



Graffiti

CREATIVE WRITING & ART ZINE

AUGUST 2025
ISSUE #24

to Love *and to* Create



1998



Design | Branding | Marketing | Code | Hosting
prisedesign.com

Graffiti

info@graffiti-magazine.com

back issues online!
at graffiti-magazine.**Editor:** Rianne Manning (RIMAN)**Assistant Editor:** Sierra Maish**Board:** Jordan Howell Rose, Lise Eskridge, maRco Elliott, Morgan Smith, Jeux Bartlett, Jesús Sepúlveda**In this issue:** R.A. Davis, Marley Lloyd, Jacob Lauch, David Koteen, Dave Morello, Arden Neff, Jessi Pauline, Carianne Shriver, Michelle Shattuck, Molly Sirois, Morgan Smith, Gideon Stuart, Tulloh, Rod Williams, Fergul, M5N5D, maRco, Mia, Nemo, RIMAN, Topaz

ON THE COVER: A photo of Salem based dancers "Jesus Inzunza (Chui)" and "Fernando Jimenez (Primo Rocko)" practicing at Riverfront Park in Salem, Oregon. Amanda West and I took a photography-oriented day trip to Salem and stumbled across these artists in the park. We asked if we could take photos while they were practicing and they were all for it. Primo Rocko mentioned they were a part of a community of Break Dancers in the city sharing the art of break dancing. We stayed for about 15-20 minutes and I took a series of amazing shots while they went through a series of moves. One of those shots made the cover of this magazine. We stayed for a few more minutes after shooting to watch in appreciation of the gift of dance that they were sharing with us. We are very honored and grateful to be featured in Graffiti.

m5 is an artist from Georgia, now based in Eugene, Oregon. His visual work lives under M5N5D Photography, in the style of documentary and street photography. As a Hip Hop artist, he creates under the name m5 vibe and his music is available on all major streaming platforms.

m5

Photographer / Hip Hop Artist / Vet

www.m5n5d.com / www.mfivevibe.com / @m5n5d / "Pixels and Poetry"

SUBMISSIONS - PLEASE READ

Protocols for submissions are as follows:

-SUBMIT TO: **info@graffiti-magazine.com**-MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS: If you have MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS, submit each submission in a **SEPARATE EMAIL**.-Work **MUST** be submitted in PDF (writing) or JPEG (art) formatting-**WORD LIMIT: UNDER 1000 WORDS. If something is submitted over word count, DO NOT expect it to be published. We MAY publish it on the website.**- **ACCEPTED WORK:** Stories, Prose, Poetry, and Art. Academic work considered, but must be formatted as you want it to be published and should NOT be longer than the word limit.-**WE DO NOT ACCEPT: RANTS, HATE SPEECH, or ANYTHING THAT MAY BE COPYRIGHTED****ADS AND DONATIONS**Please inquire about all ads and donations at:
ads@graffiti-magazine.com

We will have an account for direct donations sometime in the near future.

OUR MISSION

Graffiti aligns with the principle of free speech. Disagreement and **resistance** should be a right, not a privilege. This zine is local, community-based, and engages with artists and writers throughout Oregon and the Greater Los Angeles Area. As censorship and surveillance rises, Graffiti will be a vital defender of free expression. All art and writing will be published as is, without compromise.

We don't support hate speech or harmful rhetoric and disclaim that individual pieces don't necessarily reflect the views of contributors.

**FRONT LINES**

RIMAN

As your new **Graffiti** editor for the next three months, I plan to foster creativity amongst artists and give everyone a space to express themselves. We will now be distributing throughout the Greater Los Angeles Area as I move to the San Fernando Valley this month. (There will be more Graffiti news, updates, and housekeeping in the Front Lines of Issue #25 once I am settled in the SFV.) For now, I offer this piece to you as a distraction and rebuttal to the horrors and atrocities of this world:

Why Bears Hibernate**(A Story for Children and Your Inner Child)**

On the first day of the first summer, Mama Bear emerged from her cave. She found all of her woodland friends tending to their home, the beautiful and endless forest.

As you can imagine, there is much work to do in a forest which spreads to and from the corners of everything. Many of the woodland creatures were behind on their work. The beavers were growing tired of collecting wood for their dams. Bunnies needed help reaching for berries which the wind couldn't shake from the tall trees. A pack of mother wolves desperate to hunt and sniff the forest air needed a babysitter for their whining pups.

Upon noticing Mama Bear's arrival from her cave, the animals began to stir. They noticed she was tall, furry, and strong. Might she be able to help with all of the summer tasks?

The animals rushed to Mama Bear's sides and pleaded for her help.

"Can you help us collect berries?" Asked the bunnies.

"Might you help us pick up twigs?" Asked the beavers.

"We need help!" Cried the mother wolves in between the barks of their pups.

Mama Bear graciously helped all of the bunnies, beavers, and wolves. However, her service did not stop. All throughout the rest of the summer, Mama Bear helped every animal in every corner of the endless forest.

When the leaves began to fall and the rain became snow, Mama Bear yearned for the warmth of her cave. Mama Bear was able to rest easy knowing that during the summer, she helped her woodland friends store food and build strong houses. Most important of all, Mama Bear made sure to leave enough hope and love for all the woodland creatures to share during the dark nights of winter while she rested.

The next summer, Mama Bear was awoken to the warm sound of all her woodland friends:

"Mama Bear, we need help!"



Elevate
with
ALLIANCE



FILM TALK!

"Louis: A Silent Film" Review (Accompanied by Wynton Marsalis and Cecile Licad) *SPOILERS*

Rod Williams

On Thursday, May 29th, Eugene was treated to a film/concert event at the Shedd Institute hosted in only nine other cities. "Louis: A Silent Film" depicts a young boy growing up in Storyville, the red-light district of New Orleans in the early part of the 20th century. The boy dreams of growing up and escaping poverty by learning to play the trumpet and becoming a famous musician. The film is fictional, but captures the grit and corruption of the neighborhood while telling a tale of a classic villain, an angelic whore with a "heart of gold," and the coming-of-age exploits of the boy Louis.

