

SCRIPTUS

ISSUE 31

BECOMING

/ UNRAVELING



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Six months ago we were super excited to start the next academic year as Scriptus' co-chairs. We had many hopes and plans, but we had no idea how and if those were actually going to work out.

Yet with the release of this issue we are proud to say that Scriptus has achieved a lot over the past few months. We restructured Scriptus to only have two issues a year, but to have them be longer and of higher quality, and also adapted our board positions. We would like to take this opportunity to say a special thanks to our amazing board members - Nada, Lukas, Merel and Sophie H. They have been incredibly adaptable, and have worked hard in order to create this year's first issue. We are already looking forward to creating the next one together!

Then of course we must thank all Scriptus contributors. We have received many high quality submissions this semester, so thank you everyone! Scriptus would be nothing without your creative input.

Lastly we have decided to stick to thematic issues. The one in your hands right now has Becoming / Unraveling as its theme. As young adults we're all going through times of self discovery, so we believe the AUC community has a lot to share in that regard. We also feel like AUC is a place where people value the experiences of others around them. We thus hope this issue will facilitate that type of exchange!

Have fun reading!
Xx-



SCRIPTUS

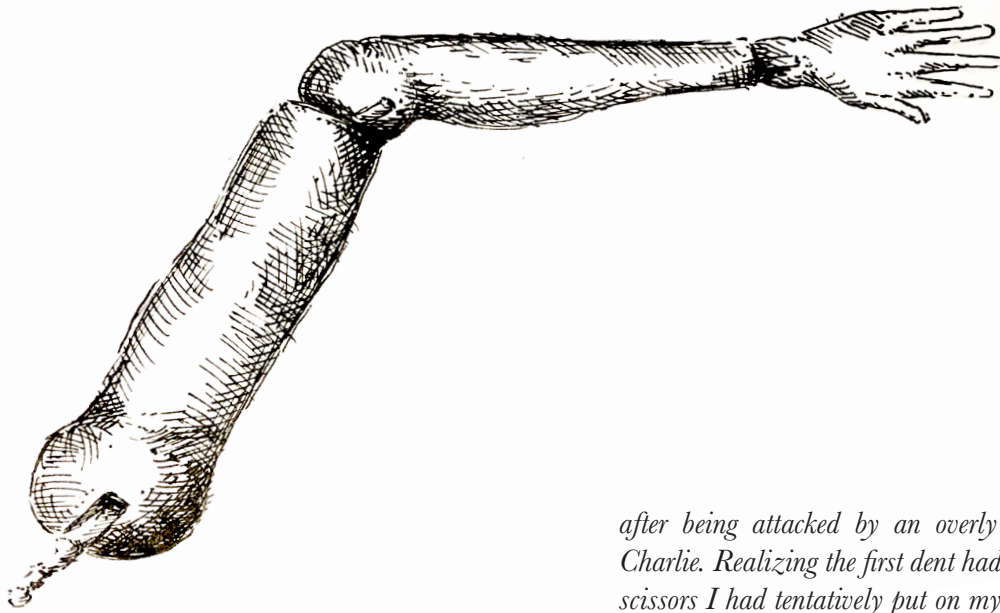


Amsterdam University College
Student Association

Broken Dolls

A creative nonfiction piece about gender identity

By Bluma Brecher



I carefully tucked the last strands of hair behind my head, thoroughly pressing every last piece into my clenched hand. For the third time that week I was balancing on the tips of my toes to meet the bathroom mirror, holding the entangled halves of my life together by their fleeting hairy counterparts.

I held her placid body out in front of me, my fingers pinching the cold edges where her stomach should have been. Charlie. She looks like a Charlie. That was that. Charlie had waist-length golden-blond hair just rigid enough to stay fixed framing her tiny face: like a permanent painting of childhood deception, just old enough to drive Ken to the movies. I twirl her between my fingers. Pretty girl. Next to me on the kitchen floor lies a pile of pastel dresses, every single one folded neatly to fit its brightly colored hems. As I spin her around in the air I press my thumbs softly into the warm plastic, until I remember the heat of my hands cannot melt the rocky features of her chest. I think Charlie needs a haircut. Decisively I grab the white scissors off the kitchen table, unnaturally large in my growing hands and start to cut. With determined cuts, strokes of golden glory soon fall around my bare legs as I take one piece of hair after another between my fingers until there is barely anything left to cut. I hesitate. Charlie looked rather disturbed, like Einstein

after being attacked by an overly eager lawn mower. Poor Charlie. Realizing the first dent had been made, I picked up the scissors I had tentatively put on my lap. I pointed the blade at her shoulders and using only the edges of the hard metal tool I carefully divorced her thin arms from the rest of her torso.

Folding my legs under myself as I kneeled down on the damp attic floor, I quietly started to peel the grey tape off of the cardboard box in front of me. Sophie's room. That's what it said: spelled across the side in bright red whiteboard marker. So much is in a name. I tugged at the last piece of tape on the dark brown flap, freeing the last two parts of the top from its grasp. The box sprung open to reveal a sea of rose-colored plastic: dolls. A giant chasm of unanswered, naked stories and wasted candy money. I suppose that this is why my mother had sent me upstairs to look at the last things she took from the old house. I took one of the tight rubber bodies of the pile and turned its head to face me, examining the creases of her artificial edges. Or at least, what was left of them. The small red-haired doll had lost both of her legs, her cold face covered in colorful marker, every last part of her complexion purposefully disfigured; her flaming hair was cut into a crooked bob; the tops of all of her fingers had been neatly chopped off. Except her pinky, that I had left. I tossed the playground skeleton next to me on the wooden floorboards. Strange discovery. As I sifted through the rest of the box, memories like oceans started rushing back to me. Memories of afternoons sat on the bathroom floor, scissors and knives and cases upon cases of markers scattered across the glistening tiles; afternoons carefully planned to ensure no one would come

home and find me in this process of “refurbishing”. With rigorous precision I would take apart every last one of the childhood artifacts: breaking off arms and legs, painting their placid faces until nothing but their tiny mouth were left untouched, cutting down their hair to its rigid nylon edges. If plastic had bones I would have broken them too.

I picked the red-haired doll off the ground and put her back with her tragic companions. I wish I had remembered her name: she deserved a worthy burial. Pressing the sides together I carefully folded the top of the box shut again, sticking the old tape back in place.

I woke up that morning, and the sun was shining and it was raining. The auburn leaves of the courtyard trees filled the small space between the dormitory buildings with golden light, last night’s full moon carefully retreated to its hiding spot behind the clouds. I woke up that morning and took a long, hot shower and put my dad’s favorite Van Morrison song on repeat. I woke up that morning and called my mom. I woke up and folded my damp laundry and cleaned the bathroom floor and turned all of the spice-pots above my kitchen sink around so the labels would face toward me. I took my rusty red kettle out of the kitchen cupboard to make myself a cup of coffee, and then I remembered. My stove was broken. Again. Last week I had, for the second time in the past year, put one of my many Tupperware containers straight on to the hot oven plate, freshly filled with leftover lasagna. The thin plastic of the dollar-store-treasure had slowly melted to cover the round crevice of the stovetop plate, molding itself anew around its warm edges. This I had only noticed, of course, once nothing but the green top was left recognizable in the pile of melted rubber, the lasagna now firmly stuck to the kitchen counter. I guess I was distracted. Barefoot I had pattered back to the tall bathroom mirror and closed the tube of lipstick balancing on the edge of my sink. It was painfully red, like a firetruck misplaced in the snow, like warpaint and like my cheeks as smoke slowly started filling the room. I think I am going to have to deal with this now. I took one of the lavender makeup wipes from the packet next to me and started rubbing away the shiny warpaint on my lips. That was that. I have a broken stove and broken bones and broken dolls.

One hand resting on the sink I pressed myself closer to the mirror. I loosened my grip on the remaining strands of hair, letting the bunches fall naturally around my face, and reached out for the scissors.



Illustrated by Sophie Holländer

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ



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ΕΡΩΤΕΥΝ

Ερωτικά

By Alex Stargazer

The pale blue night sky;
The gentle breeze, the cry of a
nightingale.
Temptation.

You, my own Adonis
With your eyes
Amber and topaz;
Your hair, a chestnut brown.
You, with your skin:
So bronze, so perfect
Sun-kissed and moonlight blessed.

How can I resist, I wonder?
Like Antinous you frighten me
With your beauty.
In your presence I feel as if
Possessed
By that spirited soul:
That fanciful, irrational
Quintessentially human character.

Anger burns and jealousy
Casts its seductive venom;
But love, aye, that is worse.
Weren't the Stoicists right
One thinks
To shun its wild unthinking magic?

But what an existence that would be!
For the unexamined life is not worth
living
But truly
The unloved life is not worth bearing.

The love that dares not speak its name
Does but speak in poetry and riddle.
Σ'αγαπώ.

MY HANDS ARE MAGIC

By Angelina Villa

The enchanting smell of freshly baked bread would dance through the air, skip between the nostrils of Angelina, and draw her into the kitchen. “Mamma!” Angelina cried, “You make such wonderful bread!” The mother smiled a tired smile and stroked her daughter’s hair. “One day, *piccola mia*, I will teach you”.

That day did come. Angelina learned to roll the dough. Twist and squish, mould and fold, she played with it until it was ready. That evening the whole family feasted on her golden bread. “Amore, this bread is even better than last time!” The husband sighed. “Caro, I did not make it. Angelina did,” the mother replied. All heads turned to Angelina. “You must make it again!”. “Bravissima!”.

“You have a gift!” Everyone shouted. Extremely happy, Angelina agreed.

