or flute. Elliot wonders why he knows so much about band instruments. Of course, you and I know that it's because he was a music teacher at a small, local middle school before his accident. Elliot doesn't remember that, or it's buried so deep in his subconscious that he wouldn't be able to access it without dozens of those prompting questions therapists lust over.

While Elliot mulls over his seemingly irrelevant knowledge of music, the woman in the room, who is most definitely not his mother, presses the little red button near the foot of his bed.

Callie is glad that her pager beeped, interrupting her fight with her fiancé. He wants kids, she doesn't. She really really doesn't. And this seems like it will be a big enough deal to call it quits, but they won't, not yet. Seven years and zero kids later, Callie will leave Joseph to live with her sister, in San Antonio. But neither of them know that yet, although I think that they both have an inkling that their marriage will end in an anticlimactic poof, a sort of bomb with not enough explosive.

Callie checks her pager. It's room 205. Her hopes soar. She wonders if he's awake again. She walks into the room Elliot shares with the old man who snores too loudly. She notes that he's awake once again. Dazed and confused, but awake. It goes just like the last time and the time before that. Callie brings him water, which he guzzles.

"Why am I here?" Elliot asks. His voice sounds weird to him. Older. He resolves that it's because he just woke up. We know that it's because he really is older, around 13 years older than he remembers.



Photograph by Jessica Mellon

Callie looks over at the women to Elliot's side. She's a beautiful, middle aged woman who is always here, always waiting for a good day. She feels sorry for her. Callie doesn't think that she would stay faithful to a man who couldn't remember her. The woman's smile is plastered on fakely, but her eyes look weary and tired. Callie wonders if her days are really better when Elliot is awake. She looks so exhausted.

Elliot thinks that his question must have dissolved into thin air. The nurse isn't answering him. His mother isn't answering him. They seem to be engaged in an intense staring competition or something. Finally, the nurse sighs and tells Elliot, "This is going to be shocking to you." Elliot rubs his eyes and sits up. He thinks about the book he just finished a month

ago (well, around thirteen years and four month ago) about how cancer is on the rise, and related to a bunch of weird stuff, like fish consumption.

"Is it cancer?" Elliot asks. He loves salmon.

"No," replies Callie. She looks at Elliot's wife, who begins her well rehearsed speech. Because, why change it? It's not like Elliot will remember it.

She takes a deep breath. "Elliot, this is going to be hard for you to hear." She knows this because she's told him upward of a hundred times. "Thirteen years, three months and five days ago, we got into a car accident. A

truck rear-ended us. I broke three of my ribs and my collarbone, and I got part of my left leg amputated.” She lifts up the hem of her loose, tailored pants and reveals her prosthetic. “And, um, you went into a coma. You didn’t wake up for around a year and a half, but then, one day, you did. I was ecstatic. But then, three days later, you went back into the coma. And three months later, you woke up for a couple of hours... but you always go back down.”

She takes a deep breath. “Elliot, this is going to be hard for you to hear.” She knows this because she’s told him upward of a hundred times. “Thirteen years, three months and five days ago, we got into a car accident. A truck rear-ended us. I broke three of my ribs and my collarbone, and I got part of my left leg amputated.” She lifts up the hem of her loose, tailored pants and reveals her prosthetic. “And, um, you went into a coma. You didn’t wake up for around a year and a half, but then, one day, you did. I was ecstatic. But then, three days later, you went back into the coma. And three months later, you woke up for a couple of hours... but you always go back down.”

“What?” Asks Elliot, his voice barely a whisper. Callie has to look away. His face is so devastated, so crushed. His wife’s face isn’t any better.

“Oh, my God. Oh my God!” His face crumples in recognition. “Julie?”

His wife nods.

“And you just... stay here? To wait for me to wake up?” Elliot isn’t sure if he’s more upset about his condition or that Julie’s life has been paused for thirteen years. Thirteen years!

“No,” Julie whispers. “I mean, I come by everyday after work and on the weekends, but I don’t spend all of my time here.”

“Jules,” Elliot says, a tear running down his face, “When was the last time you went out?”

Julie wipes a renegade tear off her cheek. “Lauren’s wedding. Three years ago.”

“Lauren got married?” Elliot asks, his voice hollow. The last memory he has of Lauren is helping her with her PreCalc homework junior year.

“Jack’s a great guy.” Julie assures him. “You met him and absolutely loved him.” Elliot takes a shallow breath. Julie knows what’s coming next. It’s the most heartbreaking part.

“You have to leave me, Julie. You need to make your own life.”

“I... I can’t!”

“Yes, you can. You need to leave me, right now. I love you, but you need to create your own life.”

Julie nods. “Just one last visit?” She asks. He nods, and they play cards and talk and cry and four hours, seventeen minutes later, Elliot starts to feel drowsy.

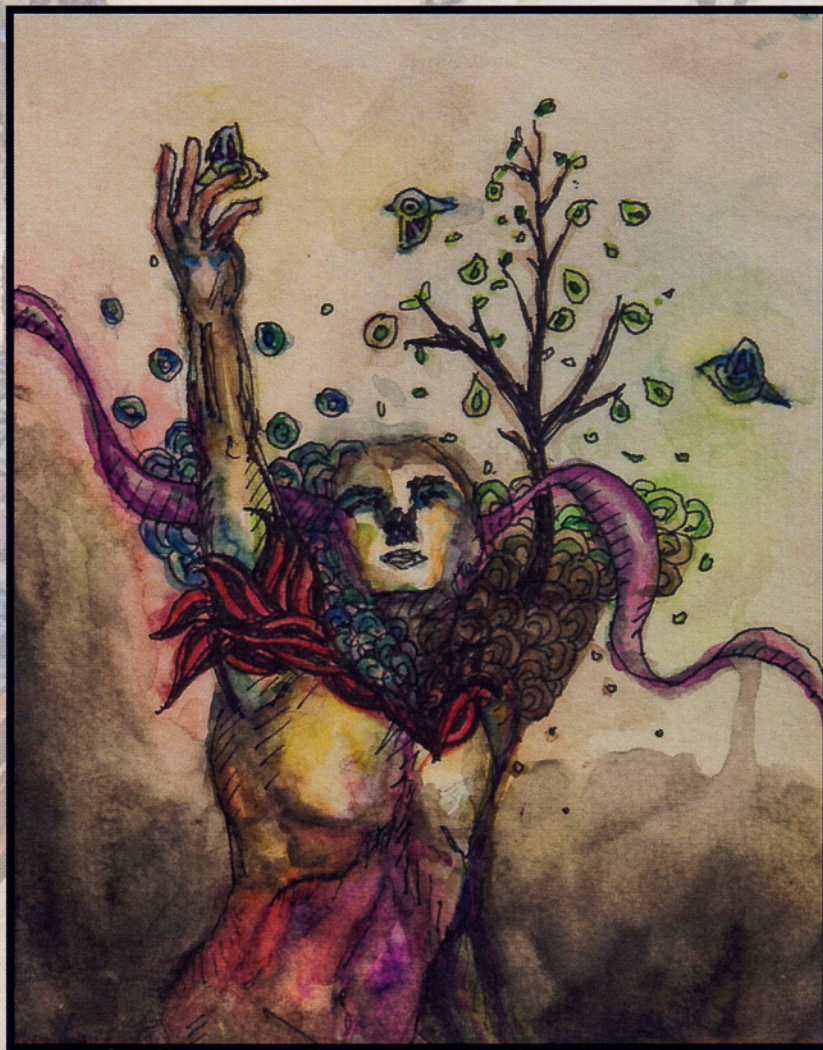
Art by Amelia Bender “Do you promise, Julie?” He asks with

his last ounce of energy. She nods, unable to make a promise she won’t keep. As he drifts off to sleep, she presses the paging button, and Callie comes back in. She left before they talked, like normal. She smiles at Elliot’s wife, who is a puddle of tears, just like every other time.

“Did he ask again?” Callie asks. His wife nods.

“Why don’t you ever take him up on it?” She shrugs.

Three weeks, two days and nine hours later, Elliot wakes up. And he sees an older woman in his room, crying.





