

ISSUE 33    ISSUE 33    ISSUE 33

SCRIPTUS



TRI-

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## LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Dear beautiful people,

It feels like a broken record to say these are strange times, yet little else is vaguely encompassing enough to do the current state of world justice. Looking back now, a year after the start of the pandemic, it feels simultaneously like the world has turned upside down and nothing much has changed at all. We're back where we were roughly a year ago: at home. Though, nothing would be less true than to say that the world is back where it was a year ago. Protests, conflicts, demands for deep systematic reforms; people taking to the streets and standing up for each other in times when we've had to reshape our ideas of togetherness. All the while, we were struggling with finding balance and maintaining university work in a canceled culture - trading skin for screens and chasing voices through dial tones. Where does that leave our sense of adventure and creativity? How could we not have been affected? How could we do anything but wake up and go to sleep, sometimes nothing in between?

As chairs of Scriptus, we feel the effects and the emotional burden of this year every step of the process. Our first job as a new board was to print the (postponed) issue 32, before we, as a new board, were thrown into creating the issue you are now holding in your hands. We were excited and wanted to provide a source of inspiration, as well as a place for its products, but we were scared as well - scared that people were too exhausted and depleted of inspiration to even think about doing anything else than just get through the year. But, as always, you came through, and the level of creativity all authors and artists brought in has been astounding. Publishing this issue has not been without its troubles, and we've had to be flexible throughout, changing some things here, postponing some deadlines there. As we write this letter, we cannot wait for you, the writers and illustrators, to see your work published, and you, the reader, to see everyone's hard work paid off. Most of all, we are proud of our incredible board, who have been inspiring and downright extraordinary - Sophie, Martina, Dewi and Vero, thank you for your hard work and input, we hope you have enjoyed this wonderful, but exhausting process as much as we have.

Love,





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Foreword to the reader:

The following is a meditation that began with the simple sentence: “We ought not take chairs lightly”. It is by no means definitive and neither is it an argument against anything. I have simply chased down a stream of thoughts beginning with that first statement. In many ways, this is a reflection of my own perspective, so I urge you to read this against your own and perhaps we might come to an accord or, better yet, disagreement. My ultimate hope is that this piece prompts you to visit your own stream and explore it in any direction you so please: down, up, against it or with it, anyway to unshackle your mind from the present and enter a different form of existence altogether, unburdened by sense of time and self.



Shigeo Okamoto 2020

# A MEDIATION ON CHAIRS

BY AYOUB SAMADI

We ought not take chairs lightly. No object is as covertly evil and wicked as the one we always have under our nose. To many, it is but an object, to be simply taken for granted. We use it at home, at our jobs, in our leisure time, and in any hedonistic pleasurable way possible. Yet, the chair is beautifully elegant in terms of its simplicity, broad variety of uses, and efficiency. For over millenia, humans have capitalized on the comfort and convenience of these peculiar objects. While humans have been able to advance to unforeseen heights in terms of technology and culture, we so often forget that most of this history has been done off the support of chairs. Decision makers come up with their plans whilst sitting on a chair, Scientists, philosophers, and researchers have all sat down to ponder at some point or another—family arguments, business negotiations, sex, and eating. These are but some of all the human activities that are shaped, to some degree or another, by the chair. In this way, we can say that all of contemporary human society has been built on chairs.

However, we never question or challenge the nature of chairs in any way. Whilst they catalyze virtuous human development, we must not forget that it is upon these same chairs that despots throughout history have been able to contemplate wicked plans and strategies. Scriptures have been written and people killed in their name, all as a result of some ordinary folks sitting. Not only do chairs create the possibility for this wickedness, they also defy basic human physiology. Our bipedal organism is not meant for a sedentary lifestyle. The human's foremost corporal inclination is to move, from place to place, consistently chasing a boundless horizon. Yet, as their influence grew over time, chairs have been able to make society increasingly complacent. That is, our boundless mind is now forced to marry the chair lifestyle which has done anything but make us move. We have become sedentary, comfort-driven beings who crave the convenience and safety associated with the aforementioned chair lifestyle. In a sense, we have submitted to the chair, and in doing so, killed off a very vital part of what makes us human.

To reclaim human providence and restore our agency, we ought to quit chairs altogether, dispensing with our newly adopted inclination to create something to sit on. The chimp or the ape or the gorilla does not require an elevated surface upon which to relax his buttocks. The chair itself is the embodiment of the narcissistic human enterprise to flee from the ground. Our own egoism has engendered a shunning—of the first degree—of our primordial, primeval existence. The chimp or the ape or the gorilla sees no problem with laying in and even rolling on the face of the earth. They do not perceive this as any different from sitting on a rock, a tree or a log. Whereas humans might draw distinctions between the mind, body, and the environment, the chimp or the ape or the gorilla is simply oblivious to such feeble categorizations. This is not due to their inferior capacity for intellectual reflection, as the 'modest' human would have it; rather, it is an attestation to the beauty of remaining true to one's nature.

The chimps and the apes and the gorillas forgo any distancing between themselves and the earth. To them, everything is as much a chair as everything isn't. A rock or a tree or a log are simply but different variations of the same thing: the universe. While an orangutan might be inclined to use the chair in the same manner we do, he does not allow it to define him. Unlike our ape cousins, we walk through the environment with our minds rather than our bodies. This distinction should not be made in the first place. After all, the chair is but a concept, an idea created by the human mind to consolidate our status as



the rulers of the evolutionary hill. In sitting down on a chair we are, whether we know it or not, patting ourselves on the back. The chair is a grandiose celebration of the distance we've travelled from our primitive nature so far and, in indulging it, we have effectively blinded ourselves. The most pernicious effect of casting such a dye is the illusion that our minds, thoughts, and feelings are effectively separated from the physical realm. In this way, the chair creates a specific space where the mind strays away from the body. We sit with our body, but wander with our mind. Rather than experiencing and feeling the chair, we artificialize our presence through thoughts and come up with ideas not through ingenuity, but boredom.

As a result, there are two types of human progress. That born out of a primordial, instinctive, need to survive, and that out of boredom. The ancient Mesopotamian farmer built irrigation canals and developed agricultural tools as a means of feeding his family. On the other hand, the Greek philosopher sat on a chair and drew thoughts from the universe by virtue of natural boredom associated with a dichotic existence defined by the struggle to maintain a balance between the physical present and the mind. Since we all presumably exist, then we must all be philosophers. The term "armchair philosopher" contains in itself much intrigue. To suppose that a person can only be deemed a philosopher if they have sat on the right succession of chairs is as silly and disingenuous as it sounds. We bite our thumbs at those who have sat on different chairs than us, failing to see the inherent narcissism in such an action. However, if we were to return to the Mesopotamian farmer, we will find that he, too, is a philosopher inasmuch as he is able to access the same plane of thought as the Greek philosopher. Indeed, they do so through different entryways: the former through necessity and the latter through boredom—but both entail the involvement of at least one chair.

Whether it be around a dining table or a secluded room dedicated to the pursuit of thought, crossing paths with a chair is ultimately inevitable. We perceive our appointment with the chair as a choice belonging to us. But we are simply pathetically wrong. It is once again, part of who we are—or better yet—who we have become. Indeed, the chair exists. We perceive it as an extension of the environment and an inanimate object with no needs, voice, or agency, existing only to serve our own selfish demands. But you see, it is in this way that the chair has trumped us. It is not an inanimate, voiceless object that lacks agency. If anything, the chair speaks louder than any single individual ever could. Fundamentally, the chair is an idea, a simple product of entropy. It exists in its own realm, alongside plates, spoons, democracy, see-saws, doors, and Marxism. In sitting on a chair, we are quite literally sitting on an idea. Everything already exists, we simply pick the things which we think will bear most fruit. What is special about the chair is that it is, more than anything else, an entryway into this plane. We sit and think.. sit and think.. Yet, if we are to use the chair's door, we must not forget that we are subject to its rules. Humans often fall into its trap and lose themselves within this realm of thoughts, alienating us from our true nature, to exist and be at peace with our reality: the present. Above all, there should be no rift between the present and thoughts, rather these two exist as a complementary pair. As beings we ought to venerate our ability to freely traverse between both realms and not get too ahead of ourselves as there are other places to which our entry is forbidden. Let not the chair redefine who we are but rather, approach it with cognizant wariness. Or we can stand up, flip the table over, kick the chair away, rip off our garments, and scream in celebration of the absolute meaningless arbitrariness of it all.

Yet, as I sit here, writing this piece on my chair, I realize that I too have fallen for the chair's enchantment. The hours have passed and the light has gone and given way to the darkness without my noticing. In the chair's world, the illusions of time and self do not exist. Perhaps, that is why we find it so inescapably enticing.

-Written by a friendly table.

# LOSS

BY DEWI KOPP



I just need a hug, a squeeze in my hand  
I just want to see my family and my friends  
because I want to have seen them before it all ends  
before they are gone and leave a hole  
in my existence, which will never be whole  
again. A gaping void for me to fill  
with useless material and senseless thrill  
to erase the absence but to not forget  
that their presence were a comfort and to have said  
that I have lived and loved with them without regret  
but until then I shall be careful because closeness  
is dangerous and it comes with stress  
to not be the person that has caused  
holes in their relations and has paused  
their life to fill up the lost adoration of those  
that they have loved the most.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARTA CECCARELLI

# A PART

BY JOOSJE HOLSTEIN

water drops on my toenails  
a sprout grows out of the shower drain  
it is all pale

piano trio music in the living room  
the suede lining of notes

and I will leave this town  
and the birthmarks of my lover  
an old oak  
words in pencil on the wall  
the bed I was born in

and I will leave my hands  
on his piano







**ILLUSTRATION BY JULIA MARINISSEN**

Autumn is a story  
Of mothers dropping their own  
Children as pinched off limbs  
Off their far and broad  
Reaching arms

Saving themselves first  
(As they recommend on airplanes)

People seem in awe  
Of these flake felonies  
As if the mothers, not the children  
Were martyrs

But after this the air  
Starts to mourn

For three months  
Nobody cries, the clouds are silent  
People start to understand  
But it is too late now  
Whirling children never whirl back

# AUTUMN IS A STORY

# CIRCUS TRICKS

BY STELA VETA

the smell of burning tires  
engraved in my hair  
my lungs are aching  
but I quickly get used to this  
I have never felt more anxious  
walking these streets  
bleeding nails and shorter breaths  
with every step I take

what would you say if I saw you?

blood rushing  
tighter fists  
I pass by the abandoned factory  
the marbled ground and music hall  
I pass by the house where we all wasted  
every scorching hour of July  
sleepless nights filled with laughter and games  
music and dance

if only I realized  
this was a small circus  
of toxic tricks played  
I would have run earlier  
wish I never stayed