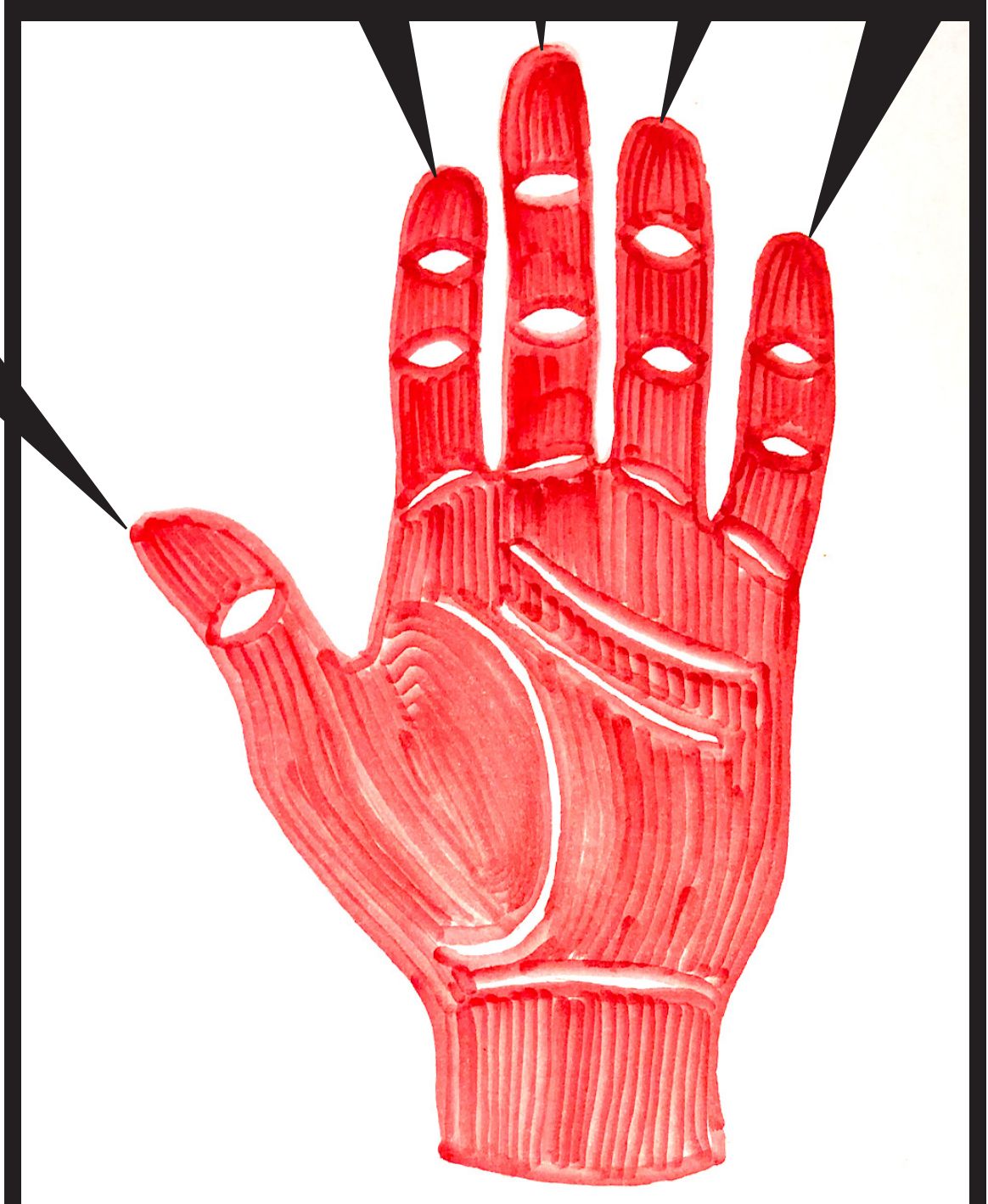
Every time she made bread, it was shared with delight and everyone always begged for more. One time, old grandma came over, stiff with a pain in her neck.

“il pane helps a bit,” she smiled weakly. “Nonna, let me help you,” Angelina replied. She stood behind her grandma and began rubbing, caressing, pressing with care the old woman’s shoulders. “Angelina *piccola*, I feel so much better! The pain is gone!” Sang her grandma afterwards. Very soon many pleaded for Angelina’s touch, and she would heal them.

Over time, the bread tasted of poison to Angelina. The massages she gave pierced needles

and stitches over her whole body and wore her down. It sickened her to see her family laugh and triumph whilst eating her bread ... eating her soul. But she could not stop, for she had enchanted them.

“How do you do it? Ma come?” A drunk guest asked her one evening. Angelina raised her hands slowly, twisting them in the air, “My hands... They are magic... They are cursed,” she replied quietly. The drunk guest burst out in laughter. “You have a blessing cara!” He hiccupped and clumsily let his glass fall. The glass shattered on the floor. Angelina picked up a shard, ready to clean up the mess. “No,” she whispered. Redness pooled around her fingers, “a maledizione”.

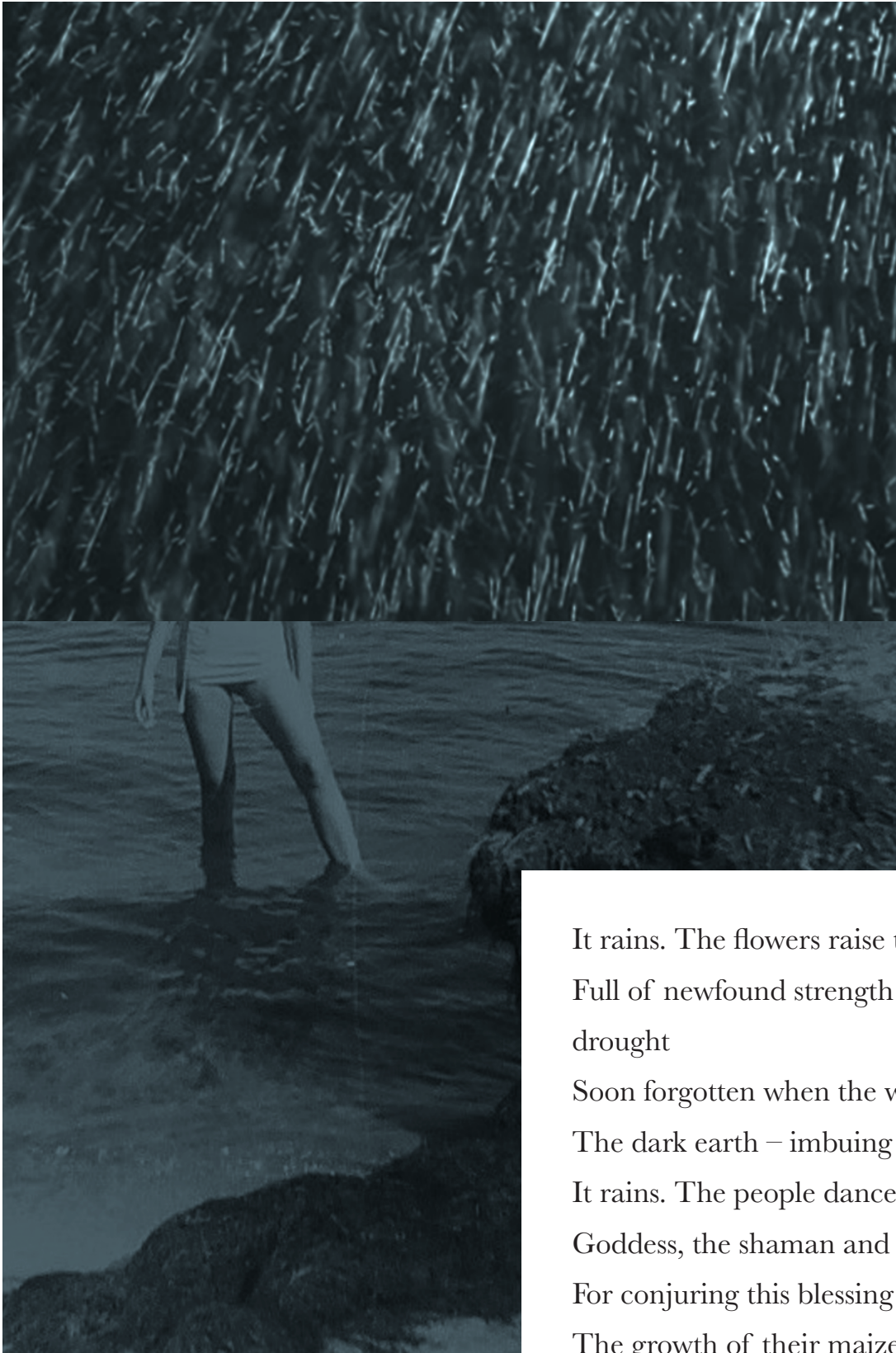


THE MAGICIAN

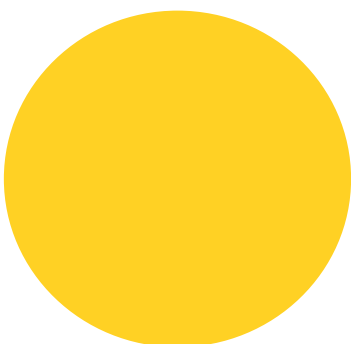
Illustrated by Sophie Holländer

THE FOURTH SUN

By Yosef König



Illustrated by Sophie Holländer



It rains. The flowers raise their heads skyward
Full of newfound strength – memories of
drought
Soon forgotten when the wild water wets
The dark earth – imbuing it with new life.
It rains. The people dance – thanking the
Goddess, the shaman and the sacrifice
For conjuring this blessing – ensuring
The growth of their maize – foundation of life.
And it rains. The water washes away
The earth, the maize, the blood from the altar
While the people grow scales and fins – feeling
First fear, later grief, then resignation
As another cycle passes – the gods
Gather to begin anew – the fifth sun.

There's this thing called



TRIGGER WARNING

“SEX”

By Anne-Marie Dimanche

Apparently there's this thing called “sex” and everyone's obsessed with it. I see it in the streets and on the TVs, behind the bleachers

at school and on my older brother's computer screen when my parents aren't home. I ask my parents what it is; I don't fully understand it. It's a blur of movements, a conglomerate of noises and foreign interactions between man and woman, woman and woman, man and man, people and objects. My parents tell me it's for people who are married and who love each other very much. I sleep well that night, there must be so many people who love and care about one another deeply.

Apparently there's this thing called “sex” and everyone's talking about it.

Magazines tell me it's what boys want, friends tell me it's for me, boys tell me it's for angels and others do not speak of it at all. At home it's taboo, at school it's

an enigma, in my head it's a paradox. Everyone's having it and having fun but

it's not okay to ask for it unless you're a boy or a girl on a computer screen.

Something in my head whispers, “touch yourself”, but my mom tells me that God is always watching and that feels like a breach of privacy.

Apparently there's this thing called “sex”, and I found out that I really like it. It's stimulation from head to toe and I feel powerful when I have it and others aren't.

