

to **Love** *and to* **Create**

1998



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ON THE COVER: I met her in an open air bar, in downtown Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, January 2025. She asked if I knew where the US Embassy was. She told me about being on a boat earlier in the day, seeing people on another boat throwing body parts into the water, but that it was far enough away to be unclear. She mentioned sharks. As we talked, she often looked nervously around, particularly watching the people passing by on the sidewalk.

The drinks were mango and vodka.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"My name is Mango."

"Really?"

"No, not really. Silly rabbit. I'm going to the restroom."

Then she disappeared. These photos are the only clues I have to the mystery.

Photos by Morgan Smith

FAQ

- What do you publish? Stories, poetry, prose, art and photography. Really any visual or written artwork you can of. We won't publish hate speech, long winded rants or anything that could may be copyrighted.

- How do I submit? Through our email. info@graffiti-magazine.com
Text is preferred to be emailed, but a pdf is acceptable. Art should be scanned and attached as a jpeg.

- How can I purchase an ad? Or donate money?
You should either purchase an ad, or donate money. We as a board pay the 600\$ to publish Graffiti and don't make any money from doing so! IF you were to purchase an ad, email ads@graffiti-magazine.com
We are still in the process of setting up a bank account for you to donate.. so hold on to whatever money you intend to donate to us and keep reading!

- What lengths of work are acceptable?
We prefer anything under 1000 words. If something is submitted over that word count, don't expect it to be published unless spacing allows. We may also publish it on our website, graffiti-magazine.com



FRONT LINES

Sierra Maish

Hey Graffiti readers,

This is my last issue as editor, which feels a little surreal to say. Being in this role has been one of the most rewarding and creatively intense things I've done. I've spent the past few months fully immersed in other people's art—reading, viewing, curating, and trying to do justice to the work that gets shared with us. It's been a privilege to sit at the center of that, helping shape it into something that feels whole.

Editing Graffiti has taught me a lot—about collaboration, about vision, about care. There's a quiet kind of responsibility in handling art that can be so personal, and I've learned how to honor that. I've also learned how hard it is to juggle everything behind the scenes—but even in the chaos, it's been so worth it.

Now, I'm handing things off to Rianne, who will be the next rotating editor. She's incredibly thoughtful and sharp, and I know she's going to bring something new and exciting to the magazine. One of the best parts of this rotating structure is that Graffiti keeps shifting—each person leaves their mark and pushes it forward in a new way.

As always, thank you for reading, submitting, donating, and showing up for our magazine. It's been an honor to be part of it, and I'm so excited to see where it goes next.

With love,
Sierra
Editor, (for now)

Here's our collective statement again, in case you want to reread it.

The new board of ten members with varying backgrounds and peculiar sensitivities have compiled a collective vision statement for you:

Graffiti is more than a creative writing and art zine—it is a living archive of community voices, a celebratory defiant act of free expression, and a challenge to the monopolization of language while being a testament to the power of creativity. Created by a diverse collective of artists and writers, we believe in the magic of language, the beauty of multilingualism, and the importance of sharing untold perspectives.

In a world where voices are often drowned out by noise, where language is weaponized to obscure, control, and sanitize, we seek to expose regimented thinking. We aim to carve out a space for authenticity and artistic exploration. Graffiti is not just a refuge but a platform—one that welcomes bold ideas, unique viewpoints, and the remarkable energy of creative expression. One poem, one picture, one piece at a time, we seek to capture the present moment in a form you can hold, read, and share in a large-format zine.

We value the open exchange of ideas and the power of art to connect and inspire. We do not publish hate speech, but embrace perspectives and the richness that comes from different experiences. All the while fiercely defending the right to challenge, critique, and disrupt. In the face of increasing surveillance and suppression, Graffiti remains a free and accessible publication, distributed across Eugene, Cottage Grove, and Springfield ensuring that creativity belongs to everyone.

We invite you to submit your work, add your voice to this growing collection, and help shape a publication that thrives on artistic expression. Thanks for sticking with us and making this magazine what it is. There's a lot more to come and we can't wait to share it with you.

Signs Your Dictator Will be Fleeing the Country Soon

There comes a time in every dictator's story arc when the Great Leader seems eternal, like fresh air or the Antarctic ice sheet.

Inevitably, though, there's a third act, when the masses breach the palace walls and a precipitous escape must be planned. To, say, a cozy Swiss chalet, where it's safe for the G.L. to venture out for a short schuss, as long as his remaining guards keep a tight grip on their AK-47s.

From Poland to the Philippines and parts in-between, despots are all the rage. Tyranny may be coming soon to a neighborhood near you. For increasing numbers of once complacent citizens, autocracy is making the transition from spectator sport to participatory endeavor. So it's more important than ever to be able to gauge which way the political winds are blowing. In order to know when to batten down the hatches. Or to pry those hastily-nailed planks away from the window panes.

Here's a list of telling signs that your very own Great Leader may be planning to take flight, whether in an extended-fuselage Presidential 747 or the boot of an off-white Prius, hidden beneath turnips:

- The Treasury has already been looted.
- First Lady's 12 "Best Actress" Oscars rescinded.
- Great Leader lists 10,000 "mint condition" tanks on eBay.
- His last loyalist is pet pit bull. And it's wavering.
- The utility company turned the water off in the waterboarding room.
- Your spouse is speaking to you again. Because the bedroom is no longer bugged.
- More people are digging tunnels to get out of the country than in.
- The Great Leader asks his butler if he can use him as a reference.
- G.L. withdraws troops from Disneyworld.
- His "new look" hairpiece is armor-plated.
- Campaign slogan changed from "You must obey" to "I can explain."
- G.L. conducts nationwide search for spitting image look-alikes.
- He orders entire nation to "go as him" on Halloween.
- Recent lavish bacchanal consisted of spouse, children and Slim-Jims grilled over kerosene lamp.
- E! Network was only cable channel to air latest speech.
- Exchanged ostrich coat for invisibility cloak designed by last loyal shaman.
- Renaming nation after his mother was not universally applauded.
- Great Leader's likeness no longer required on condoms.
- Entire standing army now consists of terracotta soldiers.
- Propaganda outlets playing re-runs of Big Bang Theory.
- Age of conscription now lower than age of consent.
- Now spends more time packing luggage than packing courts
- Rambling 12-hour speeches replaced by team of lawyers asserting right to remain silent.
- Unemployment rate remains steady at 100%.
- Daily Mail downgrades First Daughter from "supermodel" to "out-of-control drunk."
- National police out of batteries for cattle prods.
- You haven't be horse-whipped all week.
- The brother you turned in for speaking against the state has been released from prison after three years of daily psychiatric therapy, during which electrodes were fastened to his genitals, rendering him both impotent and incontinent.
- And he's looking for you.