Graphic Design by Amir Shareak

Photograph by Zachary Needam



THE DEL RAY ARTISANS



On Friday April 10th, the Del Ray Artisans gallery on Mount Vernon Avenue hosted the opening reception for the 18th annual Student Art Show featuring the creative work of more than eighty T.C. students. Elsabe Dixon, a professional artist and member of the art faculty at George Mason University, curated the show. She praised the high caliber of the student work. Mayor Bill Euille attended, as did many other city council members, school administrators, and faculty. Quite a few of the pieces chosen for the show sold before the show closed in April 26th.



Tiger by Mohammed Haidari

GALLERY SHOW





Chair by Seeley Lutz



Chair by Emily De-Bodene

Existence

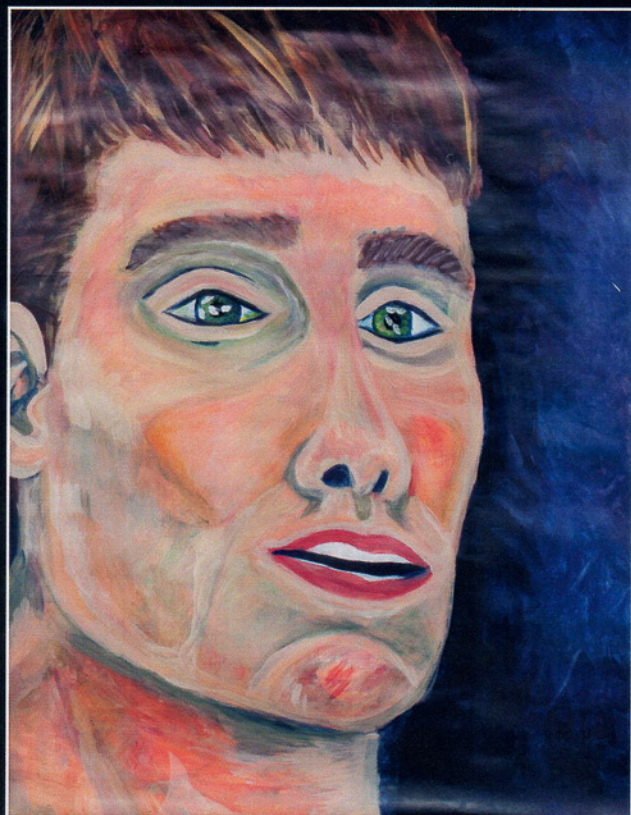
by Tim Yemelyanov

Perhaps that which withers away simultaneously from this vessel as mortality brings with it more questions than it does answers,
Unclear of the purpose, I wonder;
Ponder the repetitive and demeaning nature spread amongst those I am tasked with surrounding myself,
Exacting in the grand scheme of things,
These self-perpetuated ideals reflect a generalized concept to what we as humans can achieve in order to better the lives of people apart of future civilizations,
It seems as if everything is relative;
Otherwise substantial between whatever may be done with one's life in regards to the overall impact it will sustain on how the entirety of being alive will coincide with the rest of our world,
Apathetic in the midst of an untold solitude,
I then protrude from within that bleak vastness which continuously confides my form in an attempt to grasp reality,
Only to recognize how every nihilistic virtue has made me feel the way that I do,
Understanding not the bitter emptiness embedded inside,
Only then further questioning dogma along with the superficiality seen so evidently through my gaze,
Seeking reason for this cold , harsh indifference whilst melancholy ensues
Visions of malice begin transpiring as I further deteriorate in my conquest to find a solace,
Perhaps through remaining as devoid of meaning as I have in the years of my being, Every thought within me subsequently grows greater in the macabre to which we are all driven away from in our lives at first,
It's almost as if morbidity has become my own masquerade,
Yet the discordance of souls I've observed here cause me to rethink my morals and even long for companionship,
Prolonged suffering inevitable although it seems nothing is true,
I only wish for myself to transcend into the depths of anonymity with silence before I am able to find genuine serenity and truly be alive.