It's a rush of danger and suspense when I meet boys' eyes in the hallways, smell their hormones in the classrooms. I find that I like to touch myself in the dark before I go to sleep, and sometimes in the morning when I wake

up. I've discovered a new world of feelings, physical and emotional. My mind spins, we



grind and kiss. It probably won't be too bad if we don't use a condom this time.

I've probably told myself this too many times, but I haven't gotten pregnant yet.

Apparently there's this thing called "sex", and I think there's this one boy who wants me to show him what it is. We dance around the subject, touch each other

and whisper lies into one another's ears, building suspense for the grand reveal.

I find that my parents are right, I think I love him so, I care about him, I know. I

want to give him everything he's asking for, but my parents said it was for people who love one another and this time I am talking to a wall. You can't really have sex with a wall. The wall talks to me, and makes me promises. It holds me and

touches me in private places, and I touch it back. It feels different, being touched by a wall.

Apparently there's this thing called "sex", and it troubles me. People branded it as consensual but I

ran into a wall and got a concussion. Blood pooled on the floor, a saline solution of bodily fluids and my tears. A gag was shoved into my mouth before I could say yes or no, but the show must go on and I already broke

both my legs. It's hard to tell people about it because I'm a theatre geek and I love

this show and I love performing and I love the applause. "Liar, liar, liar, pants on fire", an ominous chant for children who do not even

know what sex is yet.

Apparently there's this thing called "sex", and it scares me. I turn into coal when

Midas touches me; thrown into a wastebasket filled with condoms and semen. I

close my eyes when it begins, all the way until it's over.

I scrub any traces that

may remain on my holy body as soon as we're done.

I laugh when my

friends

exchange stories and cry when I'm in the shower. I

feel as if I am stuck between

a

wall and a hard place.

Apparently there's this thing called "sex"; it's quite complex. It can make you feel

powerful; a white-hot, burning center formed through nuclear fusion, giving rise to life on Earth. It can make you feel pretty and shiny and it can even turn you into an object of infection. It will beat you up from the inside and kiss you all

over on your outside. It will make you feel safe one day when you're giggling

together, drunk and enjoying yourself. Then, you'll feel stupid and betrayed

when it tells you it was sober the next day. Sex is an



onion and sometimes I

cry

when I peel it, but it makes everything you cook smell and taste so good. Sex

is

means to power, yet sometimes I feel as if I'm completely devoid of it. Sex is

one

of my favorite songs by the 1975 and one of my favorite hobbies. Sex scares me,

sex excites me, and sex puts me in a box. One day I will break its

walls.



Illustrated by Sophie Holländer

I AM BE



COME

By Nikita Pavel

Confessional Poetry, minus confession

"I am become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds.
I am become Sleepy, the Goer to Bed.
I am become Hungry, the Cooker of Food.
I am become Friend, the Giver of Smiles.
I am become Lover, the Watcher of Universes.
I am become Beauty, the Rise of the Sun in the morning.
I am become Dream, the Gaze that Floats.
I am become Nothingness, the Weight upon the Chest.
I am become Solitude, shaking laughing crying falling
I am become Sleepy, the Goer to Bed.
I am become Life, the Organism that Oozes.



This is section 2B.

My name is hyperchange. I am supersonic. That is not my real name. "I" never exist because "I" am always in the past, "I" think? and this moment is just a Venn diagram of past and future, past and future, none of which are real in any sense, because they do not exist. There is only the Now, which (mind you!) does not exist either. The past, where I seem to be, does not exist ((do I?) However, it is not relevant). I am the Napoleonic War raised to the power of the Great War, I turn and burn (do not think I underestimate your great concern) and my surroundings are a soup and I boil it. We (that is, I) live an eternal jetlag. I'm on a plane , the question is, will it crash before it lands?

My name is impressions. I am many. That is not my real name. A walking congregation of mirrors, a membrane through which stories are warped and changed (ever so slightly, my dear). Miss Understandings, which one is right, which one is true and exists in the eyes of the world? Which one exists in the eyes of "myself"? Where are my eyes? (out there, in the water, see them swimming)

My name is physical body. I am human. That is not my real name. A set of data on x- y- z-axes. Something statically dynamic, multiplying, oozing filling the "space". How is it possible to take space? Space, I am a planet, I am a star, my star that darts the red and the blue, I am perpetual/eternal, I am I am I am a red supergiant on the verge of a supernova I am super. Am I an embodiment, or am I just an idea? What are these most excellent limbs? In form and moving, how express and admirable. In action, how like an angel. My name is a string of sounds. I am a word. That is not my real name. They stumble out of your mouth, sometimes a slight trickle, sometimes cascading. I don't have a "name". I am just a soup, and there are too many ingredients. I am studying their names, I am studying my gastronomy.

My name is Paul Auster (yes). I am Vertical. That is not my real name. I would rather be horizontal. So please, please, please, let me get what I want. Love in a Life and Life in a Love. I am not high, I am always high, which cancels it out, it's mathematics. Omnipresent equals non-existing. Please let me be nonsensical.

My name is real. I am existing. Name not real that is my, my, my. I think I'm a concept. I do not think, I act. Thinking is an action, no? Sorry for not making much sense to you. Please let me be nonsensical. I do not know how else to find my way. I do not know how else to become.

Just sit down and run. Run for your life."

WHY THIS



WHOLE

By Adriana Leila Rocks

"IT'S AN INTERESTING TIME TO BE THERE" NARRATIVE

IS GETTING OLD

Yesterday I received a text message from a friend: "You're literally experiencing history! So interesting." I guess it's objectively interesting to see fires burning outside my window, riot police storming my campus, and medical centers being erected to treat rubber bullet wounds and tear gas burns on kids that I knew last week only as "classmates." It's said there's an ancient Chinese curse that goes: "May you live in interesting times." Right about now, I'm ready for some seriously boring times.

I set out at the end of August to Hong Kong from Amsterdam, armed with my backpack, reporter's notebook, smartphone, and flip flops. I was excited to see what Hong Kong had to offer in terms

of history, culture, and partying. A bit of a tumultuous experience would also have been welcome. I attended the international student network party and hung out on rooftops drinking beers. I downed cheap vodka at ladies' night and watched the sunrise from a beach rave. Occasionally I attended lectures and did a bit of reporting, but mostly I lived like an exchange student should, with few limitations as long as I could find an ATM.

And the whole time I considered the experience rather interesting. It was interesting how in Mong Kok, the busiest neighborhood on earth, the stream of people never seemed to end, or how Hong

Kong couples hung onto each other, but only after 9 pm. It was even interesting as my campus was increasingly plastered in graffiti and posters. It was interesting to see a human chain walking across the street chanting "fight for freedom! Stand with Hong Kong!" I even thought it was interesting when 30,000 students gathered at the Chinese University (CUHK), my university, rallying to demand freedom.

My interest peaked on October 1st, the Chinese national day, when hordes of people poured into the streets, marching, and wreaking havoc, but still handing out water bottles and collecting the plastic afterward. I followed them for hours, taking photographs, conducting interviews, and writing notes. But my interest began to wane the following weekend when the government banned wearing masks — which the protesters had often donned to hide their identity from ubiquitous security cameras and to pull up over their nose and eyes to protect themselves from tear gas.

As protests escalated that weekend, it was like a snow day with no snow; the MTR subway system halted all service, businesses closed, ATMs ran out of cash, and protesters burned anything they could rip up from the streets or find in garbage bins. In response, the police waged a vicious war against them, lobbing tear gas, charging into crowds wielding batons, and arresting at least seventy people. I didn't leave campus for a week.

But people can't stay on the streets forever, and they eventually have to return to their day jobs. I slowly reverted to my comfortable life attending classes, drinking beers,

and watching sunsets. Even as the protests bubbled along at a low boil, I was able to largely forget about the snow that never came to Hong Kong.

It couldn't last. On November 11th, protesters blocked roads and MTR stations to disrupt the morning commute in retaliation for a student's death amid murky circumstances after he fell from a parking garage. The police originally claimed they hadn't been there, but later admitted they were. Another storm without snow was brewing. So CUHK cancelled classes that Monday and ensured students and staff that "your safety is our top priority." Later that morning police stormed campus, shooting tear gas, rubber bullets, and sponge grenades into crowds of black-clad students crouching behind makeshift roadblocks of gym mats and trash cans. That evening, things cooled off a bit as the police retreated and exhausted protesters returned to their dorm rooms.

Then the storm broke. The cafeterias ran out of food. Families supplied provisions to the edge of campus and students broke into canteen kitchens to whip up mass batches of rice. At around 3 pm the next day I was engulfed in a cloud of tear gas right outside my building, only 300 meters from the front lines. Riot police shot over 1,000 rounds of tear gas that day, much of it in the vicinity of the field and running track where I used to watch sports teams' practice from my eighth-floor window. Cycles from a bike-sharing app were all simultaneously unlocked because of a "system failure," and students quickly hopped on, ferrying cargoes of Molotov cocktails, umbrellas, masks, and bricks.

It felt something like preparations for a Medieval siege, albeit with 21st-century characteristics. Students formed assembly lines to pull chairs and desks out of classrooms and rip down trees to erect barricades. Someone broke into a sports equipment closet and stole bows, arrows and javelins to launch at police. A dinner prepared by dining hall staff was contaminated by tear gas. The college warden ordered trays of butter chicken, naan, and rice from a nearby Indian carryout joint — which students picked up at one of the roadblocks ringing campus.

On WhatsApp and Telegram — the encrypted messaging service that has become the protesters' preferred communications medium — news (and disinformation) spread like wildfire. There's a bomb. The water supply has been contaminated by cyanide stolen from the chemistry lab. If enough international students contact their consulates, they'll send in foreign troops.

And I began to think this wasn't so interesting. It reminded me of that Talking Heads song, *Life During Wartime*. "*You oughta know not to stand by the window/Somebody might see you up there.*" It may look glamorous on Instagram, but living in a war zone isn't fun. Tear gas really hurts. It doesn't just make you cry. It burns your skin and gets stuck on your clothes and in your hair. Seeing nursing and medicine students treat your peers for rubber bullet wounds and burns isn't fascinating anymore. It's no longer "an interesting experience" when people you know rip apart the sidewalk to build walls or steal sugar from the canteen to supercharge their Molotov cocktails.

I support the cause that sparked

the movement. I do think Hong Kong deserves freedom. And the last thing I want is to see this city that has been my home for the past few months descend further into violence. But what I saw around Hong Kong that week no longer felt like a means to that end.