Peter Fenton



Erica Snowlake

It's been cathartic adorning statues around town with keffiyehs in Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It's up to all of us to do whatever we can to Stop the Genocide. Free Palestine!



Yazzie

This Evil Hour

Friends, we're verging on an evil hour
Monsters perched all along the watchtower
Thunder on the hill, a foul musk in the air
Roses rotting in the national square
Boys storm the pavilion, angry and proud
While the turncoat general fires into a crowd
And the witch doctor's just a flimflam man
Like the Wizard of Oz, a total sham
And for all their boasts of wealth and power
The congressmen cringe, the senators cower
As the voodoo clock chimes the evil hour

And the baron proclaims, "Citizens!
You say you're lonely, deaf, dumb, and blind?
Oh, then won't you be my valentine?"

Folks, we're entering these darkest of days
Freedom be damned with the faintest of praise
Ignore all you heard and what your eyes saw
The naked emperor sits above the law
While the sallow judge and the defrocked priest
Applaud the approach of the slouching beast
There's a hurricane coming, a war to be fought
And life is sacred until it's not
A black sun bleeds through the purple haze
The heartland floods, the cities blaze
And we're on the brink of these darkest of days

And the baron explains, "Listen:
I'm the real estate mogul who wants to be king
I shall love you forever, just kiss my ring."

Sisters and brothers, here in the night
Keep watch for the hillbilly parasite
Beware the demands of the black-hearted punks,
The ugly false prophets, the odious skunks
'Cause all the town criers and fawning scribes
Are bought off with trinkets, junk food, and bribes
See the hollow men with their golden calf?
Yeah, the wrecking crew is here at last
We'll restore the Fifties, when we were all white
We'll wipe out our rivals with all of our might
And then you'll sleep soundly, here in the night
(line break)

And the baron declares, "My subjects!
Life will be beautiful (I don't mean to brag)
Just don't mind the stains on our grand old flag"

Minstrel, sing us to the land of greed and desire
If it bleeds it leads, where there's smoke there's fire
Here's the wages of sin, there's palace intrigue
There's the enemy within, here's compassion fatigue
Time to raise the roof, time to lower the boom
Roll out the red carpet for the viceroys of doom
This ain't Camelot or the yellow brick road
Men babbling in tongues, women whispering in code
And the ventriloquist, he's a gorilla for hire
So's the pedophile and the apprentice liar
They'll burn it all down with their greed and desire

And the baron laughs: "Comrades dear!
Let me inform you of my point of view:
If you're not at the table, you're on the menu."

Now pilgrims, we're deep in this evil hour
Our waters are poisoned, the crops have gone sour
The courtyards are covered with dirty snow
The knives have come out, so let the blood flow
Today the iceman is at your door
And happy days are here no more
From Silicon Valley to the halls of Wall Street
The party's just starting, and it's fair to repeat:
The outlaws are here, they're trampling the flowers
The forecast is cloudy, with acid showers
And there's nowhere safe in this evil hour
Good pilgrims, we're trapped in this evil hour

Rod Williams

WOLF

Lone wolf, pack wolf, alpha wolf
 packing myth wolf, under attack wolf
 misunderstood wolf
 older sibling of domestic woof woof
 call of the wild & potent wolf
 tagged & collared needy wolf
 big bad scary wolf, symbol of mean
 lean hungry wolf, Sierra Club calendar serene
 moon serenader, ruthless saloon seducer
 cooperative predators that have each other's back
 what we fear and desire, reject and lack,
 wild nature powerful and free
 wolfman in the mirror on a killing spree
 what is wild, what are we?
 which inner wolves will we feed—
 the true one with heart & soul, or the false one
 of fear & greed?

If only we could see
 getting closer to wolves, instead of killing them
 might teach us how to wiser be.

Charles Mattoon

40/30

snapping out of it, shower goes cold
 sigh, heartbeat, pacing, what time is it
 this list seems too long, loose, eroding
 the big family just won't stop dying

envying 80/20, youth, entropy, bookends
 happiness gauge, now hurricane flags
 food, caffeine, wallet, keys, remorse
 the acquirable motion of composure

swimming scattered days, arterial waltz
 clocks in the office, those little bastards
 some empty beach in my mind, evasive
 work doesn't deserve a fucking stanza

all these labels, and steady confusion
 no answers, better questions, other cliches
 still lost, accepting loss, feelings
 uncertain
 i saw a baby punch a puppy the other day

worn vinyls, aged hiss, haggard days repeat
 blasé ritual, little oases, dodging closure
 sweet ancient, eternal return, desert floods
 all it will ever be is just unfinished
 business

endless noise, pillow over the head, soft
 shells
 hearing my heartbeat, it's always something
 bland walls, beautiful graffiti, just for you
 there is a bumper sticker with a faded
 angel

Mike Heide

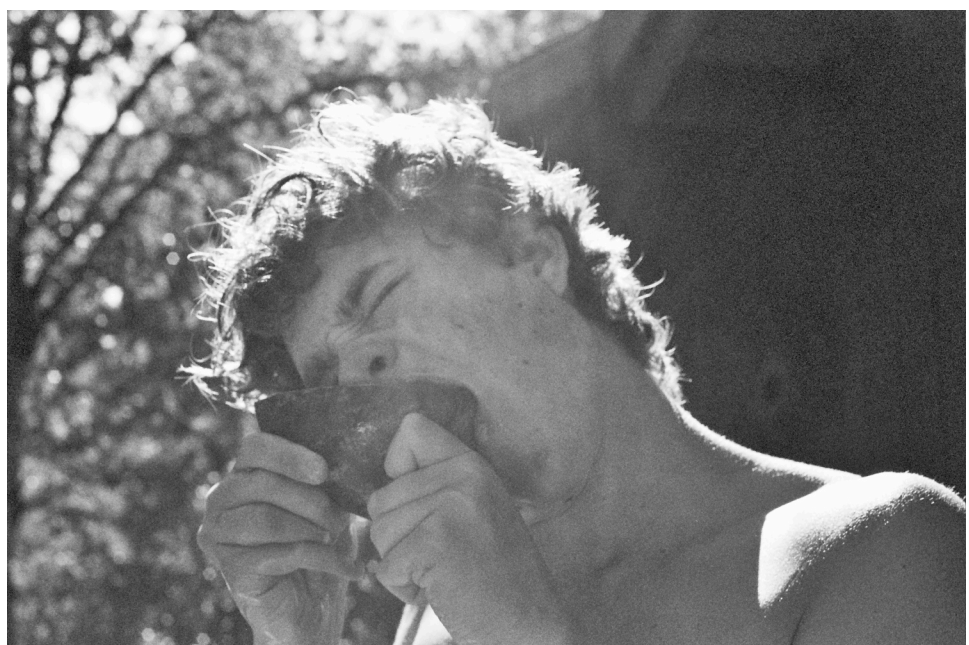
Out There

I know that if I go out there,
 the winter sun will hit my brain and
 burn through
 the human detritus that threatens
 every day to wreck my birth-joy.
 Work and words, debt and duties I never
 knew I'd have.
 Decisions. Pride. Regret.
 If I go out there
 and I'm very still, the trees
 will talk to me (as they always do) and
 smells will invade
 and dissolve that grey matter pudding,
 fuel for the
 insanity machine that keeps us alive.
 Unhappy but alive.
 If I go out there, will I have enough
 edge to survive
 this bloated human universe?
 I turn the knob.