Oh, spoiler alert: Louis is the young Louis Armstrong, legendary trumpeter and timeless jazz advocate and ambassador.

The movie is gorgeously shot, its black-and-white portrayals of the Storyville alleys and cemeteries and bordellos both stark and evocative. The decision to make this a silent movie was in keeping with the times, before "talkies" became the standard of American cinema. There's a Charlie Chaplinesque vibe to the film that feels like an inspired choice.

The description "silent film" refers to the lack of dialogue. There is a soundtrack though, an engaging jazz score performed by an eleven-piece live orchestra. The music was written largely by jazz titan Wynton Marsalis who, along with celebrated classical pianist Cecile Licad, fronted the orchestra. Let me say that again: Wynton Marsalis was here. In Eugene. Blowing his trumpet. Wow.

I don't know where they found young Anthony Coleman to play Louis, but he gave a mature and joyful performance that was a pure pleasure to witness. The supporting cast was also fantastic (how hard must it be to act so well without the benefit of dialogue?), especially Jackie Earle Haley as the heinous Judge Perry and Shanti Lowry as the appropriately-named Grace. The plot is a little surreal and far-fetched, but overall the movie is filmed and acted so well that the viewer is advised to "just go with it." The rewards far outweighed any small hiccups in the narrative, IMHO.

When "Louis" ended and the screen went dark, the evening concluded with the band gracing the audience with a spectacular blow-out sample of musicianship, Big Easy-style. Each member of the orchestra was given a chance to solo and shine, and boy, did they ever. Music aside, I was super impressed that Marsalis never once played "the big star," seemingly happy to share the spotlight and emphasize the ensemble nature of the entire event.

(Fun fact: though their roles were not advertised, two other Marsalis brothers were also involved in the "Louis" project. Jason was the orchestra's drummer, and Delfeayo (trombonist) had a small part in the movie, near the end).

This was the next-to-last stop in the tour, with the final performance scheduled for the following evening in Portland. I want to send kudos and big love to the Shedd for adding this amazing and original production to their programming. For me, the evening felt like more than just entertainment; it felt like an honor to be in attendance.

Photography by M5N5D



Slippery Slope

maRco

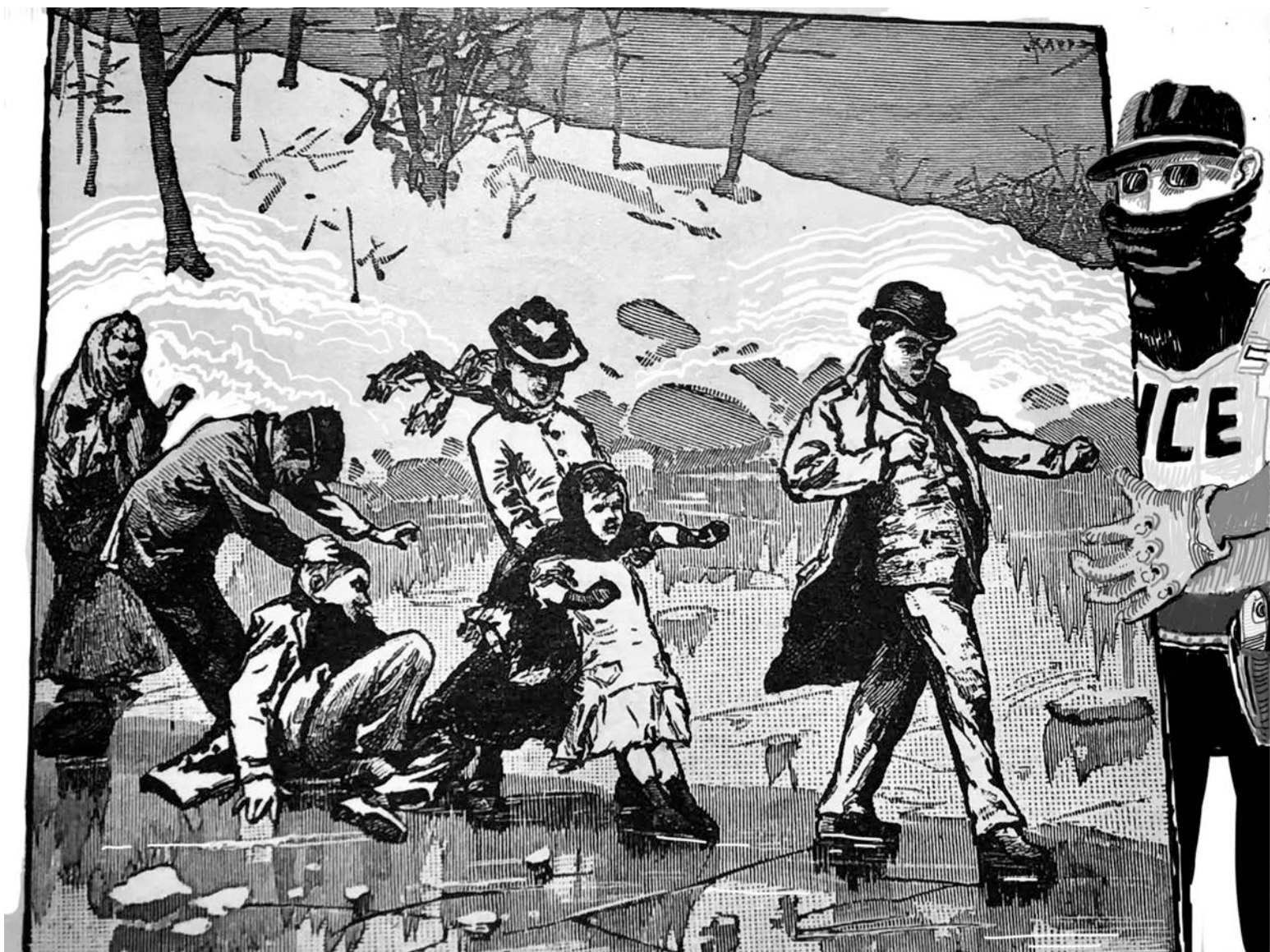
Ice — a word describing a physical phenomenon that happens on planets that have water and cold enough temperatures (below 0 degrees Centigrade.) Today on our planet, ICE (not ice!)has become a nasty three letter word associated with cruel and brutal policies. Ice was sometimes not a nice word, "her frozen toes looked like blue ice cubes " or " it was an icy reception." For sure ice is also valuable stuff, especially before the age of electricity and refrigeration. An ice pack can alleviate a bruise. Today, with unprecedented heat waves —"fry"— more and more people worry — "hot" — that we are rapidly losing ice in the polar regions, glaciers almost everywhere from the Himalayas to the Alps to the Andes are melting fast. We owe it to ice if temperatures in the biosphere remained balanced enough for a planet with a livable climate. But that ice is going fast!