COLLAGE BY DEWI KOPP



**SIMPLE**

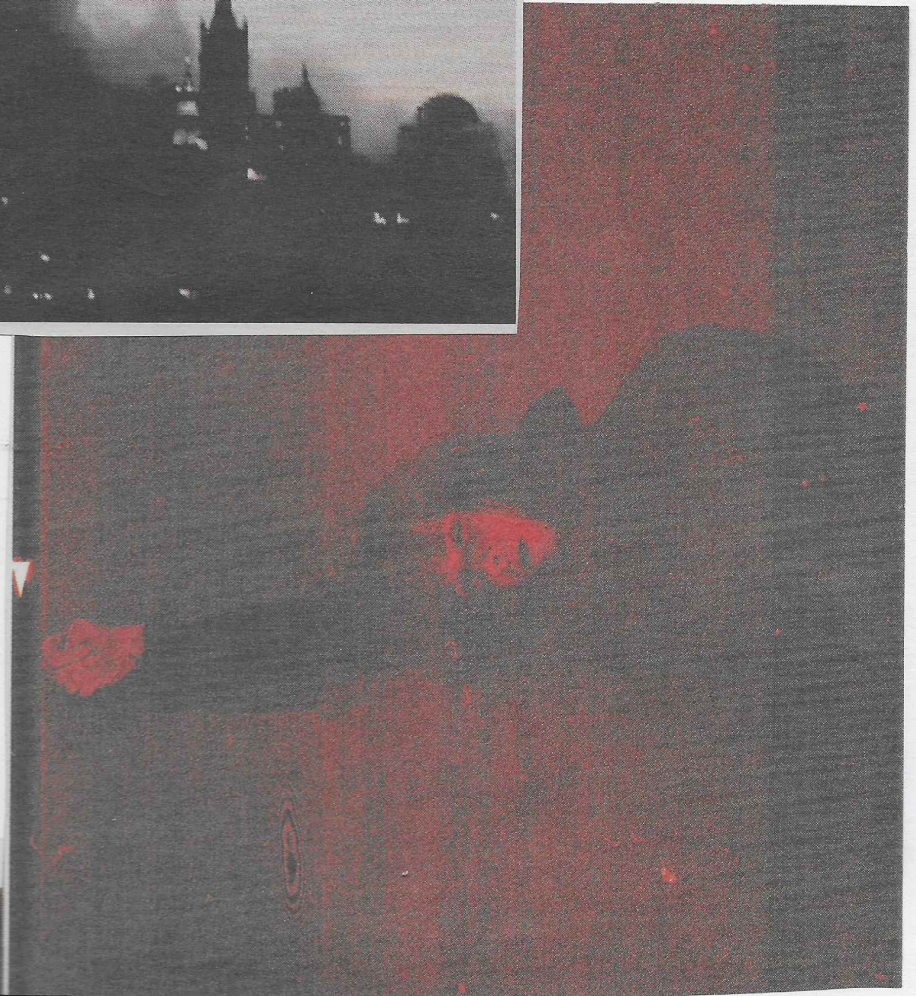
**SIMPLE**

**SIMPLE**



**SIMPLE**

**SIMPLE**



**SIMPLE**

**SIMPLE THINGS**



# AZURE DRAGON WITH SILVER FEATHERS

BY ANNA SÁRA RUMI

We emerged from within the roaring waves. The sea was unusually restless and mysterious that night, but we all felt an inexplicable calmness - a solid certainty unifying us against the wild nature. The ten of us, strong and confident, walking to the shore, to the unknown that was at the same time familiar, a shelter hidden in the last corner of our world. That house was waiting for us. It was built for us and no one else. There were no locks, not even doors. We saw how the heavy curtains were moved by the impertinent wind, almost like they were all taking part in a foreign and delicate dance.

We entered, one by one, as we were taught: always stay in an orderly line! Neat, tidy, intelligent sheep. Dinner was prepared, waiting for the hungry, the table elegantly decked, dishes still steaming hot, the smell of nutmeg, anise and sugar coated strawberries lingering everywhere. Our stomachs rumbled at the exact same moment, as if someone had orchestrated the sound. There is something magical about sitting around a robust wooden table. We all used the forks, but not the knives, because we were taught those are dangerous: Satan's toys, deceitful friends, forbidden desires. We relish sweetness, but detest spice. We adore a warm meal, but despise anything that is too hot. Look out, don't burn yourselves, kids! After dinner we all sat on the sofa, reminiscing about the good old days, while beginning to accept the premises of our new life. There was not much, almost nothing, to complain about. All very familiar, dare we say, familial. Tidy, neat and safe. The temperature was pleasant, the beds seemed quite comfortable. There was something to eat and drink. We all had to be satisfied, what else could we long for?

He said it first: "I saw a purple bird with three pairs of wings. It flew into the kitchen, rested on the counter and then left after three minutes with a disappointed look on its face." Our hearts stopped beating for a second. How dare he? This is the kind of "Crazy Talk" they all warned us about. He is going insane, this is what we all thought, but never said it out loud. Let's just wait for him to slip up once more and then bye-bye, they'll come for him and he will be gone at the crack of dawn. Purple bird with three pairs of wings. Nonsense.

She stood up a few minutes later and confidently declared: "I saw a green mouse and it had wings. Only one pair, but it could fly." These two are trying to destroy us! Crazy Talk. He had somehow convinced her to join the evil agenda of deception. No surprise she gave in, we thought. She was always the weakest link in the chain. We were still smiling, because ten minus two is eight. Eight is better than two, isn't it? Then it came. Azure with silver feathers that seemed as soft as silk. Quicker than a purple bird or a green mouse. "I saw a dragon. It was the most beautiful creature I have ever laid my eyes on. Azure with silver feathers that were as soft as silk. Majestic animal, it flew across the living room", I shouted, no, I

screamed on the top of my lungs. They looked at me with a deep dismay in their eyes. They all looked at me, even purple bird and green mouse. I suddenly saw myself reflected in the darkness of their pupils. Standing up, screaming, swinging my arms in the air, pointing at the direction where I've just seen the creature fly by. They did not even turn their heads, because those who misbehave do not deserve attention. Rule number one: paying attention to those who express difference of opinion encourages the dangerous ideas that led the individual to an engagement with Crazy Talk. Do not engage!

They all stayed put, sitting on the sofa with straight backs and their hands on their laps. I walked out the doorless door, all by myself, straight into the dark blue sea.

I emerged from within the roaring waves. The sea seemed more threatening than ever before but I was fierce and brave and strong. Walking to the shore with three unusual flying creatures above my head I saw a city of rusty old houses, of rambunctious noise, of chaos and malice. No one was waiting for me. Once I reached the mainland, I realized I was starving. My body sent a clear sign by making my stomach rumble. I sat down in a cheap restaurant, where the tables were made out of plastic, the dishes were only lukewarm and all flavours were suppressed by tanginess. I picked up the fork, then the knife: dangerous, Satan's toys, deceitful friends, forbidden desires. I could not stop laughing. When walking around at twilight, my dragon's feathers were glowing in the dark and all the people were looking out their windows, gazing at it with awe.



**ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE HOLLANDER**

# SEASONS

## FALL

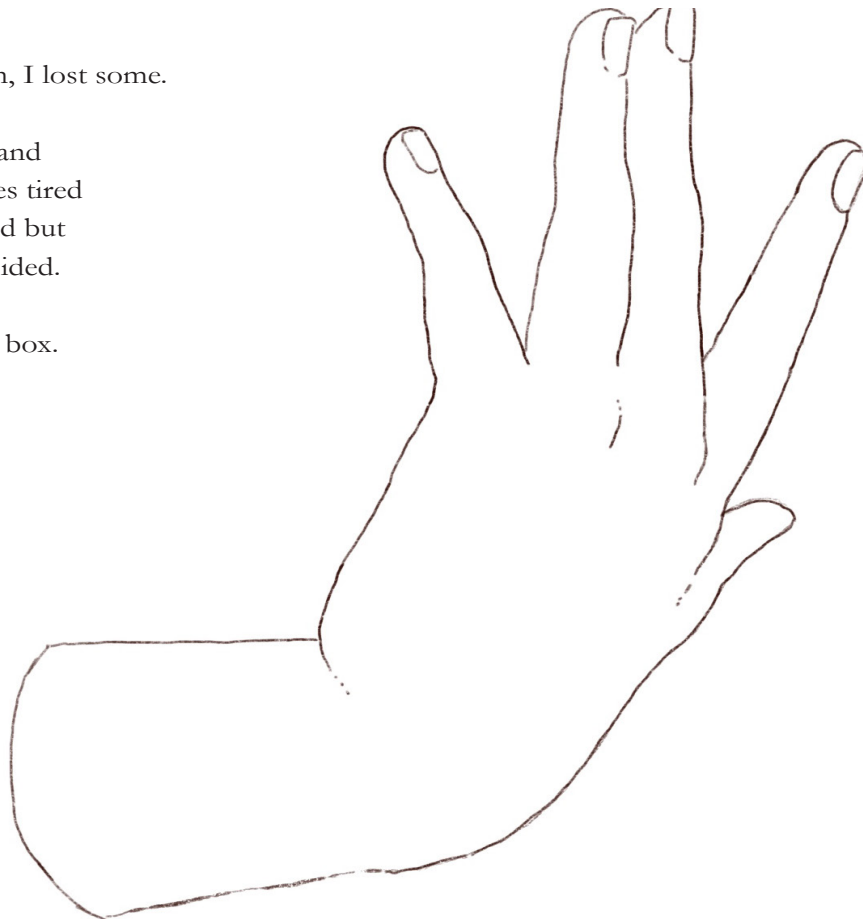
my hair I kept tied  
strands tucked and  
ordered, loosely, I tried  
to walk lightly  
no, quietly  
and I said yes and sometimes no thanks and you too  
but I wondered then if there was a place for my other vocabulary.

my words I kept to myself, mostly,  
or on a page  
but I wondered if there was another space for them waiting.  
my smiles I kept on the outside they  
didn't always find the way home  
alone I tried to be gentle  
tuck them back into my chest  
to rest for the night

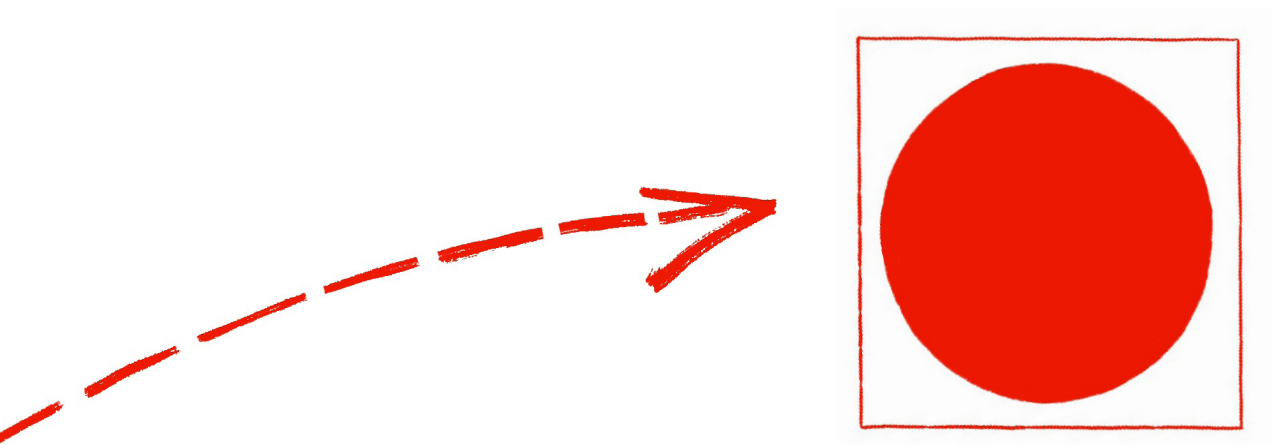
but they often fell down, I lost some.

still my hair I kept tied and  
my voice tidy, sometimes tired  
my coat never fully dried but  
still the rain I never avoided.

my sunshine I kept in a box.