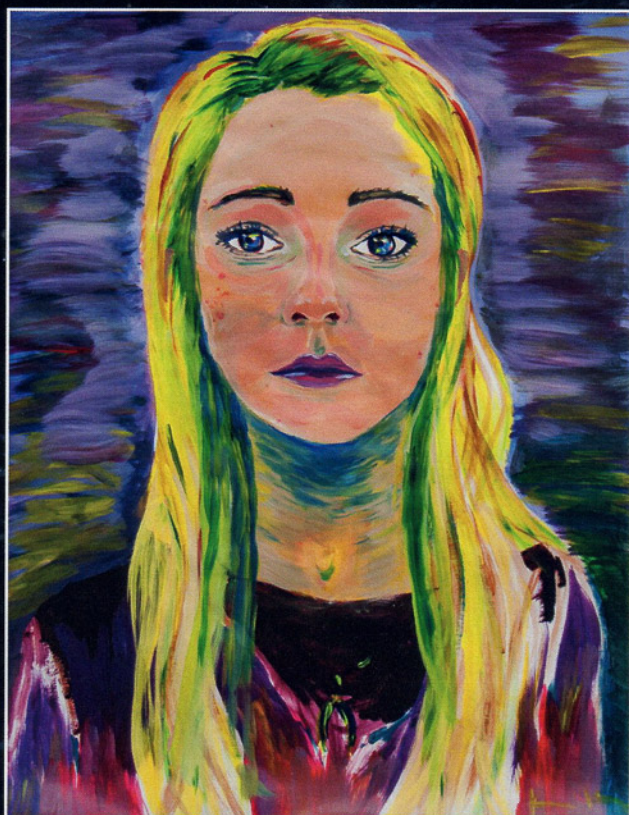
Photograph by Perry Connor

Photography by Luis Reyes

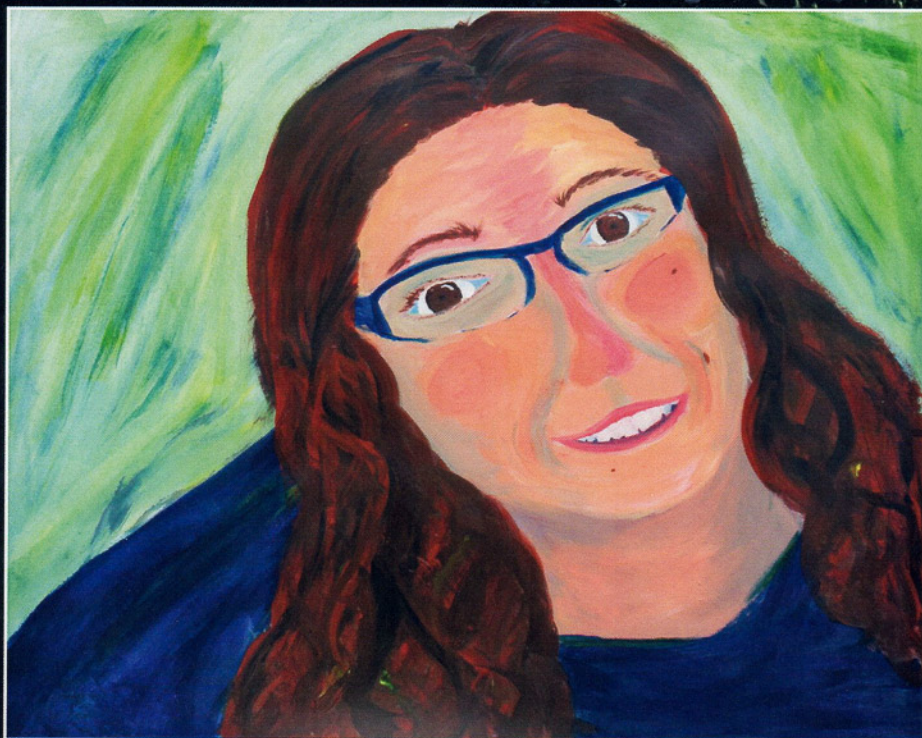




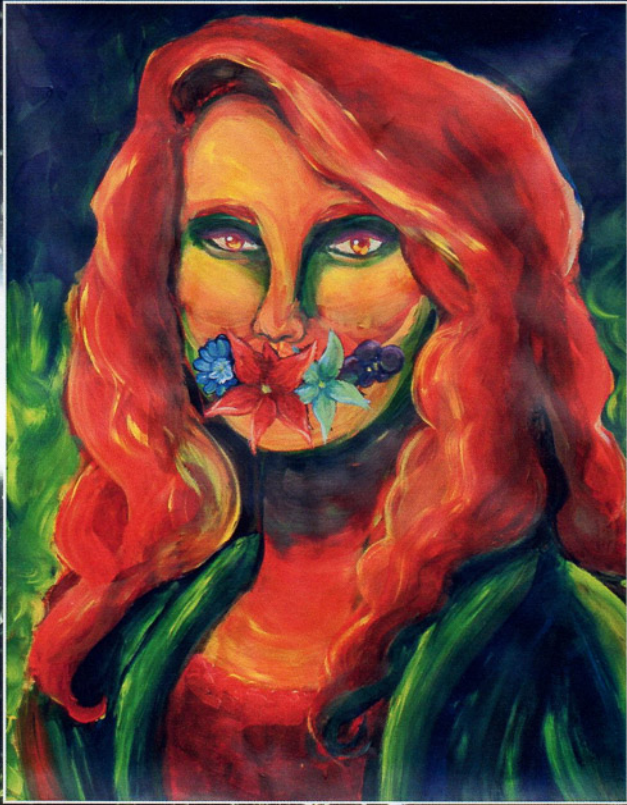
Art by Dan Crawley



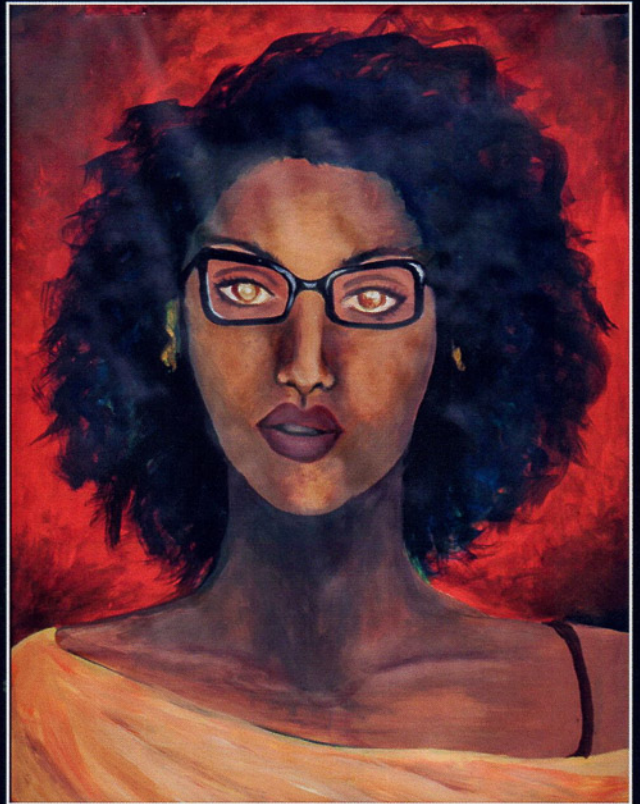
Art by Kim Kelly



Art by Maddy Dooley



Art by Diana Agala



Art by Edom Tilahun



Art by Chris Riddle



Art by Rachael Leckman



GRAPHIC DESIGN BY CYNTHIA BOAT





GRAPHIC DESIGN BY AMIR SHAREAK



Background Photograph by Luis Reyes

Photography by John Mulberger

EMULATING THE MASTERS

Irving Penn



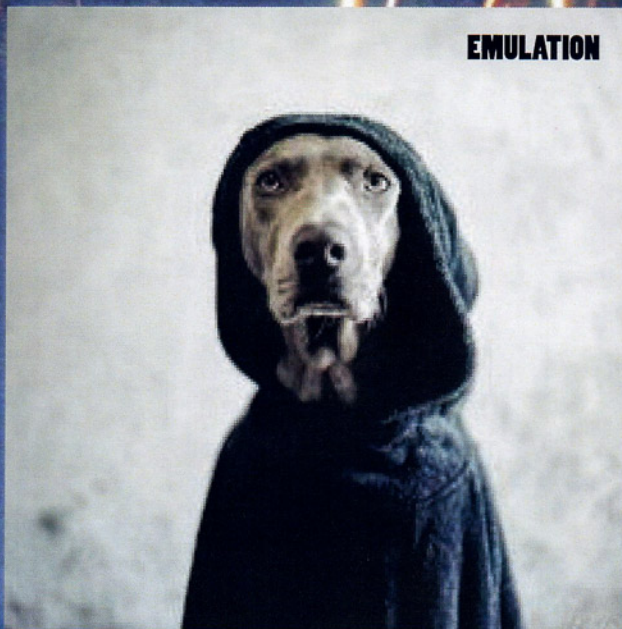
Gwyneth Collins



William Wegman



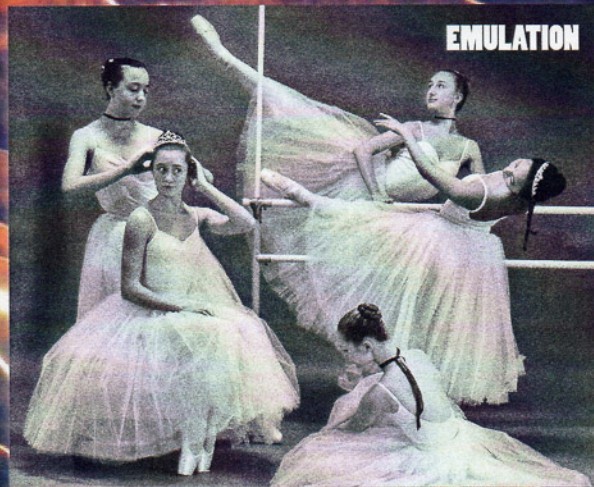
Paige Dew



Max Waldman



Emilia Dagradi



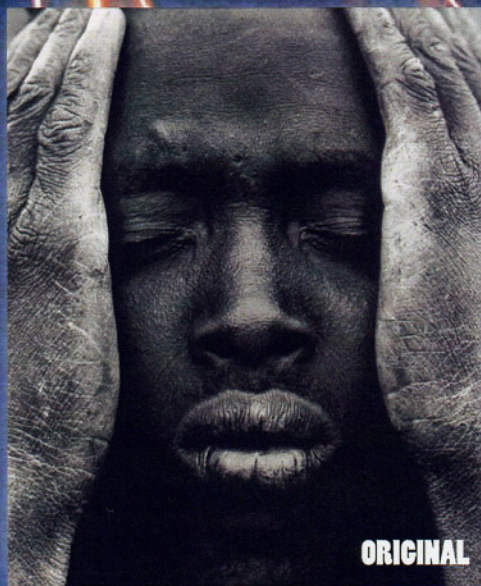
Max Waldman



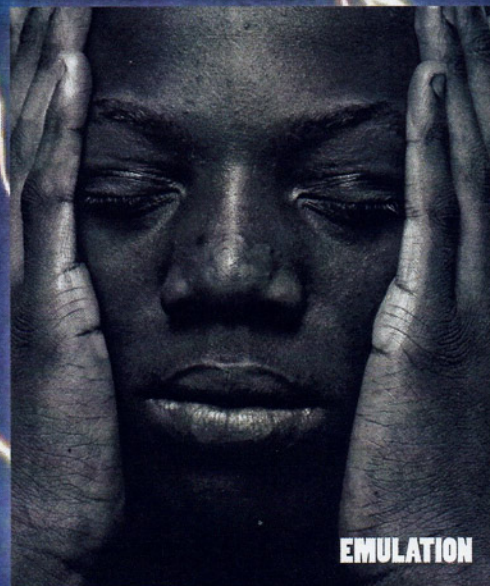
Emilia Dagradi



Herb Ritts



Nicolette Thomas



Art by Diana Ayala



Art by Anna Guo



Art by Audrey Dervarics



Background Photograph by Emma Carraway



Art by Mohammad Haidari

UNTITLED

by Ella Benbow

I feel like the average love story nowadays has to be extraordinary. Grand gestures are easy to come by and #promposal is constantly trending between March and May to boast the elaborate way someone loves them. These people, the classic romantics who watch Audrey Hepburn movies on Netflix and memorize romantic poems, are annoying. Even more annoying are the tragic romantics, the ones who pine after someone completely unattainable and are crushed when the objects of their affection don't love them back. Granted, I am a realist (read pessimist according to my older sister who yells it, often followed by long strings of expletives, after we get in fights about money) and the type of person who nauseates at the sugary sweet expectations of teenage romance.