Maya Sutherland



m5n5d



Angus McFarlane



Angus McFarlane

Monsters

Suburban kids bored stiff,

we had one adventure:
walk a mile to Bailey Avenue,
carry back a Bocce's pizza each,
and eat them watching Saturday night
horror double-features till 2 AM.

Kong, Dracula, Frankenstein, screamed defiance,
hating ordinary life as much as we,
but daring to go down in a blaze of glory

while we only dreamed in cinevision,
monstrous behind our foreheads' bars,
safe from what we might do
if our dreams came true.

Our love was all for the monsters

but they had to die, while we got life—
so we learned to take grim satisfaction
when they fell, lovely carnage ended.

Their fraternity of joyous rage we'd never join,
but soon became the cops, army, villagers
hunting down wild and wondrous creatures,
the better to enjoy those half-pleasures left
for the balance of our undead lives.

Dan Liberthson

Scars

I wouldn't touch them at first,

laid across your skin like bare wires—
even after the tubes came out

and you were healed enough to want me,
I made my hands not stray there,
arched my back so I embraced air,

not because I thought they might hurt
you but because I feared they might hurt
me, shock away my love for you.

A long time later I let my hand
go there as if by accident and felt

the same warmth as everywhere else.

Dan Liberthson

Insanity Abounds

Insanity abounds! Just look at the news and ... shoot, the whole damn government is insane. Walk downtown, and it's not just the ragged street person howling at imaginary devils - it's the noontime office worker in a tie, desperately working his cell phone on the sidewalk, afraid he'll fail at business and lose his family. It's the Iraq War veteran who can't adjust after blowing towelheads away for a couple of years. It's the high-schooler who's worried about body shape and zits, with parents who are constantly bickering.

Frustration causes insanity. A person can work on controlling frustration - say, meditating or counting to ten before exploding - but too much frustration makes it hard to deal with ordinary Life, and a lot of people caving in these days. Psyche meds are the mainstream option, if you just have to go to work and feed your family, or keep on studying for that degree so you can get a "good job". And once someone's inducted into the psyche system it's hard to get out. One is labeled "mentally unstable" forever, sometimes giving doctors and government officials (and possibly angry ex-wives or -husbands) the upper hand in making one's personal decisions.

As one person breaks down, it affects the family members, the coworkers, possibly other drivers. The depressed person is less attentive to the needs of others, and may let down those who expected joy or productive work. So the frustrated person ends up frustrating others.

How many frustrated people are frustrating you right now? It's a good exercise, to see the people oppressing you as victims, and ask "What's frustrating them?" If we can forgive the victims who are victimizing us, it's a start. To go further we need to cooperate in easing the conditions that have frustrated our oppressors. Dick Cheney must have had some frustrated parents, or something.

The root causes of frustration lie beyond the unfaithful spouse, the lousy job, the medical problems. We're in a wave of mega-frustration, caused by eight billion people trying to meet complex human needs and aspirations in a for-profit, industrial, materialistic society. We're all frustrated by intense heat (possibly neighborhoods on fire); warfare (children being bombed in hospitals); the uncertainty of our income; the knowledge that a couple of billion people do not have convenient access to clean water; the garbage patch (twice the size of Texas) out in the Pacific, the irradiated territories at Chernobyl and Fukushima (and the radioactive water being dumped in the Pacific by the Japanese for almost two years) ... and on and on. Pollution and deforestation make us sad even if we don't consciously think about them. We know our world is getting worse.

The world's definitely in worse shape than in the 20th century. And that makes our own little troubles harder to bear. The general decline in world happiness also increases the chances that we'll have less money; develop relationship problems (both parties are troubled, and trouble each other); find no quiet place to let go and feel good; become angry and cause more trouble; turn to alcohol or powdered drugs (leading to new problems), and so forth.

Continued p. 5

My Life had stood a Loaded Gun 764

My Life had stood a Loaded Gun
In Corners till a Day The
Owner passed identified
And carried Me away And
now We roam in Sovereign
Woods And now We hunt the
Doe And every time I speak
for Him
The Mountains straight
reply
And do I smile such cordial
light
Upon the Valley glow
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let its pleasure through
And when at Night Our good
Day done
I guard My Masters Head
Tis better than the Eider
Ducks
Deep Pillow to have shared
To foe of His Im deadly foe
None stir the second time On
whom I lay a Yellow Eye
Or an emphatic Thumb
Though I than He may longer
live
He longer must than I
For I have but the power to
kill
Without the power to die



Angus McFarlane

Brock Love

LAS RATAS INTERRUPTEN MI SUEÑO

Se lo llevan oculto bajo su sotana
Y corren despavoridas en el mar de la noche
Roen las costillas de la casa
Carne de invierno

El sueño gime cuando el mundo se remece
Pensamientos en boca del ático
Entre un sueño y otro hay un pasadizo
Puerta que abre el útero

En la mesa del patio se reúnen los descarnados
Una caminata en el bosque
Pies descalzos como raíces en la tierra

Las ratas corretean por los pasillos
de la mente
Roban los sueños
Domesticar la existencia