# WINTER

Stacks of paper told me to keep quiet and ask no questions  
and I accepted to let them order me around like that.

It got crowded in my head and less  
coherent

as I assessed the gathering of strange subjects strung together like the guests of an afternoon  
party, arranged awkwardly,  
thoughts were not introducing themselves to each other but  
barely coexisted.

From a distance I recall that winter was arriving  
but without distance that was called

it's getting darker earlier and days shorter and time compressed and time lost and weeks liquid  
and nights brief but  
more comatose.

Sometimes I rose from  
my homecave's embracing illusion of safety.

I remember my head did not hold too many  
filing spaces, so the  
shelves  
felt  
overflowing.

Papers throwing themselves into each other  
like they enjoyed  
some chaos.

Slowly I started avoiding the rain.

**ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE HOLLANDER**



# SPRING

It was March when I noticed  
that I was still picking up scratches of paper from  
a winterstorm.

Dew came to dissolve frozen thoughts when a hand cold from morning wind took my  
torn fingers to  
dig  
into  
earth  
again.

Bending the soil I recalled.

With still crusty eyelids I noticed how days felt less dusty, noticed how people walked and  
how their laundry smelled, and noticed how I noticed how they talked.  
And how for the first time I  
cared to clean my windows.

The windblows were still caught in memories of snow  
and my strands were tangling longer,  
less lightly called beneath hats.  
In the dark, still all birds looked like bats,  
but they now started showing up  
for the sunlight again.

Passing by strangers and smiling with two mouths and four eyes  
I decided to unpack  
the knotted strings of hope.

# SUMMER

Eventually-

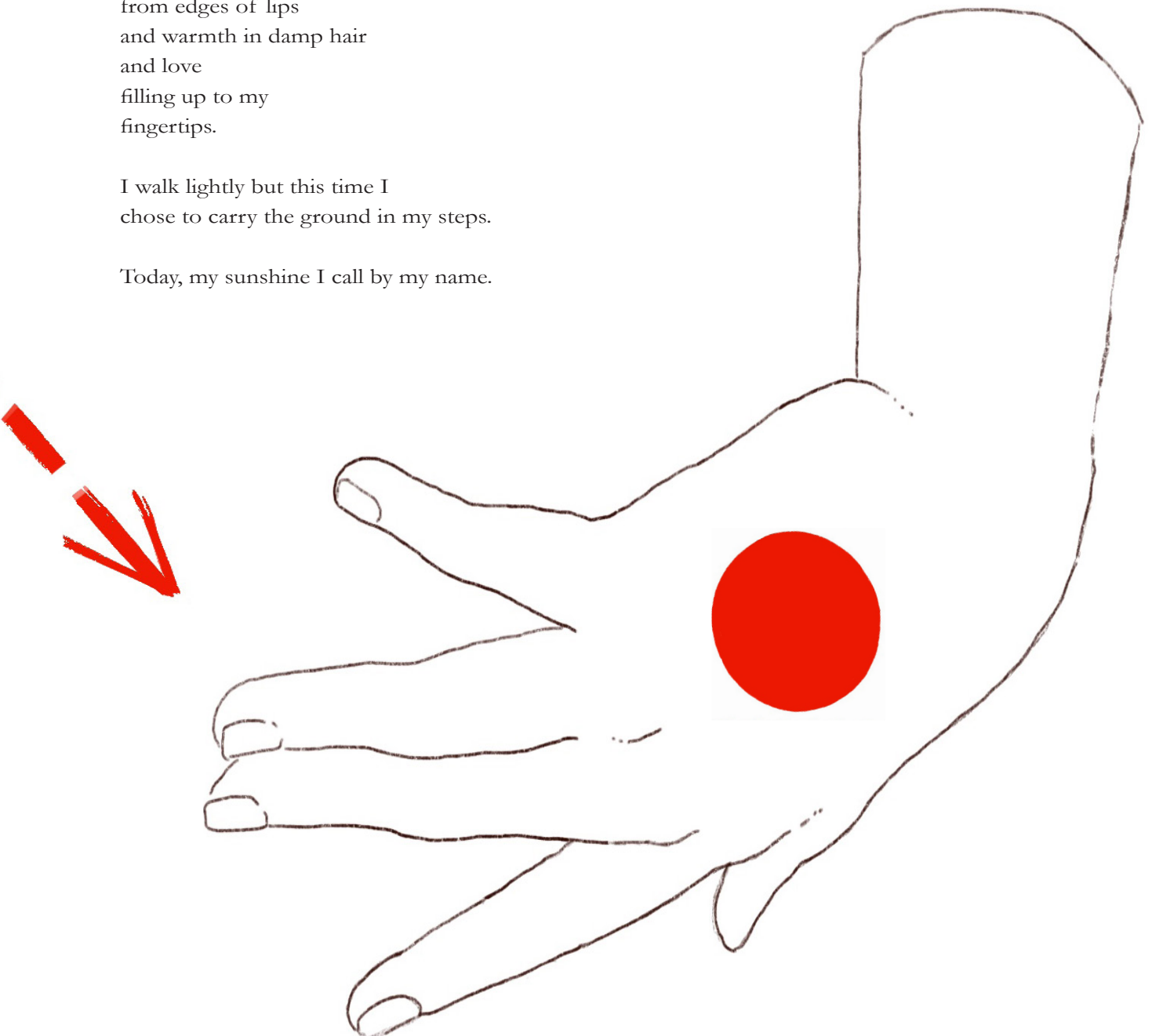
.

My face I point to the sun as  
threads stroke pale cheeks  
I had craved this for weeks, or has it  
been longer, old knittings and knots come unravelled, undone,  
that have been tangling stronger inside my chest  
this year.

A tired mind, longing for rest, is  
releasing, radiating as  
a smile cracks  
from edges of lips  
and warmth in damp hair  
and love  
filling up to my  
fingertips.

I walk lightly but this time I  
chose to carry the ground in my steps.

Today, my sunshine I call by my name.



Where would you anchor a story exploring the peculiarities of human relationships?

cigarettes help me deal with the unbearable (lightness of being? no) nuggets of truth poking out of the lines of text I consume not quite letting them become images in the cinema of my mind. Putting a pen to an empty piece of paper also feels more deliberate when my middle and index finger are occupied by a cylinder of tobacco packed tightly into a piece of slightly translucent white paper. The taste of smoke reminds me of the taste of raspberry vodka passed around a crowded balcony accompanied by shallow disputes on the nature of polish theater and female representation and crosses and god. The apartment holds many memories of drunken evenings huddled around an unstable glass table you can't really lean against which encourages leaning on other people or holding your knee enveloped in your arms, for unsobber support. The tiny kitchen has a string of red fairy lights strung over it which produce an intimate glow on the faces of your interlocutors. and fellow smokers, and alcoholics. the lack of a working speaker forms a severe contrast with the thousands of cds lining the walls arranged in an intricate system of meaning understood only, or mostly, by your ex's father who is a well-known music journalist working for a, now infamous, radio station. a glass bowl amplifying the sound of a phone speaker serves as a music box. the conversation swims around our minds and words fall in waterfalls and we gasp at the sounds of music we play and want others to feel what we feel and we want to explain what we feel but also sometimes the haze of phrases being uttered does not amount to much more than a fog which conceals time two hours back and twelve ahead and only brushes of skin against skin or a hand on the shoulder gripping, curiously remain. we communicate in ways of stares and looks and touches. the red light on the faces around me brings out the strange imperfections and marks which I have not seen before. I see parted lips, drawn brows, wrinkled noses, tongues and teeth, half closed eyes with one eyelid lower than the other.

the kitchen smells like cigarettes and spilled liquor, it's sticky and cold, but feels safer than the rushing world four floors below that does not care for our nightly escapades and lucid dreams soaked in alcohol and veiled by smoke. leaving is not an option we are ready to consider and you ask if I would be down to cuddle a while longer and I say that indeed that would be nice, and you light a straight and half way through realize that it just makes you feel the sickness of the previous hours and you offer me a drag and I take it and stand in the balcony window facing the wind and hoping for a blow of sobriety and you put your hands on my shoulders and it feels good and I lean back against you and you wrap your arms around me and hold me and the wind continues blowing. this is the part where I wish I had more curiosity more life exploring drive and passion that would turn my neck and face my face up against your face and taste the green tea on your lips and feel your stubble up against my cheek and brush my nose against your nose and nuzzle my face into the curve of your neck or explore the shape of your head and the mix of textures where your stubble ends and your hair begins and your hair is still a bit wet after the shower and the breeze makes it seem colder and we go to bed and you lie down beside me and trace your fingers down the side of my body and it tickles in a way that makes my lips part and blow some air out in a quiet gasp, you pull me closer and then you are on top of me looking into my wide open eyes staring back up at you and not closing when you lower down and kiss me and I feel your teeth on my lip and my lack of engagement moves you down and you kiss my neck and oh god please don't stop and then you stop and roll away and look at me and ask, "have you ever had sex before?" I say I have not and ask if it was that obvious and that I didn't really expect that this is what cuddling meant. you laugh and I hug you and nuzzle into the side of your body.

we scavenged your ex's kitchen in order to find something to eat. we shared a tomato which we cut in half, sprinkled with some salt and pepper and then ate quickly to avoid juice seeping down our chins onto our yesterday's shirts. you managed, I failed and fell onto the counter laughing. I said it feels nice to lean on something, and you just laughed a little because I was in a suggestively bent over position, and I laughed with you because I was too tired to worry about feeling embarrassed.

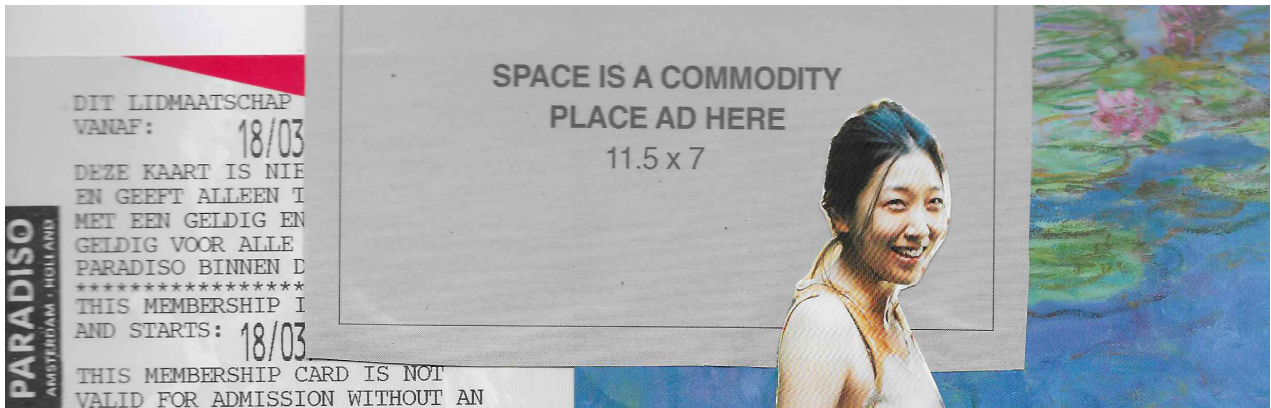


**ILLUSTRATION BY CHIARA MANCHINI**



# THE FIRST TRIAD

BY MIRANDA FAUL



There's too much of you in me;  
It's murky here, unclean.  
You echo out in my silence,  
your fear edges off what I've carefully rounded.