I am telling you this because I want to make something perfectly clear, I know how cliché romance is. I absolutely abhor it, but my romance wasn't one of epic proportions. It doesn't deserve a poem or painting, it shouldn't be immortalized in any way. It lasted 7 hours, and there is no chance that I will ever see him again. But still, he was my first love which has to count for something.

I met Christian when I hit him with my car. No joke, he was jay-walking and I was more focused on skipping ahead to my favorite track on Vampire Weekend's first album then, you know, looking. To be fair, I was going about 7 miles per hour because I hadn't left my pathetically small street in the pathetically small suburb I live in and there are always hordes of children playing some weird game that could pass as a Satanic cult ritual. There are masks and sticks, I kid you not. Suddenly, I felt a thump on the hood of my car.

"Jesus Christ!" I screamed (a fact I regretted deeply when he introduced himself as Christian). I opened my door ferociously, desperately going through all of the people I could call if I, gulp, killed a person. I tried to help him up, but he just laughed a little bit.

"I'm fine!" He drawled a little bit. I think that is when I fell in love with him, but I could fall in love with anyone with that voice.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Yeah," he said, taking out one of his earbuds. His screen flashed in my direction and I saw that he was listening to my favorite Vampire Weekend song, which was blaring from my then open car. He gave a little smile and tapped the remaining earbud.

"I love this song!" He said and I noticed a tiny scar on his too thin cheek. That was when I realized that his entire body was like a stick, 5 foot 11 and probably 120 pounds. I noticed his smile start to wobble as he retched forward. I tried to dodge it, but it was no use.

"Oh crap!" He said after he unfurled. His face was pale. "Now I'm the one who's sorry!"

"I'm fine," I protested, openly flirting with him, trying to gauge his reaction.

He smiled again until I made my next request. "I'm going to drive you to the hospital."

"No!" he protested a little too quickly.

"Nope," I said. I'd like to pretend that it was all because I wanted to save his life or whatever, but honestly? I didn't want our interaction to end and there was no reason for it to go on.

"There is obviously something wrong," I elaborated, "AND my insurance is going to spike if you end up having, like, a broken ankle that you ignore for months and ends up having to be amputated. So please go with me to the hospital so I don't have to explain to my parents why they have to pay \$600 dollars a month for our insurance because I hit a guy with our car and he wouldn't go to the hospital with me!"

He gives a little smile. "I definitely won't die because you hit me with your car."

"Please?" I asked again.

"No..." he said, pausing, "But, I will get coffee with you to prove the absence of life altering injuries caused by the collision between your car and my body." He blushed a little bit as he waited for me to answer.

"Uh, yeah! Sure. I can, uh, give you a ride." So, he got in my car and we turned the Vampire Weekend all the way up as we drove slowly (because another accident would not be welcome) to my favorite coffee place on Main Street. We ordered lattes and he introduced himself.

"I guess I should introduce myself. I'm Christian."

"Huh, I've just been referring to you as Guy-I-Almost-Killed in my head." I replied with a smile. Then, after a beat, "I'm Eli."

"Well, hey," he said, stirring his coffee.

We drank in silence for a couple of seconds until he said, "So, Vampire Weekend?"

"Oh yeah, I love them."

"They're pretty good!" He agreed and we launched into discussion over the pros and cons of various indie pop bands. I checked my watch and realized that it was almost an hour since I hit him and remembered the previously forgotten reason I left my house in the first place.

"Okay," I said, "I'm going to be a little bit forward. You are awesome and I am having an awesome time, but we finished our coffees and I'm pretty sure that barista is going to kill us. Also, I'm supposed to go buy groceries and my mother is going to be home in like," I checked my watch again, "30 minutes and she's going to be really upset if I skipped the one errand she's given me this week. But, maybe we can trade numbers and we



Graphic Design by Lynn Stevens

can hang out sometime?"

He nodded, and entered my number in his phone. "I'll call you," he told me.

"Can I drop you off anywhere?" I asked, still a little bit worried for his health.

"That's fine," he said, "I'm just going to walk."

"Okay," I replied, "So, I'll talk to you later?"

"Definitely," he said.

I left the cafe smiling and the entire time I was buying my groceries, I hummed the song we were listening to. I went home and made dinner while texting with Christian and felt myself falling uncontrollably in love with him. This was four and a half hours into our romance.

Five hours in, my phone rang. I checked the screen and saw it was him, so I did that cheesy thing

where I waited three rings before picking up.

"Hey," I said, expecting to hear his southern drawl 'hey' back.

"Excuse me sir, are you Eli?" The voice on the other end asked. It was not Christian.

"Uh, yeah," I replied, "Who is this?"

"Christian Jones is in the hospital and you were his most recent contact on his phone. normally, we call a parent, but he doesn't appear to have their cell phone numbers. He is unconscious in the ambulance now."

I listened stunned and took down the hospital information.

"Mom!" I called to her, "I have to, uh, run an errand!"

Five hours twenty three minutes in, I arrived in his hospital room.

He smiled his crooked smile at me, but it was more labored then before.

"I'm fine," he said, with a hint of irony.

"What happened?" I asked, ignoring his attempt at a joke. "Are you okay?"

"Not really," he replied, trailing off.

"Oh my God! Is this from when I hit you with my car? I told you we should have gone to the hospital!"

"Eli," he said, trying to calm me down.

"Christian! What happened? I am so sorry."

"Eli..." he trailed off again, probably expecting me to resume my frantic pacing and rapid fire condolences. When I didn't he continued, "I have stage IV brain cancer, and I am definitely not going to live. When they told me I was terminal

four weeks ago, I decided to travel. I'm from South Carolina, and I've been driving up the East Coast. I only made it to here, though."

I looked at him in disbelief. "You're kidding me, right?"

"Nope," he replied, his face obviously in pain. "And I know that you don't have to be here, but will you stay, please?"

I nodded and walked over by the side of his bed and pulled up the tragically uncomfortable hospital chair and held his hand and talked to him. He dictated a letter to his parents and thanked me profusely. In retrospect, I should have thanked him. I know how hard it must have been and he put on a brave face.

I paged the nurse when he needed oxygen, when his words became slurred, when he finally closed his eyes. It felt surreal. I was convinced that it was a joke even though I held his lifeless hand, heard his EKG machine flatline. It couldn't be happening! This was a guy who I could see a future with and he was dead. He is dead. And I'm still trying to move past it, six months later.