The same day, a video of a pro-Beijing man arguing with protesters went viral. In the clip, protesters pour gasoline onto the man and torch him. Flames burst out as he writhes in pain. He is alive, but has suffered serious burns all over his body.

At the time I interviewed students at CUHK who told me, "We can't let them [the police] come in. We have to protect the right to freedom of speech." Freedom of speech also involves listening to people you disagree with and not setting them on fire. From the evidence I've seen around Hong Kong and my campus, the protesters have lost sight of what they truly want.

The next day, I evacuated CUHK. I made a plan to stay at a friend's on Hong Kong island, packed my computer and phone, anything of emotional value, and clothes for a few days, and set out across campus. Protesters had erected roadblocks at every roadway entrance. The MTR wasn't an option as the University station had been shut for several days — after protesters had burned and vandalized it. So my friend Anna and I went on foot. We exited via the Area 39 path, about a 30-minute walk from my dorm.

It was slow-going. The sidewalks had been ripped up. Scouts with binoculars occupied a platform overlooking the highway bridge where the most serious violence took place. We picked our way past

a mini Molotov cocktail factory on a route I normally took to class. Buses I had ridden across campus just a week earlier when hungover from one-too-many rooftop beers had been hijacked, covered with pro-democracy graffiti and used to transport supplies. Maybe it was interesting to see the energy and innovation of the student protesters, but I'm sure they all would have preferred living in uninteresting times.

Earlier that day, WhatsApp groups had lit up with a screenshot of an email saying CUHK classes would be canceled for the rest of the semester, news that was soon picked up by the local press. As Anna and I trudged through the sprawling campus, searching for a way out, we hitched a ride in a black van driven by a communications administrator who had just evacuated her family. She confirmed the rumors. CUHK terminated the semester and said the school was shut until the second term begins in January.

The administrator dropped us at what looked like a checkpoint, waved us goodbye and told us to stay safe, an increasingly common farewell around campus.



Illustrations by Sophie Holländer

This piece is part of our collaboration with The Herring. You can find this and other amazing articles under our Scriptus tab on theherring.org

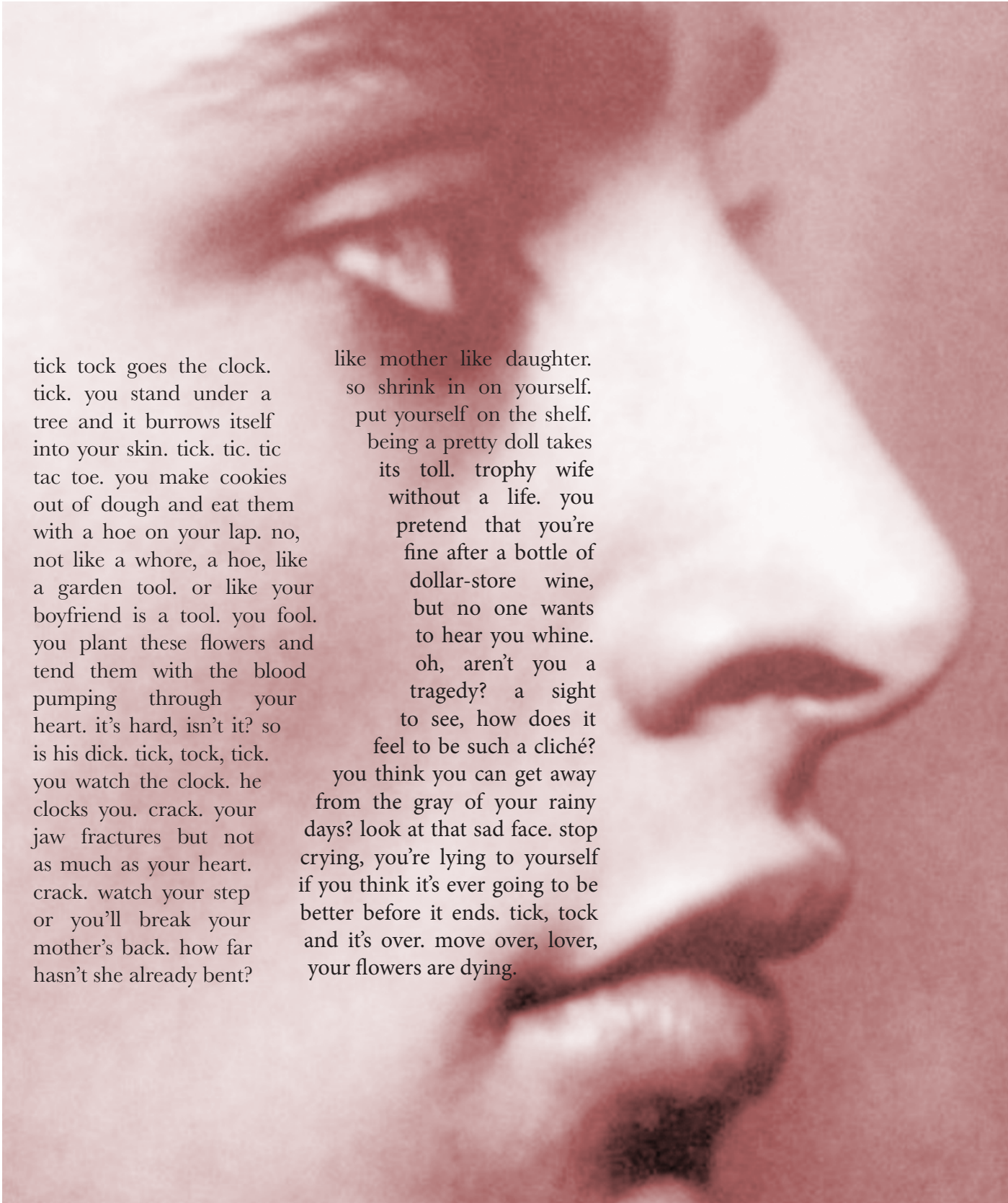
Protesters kept watch over a narrow path through the woods to a roundabout just off the highway. We joined a stream of evacuees carrying backpacks and trailing suitcases. In the other direction came a line of students hauling supplies dropped off at the roundabout by sympathetic Hong Kongers. A fluffy Samoyed smiled at the stressed crowds, providing accidental puppy therapy.

We managed to get an Uber, but the highway heading to Hong Kong island had been blocked by students, so the driver had to steer north almost to the Chinese border before turning south again. The detour aside, it didn't take long to shift from Life During Wartime to plain old life. At our destination, we were greeted with a home-cooked meal and a family watching Netflix. As Anna and I slowly decompressed, we started looking for flights out of Hong Kong, to get away from the spreading chaos. We booked the cheapest fare we could find, to Phu Quoc in Vietnam.

The gravity of the situation didn't really set in until we arrived in Vietnam the next day and had time to reflect on what we'd been through, and — more importantly — what Hong Kong was going through. The police assault on the university, the pervasive smell of tear gas, the organization of supply drops and medical facilities built, the surreal getaway from campus — it was no longer interesting to me. I had become numb to it; it was as mundane as going to class or ladies' night. Just as the ancient Chinese knew, the interesting times made me crave boring times.

And of course, I'm an outsider. My blue eyes, curly brown hair, and credit card meant I had little problem getting out, other than an extra-long route across campus and a detour in an Uber. The outcome doesn't actually affect me like it affects the locals. I can go home to a place with cafes, pubs, supermarkets, schools, and reliable subways and streetcars. A lifestyle that's not that different from the one the students still on the CUHK campus had grown up with. And I'm sure it's what they want: uninteresting times, but with universal suffrage.

So, I will never forget my foreshortened semester in Hong Kong. The interesting and mundane, the violent and peaceful, the stressful and the relaxed will be ingrained in my memory forever. It taught me how to react quickly, how to clean teargas from my eyes, to value public transportation running on time, and what democracy isn't. Here's to living in uninteresting times.



tick tock goes the clock.
tick. you stand under a
tree and it burrows itself
into your skin. tick. tic. tic
tac toe. you make cookies
out of dough and eat them
with a hoe on your lap. no,
not like a whore, a hoe, like
a garden tool. or like your
boyfriend is a tool. you fool.
you plant these flowers and
tend them with the blood
pumping through your
heart. it's hard, isn't it? so
is his dick. tick, tock, tick.
you watch the clock. he
clocks you. crack. your
jaw fractures but not
as much as your heart.
crack. watch your step
or you'll break your
mother's back. how far
hasn't she already bent?

like mother like daughter.
so shrink in on yourself.
put yourself on the shelf.
being a pretty doll takes
its toll. trophy wife
without a life. you
pretend that you're
fine after a bottle of
dollar-store wine,
but no one wants
to hear you whine.
oh, aren't you a
tragedy? a sight
to see, how does it
feel to be such a cliché?
you think you can get away
from the gray of your rainy
days? look at that sad face. stop
crying, you're lying to yourself
if you think it's ever going to be
better before it ends. tick, tock
and it's over. move over, lover,
your flowers are dying.

Illustrated by Sophie Holländer

march 11th

By Merel Van Berge Henegouwen



TRIGGER WARNING

BEC





ME

SlayUC x Raw

How did you become a dancer?



"I STARTED
DANCING
AFTER MY
GIRLFRIEND
ASKED ME
TO JOIN HER
BALLET CLASS
FOR
VALENTINE'S



DAY, WHICH
I ENDED UP
ENJOYING SO
MUCH THAT
I STARTED
TAKING
CLASSES
MYSELF."