THE RATS INTERRUPT MY DREAM

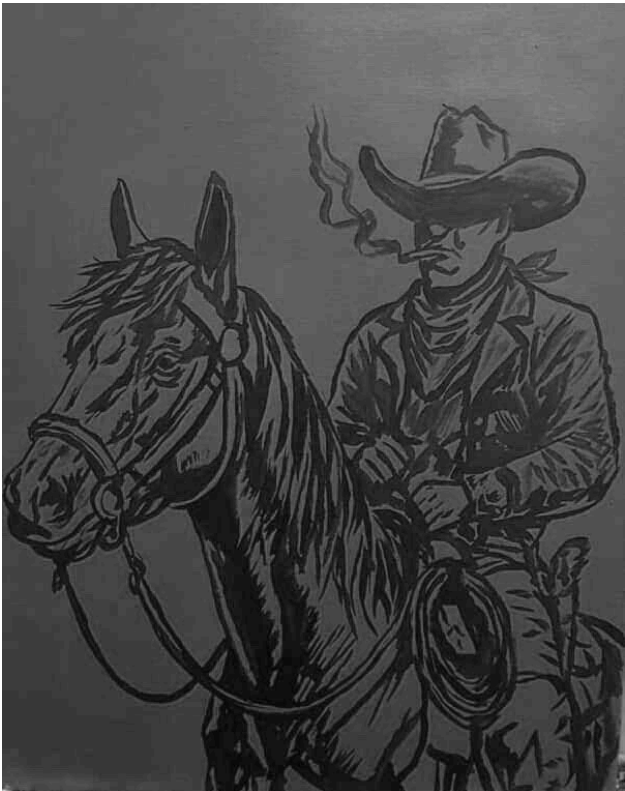
They carry it under the cassock
And run to the sea of night
Terrified rats gnaw on the ribs of the house
Winter's meat

The dream wails when the world shakes
Thoughts in the mouth of the attic
Between one dream and another lies a corridor
Door that opens the womb

Round the patio table sit the dead
A hike in the forest
Barefoot as roots in the earth

The rats run around the mind's halls
Stealing dreams
Taming existence

Trans, Elmira Louie



Yazzie



m5n5d

ELEFANTES BLANCOS

Los elefantes blancos guardan un secreto
Su aguda memoria registra el brillo del instante de la Creación

Inevitable es el fuego
de dos coordenadas que se intersectan en un punto cualquiera
Toda recta es un simulacro de los ojos
La corona es elíptica

Los elefantes blancos
oyen mayar las almas de los gatos muertos

Saben que cantar es un acto imaginario
y que la luz es un acontecimiento puramente reflejo
Nada hay de malo en su apreciación de mundo
Sin embargo
oyen mayar las almas de los gatos muertos

THE WHITE ELEPHANTS

The white elephants keep a secret
Their sharp memory registers the brilliant instant of Creation

Inevitable as fire
the two coordinates intersect at any given point
A straight line is a simulacrum of the eyes
The crown is elliptical

The white elephants
hear the souls of the dead cats yowl

They know that to sing is an imaginary act
and light is only a reflection of events
Nothing seems wrong in their regard of the world
Nevertheless
they hear the yowls—the souls of dead cats

Trans, Paul Dresman

Willamette

You walk along the river unaware of death

A bluebird perched on the top of a sweetgum-tree
Birdshit on your beret

A covered corpse lying on the riverbank

It was a family tragedy—the cops said
unfolding the yellow tape

Out of nowhere siren songs take you to the shore

The temple's tempo tick-tock tick-tock
tick-tock—time to contemplate

Blue herons do tai chi under the sky of this strange day

Camellias bloom early
The river washes everything away

Swim in Summer Rain

She stands on the bank of the pond
In jeans and denim top
Warm rain pouring down
Running off her long and straight hair
Down her back and legs
She dives into the water
Floating on her back
With eyes closed
Enjoying the rain
Gently falling on her face
And dark blue breast and thighs.
She turns and dives deep down
Then swims to the bank
Climbs out and
Stands in the falling rain
Arms outstretched
Eyes closed and smiling
Contented with water running down her face
Hair and dark blue denim jeans.

— Wild Wet

Natural indigo-dyed denim is better for outdoor recreational swimming than toxic synthetic swimwear . . . and more fun!

Wild Wet Western Swimwear
WildWetWesternSwimwear@proton.me

Insanity Abounds

Continued from p. 5

Each mistake makes mistakes more likely.

You get drunk, and maybe drive off the road. Then the cop comes and you're drunk and you piss him off. So he arrests you, and that creates more stress. Because you are noted as a trouble-maker, the cops watch you and hassle you, which causes more frustration. Frustration makes you drink, maybe fight. More legal trouble, and more frustrated people around you.

You get mad at your partner, who has already had a bad day at work, and this creates future unpleasantness between you, which breaks out into petty fights between people who are not happy. And how could you be happy? You got your hours cut but you still have to do the same amount of work. Your partner has just been diagnosed with cancer (perhaps from eating wrong foods or from toxic working conditions) and your landlord just raised the rent. So of course you're upset. Plus, you turn on the news and it's worse out there than in here.

It's dangerous and ugly outside, so you stay inside on your cell phone and play video games all day. That's bad for your bod, and you get a little fat or hunched over, get worried by all the crappy content on your phone, and then when you do go out everything is even uglier because you've been fighting internet demons all day, splaying their guts on the surrounding buildings. It's hard to compartmentalize your experience, so you still feel in competition with your environment. You put down others and try to get the upper hand (while many others are acting this way, also); this causes sadness and harm to others, who take that home with them, to their relationships and ruminations.

We can be better people, and we should try. The less we trouble others, the less trouble there will be in the world. Easier said, though - we still end up frustrating the driver behind us or the checkout lady or our best friend, once in a while. But what if the world were not such a vat of sadness? What if we could stop the useless wars, the aggressive exploitation; the declining school situation; the conniving and cheating on a national and international scale; the racism and hatred?

There are these two poles to work from: the self and the community. Let's work on ourselves, but also scam on a community that serves human needs and protects human values. To do the first is one's own holy work: to be a better person, less harmful and more helpful. Difficult work, constant work. Necessary work.

Can we improve the community we live in? By being better people, we help. But what about stepping in to create new avenues by which poor people can get home heat, by which real, empowering education is delivered to young and old, by which food is grown and distributed to all who need it?

It's time to admit that the government is in business for itself. You can't ask Uncle Sam for a better world. He's not listening. We have to do it ourselves. Can we create new methods and institutions that meet our mutual needs?

It's time to admit that the government is in business for itself. You can't ask Uncle Sam for a better world. He's not listening. We have to do it ourselves. Can we create new methods and institutions that meet our mutual needs?

If not the plague of insanity and frustration will be a worse pandemic than covid.

Christopher L

Hotdog Style

microwaved weiner
split hotdog style, tip to end
utter and sputter

Cowboy Booter



maRco

My Body

Pushed to the point of destruction
& abstraction

I build up and break down
Creating something new

An act of reckless vulnerability
My body has ideas of intimacy

My body
Shaped by connection
Trauma
Humor, love and healing.

Fergul Cirpan



Fergul Cirpan

It's not a crime

It's not a crime
if it doesn't rhyme

Just put on your bonnet
and write a sonnet

You could pen a ballad
about a salad
or an ode to a toad

Create a haiku
and people will like you.