Capitalized, the other three letter word "ICE" has mutated into a Frankenstein, shape-changing into cruel three letter words: Bad and Sad, Hit, Sob, Jab and Cry. Then there is ERO, an accomplice, ominous, less well known three letter entity (chilling acronym for Enforcement Removal Operation,)an arm of Homeland Security. Behind these acronyms the idea is to scare the living shit out of us by turning humans who pursue the innocent age old immigrant dream of a better life into scapegoats, framing them as dangerous sub-human criminals, rapists and drug dealers who have "BAD" intentions, blaming them for absurdities such as stealing our jobs or sullyng the purity of our "blood." Never mind

that they are the ones we should thank for the food on our plates, for the new roof over our heads, for caring for our children when we are away at work, for caring for the elderly and cooking meals in restaurants. Far from freeloaders they often perform the most back-breaking work. Try harvesting carrots or picking strawberries on your knees in 110 degree temperatures! The new ICE is going from a 10 billion\$ budget to 100 billion\$ for the next 4 years. Those of us old enough to remember the darkest events of the Twentieth Century notice ICE's three letters have devolved into something of a nightmare seven letter german acronym, Gestapo, the Secret State Police of the Nazis involved in rounding up and disappearing Gypsies, Jews, intellectuals, " sexual deviants" and political enemies of the state. There are differences: ICE operates mostly in the open now, not so secret — except for secret "removals" to distant countries. The Gestapo did not wear masks to hide their faces nor did they have crowds yelling, interfering with arrests and shaming them. People were far too scared and mostly complied without resistance.

If you know some misguided "hero" tempted to work for ICE or ERO please share this quote by Albert Einstein: "Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth." Remind them what Voltaire thought of liars and impostors:

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."



maRco

Planet of The Smart-Ass Apes

I recently finished reading "Field Notes from a Catastrophe" by Elizabeth Kolbert.

A sobering account about man, nature and climate change.

Here is an excerpt: "As the effects of global warming become more and more difficult to ignore, will we react by fashioning a global response? Or will we retreat into narrower and more destructive forms of self-interest? It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in essence, to destroy itself, but this is what we are now in the process of doing."

maRco

Lesson Learned

Don't talk to me like that.

Better said,

I am open to feedback, but not disrespect.

I don't respond well to that tone.

If we are going to continue, let's do it with mutual respect.

Adult to Adult

Shouldn't we be there, already?

If not, then, why?

Years pleading

Don't talk to me like that.

Like what? You say.

And then, another day.

Round and Round

The World Turns

Unending

Upending

Mia

Turn it up!

by Carianne Shriver



Summer is in full swing, which means it is concert season! A lot of great music has been released this summer, and lucky for us we have the chance to see all of it live as the bands hit the road for their summer tours. For this month's column I'll be featuring three releases from July of 2025 that will be touring around in our area during the month of August.



Ensenada (single release)



Sublime

Released: July 18th, 2025

In Mid-July, Sublime performed as a full band with Jakob Nowell on lead vocals at Riverfest in Council Bluffs, IA. If you didn't know any better, you would think that Bradley Nowell had resurrected and stood on stage. His son was remarkable, and it really felt like "Sublime" was there with all of us

again. The band released their first single with Jakob on lead vocals a few days later and without a doubt, the old Sublime sound was back. "Ensenada" tells about a guy who just wants to go chill out in Mexico by the bay (Ensenada) and he really doesn't want anyone to interrupt his vibe. Gosh, don't we all? It has the reggae backbeat, visions of soaking up the sun and throws in a little bit of humor here and there. Sublime starts their official tour at the Vans Warped Tour in Long Beach, CA and keeps going for the rest of the summer.

Someone Like You (single release)



Sitting On Saturn

Released: July 25th, 2025

Sitting On Saturn hit my radar earlier in the spring of 2025. Formerly known as Sitting on Stacy, the band is comprised of three members who were all in high school when they started. Most of Sitting on Saturn's songs are about love, being in love or being heartbroken. This song is touching and

and as a girl, I find it really kind of fun. The lyrics are directed to his girlfriend, and he tells her how "Everything is better with someone like you..." followed up with "when I think about you all of my worries go away." Aww, sweet right? The song could go both ways. Put it on that mix tape for your special someone because they would enjoy it, trust me. Sitting on Saturn is hitting the road with 311 and Badflower and will be in Eugene, OR on August 12th followed up with a show in Seattle, WA on August 13th. Don't miss it!

311 (Blue Album) - 30th Anniversary Edition



311

Released: July 11, 2025

Tracks: 14 original — 7 bonus tracks

311 Released their self-titled "Blue" Album on July 11, 1995. The album was 311's third studio album and was certified triple platinum selling over three million copies. Most music fans will remember this album for the hit singles "Down" and "All Mixed Up,"

while die hard 311 fans show their love for songs like "Purpose," "Misdirected Hostility," "LOCO," and "Don't Let Me Down." The best thing about the 30th Anniversary Edition is the 7 bonus tracks. My favorite of the bonus tracks is titled "Let the Cards Fall." This is a previously unreleased track that appeared on the band's documentary "Enlarged to Show Detail" in 1996, which included a second disc that was a CD EP with 4 tracks and "Let the Cards Fall" was one of them. Owning this track on vinyl is kind of a dream come true for any 311 Vinyl Collector. 311 is also on the road right now and you can catch them on the Unity Tour in Eugene, OR on August 12th and in Seattle, WA on August 13th.