- Stijn Maathuis



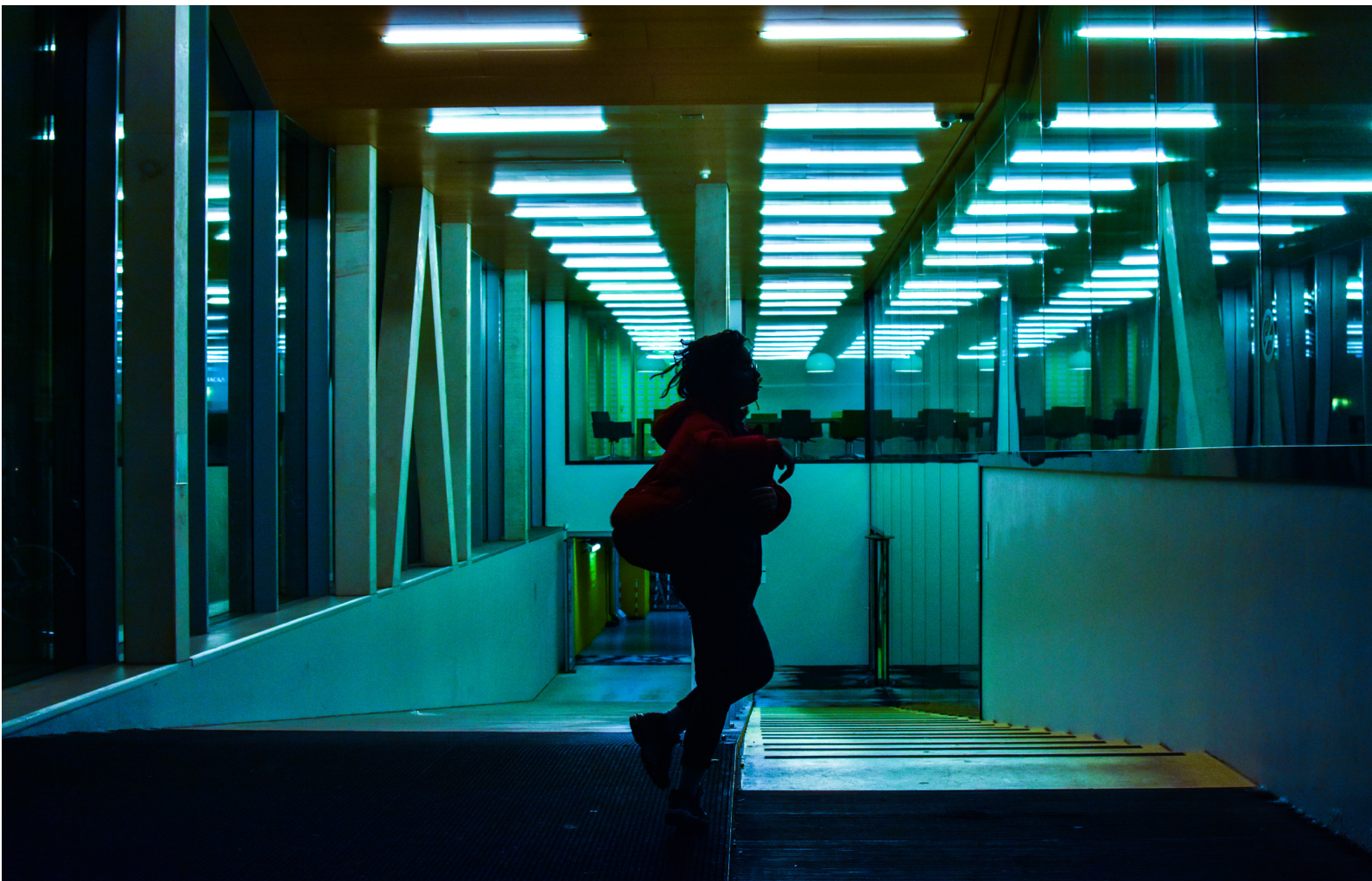


Photographed by:

Masha Demers
Mikela Koressi
Che Romain



UNRAVEL



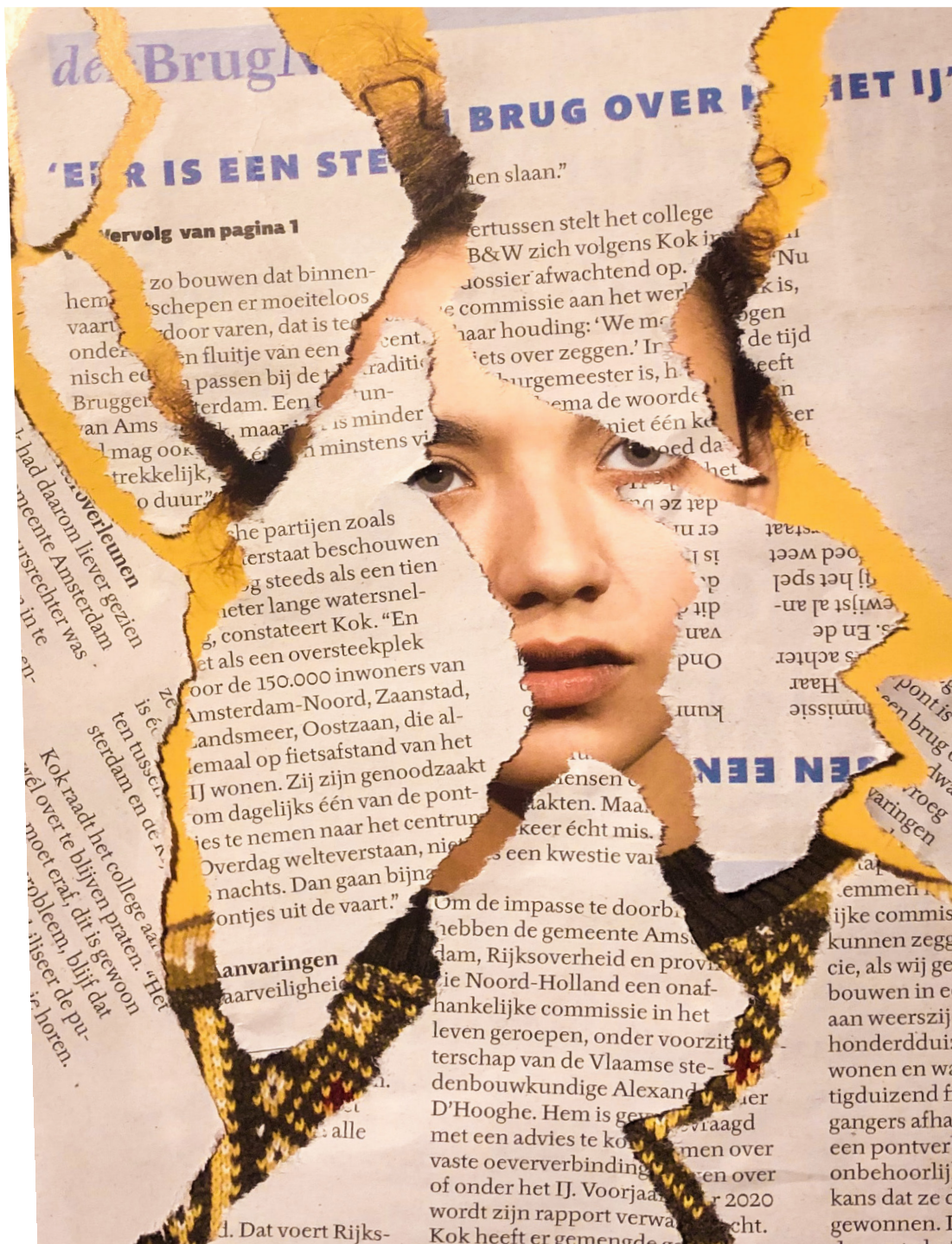
DANCE MEANS THE WORLD. WHEN I DANCE IT IS ONE OF THE ONLY MOMENTS IN WHICH I FEEL TRULY ME. I CAN FORGET EVERYTHING AND SOLELY ENJOY EVERY MOMENT. DANCE HAS REALLY PUSHED ME TO THINK CREATIVELY AND TO FEEL COMFORTABLE IN MY OWN BODY.

- Laila Spee



I TRIED SOCCER BUT AS I WAS MOSTLY DANCING ON THE FIELD, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT DANCE WAS MORE MY THING. I'VE DANCED HIPHOP EVER SINCE. WHEN I DANCE I JUST STOP THINKING FOR A BIT.

- Dewi Kopp



Artwork by Sophie Holländer

By Nada Elbohi

Within and Without

Within and Without,
 Inclusively exclusive,
 Participating observer,
 Things that I am and things that I am not:
 Not tall and not short,
 Averagely ordinary,
 A dwarf star in a universe of extraordinary,
 Inconspicuous yet vibrant.
 Oh, the wishes of divergence that fill your heart!
 Never quite reaching, but halfway there.
 Not at the end and not at the beginning,
 The days come and go again with the same mundane routine:
 Just another stranger in the sea of humans,
 Just another hopeless dreamer in the field of withering aspirations.

“hi its me”

BY LOURIEN SNOEK

I want to come over, but my body feels tense only thinking about it: Step by step, getting closer to your presence. Walking through the long empty hallways with my hands on fire, trembling. I know that if I speak, a stutter would slip its way out and expose my insides.
I'm almost there, my knees are weak.

I'm standing in front of your door. I knock. I wait. I wait.
You open the door; I lean in for a hug. We hug, we sit, we drink while the memory of us having sex is visualized in flashes in front of me as we talk, we smoke, we laugh and I'm Imagining you pulling my hair with slightly more passion as we share, we feel, we care and - then it's time to go but I know you were holding back last time.

Our bodies were still touching as we said goodbye. I let my hand reach your face. Stroked your cheek and chin and gently kissed you, one kiss. Softly. So soft, one could question whether it really happened.

But it did, and you believed it did. Because when I walked out and looked back at you, It seemed like it was disbelief I read on your face.

Illustrated by Sophie Holländer



Half submerged in the milky water, she felt the warm ceramic tub against the bone beneath the cheeks of her bottom. The surface of the bathwater swirled with foam, leaving thin white tide marks around her middle and a slick soapy residue on her skin. The smell of the flowers and flecks of dirt beneath the water muddled with the smell of rain which wafted in from the open window beside her. The wind blew in past the soft white curtains. The thin cotton made a light flapping noise as it tumbled about. The cool breeze intermittently flushed her cheeks and her forehead which had grown pink.

Strands of her hair stuck to her neck and face, pressed into the dew on her skin. These contrasting sensations gave a feeling of light-headedness and a sweet kind of internal warmth. She was sitting sideways in the tub, legs crossed, arms against one side, forcing her shoulders up and back so she could lean over to type on her laptop. She'd balanced it on a wooden French-country styled chair.

She ignored her discomfort. She wasn't interested in her pruning lower half. There was a story.

It lay dormant. It hid somewhere past the clutter of her desktop and the unavoidable hopeless swirl of ideas which kept her awake the occasional night. There was something poetic which lay just beyond the afternoon, in a place she reached for but could never be sure of. One thing was for sure, however, today there was something to write, a moment to capture, something to share about the human experience.