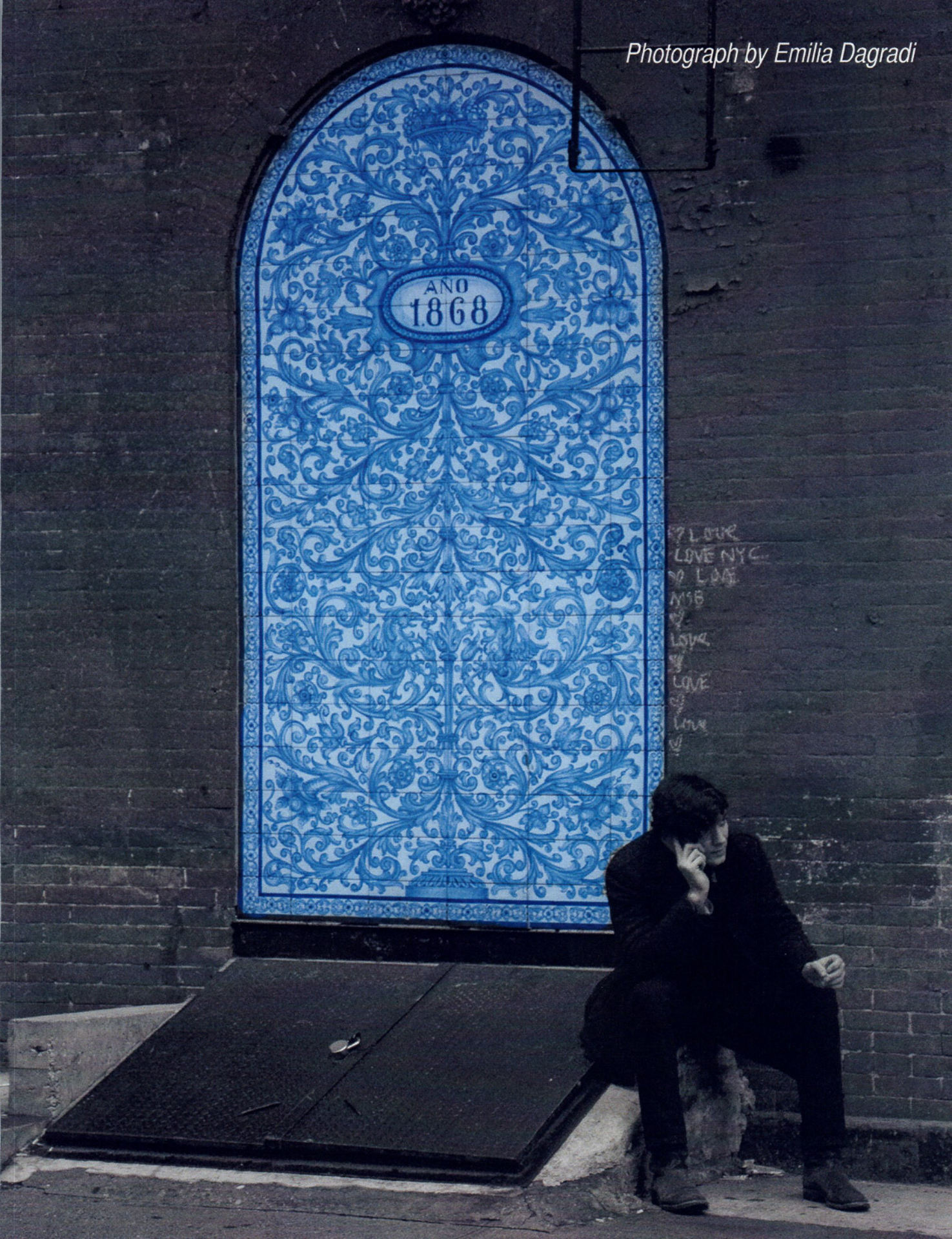
So, even though we were never "official" and he never met my parents, even though there were no proms or awkward double dates, he was my first love.

It still feels surreal.

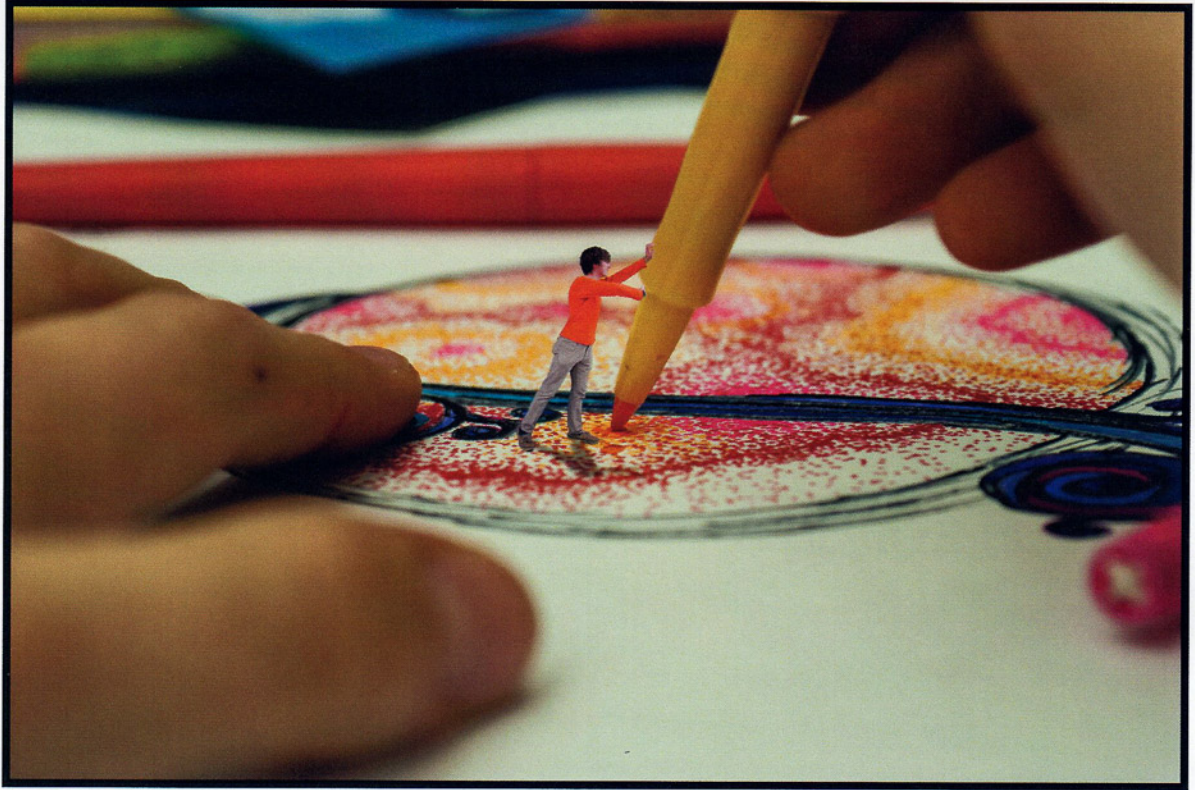


Photograph by River Balzano

Photograph by Emilia Dagradi



GRAPHIC DESIGN BY LYNN STEVENS



LITTLE PEOPLE...