Some Misconceptions About Lions

Rod Williams

In Memoriam of Leo Rivers
(The Poet Laureate of College Grove)

Popular culture depicts lions as aggressive and dangerous animals. Hunters and maneaters. The apex predators of the jungle. Those claws. Those teeth. Those savage yellow-brown eyes. When we say someone is "lionhearted," don't we imagine a warrior or a noble monarch? Someone fearless, certainly, somebody valiant. King of the wilderness.

The zodiac, though, tells a slightly different story. Yes, lions are dominant animals, fierce and fast and commanding of attention. Leo's a fire sign, after all. Still, they're passionate about life. Wildly protective of the things and creatures they care about. Warm, intelligent, generous. Courageous, often in a quiet manner.

In Dickey's words, the heaven of animals "could not be the place /it is, without blood." Maybe. But for now let's set aside the violence portrayed by culture, and place a little trust in astrology. See that lion lazing in the tall grass of a celestial savanna, lolling by the cool of a river? He's a new arrival. He lies apart from the pride. The sun shines golden on his mane,

he's surrounded by a field of marigolds and sunflowers, and it's a Sunday, near dusk. He's at peace, and resting. His eyes grow heavy. As the song goes, the lion sleeps tonight.



Morgan Smith

Poetry

Fergul

//
the fair game

the river
in constant flux

hot and messy summer days

the chorus of birds
calm yet excited
purely blessed

tears, yeah
lots to feel in this human
journey

divine play
joy and sorrow

astonishing intimacy
night will be my ally

randomness
reality's disorderly
richness
the fragile nature of life

surrendering

what a time
what a space

can you truly believe this?

//July, 2025 - EUG/OR//

July keeps July'ing...

Let me kiss you said
Morrissey
That made sense to me

I allow myself to rise in
love

Profound moments
Plenty of adventures

All the absurdities

Music is pure gold
((Sometimes))

We speak of miracles
Manifestations and
journeys
We speak of love

Coming to my truth
Feeling all of this.

//

To Hate or Not To Hate

Molly Sirois

I have very good friends in Palestine and I've traveled and stayed there numerous times since 2011. This is from my most recent trip in 2024

...

My stay in the West Bank this time was unlike any of my previous stays....it was post-October 7th, and it was that much harder to not feel hatred for anything Israeli. I used my American privilege to take bus 231 from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to see my friend. I could have used that same privilege to stay on the bus at the checkpoint where the Palestinians have to get off, but I chose to get off with them.

We waited outside for the length of time the Israeli soldiers wanted to take to saunter to their post near the bus door. Two females and one male, they wore their power like their gear, bulging. My disdain rose like acid in the back of my throat.

One of the female soldiers signaled with a jerk of her head for the person at the front of the line to move forward. ID was shown and another head jerk directed the passenger back on to the bus. With each move closer to the front of the line, I was moving closer to a choice: to try to see the human inside the soldier... or not.

My turn came. Her expression was stone cold. I mirrored it. I stepped forward and held out my passport. She took it, examined it closer, and handed it back, motioning towards the bus. In less time than it takes to make a conscious decision, I smiled at her and said "Have a nice day." The hard face she wore gave way to a smile, and the soldier she wore gave way to the human inside. I got back on the bus feeling a little less hatred than when I got off.

March 6, 2025



Design by Sam Kerson, printed by Katah at her Atelier du Livre, in Quebec.

From the book, Gaza Punishing the Innocent, Produced by Dragon Dance Theatre, published by Fomite Press, Burlington Vt.

"Angelus Novus" (New Angel) is a drawing by Swiss-born German artist Paul Klee (1879-1940) created in 1920. The illustration inspired German-Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) to reflect on the figure of the Angel of History, who advances backwards looking at the past as allegory of historical catastrophe. The angel cannot see the future, only the mess that is left behind—wars, concentration camps, starving children, amputated bodies, occupations, and a long etcetera of crimes against humanity. It's up to us to turn the wings of the human angel, so the angel of history advances looking at the future to project utopias instead of miseries and disasters. May poetry be a means to do so.

ANGELUS NOVUS

The philosopher dreams of the storm's ruins
Ideas dripping in the cave of thought

Pumas grow two eyes
one for the night / another for the deer

Moon's fissure on the skin
The beast beats its wings

In the pregnant belly of history
war incubates

ANGELUS NOVUS

El filósofo sueña las ruinas de la tormenta
Gotean sus ideas en la gruta del
pensamiento

A los pumas les crecen dos ojos
uno para la noche / otro para los ciervos

Fisura de luna en la piel
La bestia agita sus alas

En la panza preñada de la historia
se incuba la guerra

Jesús Sepúlveda



maRco

Decay's Performance Cues
David Koteen

Presence is primary. Your profoundest performance source.
If you don't show up, how good are you?

3 breaths before you enter stage, be on. What is
first body part you choose to show audience?

Be wary of the parallel

Speed, slow motion does not exist:
only relative to fast motion,
which is what?

Art & Culture are co-dependent.
Thus certain movement/gesture/
phrase as in raising the middle
finger may never be pure.

Largest energy source and
field is above audience.

What is shape of your
dea, its posture?

Find your own performance mode,
your personal vocabulary--where
movement equal emotion.

Always warm up your voice before
dancing, or body before theatre &
singing. They are inside each other.

In dance, meaning, intentional sequence
of aligned movements, often what is ex-
plored is intimacy with one's body; and
joy of sharing it....

Disorientation is necessary to
break into creation, to break
with curses and programs of
your family & culture.

Intention is your strongest ally.