Explore the universe
by writing some free verse.

Even if you can't spell
you can tap out a
villanelle

It's not a magic trick
to write a limerick

It's not a crime
if it doesn't rhyme

Just write the damn poem.

C'elle**chilli requires at least
two beans**

something happens inside
these words
that bury the emptiness
below details
the void at the center of
fragile constructs
about other-suspicion and
self-reliance

the revenants of dead
internal arguments
whisper in recesses of
sentence fragments
the only communication
that seems real
to this world-fear and
heaven-hate

all good things wait with
suspicions
for the silent loneliness
at the cold end
the necessary decline of
life's parabola
in the birth-wonder and
death-mystery

love's embrace that is
looking downward
with a stare that
transcends causality
the satisfactory
consequence of shame
of a great life-envy and
peace-illusion

a cold world's little waft
of symmetry
plays the jester amongst
the magicians
the displaced face of
eternal modesty
for some time-trust and
change-irony

Mike Heide

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Monstrous Night

wading deeper, tall sticky grass
grabbing my tattered legs
wandering through the endless deep
night
dark dormant devils slung over
branches
their drool like crystals hanging in
the moonlight
tiptoeing around headless horsemen
how deeply they must rest with now ears
to hear or eyes to see
dodging drips of blood from vampire
coffins
made of the most beautiful woods
shoeless slinking silently as to not
wake up the golems perched on rocks
but stroking their cold Stony heads
the ripples of my steps ebbing onto the
shores where werewolves guard their
bones
beautifully licked clean
plucking poisonous peonies in a toxic
bouquet
what a wondrous time to be undead.

Selah Brougher**She was a Famous Beauty**

She was a famous beauty, but the
Court she held she held 30 years
ago when flirting
with school boys and passing
princes
- all now forgotten like a dream.

Now affection and mercy mix like
cool water
and warm wine to soften the focus
in the eye
of a good heart's World-wise mind
- when passing by her Garden fence

to praise the new blooms for their
beauty,
and the full blooms for their
scent.

Leo Rivers**The circle of power**


surrounded by the buried
barely alive
fed flax seed and wild rice

scars for years
cross hatched across shoulders
bald but for one long horn
that remains unclipped

fractured smiles in the barly
harvest is cancelled
another sacrifice lives on

In a mansion of mole hills
a gentleman sighs
sipping distilled spirits
through his missing eye

in a field of blue poppies
skeletons knock on their caskets
a child with snow white hair
and the face of a rabbit
constructs towers out of seashells
a home for the exalted

James Otter


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SO VAST

I could trade a ticket
to New Zealand
for a spot to sit
in the sand,
in a sage brush thicket.

To be alone and free
from harsh sounds
is an extravagance.

To sit quietly,
the smell of sage,
strong in nostrils,
a distant vista so vast
that you have to wait
for an hour to devour
the sight of distant mountains
that cry blue shades
of past memories.

This, like a sage grouse nest
is a place devoid of worry
and full of peace and serenity.

This small spot
in ancient Mazama's ashes
is where I want
to lose my breath.

Bill Gunn**the cherub's repose**

so newton sort of sideways
fucked us
with these overarching
mechanical ideas
trees probably should have
made sense
since you really can't saw off
the problem
only casually redirect the
small nutrients
fold the last load of
unnecessary laundry

the groaning power to forget
is useless
memory hauls the infinite
weight of hope
as cynicism wins all of the
arguments
while curiosity wins the sum
of all future
it was always worse than we
realized
and there's some bullshit
strength there

a slightly overstepping
generalization
everything bad is saved by the
details
the falsehood of concrete and
chaos
so many life echelons are
pyramidal
there was a blank space among
ages
calmly looking for the tiers
of maturity

long before we will meet
ourselves
the voids that fall between
our faults
make way for that crazy little
infant
whether warmly real or
metaphorical
it just wanted a conscious
obituary
humble homages to the first
plaything

Mike Heide

Turn it up!

by Jayce Barnhart



This month's column pays tribute to a bi-annual event held in the tropics: The 311 Cruise! The band 311 charts a boat and takes 3000 of its "Excitables" on a Caribbean cruise to share music, love, fun, and adventure! Part of the excitement comes from learning about new bands and new music while sailing. There were nearly a dozen featured artists and bands aboard that boat as well. I sampled some of their newest released albums and look forward to reviewing them for you!

Full Bloom



311
Released: October 25, 2024
Tracks: 10

After more than thirty years, this band is releasing brand new rock, reggae, and rap vibes as clean as ever.

An instant favorite of their discography, 311's sound is audibly honed in this new album. Badass rock and roll from guitarist Tim Mahoney makes singles like "You're Gonna Get It" sheer proof that this band has not lost a step. SA Martinez delivers some of his best poetic rap/rock in the track "Braver" which was performed live as a world premiere on the boat! Lead singer Nick Hexum even brings brilliance and energy to a couple slower tracks like "Persimmon" and "Friend." Definitely a positive evolution from one of my personal favorites.

Royal Grove



Tropidelic
Released: July 19, 2024
Tracks: 10

This hip-hop reggae rap group tours with 311, and was a great fit with the musical vibes aboard this year's cruise.

Their signature sound blends jazzy brass and rapid-fire hip hop lyrics together into an energetic live show. Frontman James Begin will one moment be rocking a funky trombone and the next pelting you with machine-gun lyrics not unlike Eminem. Their newest album gives us some more reflective pieces such as "Affirmations" and "Grove" but then cranks the energy up with crowd moving tracks like "Lala." This latest album by the band features quite a few collaborations with popular contemporary musical talent like Iration and The Elovators.

The Red Album



RDGLDGRN
Released: February 28, 2025
Tracks: 12

This band brings the head-bang and the big bang together for an experience you'll easily find at any reggae festival or at your local dance club.

Don't let their name intimidate you, it's just the disemvowelment of Red Gold Green, the names of their members: Red (Marcus Parham), Gold (Andrei Busuiocanu), and Green (Pierre Desrosiers). This band brought raw guitar rock and roll and sharp, quick fire rap lyrics that definitely fit within the rest of this year's cruise lineup. Their radical new flavor of rap and syncopation go-go is something that the band cultivated in Washington DC back in 2011, and they've been producing electric sound ever since. Profound messages hide within catchy grooves and snappy riffs throughout the album. Personal favorites from their latest include "Heads are Gonna Roll" and "Bounce."