GRAPHIC DESIGN BY INDIA COLBERT

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY JOHN MULBURGER

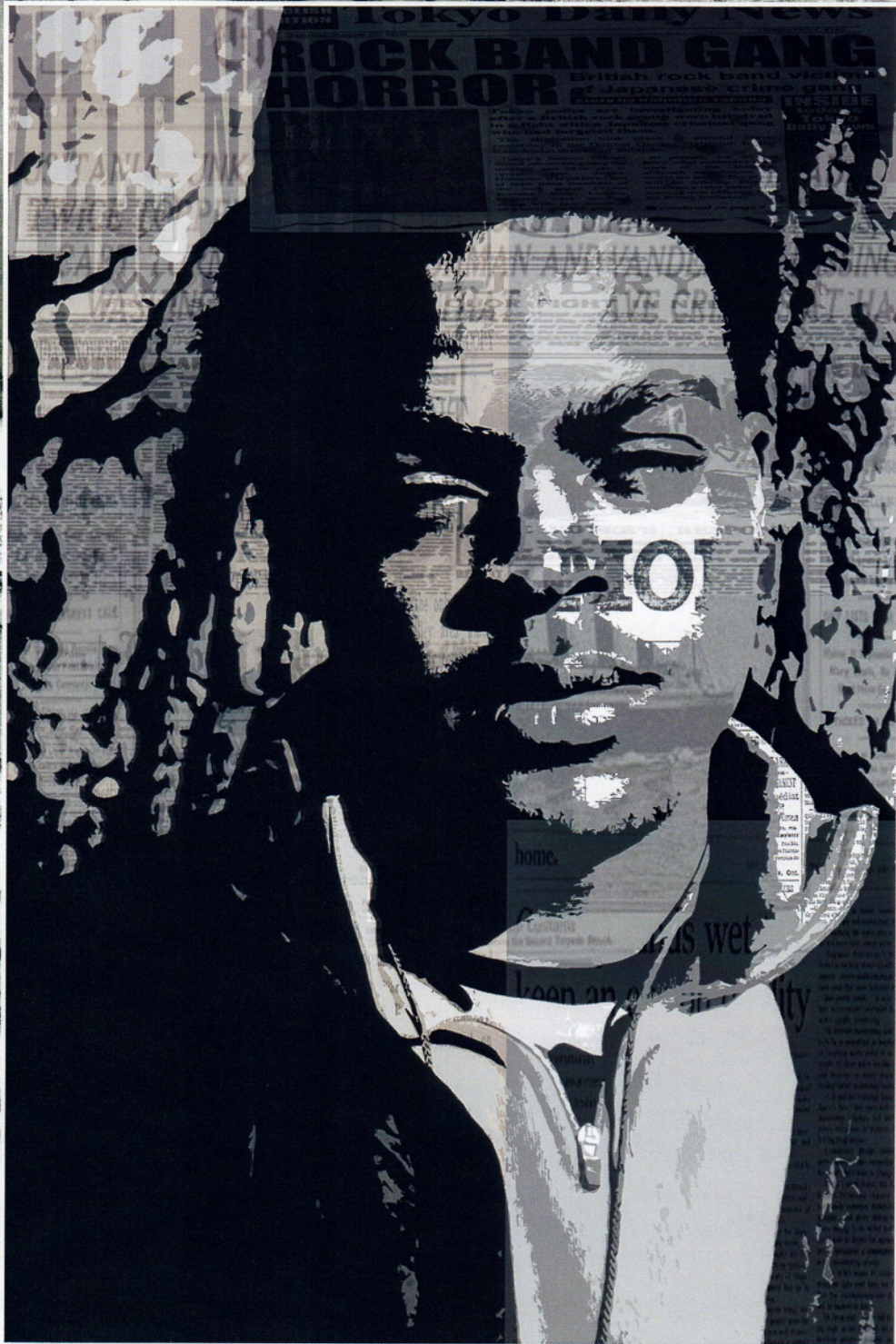


...IN A BIG WORLD

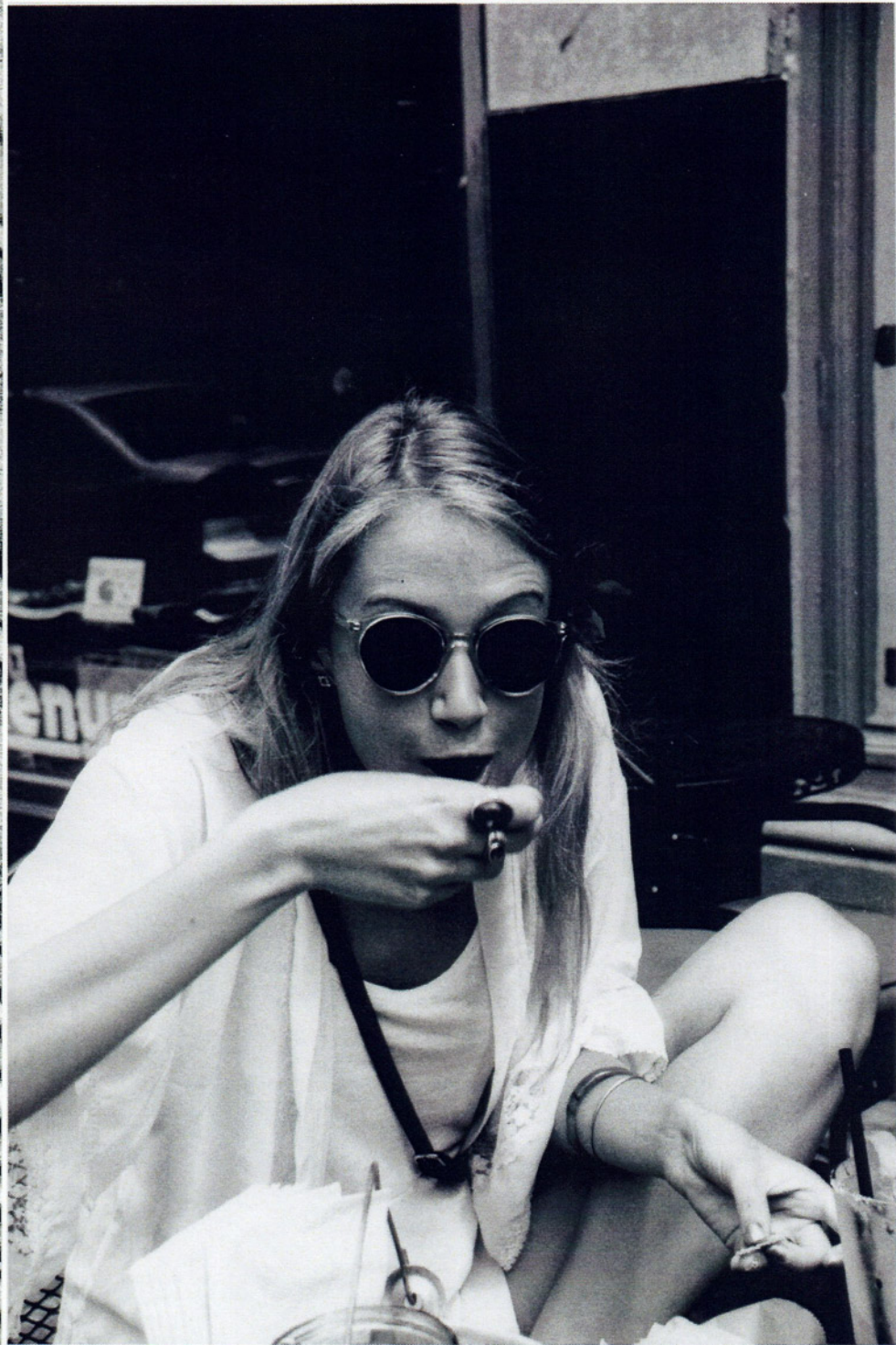


GRAPHIC DESIGN BY JOHN MULBURGER

Graphic Design by John Mulburger



Photograph by Kim Kelly



Art by Tracy Zhu

Photograph by Paige Dow

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEMIR CRNOVIC



PHOTOGRAPH BY SEMIR ERNOVIC



Photograph by Keomi Parker



by Francisco Ortiz

Memory

It's like you're here but you aren't,
Your presence makes me have those little chills that trickle down
my spine,
But when I turn around you aren't there.
I feel as if I'm lost.
Does that make sense?
Is it weird that every time I think about you,
You become more and more nonexistent?
What's happening?
I text and call and everything is fine.
But when I start to think about you I can't even remember who you
are.
The memory fades and shines once again and dims down until the
small bright dot turns grey.
Now it's dark.
Am I alone?
A hand grabs me and pulls me out of the trench.
I look into the light and see a stranger smiling;
I smile back and thank her.
We walked and talked, and she seemed very friendly.
I can't help but think that I've seen her somewhere before.

Photograph by Beatrice Varela



Photography by Emma Carraway

Depression or "How to Survive an Apocalypse"

By Karen Galeas

Don't run –

Walk.

Feel the concrete cushioning your feet.

Embrace the sounds around you.

The sound of your neighbor getting devoured by the misty fog,

That so shamelessly tries to creep through your windows.

If you feel the need to help, then do so.

But you cannot always help those who have joined the mist already.

Do not build a partition between yourself and the mist, it will find its way.

Save yourself the effort.

If the mist does make its way through your windows,

Prepare yourself.

It will wrap itself around your neck.

Give you the impression that you will not survive this.

It'll step on your back, making you believe that you're dying.

It will erase the life in your eyes and fill it with obscurity.

The only thing you'll see is the mist.

Lastly, it will make its way into your mind.

Create these false accusations that you are not worth anything.

What makes you different than everybody else?

Nothing is what the mist says.

You fight it off with everything you love, but the darkness sometimes overpowers the
light.

Please fight back.

But how can you fight back an intangible object?

Play its game.

Trick the mist into believing that you are better than it.

That you are the one with control.

Some days it will believe you,

But you cannot trick a trickster, so they say.

But the trick is, there is no trick.

You ARE better than it.

You ARE the one with control.

You WILL become tired and weary.

You WILL become weak.

But you are strong.

Because you see, depression isn't all in your head.

It's physical.

You lose the ability to enjoy the things you used to love.

You hate yourself for reasons you cannot control.

You stop eating.

Or you begin eating.

You become a prisoner to your own bed.

You congratulate yourself for simply getting up and going to the bathroom.

But depression is curable.

It may not go away, but you will learn how to survive an apocalypse.

Do not run.

Walk.

Look around you and embrace the life that can one day cease to be.