Always know where your
audience is, but see no one.
Your eyes are your secret,
sacred weapon.

All movement is 3-dimensional.
Be economic, direct. Sound
radiates, emanates outwardly.

Set design, costume, color, music, lighting, sound, props are endless
resources; but needs best be used with caution.
Like make-up or horseradish.

Be low. Go slow. You're
in charge, reason why folks
have paid to get in. Know
thy coccyx!

Where are you in performance
space? Relationship to others.
Source of light...& shadows?

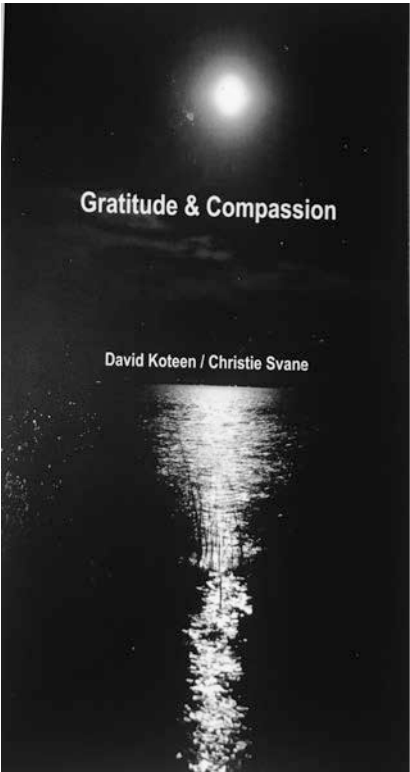
If you get lost, try long visual
sweep above audience to
furthest corner.

In doubt?....trust your guts.

At core of performance is concept that by
digging into your own personal process,
you align with creation and therein help
others see themselves.

Remember, you are the jewel
in this performance venue....

Untitled



Spring
Hawks circling high in the sky.
Wings extended
Clouds gliding, shapes shifting with teeth
open-
Rocking back and forth while focusing on a
leaf bud.
The sun warms everything within reach. Not a
care in the world.
The wait was worth it

Michelle Shattuck

San, Sun, Satori

Topaz

<https://poeticphonetics.com>

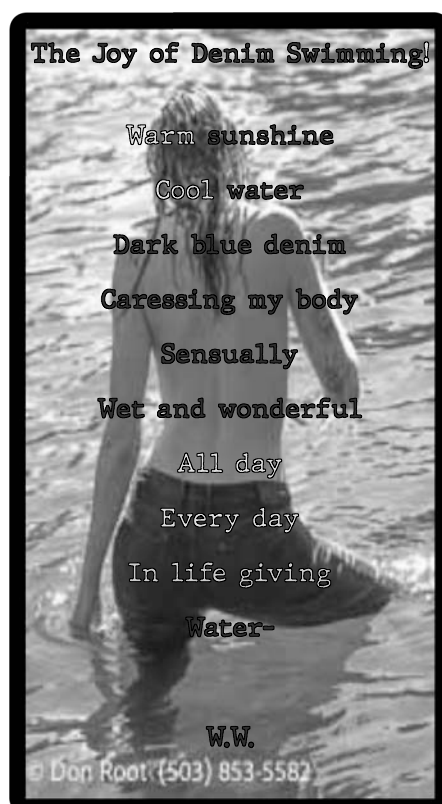
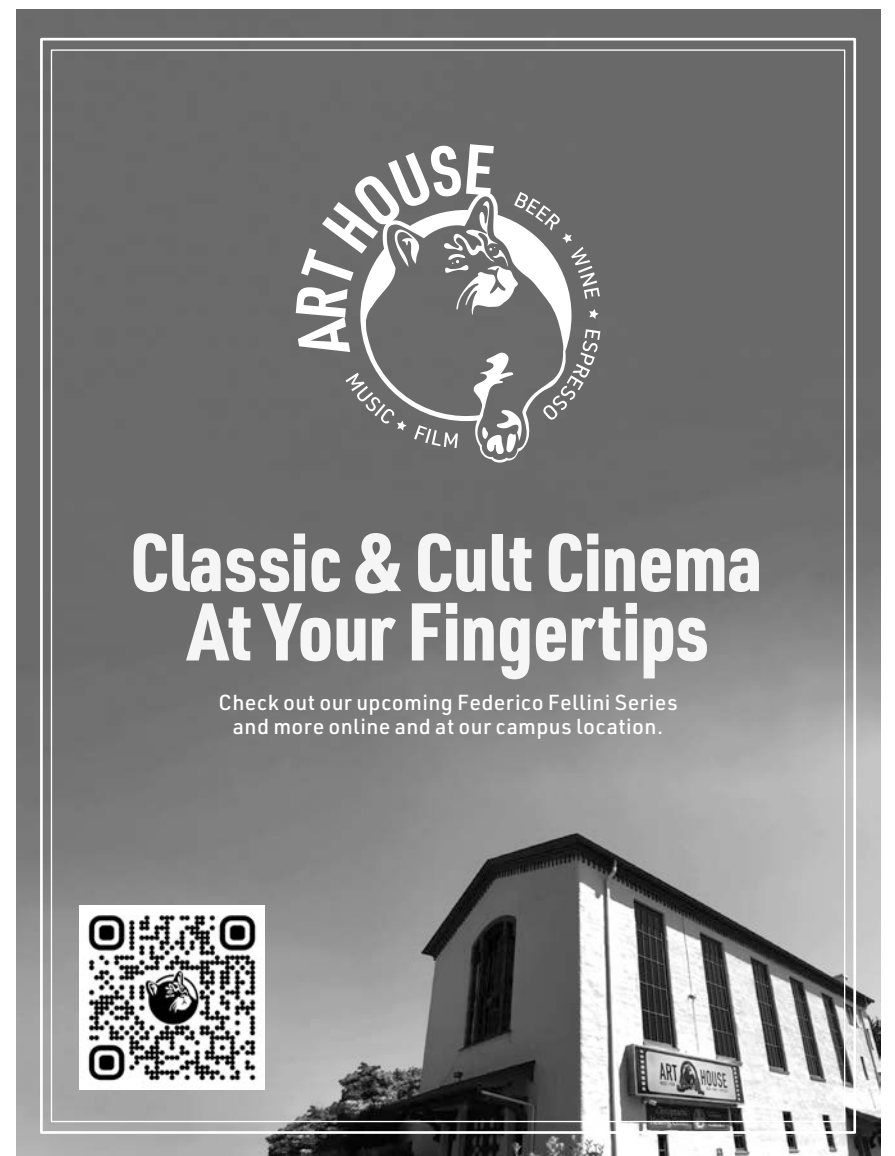
as the past,
memories, and dreams
mysterious are the roads
of unconscious action