There are three of us here,  
but somehow it's more lonely than solitude;  
You, two unwanted guests,  
all others at a careful distance,  
your inability to let people in being another piece of you in me.

Is it to always be this heavy,  
being the one you made,  
the only one you let know you,  
the only one to see the depth and dark of your pain?  
What am I supposed to do with it?

It is too much;  
I am drowning.

I try to cut you off, to unzip you,  
but it is futile;  
your blood is in my veins,  
your trauma in my character,  
your pain on my mind,  
my pain stemming from the idea of you needing me,  
or not, but alone,  
drowning too.

COLLAGE BY DEWI KOPP

And so I carry you,  
Clinging to the idea that I can be free of you if I let you in,  
If I make space for the piece of me that is irrevocably yours,  
If I can learn to do so without all of this pain.

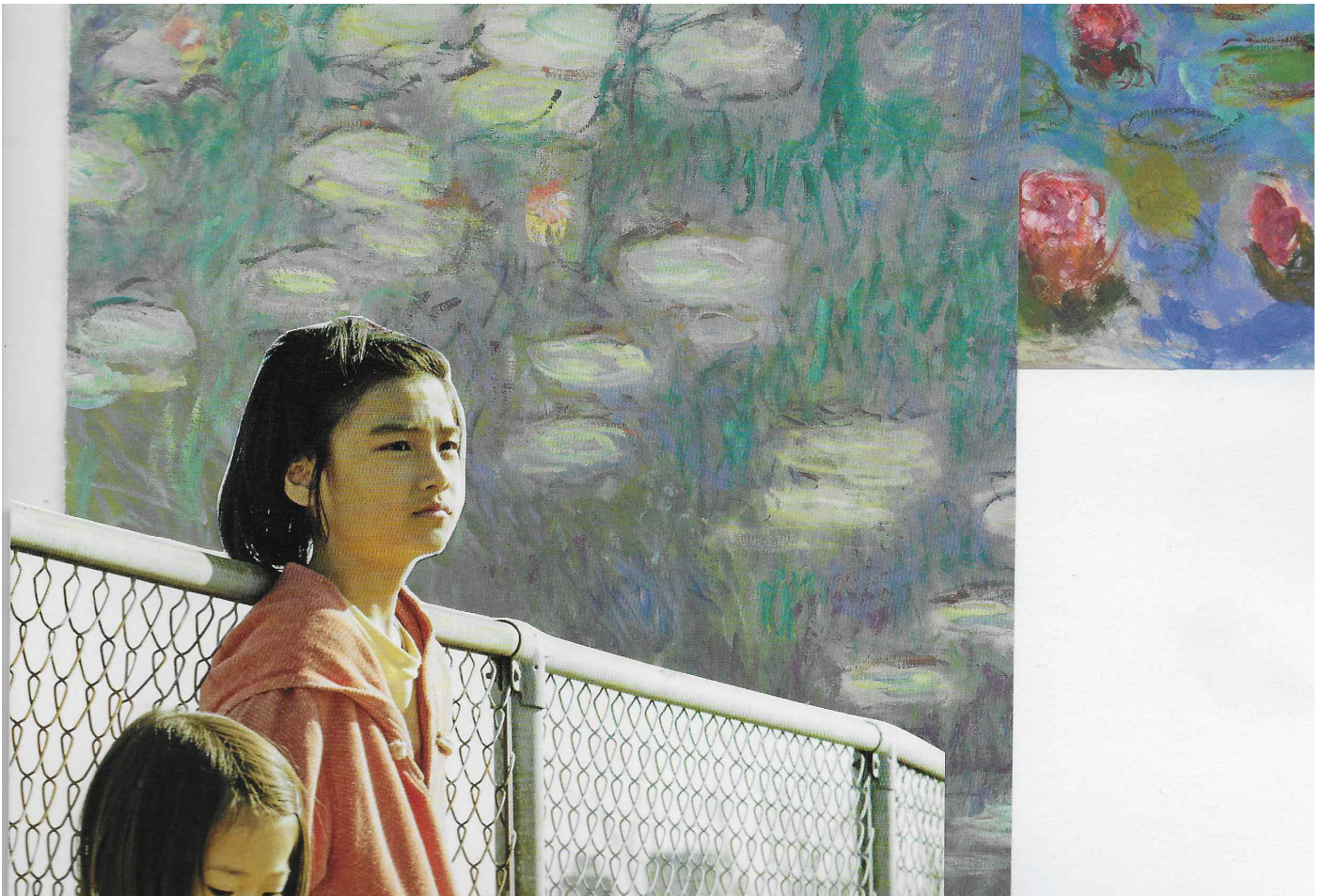
I am not there yet.

But, then again,  
I was once in your arms,  
your physical grip.

Now I am here;  
and this air, though murky, has its own beauty.  
At times I lose you in it,  
at times it stills and colours,  
approaches  
Clarity.

And you, for all your faults,  
have never made me feel unloved.

Colour and pain, trauma and love  
is what I have now,  
and for now,  
is enough.

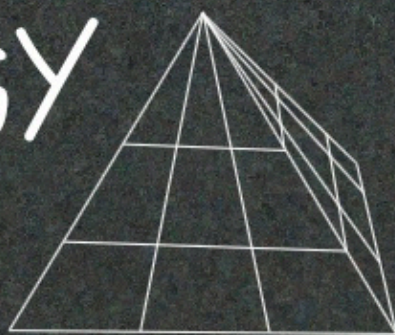
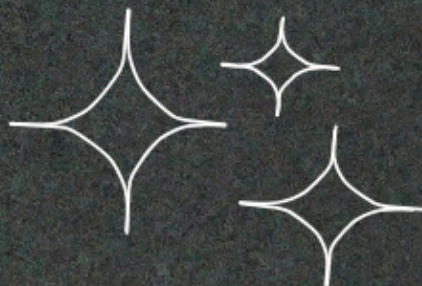




# A MALL OF



ASTROLOGY



HOW MANY TRIANGLES  
DO YOU SEE  
?



3π



HAPPY

WHEELS

@culturaldopehead



PICTURE ME ROLLIN'