That day she'd been reading absurdist philosophy. She'd been captured by the idea of rebelling against life's apparent meaninglessness, inspired by absurdist art.

She leant back. She turned away from the screen to watch the trees bend and wave with outstretched arms. For a moment, she thought they looked like raving lunatics. She then thought that description not eloquent enough to capture their romantic dancing,

their leaning into each other like long lost lovers.

There,
that was a much better description.

She'd been writing for an hour now. She leant away once more. Where was this to go, this story? What was she to do with it? When would it be finished? Who would care to read the ramblings of a young woman, pouring into a fluorescent screen while naked in a tub of dirty water.

She thought to herself she'd retract those negative thoughts about the garden water.

She really liked the earth smells and who would ever know. It's not like there was someone describing her now, as she lay back in the tub, contemplating the point of all this nonsense.

Was she wasting time? The story wasn't really real. But maybe that was just it. Making things that aren't real... real to someone, somewhere, if only for a moment. The trick was to translate vivid flickers of fictional lives in her head to make them sit still. To make them into words on a page. It seemed almost cruel. Turning dreams into words. Then she thought...no, it's kind. It's kind to give them real life. To make them seen by anyone who had the time to sit down and read.

She sat up straight and the wind sat up to meet her, blowing softly on her neck, her face. She wiped her hands on the towel she'd slung over the chair.

She hit print.

A draft.

The coming into being of a narrative.

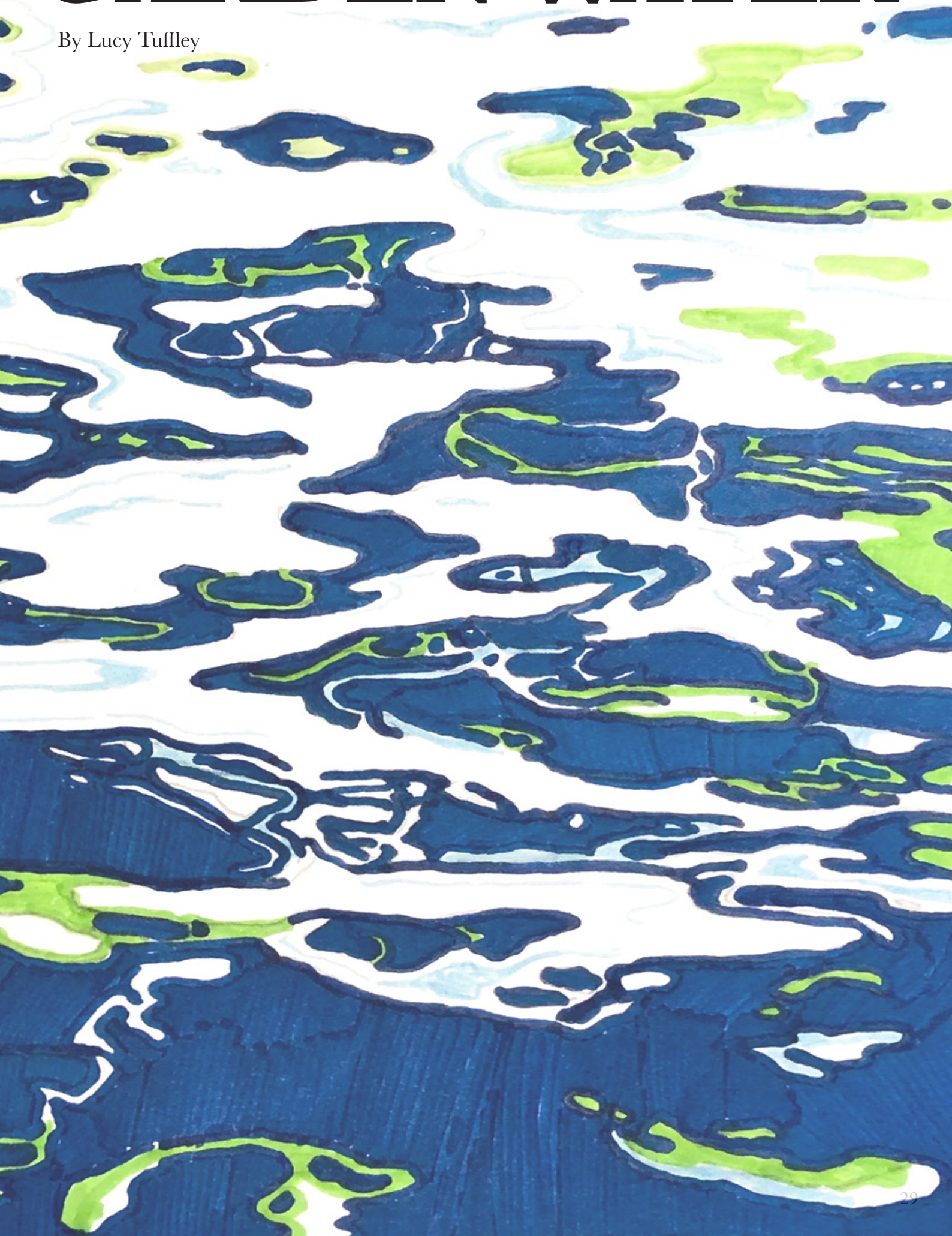
Introspective cinema.

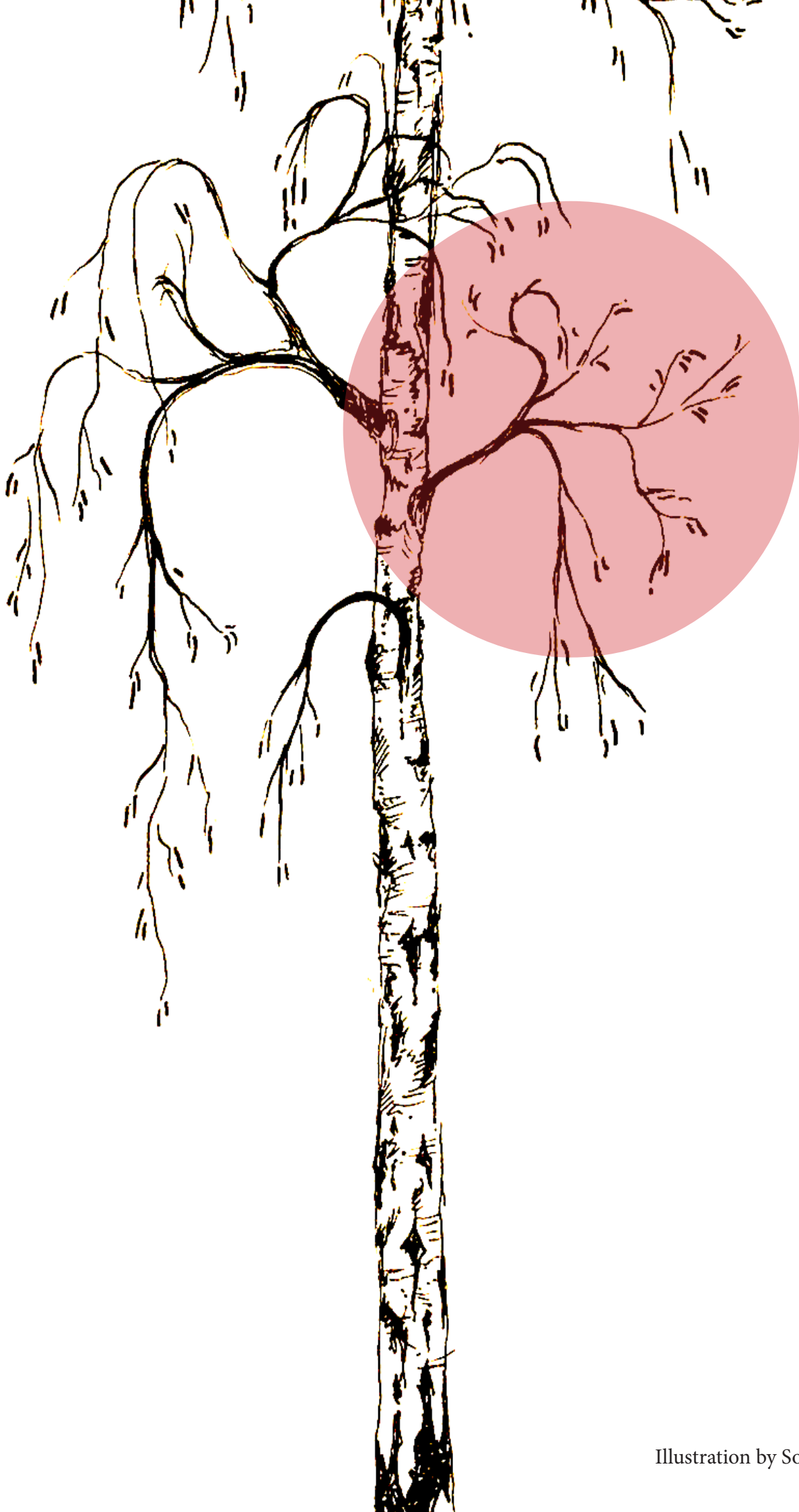
She pulled the plug, shut the curtains, and left the water to swirl awkwardly as the drain choked on the debris and petal confetti left unattended.



GARDEN WATER

By Lucy Tuffley





Climate Crisis: Ignorance is Bliss?

by Zuzia Sarlej for SUSCOM

Ecology used to be straightforward. Recycle your trash, turn off the light when you leave the room, take showers not baths. Taking care of the planet was brought down to simple mechanical acts, easily fulfilled, no questions asked, only the self-satisfaction that came with taking a bus instead of a car once in a month. Environment, hardly ever mentioned in the media or politicians' agendas, received just as little attention in the individual minds.

The change in the environmental narrative of the last 5 years, has made the saying 'ignorance is bliss' more accurate than ever. Suddenly, no matter what we do, it is not enough, the more people join the conversation about climate crisis solutions, the more (increasingly contradictory) opinions are formed. So long, energy-saving light bulbs, it is time for zero- waste lifestyle and electric cars. But is it? Why are we focusing on keeping plastic straws out of the oceans, and not much more on dangerous fishing nests? Are we actually cutting down on our emissions, despite unsustainable production process of electric vehicles? Is it even our (consumers') responsibility, to take a lead in this process of change towards sustainability? There is no one, simple and satisfying answer for questions like these, which leaves us drowning in the excess of arguments, doubts and options. The cognitive dissonance with which we are faced makes people seek different paths of coping with it.