plowed over, re-zoned,
abandoned, frozen
through trauma and
turmoil
side effects of zeitgeist
structured with ignorance
and greed
until, a tiny glimmer,
a sliver, a
neurotransmitter
a phoneme morphing
into
synaptic summer

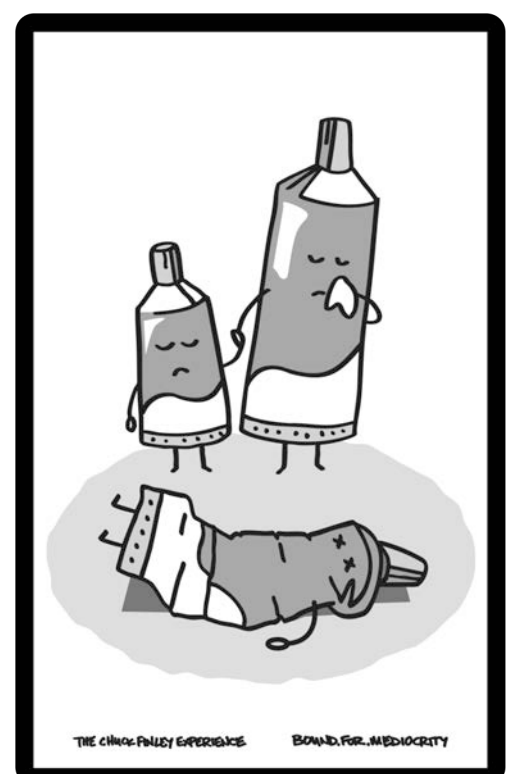
awakening, dawning
like the rising sun
red
symbolically anyway
because climbing
the archetypal Mt. Rainier
of self-knowledge
is the life-blood of hope
or, because poetry is
mental climbing gear
consciousness equals
victorious

The Bering Nemo

I know well
of ships upon the water
in the night
as you slip past me
port to port
undefined
thus the vessel and the mind
slip past you
unrefined
invisible but for running
lights
an obstacle
to be avoided



Comics by Dave Morello



To Carry

R.A. Davis

I had a vivid dream once that
 I was carrying a heavy book bag around campus
 Oversized and cumbersome with texts
 And at the bottom, beneath novels and workbooks and paper,
 there was a severed head.
 It was discomfiting
 It was scary-- a gory Banquo thing, ragged shreds, bloody locks
 How would I dispose of it? I couldn't bowl it into a gutter...
 I hadn't killed this person but I still had to carry their head,
 unstarling, mashed a little by my books
 What could I do?

I didn't know, I couldn't shed it
 So my dream self carried the small heavy horror with me
 Under my ordinary daily stuff

Just now I realized
 This is a story about grief
 Which is not my death
 But my bloody burden to carry

Untitled

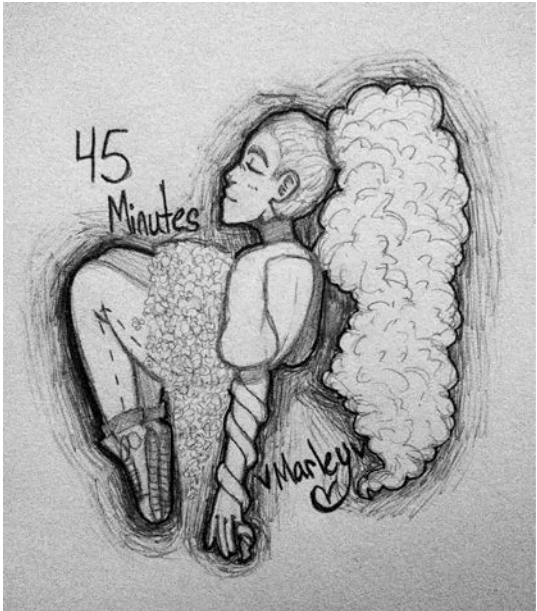
Jessi Pauline

August, don't let me down
 I beg you to relieve this frown
 I'll do anything to turn it around
 Let me have a will to live again
 I don't even need to have a friend
 I just need this shit to end
 Just like summer gives its final bow
 I'm ready for Autumn to overtake this town
 I pray for a miracle that somehow
 He doesn't hate me
 and I don't want to be six feet underground

Untitled

Pallas

You who travel with thieves
 Transformed by greed
 Attempting to pervert every
 seed
 with your disguised technology
 You are wise to fear me



Marley LLOYD

@Human_gutan



The Collector

Jacob Lauch

"Have you ever seen a bucket of Di\$&'s Rico?" Rico stared blankly, a little more than perplexed and slightly angry at his friends seemingly random inquiry. His uncomfortably expression declared the fact that he would not be responding and did not want to go down any "Bucket O' Di\$&'s" Rabbit Hole."

"Fold," Dom flopped his cards on the table.

"I'm talkin' like a full bucket."

Rico looked down at his cards once more and laid them face down on the table even that much more confident in his quest not to respond.

"A whole bucket of Di\$&'s, can you even imagine."

"Dominick", "unfortunately I can". "I have a very photographic imagination."

"Well, there's money in it you know."

"Money in what?"

"Di\$& Collecting."