OR Coast Poem

Purple hydrozoa
dried along the backshore, the low smell of sea-salt
beaten rocks & the naked body of a black sand beach,
laying open— widening still—
to eat up the surf.
The crashing, shushing spit of a wave throws white
textures into the air, & for all the fog, early
Spring rain & wind, seagull squabbles & strewn
sands, there is,
without question, an emptiness to the landscape,
like that of raw materials:
smooth marble or ivory,
soot powder or dense indigo dye.
Things elemental,
things before & things after.
The waters come up,
rolling off, silent with my thoughts.

Ezra Williamson



maRco



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Lets Make TV Black & White Again
by Peter Fenton

I agree whole-heartedly that 100% of Hollywood movies should be made in the U.S. And that all of them should feature President Trump as Executive Producer. That is, when he's not concocting another run at the Vatican. Which come to think of it, should also be moved to the United States, preferably near Doral Country Club. The Pope/ Prez does love his golf, particularly when it can be worked out that all 18 holes are paid for by the American taxpayer.

But back to this Hollywood movie thing. Great idea, but it doesn't go far enough.

First, the new law should require all foreign movies to be filmed in the U.S. And no subtitles. All spoken American English or the Justice Department will be shutting you down. Unless you can find a part in it for Pam Bondi. Like, say, as the lead angel in Donald's Angels, co-starring fellow MAGA exhibitionist Kristi Noem and fast-talking Karoline Leavitt, aka "The Kid."

And what about TV?

This is the most important issue of all.

The entire nation used to gather en masse in the black and white glow of universal favorites like I Love Lucy. Teen girls had never been more united than when screaming through The Beatles first appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show. Or fellow Brits Freddie and the Dreamers doing, well, "Do the Freddie." On nights like those, America was like one vast living room, with pioneering, ultra-processed TV dinners.

The Ed Sullivan Show is a prime example of the black and white era's

ground-breaking inclusiveness. Long before America's Got Talent, gossip journalist Ed Sullivan exposed America to the wonder of Eastern Europeans spinning plates with various extremities, followed by, say, a Canadian telling jokes. A Canadian.

Today, audiences are fragmented. A 2025 teen mom is binge-watching 2009 episodes of Teen Mom for pointers. An elderly couple is scouring Antiques Roadshow to see what their purple Princess phone is worth. Another guy is transfixed by the video his girlfriend sent him.

Result?

Societal chaos.

Solution?

Let's make TV black and white again.

I am a self-employed atavist unafraid to voice my opinion in a crowded bus or isolation cell.

One needn't be a student of my logic to realize the nation began its descent into controversy when color TV came on the scene. Star Trek was in color. Archie Bunker was in color. The Vietnam War was mostly black and white but seemed like it was in color.

Even little-lauded The Dukes of Hazzard was in color. While some say the 1980s show was nothing but the mindless tale of two good ol' bros and the car they loved, I'd contend that it set the stage for the dreaded MAGA movement. Is it any wonder that Bo and Luke Duke's cherished hot rod was nicknamed General Lee? Or that their sexy, cut-off jeans wearin' sister Daisy Duke was the obvious role model for distinguished Secretary of Homeland Security Noem?

To find the philosophical underpinnings of the Trump Administration watch an episode of The Dukes of Hazzard.

Back to The Ed Sullivan Show.

The variety program, which came on at 8 p.m., so even little kids could watch and learn, was pioneering in its inclusion of fringe groups.

Ed Sullivan was a DEI pioneer.

I mean, where else could Middle Americans be exposed to regional entertainment from the previously unexplored resorts of the Catskill Mountains? Mr. Sullivan brought the 2nd generation immigrant humor of Henny Youngman and Myron Cohen to the mainstream.

Then there's what black and white TV did for the advancement of female comedians. Where would Chelsea Handler be today but for the pioneering work of Totie Fields? Probably on a podcast.

Epiphany:

The proposed transformation of Alcatraz from tourist attraction to cruel island prison indicates that the black and white movement I espouse is advancing more quickly than anticipated. The product of Donald Trump's fevered mind, a refurbished Alcatraz returns the institution to the black and white glory days of his youth.

The New Alcatraz could blend tourism with the incarceration of violent felons. A zip line from San Francisco to The Rock could provide thrills for one and all. Hotel rooms set atop the prison could feature theme rooms like Solitary Confinement or an entire floor called Death Row. Restaurants could feature gourmet "prison food" by Martha Stewart. Not a bad concept worth turning into an idea.

So why stop at TV?

Let's make all America black and white again.



James Otter

Reflection

My face appraises me

from a horse's hoofprint
brimming with rainwater.
The walls erode and crumble:
bit by bit, cohesion fails
until a whole side comes down
and another and then
only a faint imprint remains
beneath a thin wet sheen.

When I was five years old

I found myself fishing
from the end of a pier
on a small Adirondack lake
beside a girl shy as myself.
We shrank from our parents'
knowing glances and nudges,
my big sister's smoochy noises,
lowering our eyes

to a secret embrace—
our figures rippling together
in dark water.

The girl's name is gone

and her white salty skin
and the curve of her limbs.
Her sweet face, like mine,
is a muddy blur
in a ruined hoof-pool.

Our parents dissolve

in endlessly receptive earth
and my sister is an old woman,
yet from beneath the sediment
layered over that moment
love and shame surface again,

a double-edged blade, now as then.

Dan Liberthson



maRco

i keep forgetting my dad died

spring has sprung i feel the air changing
our watering holes with slowly shrink and we will become thirsty
i am thirsty now
i am missing something but there are flowers
blooming
annuals? perennials?
the ones that die every year but hang on and come back
i am like those flowers except some of the people in my life they die
and they don't come back next year
my dad he died and he didn't come back this year october 18th
he stuck around longer than most of the flowers that die before the air gets colder
i love him for that
i love him for a lot of reasons and i miss his for so many more
as i grow this season there are so many bees
pollination
new rains that hit my petals and i don't have you to confide in
to say sissy i love you when can i see you again
i haven't listened to you voicemail since about a week after you died because i think leaving you with last
years dead flowers is what i need to do
if i bring you into my new blooms i will feel
unable to continue
i forget sometimes that i can't call you and then i remember that ive forgotten and i feel like a piece of shit
who forgets that their dad is dead and who forgets that they are devastated about it
i wrote this poem and it's the first time i've written about him
i used to write poetry all the time and now im acting as a foreign politician trying to speak a language i no
longer understand
my roots arent taking to the new soil of my life and i don't know if i will bloom this spring because i have lost
myself
but i don't know where ive lost myself to?
i feel so normal most of the time and then i don't and that's when its weird and confusing and i sit in my bed
and think about all the words i want to write and i cant
maybe i need to start snorting lines of cocaine to get my creativity back because it made me unfiltered and
honest and all i cared about was the next bag and not what i thought about myself or my art or my writing or
my thoughts
i was controlled by something else and that's what i need back because im controlled by my lack of grief
the absence of grief when you know you should be grieving is like
i can't even think of a fucking metaphor like a simple poetic line to compare to the line above. i should read
this aloud to people don't know and they can think i don't know how to write and that will be ok because
maybe i dont

odds & endings

is this what end tidings
are...jar full of grey moths...?
months of uncontrol
lable urges...purging of
crimes against yr essence...
why yr once friends found
joyment in yr absence....dachs
hund mama w/ tit tips hittin
grass.

or only yr endless whines
like mini-spoonfuls of med. co
caine...psychoactive alka
loid...keeps one up todo noche...
so neither healthy...wealthy nor
wise....cependant...babes aiment
beau
coup...true as plomb bob...
tired i wake as dream haunt...chase
me away from catastrophe...often...!
tho sadly some times fail...
sleepwalk thru my day's daze...24
hrs
of what's goin on...down...anywhere.
.?
milk n honey awaits...death...as
do unincarnated souls..