The spectrum is wide, and it is difficult to explain for which reasons do we find ourselves at whichever side. Maybe it has to do with knowledge, sensitivity, sense of responsibility, or maybe something else. Some people panic, some are in denial, but the vast majority is just confused. It is confusion and anxiety that appear to be the main emotions in the era of climate crisis. The effects of it are difficult to grasp and gradual. It is not a sudden apocalypse, which, leaving aside the difficulties in choosing the right path of action, makes it even more difficult to decide - how much do I actually care? This question is vital when contrasted with the trends that ever more often appear in the environmental discourse - veganism, antinatalism, rejection of consumerism, to name a few examples. Perhaps this is a partial reason for different attitudes that we present. For some, the bottom line is the end of the planet, whether it be in 30 or 100 years, in which case, no matter how radical, action must be taken. Others, however, question if life deprived of its pleasures (as understood in contemporary society), such as travelling and consuming, is even worth living. What makes it even more disconcerting is the lack of culprit. Governments or corporations are most often in the role of villains, yet aren't we, citizens and consumers, most responsible for the course of their actions? Even if we are though, what are the odds that our single action will bring change? One less burger or new shirt will not reverse the damages, so obviously I will not change the world. Does it mean I should not even try?

Clearly, the questions are countless, and so are the answers to each one of them. The endless confusion arises from an endless debate between scholars, politicians and just people. No matter our stance (or lack thereof) in the discussion, everyone seems to be equally frustrated. So, faced with perhaps the greatest challenge humanity has ever encountered, what is to become of us?

I've been lonely, you know
never been good at keeping
staying, sustaining
another person, I'm projecting
while I still believe in
the romantic type of love
I don't believe it belongs to me
nor to most people

a love story

By Lourien Snoek

thought I could love
but her story tells me different
I was lonely for a while
needed to not trust sometimes
to strengthen my intuition
and it felt horrible
but I know growth hurts
and I have never felt worse

that's why I've been lonely
couldn't be with myself
around other people
I turned inwards
rolling my eyes back into my skull
looking at myself - and
I could be alone again

I can do it anywhere now
even with you around



Illustrated by Sophie Holländer

F R E E D O M

By Sophie Sutherland

You're afraid of the writing.
You fear the words you put on the page,
the meanings twisted and turned within the
grooves of the letters.
Every new sentence forming itself
brings a cold sweat and drip
drip
drip
the ink of your pen crosses the page.
You can't control the movement, the meaning, the metaphors.
It's alliteration,
It's rhythm,
Like the beat, beat, beating of a heart.
The words come alive.
Jumping off the page, rising overhead
They envelop you in the hard embrace of chains,
until you're no longer able to write,
You watch helplessly as the words join to
form the creature of your nightmares.
But it's not the words fault,
after all,
they simply brought to life your own creation.

You shouldn't fear the writing;
it is your own mind.

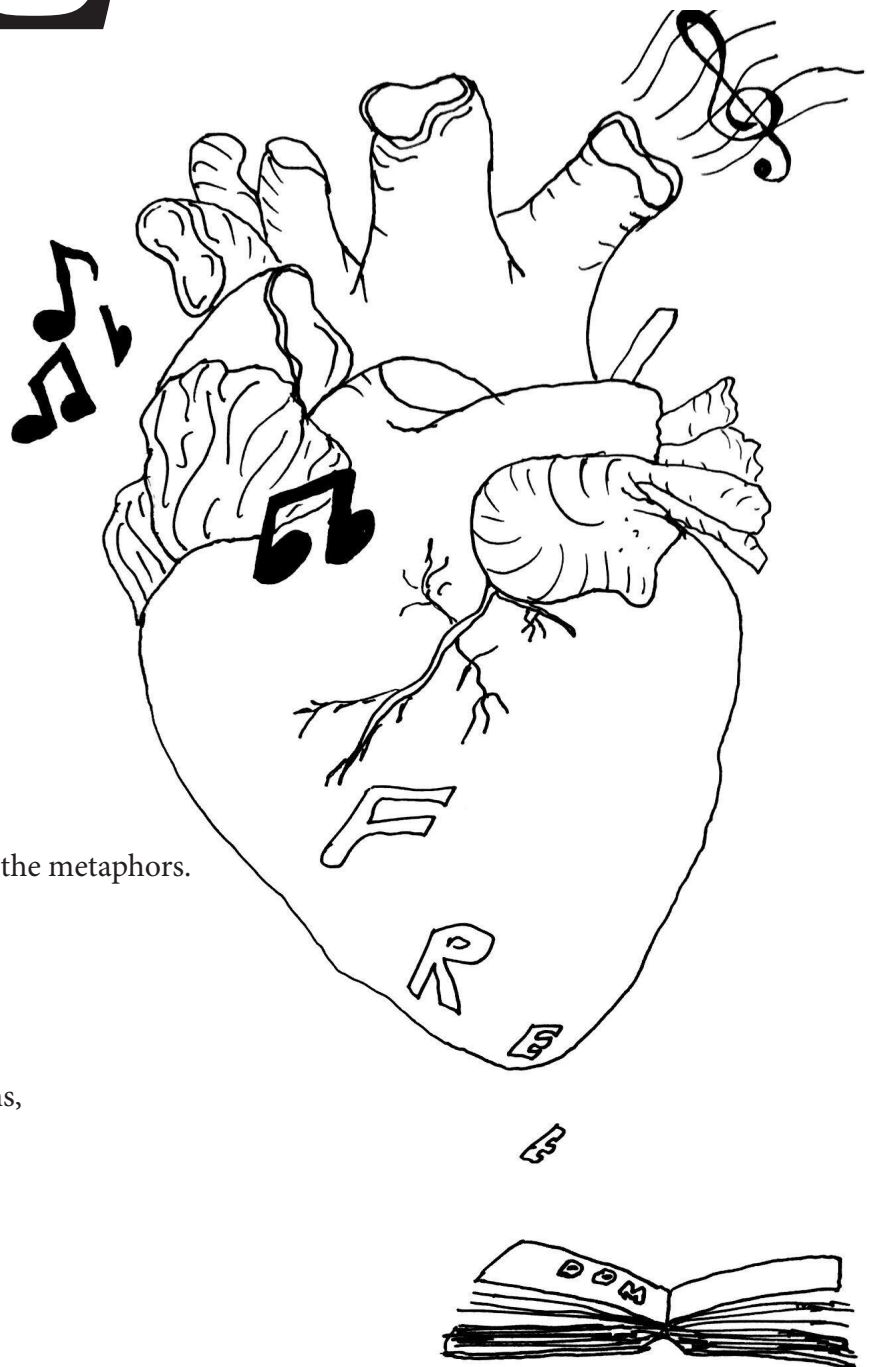


Illustration by Neda Summers

TR



QI

DJING HER WAY FROM THE DORMS TO AMSTERDAM

By Ana Luiza Loio

Way too many posters and pictures on the walls, a traffic sign hanging around and a table full of DJ equipment in the corner of the room. Upon entrance, the door was covered with stickers and it read “The Traphouse”. This is the four-person room where Iqra Nowshari, known in the AUC community as Triqi (pronounced ‘tricky’), lives and where she has hosted many of the parties she first played at. Yet, recently Triqi has managed to take her music outside the confines of the Bubble – and to get paid for it, too.

Walking around aimlessly looking for a good dorm party on weekend nights, many students may have encountered one where Triqi was mixing her house tunes – if not at the Traphouse, at parties thrown by her friends (or friends of friends). She may otherwise be known as the name who is frequently on the lineup of WebRadio events. But what most people in the Bubble probably don’t know is that Triqi started DJing only two years ago, when she first came to AUC. Though her first events all happened within the college community, around two months ago she finally landed her first paid gigs outside of the Bubble: vintage kilo sales all over the Netherlands.

Now a third year at AUC, Triqi was born in Austria and grew up in Dubai, Canada, and Germany but her parents are from Indian-administered Kashmir in Northern India. Having lived in Berlin for nine years before she came to Amsterdam, electronic music played a big role in Triqi’s coming of age. Triqi explains that she had wanted to start mixing for a while, but that DJing equipment is very expensive so she would mostly practice with her brother’s equipment back in Berlin. So when he surprised her with a Traktor S4 DJ Controller – which “is essentially a four-channel DJ mixer ideal for beginners” – as a gift for her birthday in first year, dorm parties became like her lab experiments.

“I wouldn’t be where I am if it hadn’t been for the dorm parties where I first started out playing at”, says Triqi. She adds that the dorm party culture at AUC gave her a chance to practice and helped her build confidence, both in an artistic and in a personal sphere. Joining WebRadio as PR manager in first year also gave Triqi the opportunity to hone her skills. “The first time I saw a CDJ, which is the club DJ setup, was at a WebRadio party in Studio/K,” she says.

Today, Triqi has in fact managed to move up the WebRadio ladder and she leads the committee as the chair. Chu (Chuyue Zhan), a second-year Humanities student who is today the PR manager of WebRadio says, “Triqi is someone that I look up to, as she knows a lot of people in the field and as she has been DJing quite often lately”.

But though her artistic side is evident, Triqi is in fact a Science major following the Environmental Science track. When asked about the challenges of her hobby she says that juggling her gigs and classwork is definitely one of them. “Second semester last year there were weeks when I would have three gigs in a week. So sometimes I’d really think it’s a bit too difficult,” says Triqi. She explains that she used to accept every dorm party gig she would get. But now for the sake of her studies and because she thinks it’s time for other AUC music talents to take advantage of these opportunities, she usually refers people to Chu.

Only recently did Triqi manage to expand her music’s reach outside of the Bubble. She has played at vintage sales in Utrecht, Leiden, Rotterdam and Groningen. Her recent gig history also includes some

underground parties such as Queer Night at Cinema of the Dam'd in the beginning of November, and an arts festival called 710 Festival last July. But when asked about how people find her, Triqi responded that this is a “good question”. Though a bit unsure, she thinks it might be through connections with other local artists that she has made through WebRadio. For the vintage kilo sales, she came into contact with the organisers via a Facebook group called Our Houz.