Photograph by Emir Crnovic



Art by Amelia Bender

Ghosts

by Grace Asch

We are all just ghosts. Subtle tans painted on several blank canvases. Shades of grey, black, and white. Beautiful mysteries of the unseen. Stolen away by the darkness. We're all nothing. Popular society with no interest in interaction. Extensive bedtime stories. Because where we are, it's always dark. But no one can ever seem to fall asleep. Insomniacs. With the tears of blood and the bitter cold veins. With dull skulls and beautiful minds. The most unextraordinary of folks. With the gorgeous smiles, unknown to the people. The legato whole notes, slurred through the melody. Boring. The fingertips of society. Not needed. But used more often than not. We are the foundation of art. The basic premise that all art is conception. An idea. We are the art. We are the idea. The thin petals of a dandelion. Blown on and wished upon, only to be forgotten. Like the butterfly that kisses your finger. We. The disappeared. We come around every once in a while. But only for a second. And these seconds are getting fewer and fewer. Because no one seems to notice. Just skin stretched across multiple bones. Like canvas stretched on wood. We are the camouflage. Painted into society with a rough brush. We appear just like everyone else. But that is only but skin deep. Underneath the flesh we are more than just shades of tan. We are the rainbow painted back and forth with elegant strokes. We are utterly similar on the outside. But underneath the similarities, blooms the unknown. The endless gardens with every imaginable flower. Scents of honesty. That's who we are. We are the ones who were always there. But no one cared enough to know. We are the common folk with an uncommon being. We are the breathing. But we are the ghosts.

CONDOLANCES

by Nashae Bates



Photograph by Luis Reyes

Dear black hole of insincere kindness:

Today, I am the oldest I have ever been and I decided to let you know that I have made it, I have made it through all the bull and bottled up emotions that you made me feel, I remember those months where I felt completely hopeless, I believed that nothing would get better between us and that those dark thoughts of you would linger on my memory forever but today, They barely cling to my brain cells,

Dear mama:

A poem acknowledging my gratitude towards your existence that consist of millions of words and beautiful metaphors is not enough to express how I truly feel about you,

I'm glad that you didn't teach me about love and relationships because you knew the pain that you felt after your first break up with my father,

It made earthquakes in your heart, shattered your rib cage, and sent tremors down your spine,

I guess I know how you felt now because my body is still recovering,

Dear sister:

I hope one day you dab in the wonders of love,

I hope you experience your fair share of heartbreaks and lust aches,

I hope one day you are clutching your mouth hiding the brightest smile because the one you love proposed and promised the rest of their life with you,

I encourage you to be open and just because one person broke your heart doesn't mean that you should stop loving forever,

Dear brother:

I believe in you,

I believe that you will treat every woman in your life right even though a father figure to teach you chivalry was absent,

I believe that you have the charm and ability to sweep some lovely young woman off of her feet and treat her as if she was royalty,

Dear me:

You have regained hope since he's left,

You have reorganized your mind and your thoughts don't seem to consist of him anymore,

I want you to take this heart-break and turn it into a learning experience and prepare yourself for men in the future who decide to leave your life,

I want you to always remember to love yourself first before you can fully love anyone else,

Because in the end, all you have is you.

Spread by Darius Turnen





The Smile That Stings

by Tsebaot Tilahun

She enters with a glide, as if her legs were mere phantoms of sticks.

Glide not walk,

The utmost impeccable form with a string pulling her

From her backbone, up...up...up...to the sky.

Straight form,

She curtseys with a graceful bow that puts the swan of The Great Lake to shame.

Head up, chin out, walking as if she were going to the Queen herself.

Then....

Then...

Oh what horror!!! What horror!!

There is no hope! Not a trace of faith in the world.

For not even Hera could keep this catastrophe at bay.

Slowly but neatly, she does it.

With a gentle nudge of her upper lips she revs those weapons.

Pearly white.

She fires one by one.

Unrelentingly taking out each warrior.

They are brave but irredeemable from the terrible loss they will soon suffer.

Not a thousand guns nor spears could outlast this weapon.

Cling to your husbands! Don't let them go! Oh, don't you dare!

For that is when you are doomed to the fate of

Being the apparition that is his previous visions of love.

He will not think of you no more when the word

Lovely comes to mind.

He will think of the lady with the stinging smile.

For if you have the free will and conviction to

Pry your gaping eyes from her lovely form, you will see

The Dead Sea of her eyes, reflecting what is lacking in the heart.

Her previous victims trapped in those soulless pits.

Hold fast my dears!! Hold fast!!

Even you cannot help but surrender to

The smile that stings.