"Dom, I going to pretend that you didn't just say what I think you did. I have a hard enough time sleeping at night without thinking about the fact that there could be some deranged fu\$&er out there trying to sever my jimmy whilst I'm drifting away to dreamland."

"They wouldn't come into your house. That's breaking an entry, are you kidding me."

"They?"

"Yes, "They". The Di\$& Collectors."

Rico rose from his place at the table slowly and made his way to the kitchen for another bottle of MGD. After removing the bottle cap and taking a long pull off the long neck bottle he leaned against the counter and mused at his poor choice of friends.

"Here's the deal. The Chinese are betting on it, Vegas has odds on the various teams, and the syndicates are providing cash bonuses for benchmark accomplishments."

"And how do "they" go about the procurements of these... Johnsons?"

"I'm glad you asked Rico. The old-fashioned way of course."

"Old fashion is a Donut; you're talking about Di\$&'s here Dom. As in a very important part of anatomy to most of their owners."

"Donuts to Di\$&'s, I like the way you think Rico."

"This is not how I think Dom, if this is a real "game" I certainly do not want to know who plays it or how they procure the goods."

Like I said, The Old Fashion Way. Like street walkers do, same game."

"Game?"

"Steet walkers, sex workers, do not... I don't want to argue about this. I just don't want to hear any more about it".

"Suit yourself man, actually don't, because if you're not on the team you're not getting a custom track jacket. All your other gear like clothes, perfume, makeup, and razors have to be purchased by you. I would suggest some hip padding as well if you expect to pull any interest from behind, if you know what I mean."

"Ok, I kinda know what you mean now. And I want to pretend like I never heard a word about the subject as there is still a part of me that wants to believe that these kind of betting, erh; sporting events do not take place anywhere but horrifyingly bad movies."

"Rico, we've known each other a long time. And I'm not trying to convince to start gambling again man. This is a sure thing. I've done the math. All I'm saying is don't come cryin' to me when I'm rollin' in BucketO'Di#&'s Money and you're watching from the sidelines with green eyes."

"And no track jacket."

"I don't want a track jacket and I don't want to be a part of your Johnson Heist, heavy on my second point."

"I don't know what the penalty is for getting pulled over with a trunk full freshly harvested wieners from the shadowy backstreets but I'm sure it is harsh as it should be".

"Not a trunk load Rico, just a bucket, 5 gallons, fresh. I guess there's a drying factor."

"See, sounds manageable huh? I'm not saying easy, there is a lot of work and carefully calculated moves involved. But it's not impossible. You got to admit that."

"I'll see you next week, maybe."

Rico gently proclaimed as he padded towards the kitchen door and exited.

"Later."

"Think about it."

As Ricardo attempted to drift off to a restful slumber that evening despite his involved reading of his favorite periodicals (Popular Appliance & National Pornagraphic) he could not get his brain to stop firing on whether or not the stuff he saw in bad movies could be true. And if they were how much money did people pay for this sort of thing, and who were "they"? At that he shutters and takes an additional sedative.

-BEEP

Rico awoke to the sound of his answering machine.

"Yo. It's Dom, call me. There have been some interesting developments, in "TheGame."

Sorting his thoughts through the fuzz of beer and medication Ricardo tried his best to recall which parts of the previous evening belonged to real time events and which could be attributed to dreams that may seem real in the first few minutes of his regained consciousness.

When the process was complete, he had ciphered that his wayward pal was probably not wrong about the existence of these "Collectors" and that the possibility of gambling and money being involved should be assumed as well. Dom was not always the provider of information he wanted to hear but was somehow harmonized with these types of underground events.

The uncontrolled interworking of Rico's mind continued as he thought about his outstanding debts and how his thankless intellectually void vocation would never allow him to escape the drudgery that was now his middle-aged life story. Just the thought of the sort of not only violent but acutely cruel and unusual act... or acts that his long time boozy yet peculiarly clever associate was suggesting made him uneasy.

Then the uneasiness turned into questioning.

How hard could it be?

Difficult. Very difficult. But was it impossible? Was this... "game" simply something that took practice. Going to work for hour after thankless mind-numbing hour. That was difficult. Risk. There was Risk yet potential for reward. How much reward?

Ricardo rose up out of bed like a cobra landing both feet on the ground hoping to jolt his mind into a more sensible state with an adequate dose of caffeine. After two- and one-half cups of Joe and approximately the same number of his pharmaceutical of choice he decided against the better judgement of whatever sensible portion of his mind was left to phone his aspiring tally whacker of a pal.

"Yeeees" Dom answered with a honey-dripping tone of calm satisfaction."

"Can't talk on the phone, come back over tonight, same time."

"I might;"Rico reported with some sense of dignity and no I still don't want to hear about it and am not considering the venture in any way in his still early voice.

"I got some Team Names to run by you."

Click

Before the screen door could close behind him Rico heard the rhetoric coming from the other room.

Between some of sausage meat cutting or delivery reference and "Willy Wonka's Hat of Magic Tricksy Di\$&'s" he swiftly interrupted.

"I don't want to hear about "TeamNames."

"Well, what do you want to talk about. There are steps to this sort of thing; planning, time."

"I don't really want to talk about it at all, I'm sorry I ever even heard of it. Real or Not."

"Oh, I can I assure it its real". In fact, I can get you a roster as soon as you fully commit. There are no sign on bonuses but there are some incentives for your first harvest."

"Here's the thing the Dancers from multiple Gentleman's Clubs around town are talking about Unionizing and taking to the streets in Force, at the same time the Drag Queens (and a few Kings) are actively planning to take to the streets with an ever greater force, and they are threatening to go schlop hog on any Collectors they run into out there and take even more bounty."

"Man, we have to strike whilst the iron is still plentiful and before the public has time to react and retract. I don't want to mess this up Rico, the time is meow. If the Beaver Weavers crew comes together like everyone thinks they are gonna there won't be a an unjacked jimmy johnson left to split between us. You should see their logo."

"Now put this on and practice your walk."