Last October, Triqi landed her biggest gig so far during the Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE). Playing at Pollux Pacific, a boat venue in NDSM, alongside some well-known names in the house scene such as Move D seemed to her like a big step. She was recommended by her internship boss, Morrison Bramervaer, whose environmental NGO she did research for but who also happens to be a DJ and producer himself. “But the event itself was kind of a flop because there weren’t that many people,” says Triqi. She had also hoped to connect with the other artists who were playing, but that didn’t really happen as everyone seemed to stick to their friends. She explains that though this was a bit disappointing, it is just part of being a DJ. “I don’t think it was a setback, I just think it was an unlucky event. I was really excited, but stuff like that happens. I’ve played for other empty dancefloors some times before”, Triqi says.

The ADE party also wasn’t a major setback because Triqi is quite certain that her future career lies in the Sciences. Though she has indeed come a long way as a DJ in the past two years, she plans on moving back to Berlin and pursuing a masters in Global Geography after graduating from AUC. She believes it would be difficult to stand out and make a living out of music in Berlin, where the music scene is so intense. Her friends, however, are not so sure of that. “Since day one I said she would be famous one day, changing people’s lives on the dancefloor, and stand by that belief even more today”, says her friend and third-year Humanities student Carla Kay.



But what if the opportunity for a successful music career arises? “If somehow I got all the right connections and played at the right parties and got the right promoters’ attention, I would definitely want to do it professionally,” says Triqi.

Photograph by Passion Deez

MOTHER

The air smells like fish blood. But Gaia does not mind. She peers at the colorful stalls that saturate this vast market, observing the gilled creatures laid out on beds of ice.

Gaia's children have many names for her; they discuss her in chirps, yowls, pheromone trails. Before her moonfish children rode many a Pacific wave to this Kauaian market, they uttered her name in bubbles.

We call her Gaia, Thorani, Pachamama, Houtu, Coatlicue...

But she is always Mother.

Sometimes Mother is essence, a cloud, a breeze caught in your hair, a crater; but today she is 47 with crow's feet, periwinkle nail polish, and flip flops.

Stepping out into the sun, she observes all of her clueless babies and craves drama.

She ponders, "What will it be today?" Will she conjure an earthquake? An eruption? Perhaps a tsunami?

A golden gust sweeps her attention towards the warm earth below. To the earthworms that permeate her; the ants that bicker and prod, tickling her feet. Water percolates down through screaming stones that erode and compose her.

From the corner of her eye, she spies the violent gleam of the sea, the black beach, and more of her children idling. It's us! With our bellies in the sun, trying to change color, wanting to change form.

We are more than a jarred, static thing; never one without the other.

Mother planted a seed in her chest and from it sprung... us!

Argentinian Alfajores

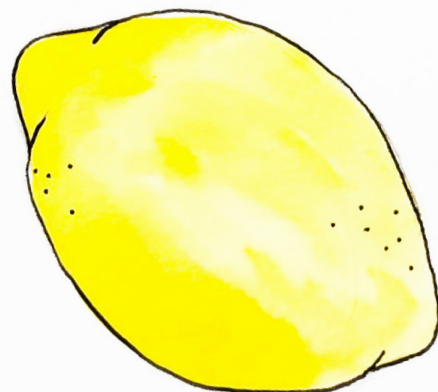
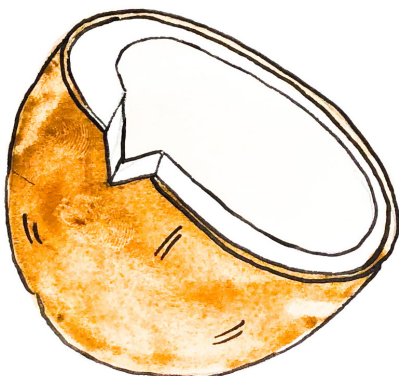
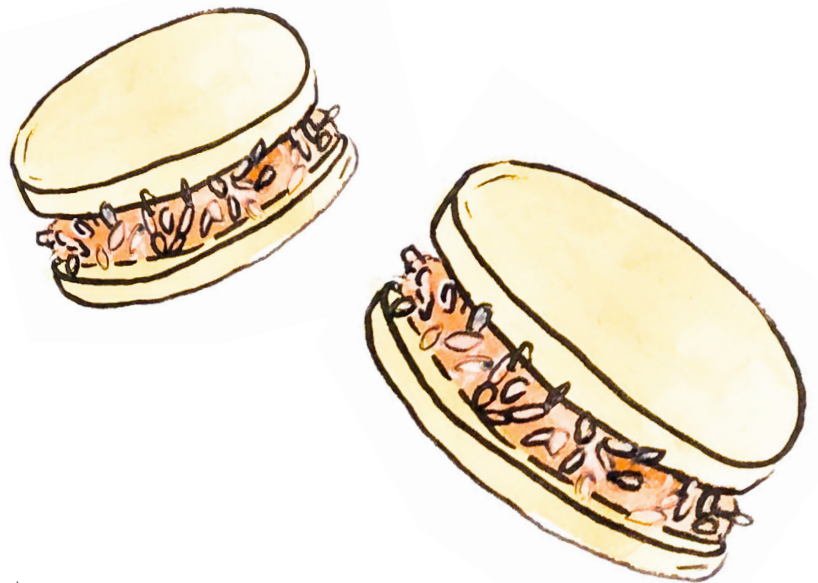


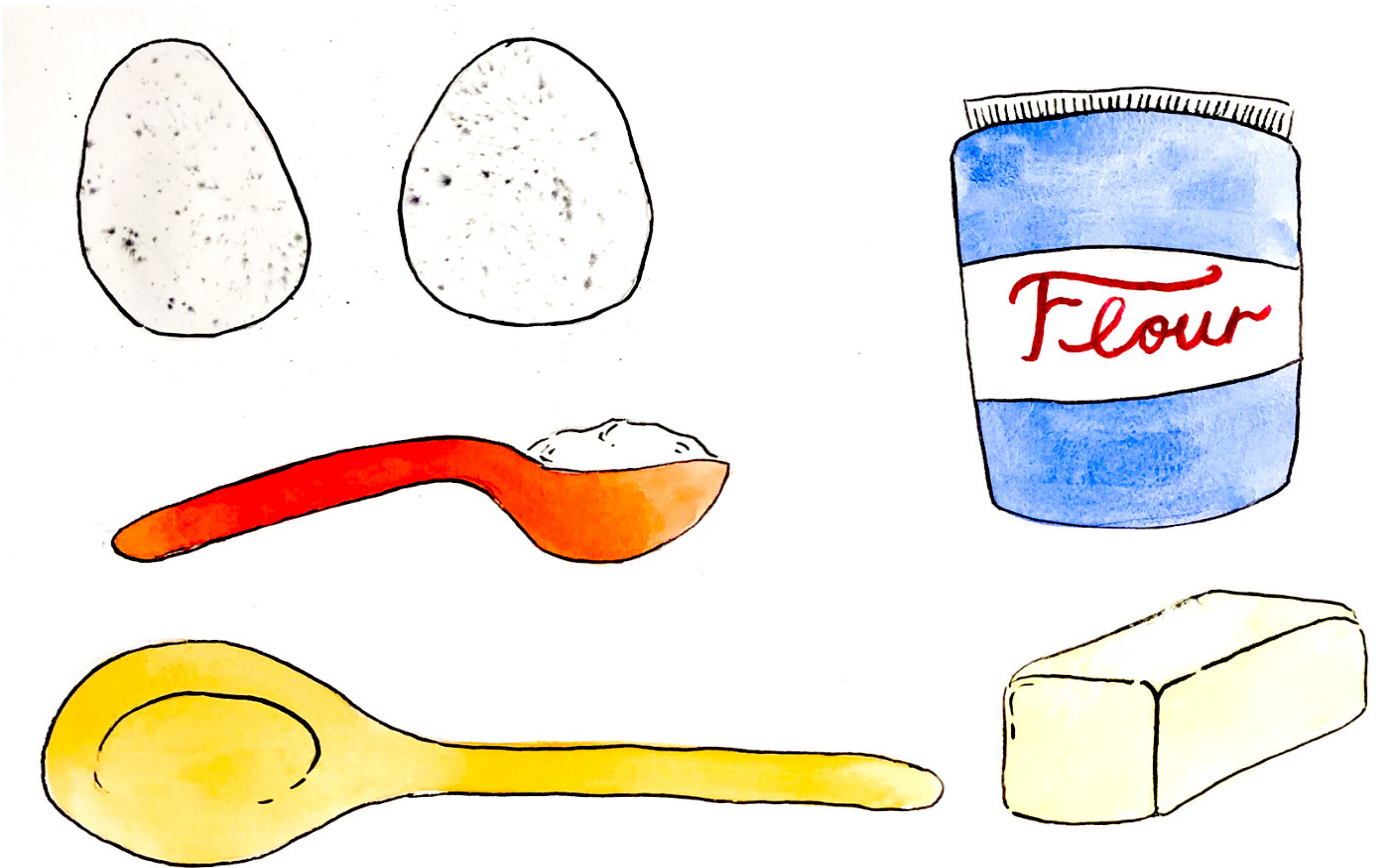
by Cuisine

These dulce de leche filled cookies will keep your heart and soul warm this winter
(Yields 10 alfajor cookies)

Ingredients :

100g butter
100g powdered sugar
2 eggs
1 egg yolk
1 tsp vanilla essence
1 tsp lemon zest
100g all purpose flour
200g corn starch
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
Desiccated coconut
Dulce de leche (or sweet filling of your choice)





Illustrated by Sophie Holländer

Method:

- 1) In a bowl, combine the butter and sugar and whisk until sugar is well-incorporated into the butter. Add the eggs and the yolk one by one until the mixture is creamed.
- 2) Whisk the lemon zest and vanilla essence into the mixture.
- 3) In another bowl, sift together the flour, cornstarch, and salt. Mix until thoroughly combined.
- 4) Gently fold the dry mixture into the wet mixture until all ingredients are well incorporated.
- 5) Cover the newly formed dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for an hour.
- 6) Divide the dough into two equal parts and gently knead them back together to develop elasticity.
- 7) Roll the dough to a 3mm thickness and cut into ~7cm diameter disks with a glass rim or cookie cutter.
- 8) Place the disks onto a buttered and lined baking tray and bake at 180°C for approximately 10 minutes.
- 9) To build the alfajor, put a spoonful of dulce de leche onto a cookie and stack another cookie on top to form a sandwich. Roll the alfajor on a bed of desiccated coconut to cover the rim.

SCRIPTUS TIP: Dunk the cookies in molten dark chocolate and cool in the fridge for extra yumminess.



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