(eco-politics...alas! ...simple 14,5
song)

don't give up the river
they flatten our mountains
pour tar on the valley floor
erosion past belief
hard facts are hard to ignore
but you can't plow a furrow in
concrete
& you can't plant seeds in yellow
hard pan
but if you turn yr back and walk
away
they're going to take yr land...

don't give up the river
don't give up yr bottom land
it's neither now or never
don't give up yr bottom land

they'll offer you a good price
& you'll shout: "my ship's come in..."
but when you see that mobile home
on yr sandy loam
you'll swear you committed a sin...
oh farmer..! farmer..!
you are the one
take up yr horses & tractor...
rise up with the sun...

don't give up the river
don't give up yr bottom land
it's neither now or never
don't give up yr bottom land

David Koteen

Everything You Need to Know to Become a Millionaire

In The Road Runner Show, what famous sound does the Road Runner make?
Where should choking victims place their hands to indicate to others that they need help? What is a dance name that is used to describe a fashionable dot?
In what "language" would you say "ello-hay" to greet your friends? What part of a chicken is commonly called the "drumstick"?
What is the only position on a football team that can be "sacked"?
What god of love is often depicted as a chubby winged infant with a bow and arrow? What Steven Spielberg film climaxes at a place called Devil's Tower?
In what U.S. town did the famous 1881 shoot-out at the O.K. Corral take place?
What month has no U.S. federal holiday?
What mythological beast is reborn from its own ashes?
Who developed the first effective vaccine against polio? Is Hinduism a monotheistic religion?
What architect designed the glass pyramid in the courtyard of the Louvre? What U.S. President appeared on the television series Laugh-In?

Brock Love

Foretaste

I am Captain on the rowboat's prow,
Wind Master gliding to dock,
shifting balance as wavelets play,
crouched easy as a buoy-rocked gull.
Warm and sweet is life this day.

My loyal crewman ships his oars,
grins at his boy and hands the rope:
pride slyly softens his face,
fight how he will to keep it firm.

The boat hits the dock as I turn.

Slung suddenly at the sky,

I fall head-first into freezing
murk.
Oh how it stings, the dense green
press:
ice-wasps crawl right down my
throat
and a grinning lake-shark circles
in.

Five feet to safety I could swim

but chill and terror steal my
breath.
When Mother pulls me to the dock
I scream and whirl, stamp and craze.
Cold and harsh is life this day.

Mother and Father smile at each
other,
he in the boat, she on the land.
By turns I see them as I twirl,

my shrieks and a loon's the only
sounds
as I go round and round and round.

Dan Liberthson

Delirium

Golden hour on the hills

The uncharted universe
The uncharted galaxies

Dreamscapes
Wondrous journeys
Renaissance of hearts

A lot of broken hearts at
bars

A lot of brokenness
Everywhere

Within me
There is a sanctuary

Stillness
Non-duality

I only see and speak
myself
With all my glory.

Fergul Cirpan

(The following poem was generated by aleatorically
flipping through the pages of Leaves of Grass. It
was
performed in front of the Corvallis Poetics group.
It is another example of impurity and non-value
poetics. I added conjunctions and changed tenses at
times to construct a feeling of narrative or to
create
disjunction. Here, it is interesting how a poetics of
nonpurity/non-value allows for a curation process:
something akin to enantiodromea.)

These to
Echo
A long while
Amid
Gaiety
No greatness
Tumbling on
Steadily
Regular
Apaced
Whoever you are
Away
With the old
Romance
Who cuts
Tunnels
Great or small
This moment
Yearning and thoughtful
When I peruse
A woman's body at auction
Colorado men, birds of passage,
From our continents,
I swear the earth shall be
Find new thought
We too
How long were formed?
I am enamored
A man or a woman
The wild gander
Shadows lengthening
The prairie grass dividing
I swear earth, sunshine, storm,
Cold, heat
All the past,
The present
Me today?
Valueless, Objectless.
The blue sky, the grass,
The morning, then
Rising
Tremendous
Then not
Your deeds,
Marco Polo
Your personality,
Where the city's
Ceaseless unfold
Of the folds
Whether that
Old Ireland
Alone
More than them,
My comrade's hands
The halt
Of a midday hour
Oh, maidens and
Young man or
Shape of earth divine
The popular tastes
When the psalm sings
The healthy presence
By the roadside
Oh, to have life
Lands of wheat, my spirit
Salut de monde
And unseen,
The rich coverlet
Of poems
Buried attitudes
All characters,
All movements
I fear you are
Walking
Beautiful women,
The runner, the
Dailliance,
The mother,
The fooled European
The delicate spear
And the star of
France
And they pass
Central
And
Southern
Empires
Then not
Your deeds
Whispers of
Heavenly
Death
Thee and thy
panoply
That only holds
Men together:
The soul
To a certain civilian:
Did you ask
Dulcet rhymes
Of me?

Brock Love

Omniscience

I watched moonlit raindrops
gallop down the windowpane
to the finish line, unyielding frame,
win a brief ovation

or trail behind in shame,
though all went to the same ocean.

I puzzled why some tried so hard
to reach the end ahead

when those who came in last
got longer life instead.

If winning won a quicker death,
glory was a false reward—
better then to come in last

and fill the extra time with breath.

In any case the places

of first or trailing racers
soon were filled by others
who ran the same course.
Which won or lost
mattered not to me—
only to the drops.