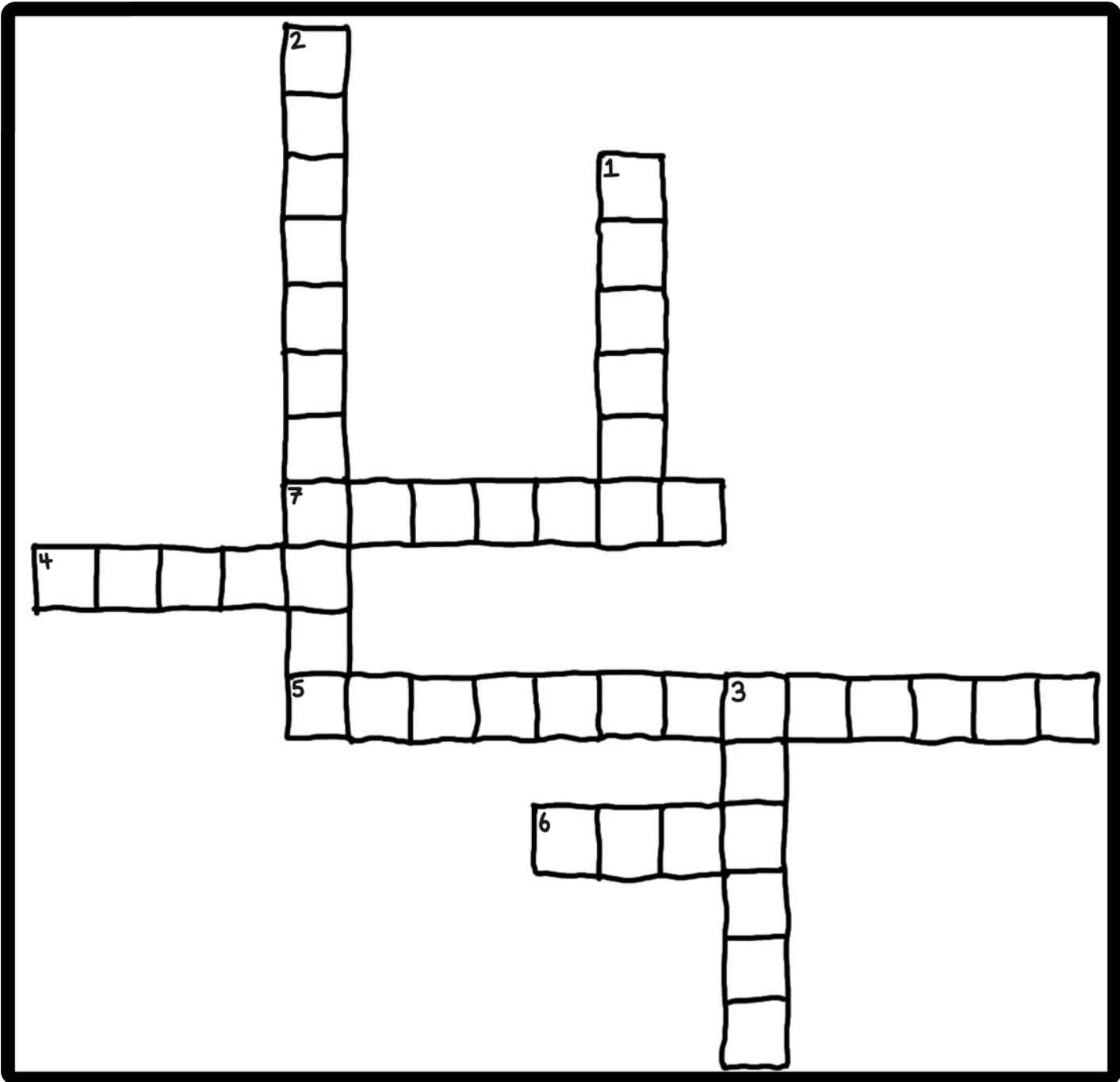
"Curves Silhouetted

She Waits with Sweet Moistened Lips

Her Bucket Half Full."

A crossword for Blu the monkey

created by RIMAN



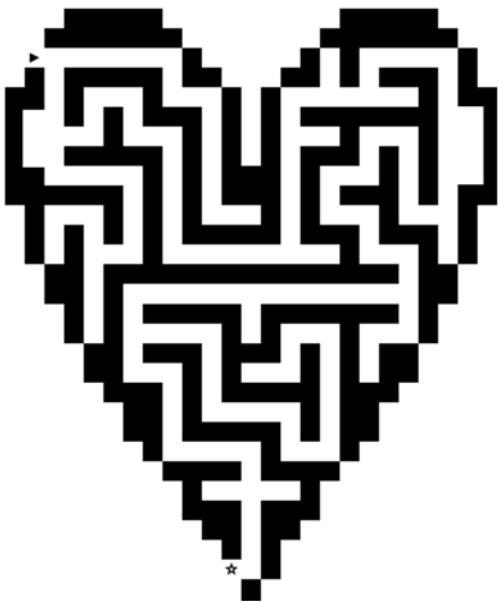
UP AND DOWN

1. LYRICS from Swedish POP band Nic and The Family:
"Hej Hej _____"
2. Elaborate piano with various instruments used to accompany silent films
3. Rap artist featured in the Netflix Show "SUPacell" Soundtrack:
"Wrong way down a one way / Wrong way down a one way."

ACROSS

4. Anri's " _____ Summer"
5. The _____. Hint: (:P)
6. Quote from Dr. William J. Barber in Burial's "Dark Gesthemane":
"We must shock this nation with the power of _____."
7. Santana's first album to top the Billboard 200s in the United States

Heart Maze by Gideon Stuart





EMERALD BROADBAND

FIBER INTERNET

Fiber internet is the most reliable internet on the market. Game harder, work easier, stream smoother, and increase your home value!



CONTACT US
541-363-0260
EMERALDBROADBAND.COM

✓ LOCALLY OWNED

▶ NOW AVAILABLE IN SOUTH UNIVERSITY!