TRIPPY



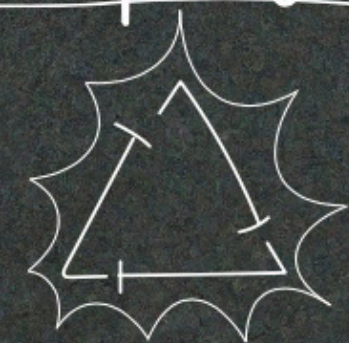
SKATEBALL BEAT





## How To Shoot <sup>triple</sup> Double Exposures On Film

1. Plan your shoot
2. Aim for focus
3. Shoot full clip
4. Reload same roll
5. Shoot again!
6. Develop film

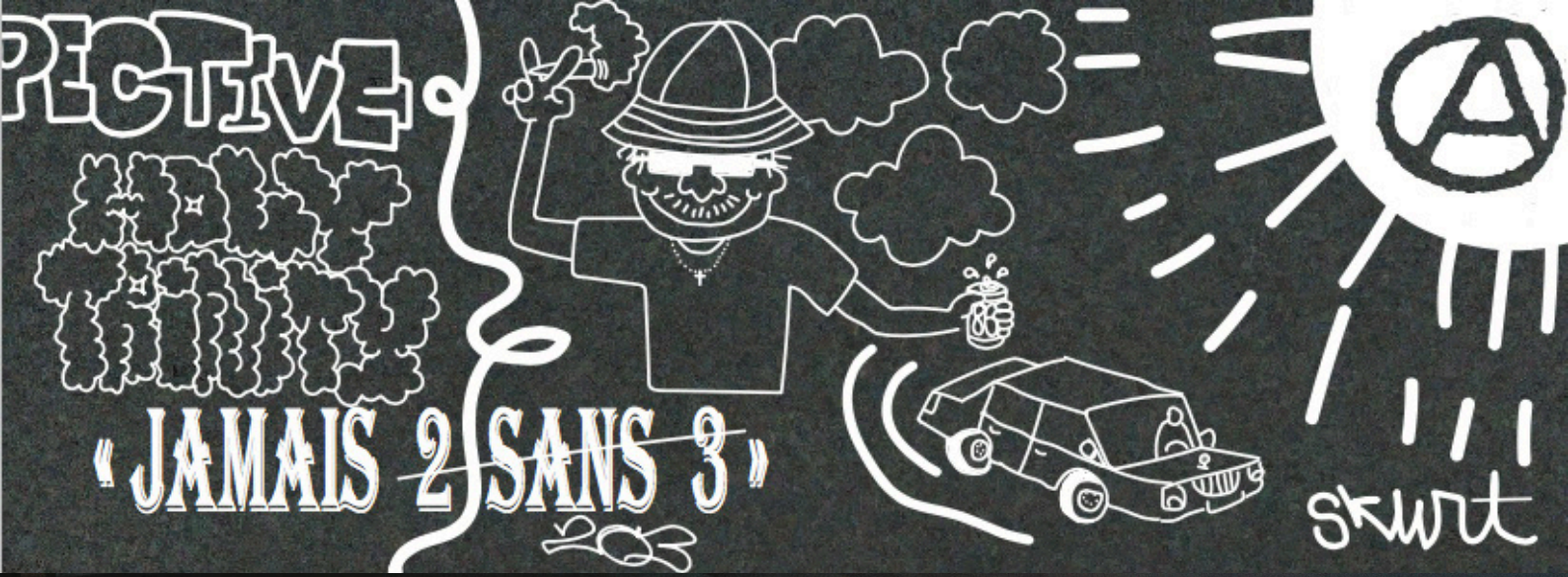


$$1+1+1=\dots$$

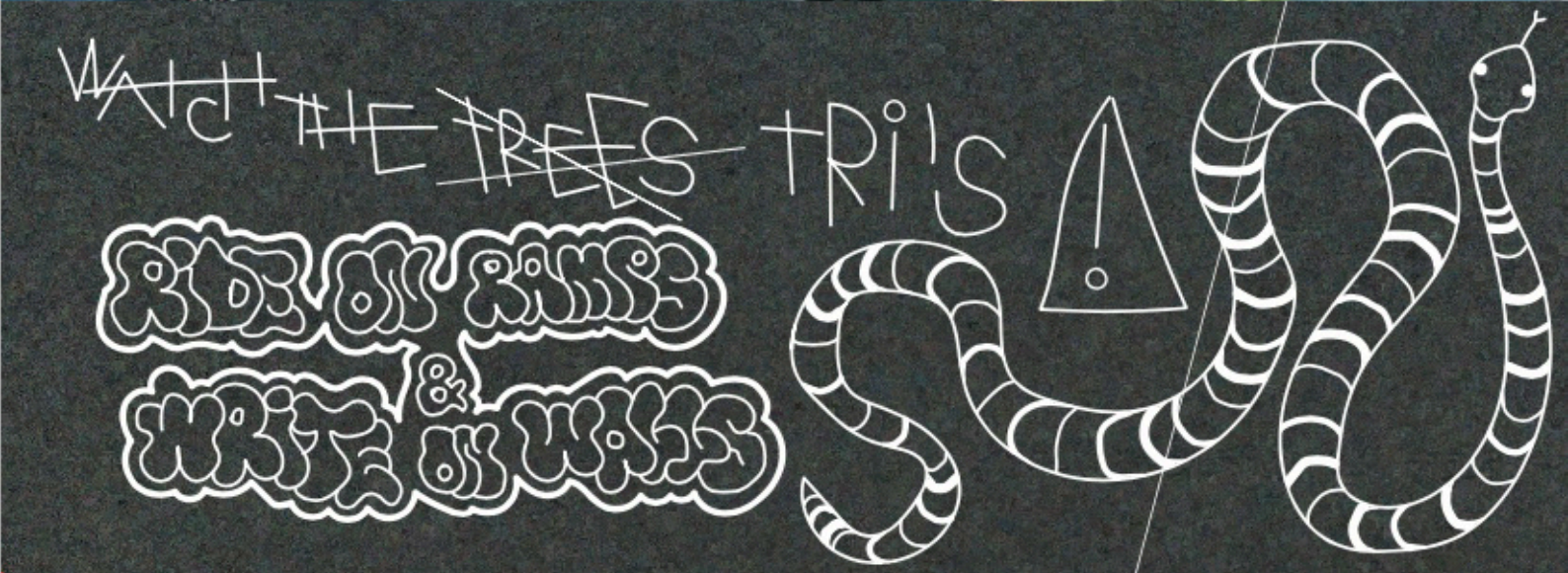
"Believe  
in yourself  
Because  
you are  
one Hell of a  
G O D!"



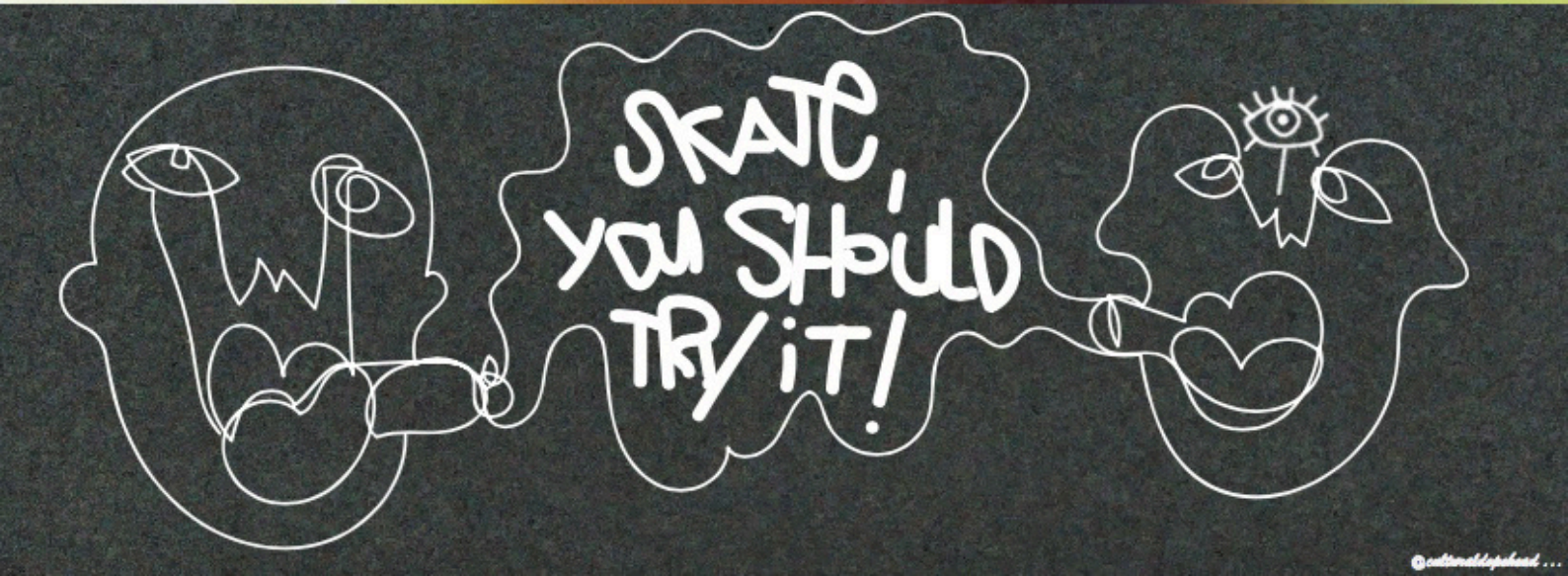














# TEMAZCAL

BY DEWI KOPP

The heat is infiltrating my brain. The space is endless in its invisible darkness, where breath and steam become one, like we become one in our crouched connection, confining the body and mind through all the senses. Gusts of light separate periods of cinching heat. Only the advancing night gives us solace.

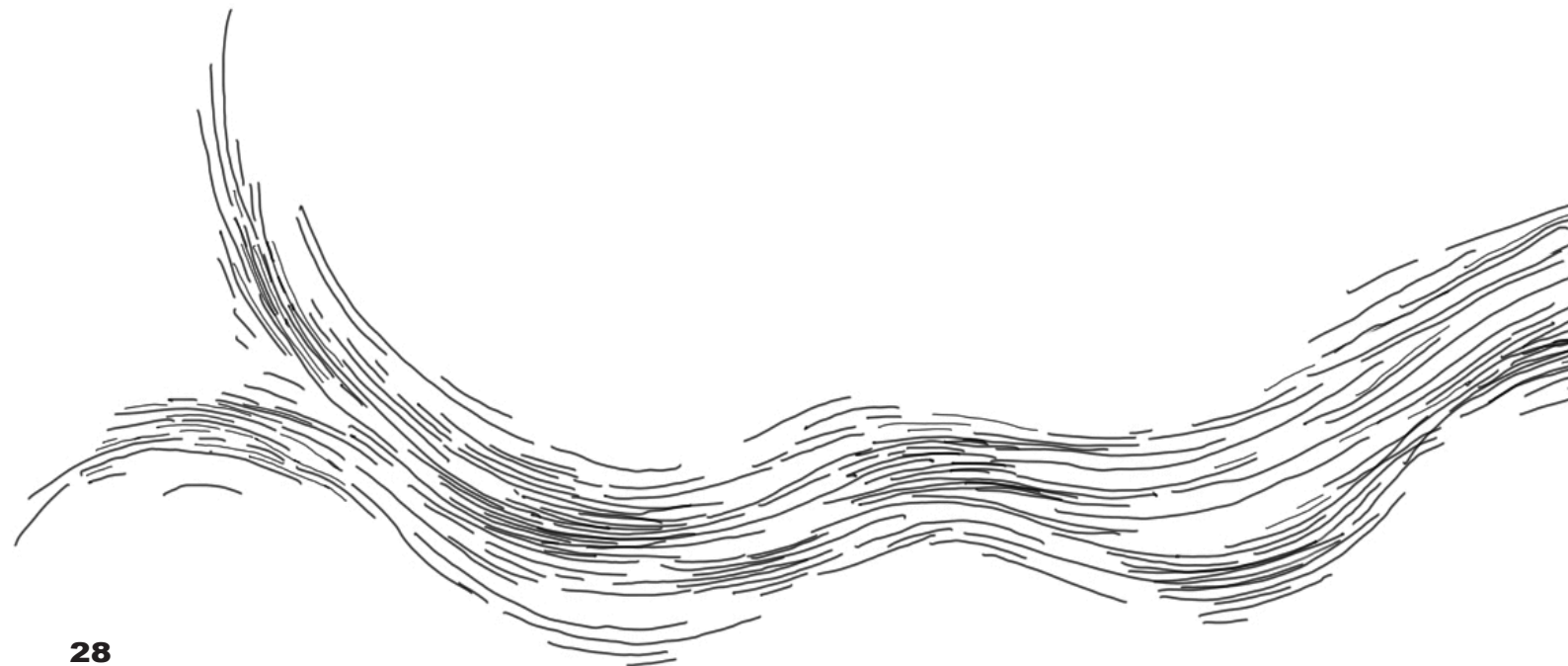
“Fuck, I need to escape!” “You will feel like dying but it will feel so good!” “How long will this take!?” Thoughts and chanting comfort, but what about the physical boundaries of the body and can you take advice from people you barely know, travellers, stoners, alcoholics, thieves, all unknown in an unknown country, where politicians and the innocent end up in mass graves.

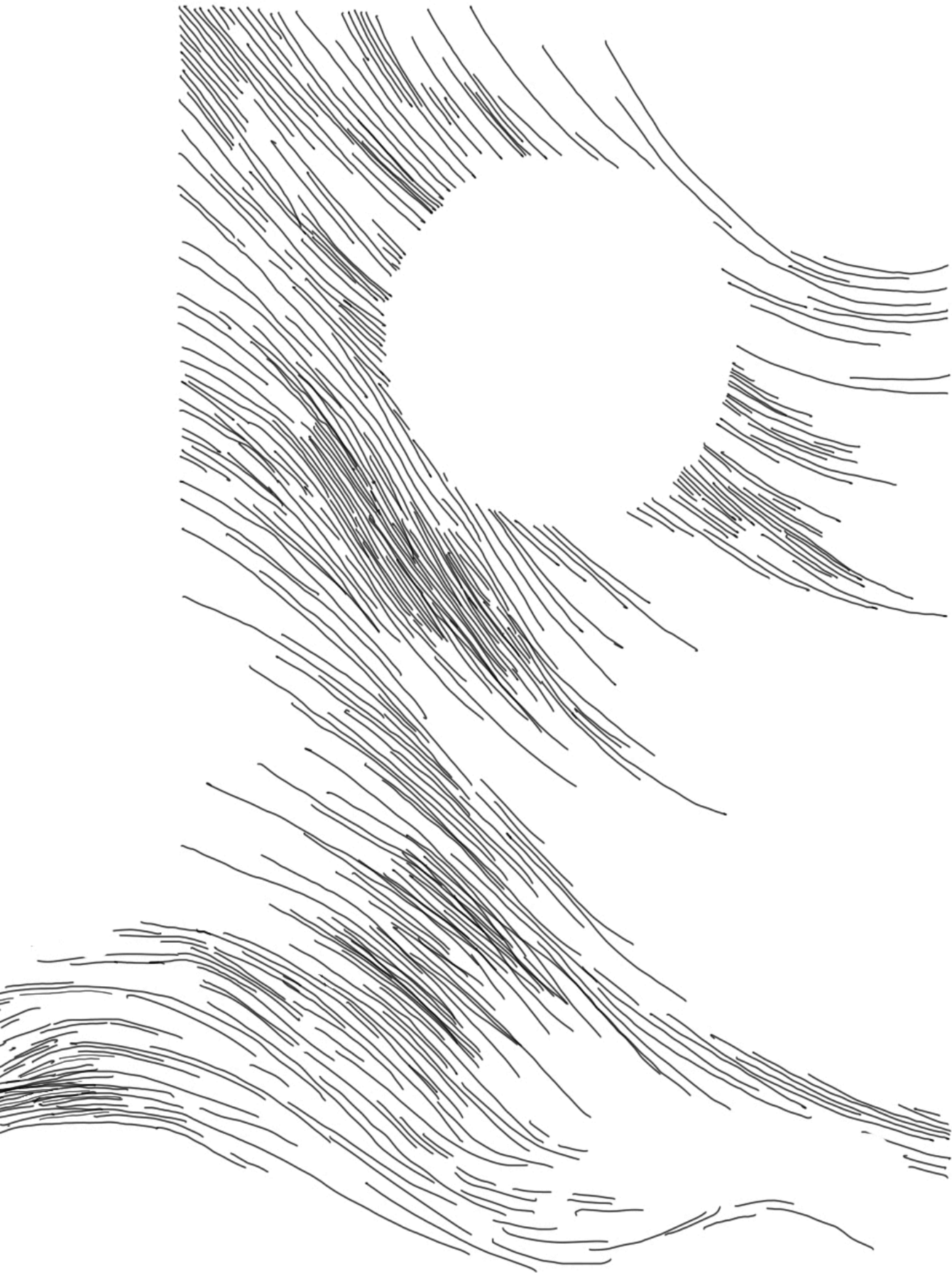
These are the ways to find the truth. One has to do with finding an experience of fear. The fear becomes the encompassing truth. It is the heart pains of scared and sacred humans, who find out their worst nightmares, who find themselves fazed by the death of their significant others. Those pains will turn into crawling spiders, running over and through the body, spinning their webs of wisdom.