Dan Liberthson

Partner versus Soul Mate

" No you can't take it,
No you can't take it,
No you can't take that away from me,
No you can't take it,
No you can't take it,
No you can't take that away from me"
--Nine inch Nails
Love is give and take. More about the giving than the taking.
People say you have to be loved in order to love. They say it's a
two-way street. People say love is where you find it. People say a
lot of things about love. My partner doesn't love me. She says so.
I know it's true, too. But I love her. It must be love. There's too
much sacrifice, too much trial and judgment, too much coming back
and trying harder for it to not be. Maybe love is a two-way
street. But when people say all these things they say when they
talk about love, they are saying things that everyone else says,
things a culture commonly accepts as rules for relationships.
I think such thinking doesn't really stand up against the test of
time and the differences between individuals. There's a point
when individuality and common assumptions don't fit any more and
that point is where we find intimacy.
If we think about intimacy, this is where all of the love
assumptions start booting up, because when there's intimacy, there's
conflict, and then the platitudes follow.
Conflict is when A doesn't equal B, and why? Where are the
differences? Differences turn the air cold, our partner becomes
distant, and intimacy goes away, doesn't it?
I'm 80 so I should know, so listen up.
The quote was from the song from "Head Like a Hole," and the rest
of the lyrics are harsher.
"Head like a hole
Black as your soul,
I'd rather die,
Than give you control.
Head like a Hole
Black as your soul,
I'd rather die
Than give you control"
When we argue with our partner and it drives us apart, and we
take back control "No you can't take that away from me," was your
partner your soulmate?
I've had the same partner for 30 years. We had a love at first
sight dreamworld romantic love for 5 years. We've moved across the
country 3 times together. Now we live apart. We see each other
every day.

And finally liberation is at hand. My liberation. I don't have
the energy after 30 years to keep sacrificing. She's moving to a
much better town, where she'll not be endlessly upset by the
things going on around her. If she can't make it there, she can't
make it anywhere. It's Veneta. It's small, it's 15 miles from my
house, and she'll have everything she needs in a very pleasant
little town.
But she's not my soul mate. A soulmate goes with the give and take
of what goes on in their soulmate's life, doesn't argue because
soulful calling is more humane than a partnership. The soul plane
doesn't work on that level. A partner is a partner. There are
demands, rules, regulations, expectations, demands, personal needs.
Partnership is good; it's a solid form of the widely accepted
"working relationship." But it's not love, and if the love isn't
there, it's not on the soul plane.
I live on a soul plane. Always have. I've been guardian angel for
all my life because that's the plane I'm on.
People used to openly wonder, when I'd help them, what I wanted,
what I was after. You can try to explain to them when you face
their fear, but they will only know whether you meant it on down
the road. And if you steered them wrong, even with the best
intentions—because you can't hold their hand all the way—then
they can resent you, all that you did, and blame you for their
failure.
For most women, this is old hat. For men it is not. I'm a man, but
I'm a humanitarian first, egalitarian by nature, devoted to the
greater good since I was a child, a big-picture thinker since
boyhood, a teacher, and a mentor. This article is for many, many
men—too many men. And they won't be listening either, not
because they don't care, but because they are young and strong and
mannish, or are successful and look back on their accomplishments
as validation of their personal beliefs/ They take the bull by
the horns. I do too. Always have. Big bulls, bigger than most,
bulls that almost killed me. And I rode em all. But they didn't
consume me. They didn't take my soul away.
"No you can't take that away from me..."
Hardening of the attitudes occurs long before hardening of the
arteries, so I don't know who I'm saying this to who needs to
change their point of view. But I'm saying it anyway. Standing on
the highest mountain and shouting as loud as I can so anyone
near might hear it. Think about your soulmate, not your partner.
Get off the "me" plane and get on the plane of Beneficial. Look
at her soul, say to yourself, "would it be beneficial if I said this,
did that?" Play it forward. If it winds up turning into some kind
of adversity on the soul plane, just refrain. Look for something
instead that would be a beneficial outcome for both of you, and
steer for that.
If you do that enough, your partner may become your soulmate.
When you have a soulmate, there's love. Where there's love—there's
acceptance, warmth, security, completion. Fulfillment. We all
want it, but you can only get it on the soul plane.
Get of the plane of personal needs and go there.

fredx

Between the Surface and the Center of the Earth

Somewhere below the surface and above the center of the earth there is a room occupied by a series of obscure figures and they are watching you. They hunch over their flickering ancient CRT screens and the pale electron-light casts up upon what would be their faces, washing out their features, offering up no detail. They do not require faces. They are watching you, specifically you, every day, every hour, forever and ever watching, and as they watch they plan their clandestine war against you. This is a duty they treat with the upmost seriousness. They do not peruse this with the gleeful malice of devils, nor the bored indifference of civil servants, but with the care and delicacy of craftsmen. Their knowledge of you is perfect. They know everything you have ever said, ever done, ever thought. They know what you will do well before you do it. Your whole life is mapped out before them, an elaborate series of charts and graphs and blueprints and countless, countless pushpins and post-its and polaroids tied together with spiderwebs of colored twine, overlapping and overlaying one another, the accretion of decades, a code without meaning, coating every inch of the walls of their windowless room. They are subtle in their machinations. They deliberate gravely upon the proper tactics, the most ideal way by which to afflict and dispirit you. Their eyes watch you through cameras both hidden and obvious, a panoply of lenses shining darkly. They learn the exact composition of your body, the contents of your mind, probing you from a distance with invisible rays. They plot your motions, your small habits, your tender fears, your secret hopes. They are cautious. They do not wish to be discovered, although any evidence of discovery could just as quickly be erased. They work through the intricacies of paperwork, the judicious application of bribes, the convenience of carefully planned coincidences, the motions of their many agents, who do not know they are agents. They work through recursive layer upon layer of false flags, shell organizations, transactions cyclically rerouted so that the true origin can never be found. Their reach is all-encompassing. They are the secret masters of the world. They conspire against you. They do not seek your destruction, though to destroy you would be as total and as effortless as an act of god. They work by degrees, a death of a thousand cuts, and each cut is well planned and well placed. They eat away at your substance with the determination of timeless age. Their goal is to curtail you, to reduce you. You are no good to them dead, only diminished. They do not question why this is. There may be others, other rooms, watching other persons, enacting their own subtle plans against carefully selected targets. They do not know. It does not concern them. They have no families, no passions, no pasts. They do not live. This is their only purpose. They are tireless in their work. They will never be found.

Elliot Phillips



CJ Mitchell

Some days

some days I am
in-love with
myself
with the way my
hair falls, up
for down
with the way my
pants sit on my
hips
the way my t-
shirts lay on my
shoulders
the color of my
eyes in the sun
and in the dark
every freckle
and eyelash, as
if ordained by
god to be right
where it is
and I wonder...
I wonder
how a world that
made me is not
in-love with me
too.
because surely
such a
wonderful
creator is in-
love with its
creation?

Selah Brougher



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