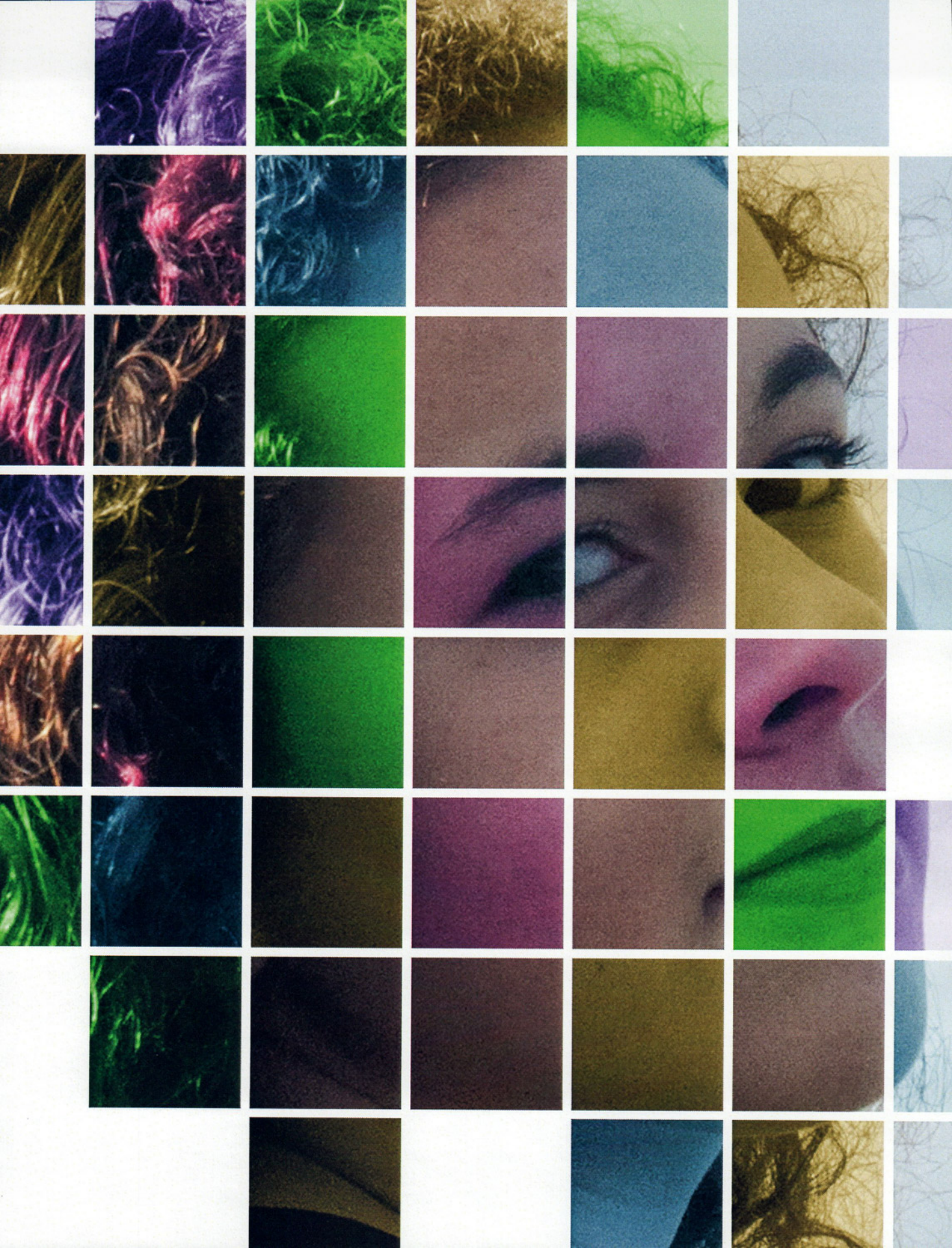
Photo by Genesis Romero

Ceramic by Zachary Wilcox



Ceramic by Rosie Cool







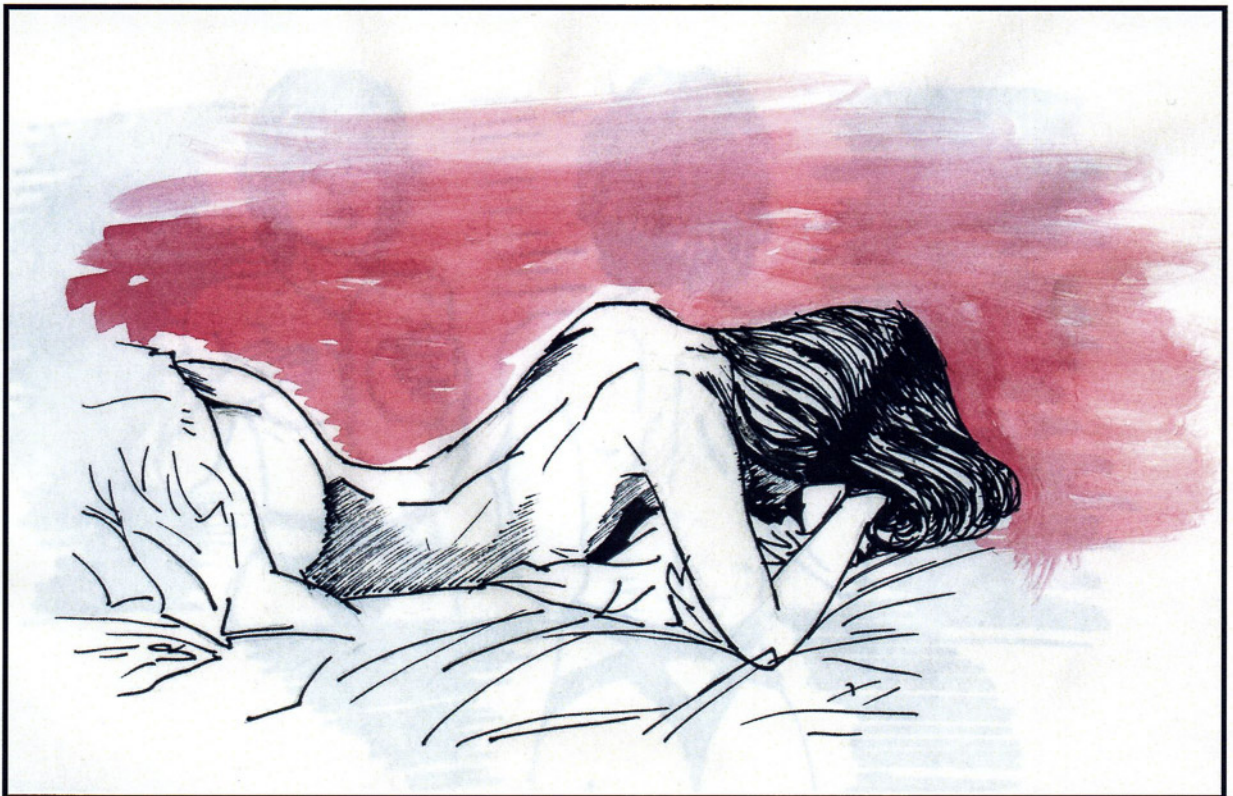
Spread by Fatima Chavez



Art by Anne Marie Blessing Merife



Art by Luis Reyes



Photography by Zachary Needam

Quiet by Yonas Araya



If I was brave enough to be your Romeo, would you be my Juliet?

Would you find me important enough to be in your poems?

Would you bring me up in random conversation with people I've never met?

Would you believe me when I tell you:

"You are your own worst critic."

Everything you do is sunsets on countrysides,

Drops of rain dancing across a baby's forehead for the first time,

You are nothing less than a treasure.

I know that people have loved you for all the wrong reasons,

If I was brave enough to show you the right ones, would you let me?

I've been thinking of how to tell you how I feel,

Or if you would even believe me,

You've met the worst parts of me before the best parts got a chance to shine,

If I was brave enough to take the time, would you let me get to know you?

Not just the picture perfect smile or face you put on for others,

Would you let me know the reason you wear the mask?

This isn't a crush, or teenage lust, but I wouldn't feel comfortable calling it love because,

I don't just want to kiss and hug you, or know all your secrets,

You make me want to be the man I don't ever think I can be.

Your words fuel my inspiration,

My skin dances to the sound of your voice,

When you speak, I don't get butterflies,

I get riots of unspoken words demanding refuge,

Raging balls of fire in the midnight of my stomach,

I wish the flames could dance off my tongue as easily as they do yours,

You are the night before my revolution.

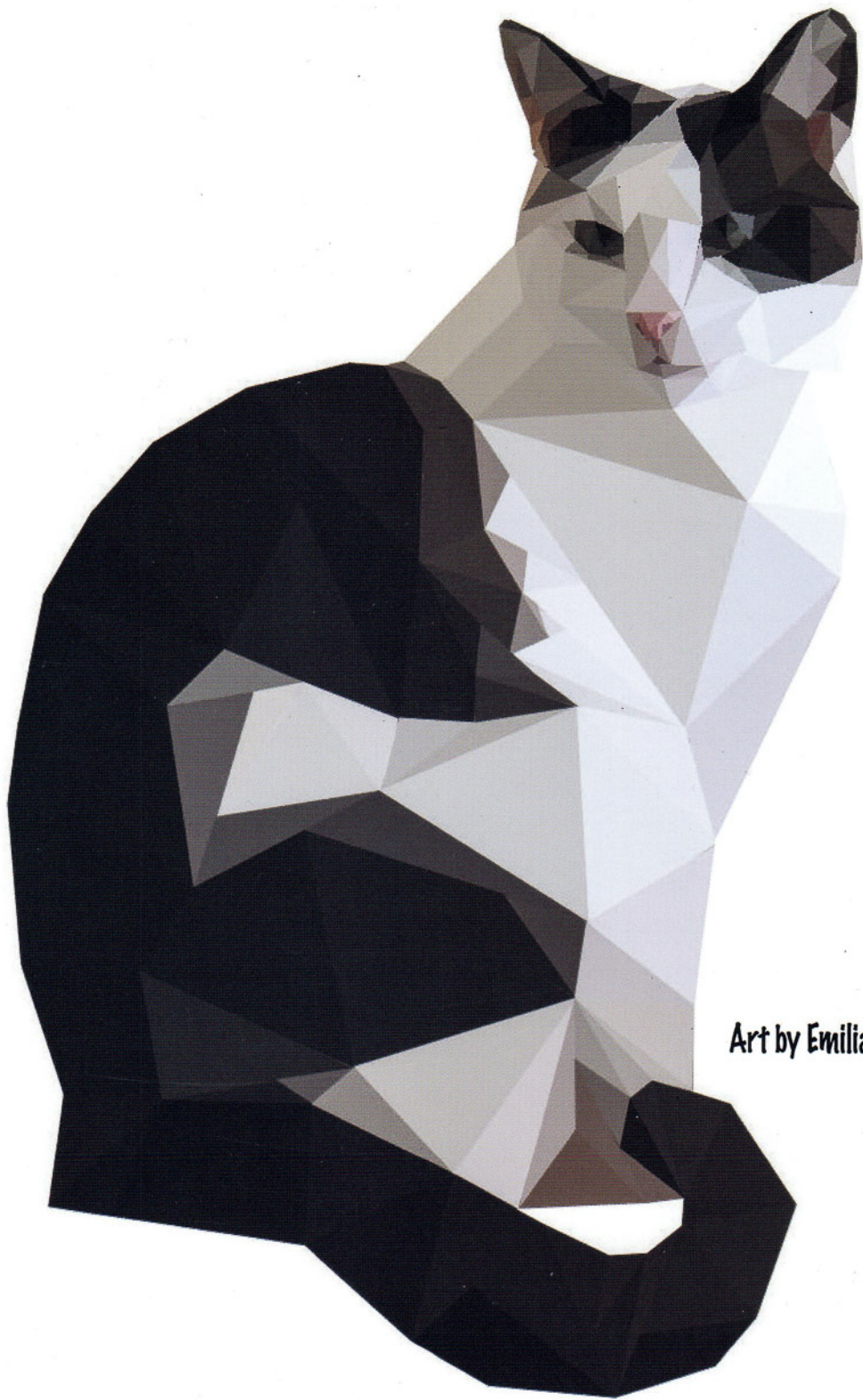
I ask you,

If I was brave enough to be your Romeo would you be my Juliet?

Or could we trash all the metaphors,

Get rid of the overused clichés and not-so-well-done similes, and simply

Help each other be the best versions of ourselves?



Art by Emilia Dagradi