I will always remember the curves of this cleansing, where the sweat slipped from our heads over our burning red backs to drop from our flimsy swimming wear to the cold hard ground, and the sizzling sound of water on coal. What I want is the temperature of this water to decrease – cold shower to ocean waves to beer in my throat.

I feel like all my sins have slipped off: a soft held limb that squeezes out a wet towel and then shaking of the excess, relieving the cloth of its duty. My relief from confinement. A sense of freedom encapsulates me, now the night has come with its open obscurity.

While the experience evaporates, questions condense in my mind. They say they take back their culture. I take in theirs. Have I sinned in sharing?











C

**BY COSTANZA SFAMENI**

I live on hold.

The undisturbed beating of the drum  
encaged in my chest  
is altered by the thought of you.

I pace. Back and forth.  
Pondering.  
Alone.  
In this room crowded by emptiness  
I cherish the words  
that describe the rhythm of the clouds.

I stare at the noble creatures of the sky  
which remain pending in air.  
Frozen.

Naked,  
even when clothed with glimmering garments,  
wrinkled by my sleep  
and scarred by a perpetual duality: that of the nightingale.

A nightingale who's free, strong and wild  
while enclosed by these golden bars.  
I try to sing.

You.  
A desert's flower  
a poetic, musical silence.

A northern light,  
You  
the missing piece of my puzzle.



**ILLUSTRATION BY ILLIANA SOMOROFF**

# A LESSON ON

**BY AYOUB SAMADI**

As far as I can remember, I've always been quite good at improvising. Whether it be school assignments, important tasks, chores, or food, I always manage to somehow find the suitable solution. While it might seem that improvisation can only be afforded by a thorough expertise in whatever it is you are doing, the fact of the matter is that improvisation is an art in itself. Throughout my school years, I've always had the same mentality "Work in advance. If not, improvise", and I must say that everything turned out to be not as bad as you might think. In essence, improvisation offers a reassuring safety net that, once acquired, is always at your disposal. It is a tool—what matters then is how it is used. The person who taught me how to harness the power of this tool is my father.

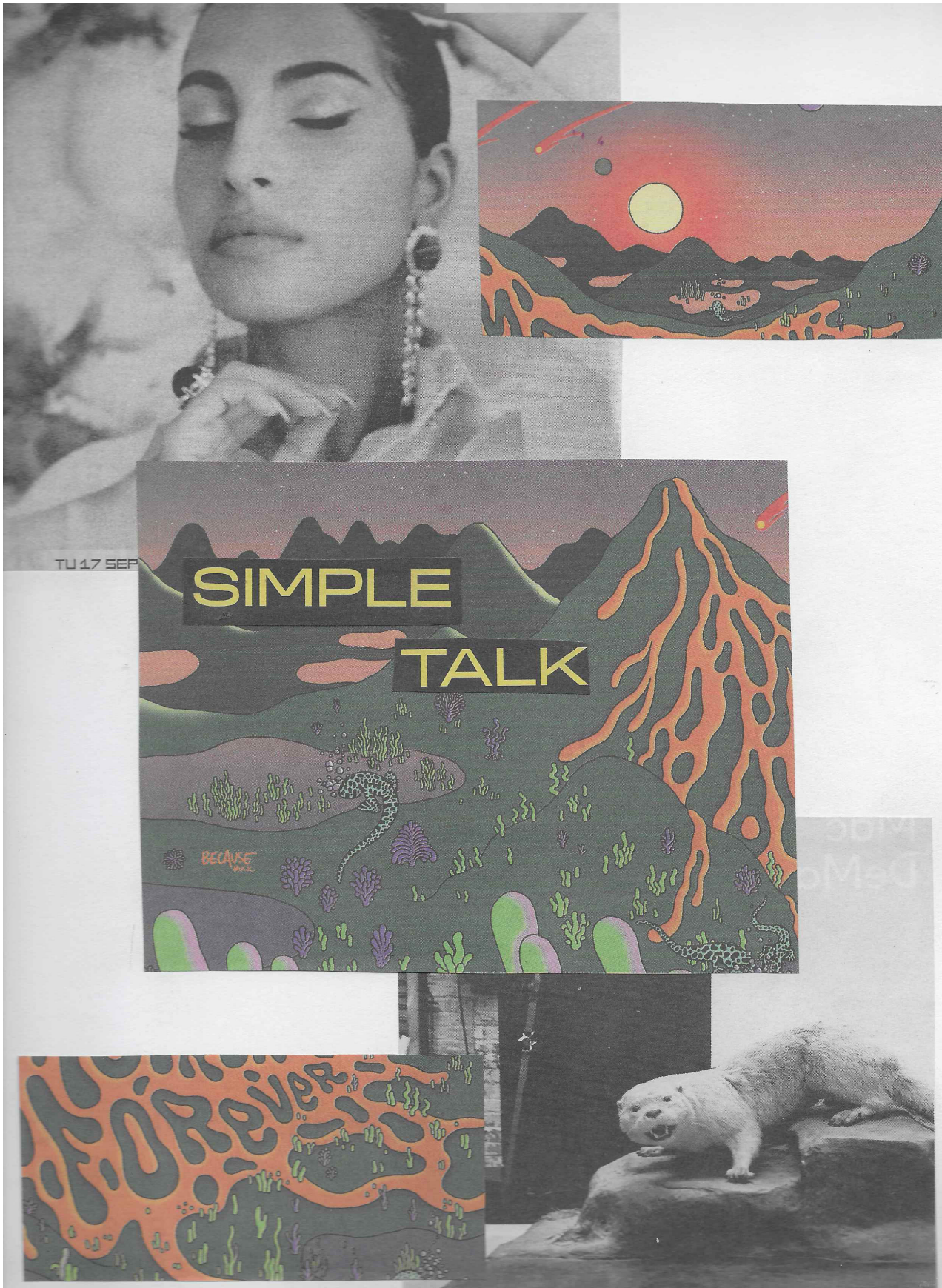
Ever since I was a kid, we would improvise midnight snacks to satiate our need for nourishment at ungodly hours. Like two hungry hyenas we'd scour the kitchen looking for any remains from dinner, any leftover ingredients that could be combined, or perhaps, if fate was feeling generous, a slice of cake in the refrigerator. Whatever we could find, we would use to concoct something strange, but delicious; extreme, but quaint; unorthodox, but familiar. Such is the power of improvisation. It renders rules and barriers superfluous, transcending to a fresh, liberating, reality of its own in which you are the supreme agent. From all the snacks my father and I conjured, not a single one left us unsatisfied.

That is not because our food choice was sufficiently nutritional—that was secondary. It was neither because we were expert cooks, if anything, it was because we lacked the primary kitchen authority, my mother, that we felt the need to improvise. While she was asleep, we often relied on whatever kitchen tricks my father picked up away from home in college. It is there, he says, that he developed most of his skills. He would often recall the hardships he faced, moving to a foreign land, away from family in order to pursue education and opportunity that his home did not offer. In his early years abroad, he'd often move housing, either due to money, contracting, or any other from a list of reasons I've heard him mention. While he doesn't have a word for it and never explicitly acknowledged it, improvisation is what helped him get through. Either sleeping on a friend's couch, staying in a church shelter, or bartering for furniture, there was always an improvised solution to any story he would recount.

From all the things I've heard—very much more than once—I managed to conclude two things about improvisation. Firstly, improvisation is not something that is done at the last minute, it is not even something that is done. As I mentioned earlier, it is a tool, one that can only be honed through its own use. I am certain that my father was not as successful as he paints it. There is no doubt that his early attempts were more than likely unfruitful. But over time, and some failures, I believe he managed to master the intimacies of improvisation. One attestation to that genius is his signature cold fish and french fries sandwich. He uses the remains of whatever fried fish my mother made earlier that day as the main attraction—his favorite: fried flour-wrapped sardines marinated in a mixture of olive oil, parsley and some other spices that I am apparently oblivious to. These are then placed inside a slice of semolina bread, usually cut in a half circle. He then adds some homemade french fries into the bread and drizzles a decent amount of Tabasco hot sauce on top. The result? An amazingly crunchy, texture-rich sandwich with flavor to spare. I guess the main takeout from this recipe is that improvisation relies on crisis. My mother often makes large portions, meaning sometimes there is fish leftover. Rather than throwing the seemingly



# IMPROVISATION



COLLAGE BY DEWI KOPP



wasted, non-appetizing cold fish, we render it an opportunity, something that is only possible through the goggles of improvisation.

The second aspect, and perhaps the most important, is the secret of compromise. Remember when I said that we were never left unsatisfied? Compromise is the key to satisfaction when it comes to improvisation. I am not saying that improvisation betrays ambition—if anything, it ought to encourage an aggressive pursuit of results. Once again, recall the cold fish and french fries sandwich, a symbol of rebellion and a totem of anticultural strife, it would be a shame if such an ambitious product of humanity be degraded to “a measly product of improvisation”. The cold fish and french fries sandwich warrants the same cultural merit as pizza does for the Italians. Pizza in itself, is a product of pure improvisation—look it up. The only way to appreciate improvisation and bestow it a certain prestige is by accepting the need for compromise. One should not expect to make a Thanksgiving dinner using the remains of today’s lunch and whatever is in the fridge. Rather, seek to take advantage of the transcendental possibilities that improvisation affords, beyond the grasp of rules and thresholds, in order to create something as fruitful as if it were planned.

In a way, I learned to appreciate the intricate use of improvisation from my father, as well as to appreciate the difficulty of navigating it. While it might seem impossible to conjure something out of nothing, that something lies in the effort you give towards improvising. While I could not expect to deliver a Tedx Talk for my next class presentation, I can certainly anticipate a solid passing grade from preparing a Google slides document in no more than half an hour. Yet with all that’s been said for improvisation, I now realize how bad my previous statement sounds. In a sense, while it is often satisfying and fruitful to improvise, it should in no way become the standard. A tool is a tool, and shall remain a tool unless I render myself the tool. I’ve realized that, much like how a butter knife should not be used to cut a steak, improvisation should only be used if it is suitable and is, in most cases, a safety net. I sometimes stray away from this, in that, I improvise certain assignments that are simply, by nature, unimprovisable due to the simple and sole fact of time. I suspect that I’ll only grow more respect for improvisation as I get older since it is something that, counterintuitively, can only be used when one has a lot of time. While I am young, I can afford to make mistakes simply due to the difficulty of improvising your life, but as I get older the weight of these decisions only grows due to shriveling time. Such is the way of improvisation.





# ABOUT=BLANK

BY ALICE BRICCOLA



Vittoria (January, 2020)  
Cima Parè nel Bergamasco



Gennaio (January, 2020)  
Piazza Trento e Trieste, Monza





Fulfillment (January, 2020)  
Cima Parè nel Bergamasco

@ali\_onfilm

Camera: Canon AV1  
Roll: Ilford HP5 plus



# BEYOND THE BI-NARY IN SCIENCE: SEX OR GENDER

**BY CARLA ROBAINA RODRIGUEZ**

I'm confused. I feel miseducated. And I'm raising my voice to talk about the small triggers when one of my science based lecturers says "50% of women are associated with xxx condition or disease". What do you mean women? When you say a certain percentage of "women" are associated with breast cancer, do you really mean the gender identity? Or do you mean "female", which is a person that has biological breasts?

Personally, this is so confusing. Let's take breast cancer as our "case study". A person without breasts can identify as a woman, yet science is telling me that this person as a woman has a higher risk for breast cancer. This is simply wrong. This person will be able to live a happy life without any high association risk to breast cancer because they simply don't have breasts AND this person is indeed a woman because that's how they identify their gender to be on the spectrum. Then, statistical science is doing something wrong. They are interchangeably using the words "female" and "woman" when they are not the same. What's frustrating is that technically, as the science community, we should already know this. Science has shown that there is a difference between the developments of our reproductive system and our gender identity. Therefore, c'mon it's 2021, a woman is not someone with a vagina and XX chromosomes. A female is someone with an uterus, ovaries, and a vagina, which have formed on the basis of no hormonal stimulation to the precursors of sex organs, which made the müllerian system develop. A woman is a gender identity of the feminine part of the gender spectrum, for which gender roles and the development of our brain have more of an influence. There is the distinction: female focuses on genitalia and sex hormones (physical body aspect), while woman focuses on behaviour and identity (personality aspect). If I ask a person "what are you?" they could answer with their sex, however if I ask them "who are you?" they could answer with their gender identity.

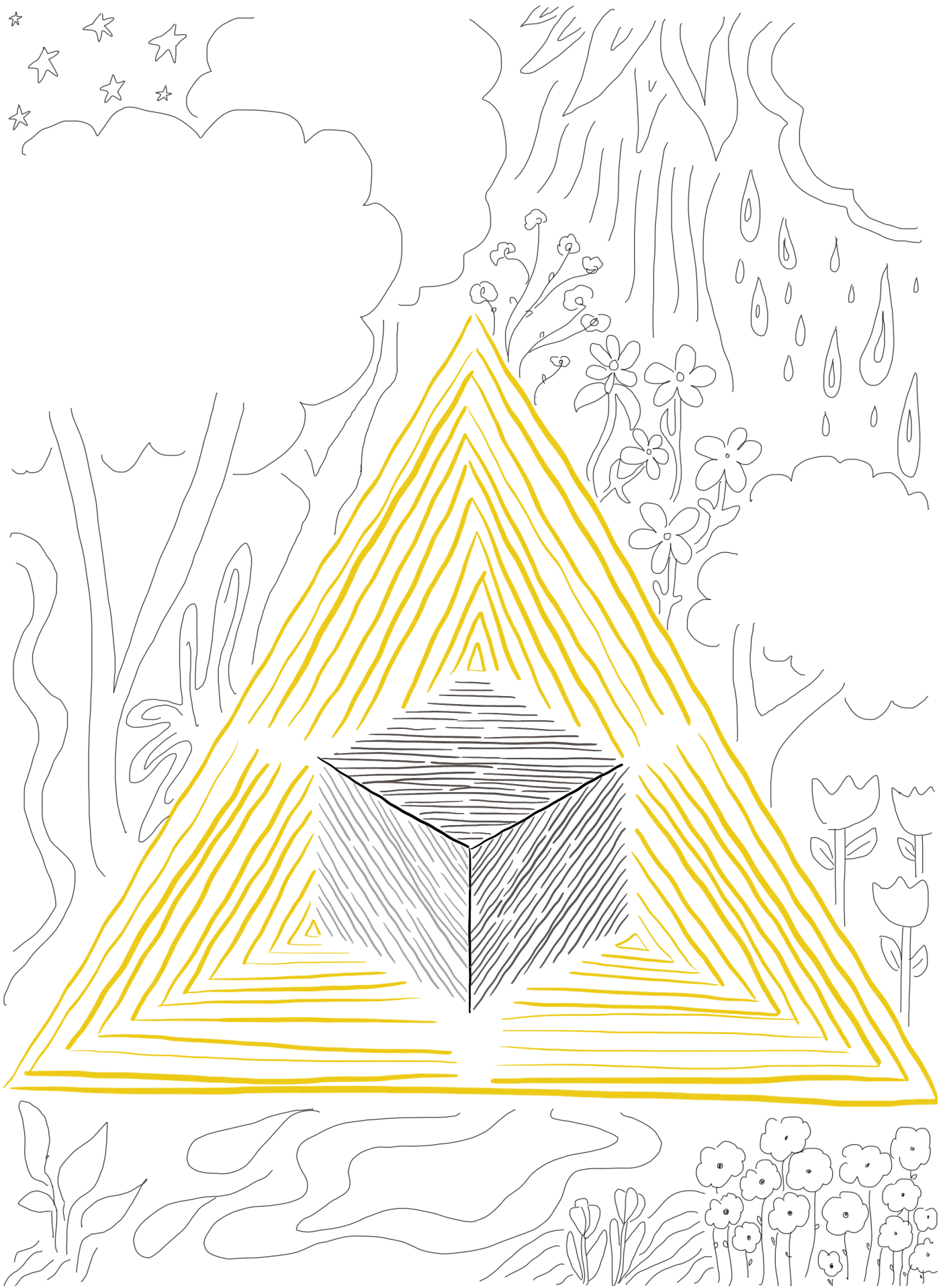
Therefore, now directly speaking to statistics in science: stop being so confusing. When you want to refer to disease associations to gender, please use your chosen gender identity from the spectrum, which is not only man and woman, but also the rest of the fucking spectrum. You know, there's an entire new field to explore associations between health conditions and, for example, non-binary. That is crazy cool from a science perspective, to be able to research on an entirely new perspective/field. So c'mon, stop using terms wrong and refer to a female association when you have studied a group of people with vaginas,



breasts and/or XX chromosomes, and please specify which part of it you are trying to find an association with. Why specify? Well, because indeed everything is not so simple in biology, and as an example someone with XY chromosomes can develop female genitalia, this is called androgen insensitivity syndrome. On the other hand, refer to a women association when you have researched a group of people that identify as women, as easy as that. Science community, let's already make this distinction that we know exists, let's apply it to statistical research, and help biology progress. Thank you.

Disclaimer: First, this is my perspective and understanding of the gender spectrum and I'm constantly open to learn about possible misinterpretations or misuses I might make. Second, I want to clarify that being a specific gender doesn't mean you have to behave in a certain fixed way, but exploring the ways one behaves can help or influence one's own view of one's gender identity. To put myself as an example, I perceive myself as a woman and acknowledge my behaviour as very gender fluid, therefore my gender identity is a gender fluid woman. Just as some people can identify as fem men, masc women, masc non-binary, etc.





**ILLUSTRATION BY ERIKA MIER Y TERRAN YAMAMOTO**

# WHY TRIANGLES ARE BETTER THAN SQUARES

BY GODA SKIOTYTĖ

couple of people  
couple of kids  
oops divorce  
wait what  
no divorce  
stay together  
stay for the kids  
wait mom no  
don't do it

brilliant mom  
thank you  
for my triangle family

some say we're worse  
girl with daddy issues  
boy with no strong father figure

chaos and drama  
struggling mom to fulfill "both" roles

after breaking off  
the perfect square  
my triangle family

I say it's better  
girl empowered and strong  
boy with compassion and able to cry  
mom feeling free but less feminine  
whatever it means to her

what else do we need  
than each other  
in our triangle family

# (SOMETIMES)



**BY COSTANZA SFAMENI**

“Love and happiness. That is what human beings are in a constant pursuit of”

“Aren’t love and happiness a bit too abstract. How would you define such feelings?”

“Hahahahah...yes kinda”

“I can’t give you a clear answer. I can talk to you about my perception of love and what I’ve known happiness to be”

I remember sitting at an old café. Our table was one of those old wooden wobbly tables, with one leg that’s uneven to the rest. The sun was shining but we were both freezing to death. My hands: shivering. We tried to find comfort from the warmth of our jackets, but the icy wintry wind pierced through our bones. I remember clinging to my drink as if it was my only source of warmth. And while my fingers quivered spasmodically, his were stably anchored to the beer glass.

We talked for four hours. We started by catching up, like one usually does with an old friend. We rarely made eye contact because we were both too focused on the words that were going to leave our lips. We knew that we would have had just that afternoon to tell each other everything. The knowledge of having just a few hours with a person makes you think really carefully of what you want to say.

“What is happiness?”

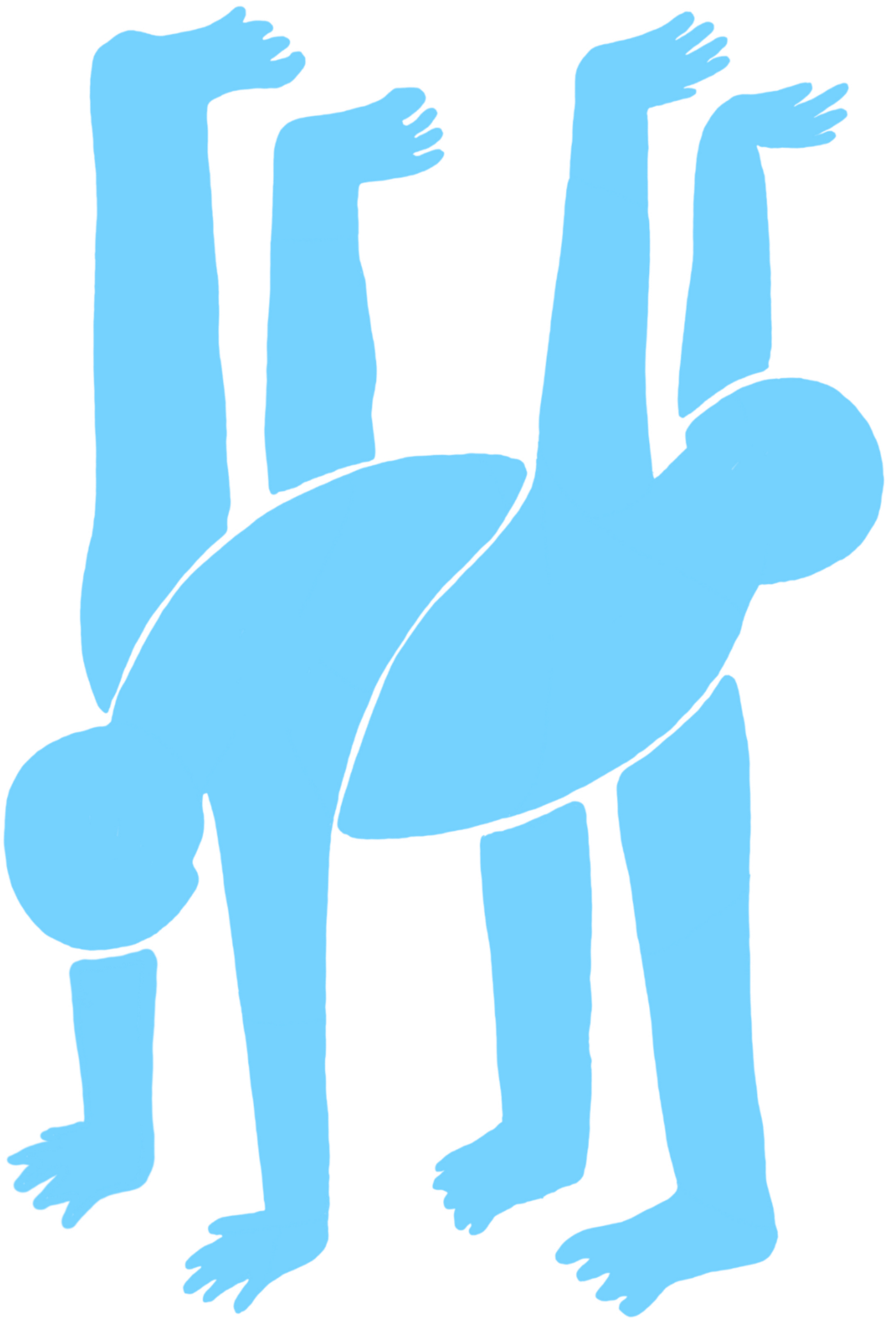
I looked at him for the first time. It was as if hearing the word made me wake up from my thoughts. I opened my eyes. The majestic trees danced to the rhythm of the breeze. The crimson leaves fell to the ground, announcing the beginning of autumn. There were people, sitting at separate tables, having distant conversation. I could hear the laugh of a mother while she watched her son roll on a bed of amber foliage.

“What is love?”

I watched my friend as he took a sip of beer. I noticed how calmly he was sitting, unmoved by his surroundings. His eyes looked ahead. He couldn’t see what I saw. He couldn’t feel the harmonic music composed by the synergy of human lives. He was looking for an answer from within, while the answer was already there.

“I have no idea. What would you say?”

**ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE HOLLANDER**





**PHILOS**



**EROS**

**AGAPE**

**BY CAROLINA RESIGOTTI**

Eros  
you stand fiercely between me and her  
filling every look  
conquering every touch  
you selfishly invade my body  
a violent wave  
painful intensity  
you destroy me  
while you fly me high

Philos  
you occupy all the empty spaces  
a constant presence  
we meet between tranquility and excitement  
everlasting companion  
you are the one that paints our smiles  
I see myself in her through you  
cautiously and chaotically  
you brought us together

Agape  
you pervade my mind and soul  
devouring my totality  
you erase my surroundings  
and all I perceive is her  
unconditional energy  
you are the strongest one  
you guide all my motions  
gradually consuming my being  
unstoppable force  
that regenerates my better self

Eros  
Philos  
Agape  
a triangle of love  
impossible to disentangle

three forms of love  
each one I feel for you.



**ART BY SOPHIE HOLLANDER**



# AYO STYLE TOASTIE

BY AYOUB SAMADI

I begin by heating up the grill  
Grabbing the bread  
succulent and fresh,  
already, I can feel the thrill.  
Buttering it up, so methodically  
Getting to all the edges, meticulously.

I stop and realize,  
that for something this nice,  
my expectations must swell in size.  
Now, nice and fatty from both ends,  
This will surely pay dividends.

Slap on some cheese,

Pff this is such a breeze.

Repeat your abcs,  
Assess the crust  
Beware not to combust,  
Create something that can't be cussed.

Make sure all these rules are applied,  
Now that's what I call "ayo certified."



ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE HOLLANDER





# VEGAN 3 KINGS CAKE

**RECIPE AND ILLUSTRATION  
BY SOPHIE HOLLANDER**

This beautiful Swiss sweetbread is called a Dreikönigskuchen which translates to three kings cake. It is typically baked to celebrate Epiphany Day on the 6th of January, but its far too delicious to eat only once a year. A small figurine or almond is hidden inside one of the buns and who ever finds it gets to be royalty for the day. Get baking and lets dine like Kings!

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## INGREDIENTS:

500g plain flour	300ml plant-based milk (at room temperature)
1.5 tsp. salt	1 whole almond
3 tbsp. sugar	1 tbsp. maple syrup (optional)
7g dried yeast	4 tbsp. plant-based milk
60g vegan butter	1 tbsp. crystalised sugar
1 lemon	Flaked almonds or almond shards

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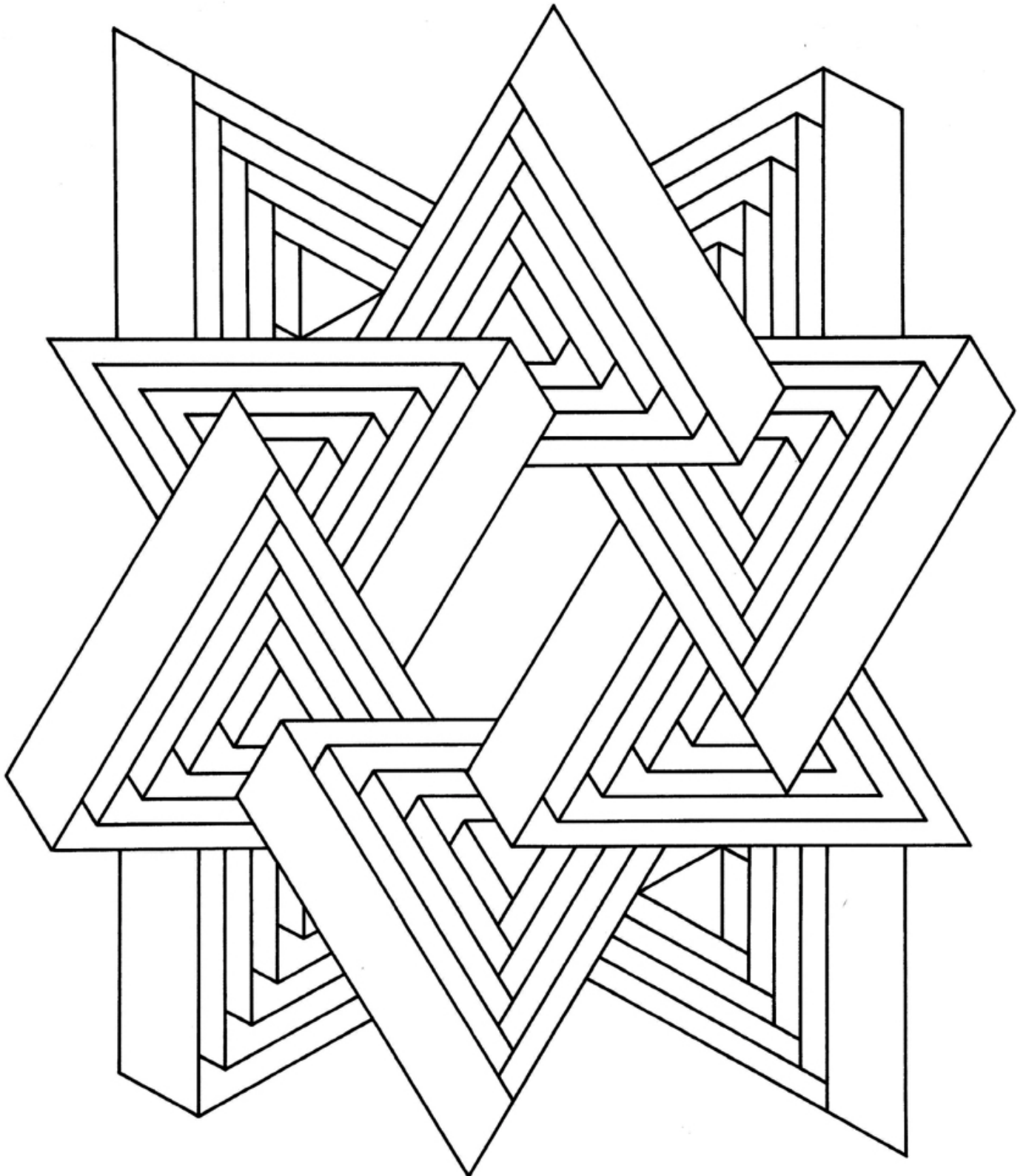
## METHOD:

1. Mix the flour, salt and sugar together in a large bowl and then sprinkle over the yeast. Cut the butter into small cubes and rub into the flour mixture with your fingers until completely combined. Zest about 3/4 of the lemon into the bowl and mix through the flour.
2. Make a well in the centre of the bowl and gradually add the milk mixing constantly until you form a rough dough. Flour your work surface and kneed the dough for 10 minutes until a soft and smooth dough forms. Then leave to rise in a bowl covered in a damp teatowel for 2 hours in a warm place until at least doubled in size.
3. Portion dough out into 8 sperate 80g pieces leaving 1 larger piece left over. Form each of the pieces into balls (hiding the whole almond in one of them) and arrange around the large ball on a lined baking tray. Cover again and leave to rise for another 30mins.
4. Pour a couple of tablespoons of the plant-based milk into a bowl and add the maple syrup. Brush the milk mixture over the surface of the dough making sure to get into all the creases. Sprinkle over the crystalised sugar and the almonds to decorate.
5. Bake for 30 minutes in an oven preheated to 180 degrees until a dark golden brown colour forms on the crust. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on a wire cooling rack.

NOTE: Enjoy on its own or with a bit of butter while its still warm



# COLOUR ME TO DESTRESS



# LETTER SUDOKU

## INSTRUCTIONS:

This is just like usual sudoku puzzle, just with letters instead of numbers!

Fill the missing letters into each box so that you end up writing the word 'triangles' horizontally, vertically and in every 3x3 square.

	I	G		T				N
S		T		R	A			
	E	N					L	R
		L	I				G	
N	G		R		T		I	S
	A				S	E		
L	R					A	S	
			A	L		N		I
E				I		G	T	





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