

a collaborative journal



muse



Second Nature



half-alive - TIME 2
Jean Dawson - Pirate Radio
Arvo Part - Fur Alina
Noah Kahan - Strawberry Wine
Lucy Dacus - Modigliani
Fonshee - Candy Grapes
Haley Wilkins - Parachute
Conan Gray - Holidays
Mozave 3 - Pictures
Harry Styles - Satellite
Clairo - Second Nature
Jeff Buckley - Opened Once
Jake Munch - Dad's Song
Olivia Rodrigo - Deja Vu
Daniel Caesar - Moon
Bon Iver - Nocturne
Bark - Breathe Death
Type o Negative - Love you to

Gigi Perez - Sailor Song
Selena Gomez - Guess You
Benry Blanco - Could Say I'm
in Love
Lanbey - Lover Girl
The Favors - The Hudson
Pomme - Alto Alto
Lorde - David
Lord Huron - Bag of Bones
Eric Whitacre - October
Bon Iver - Staring Love
The Format - Half Roller
Leon Bridges - That's what I
Blanco White - Love
Wolf Alice - Olalla
Blondie - Current Toys
Fiona Apple - Paper Bag
Noah Kahan - Howling
Ghost - Dance Macabre

Second Nature

Dear Muse, ☆
Here we are - autumn! ☆
The third issue of
this little zine project has
had me thinking back to
childhood, girlhood,
how the world shapes us.
Reminiscing - unearthing.

Something about this season
just feels like a blanket,
a song, and a diary. ☆☆☆

I hope you love Second Nature -
making it has been so much fun! ☆☆

-Dani



Lately I'm Loving



crocheting scrunchies

sunlight patterns



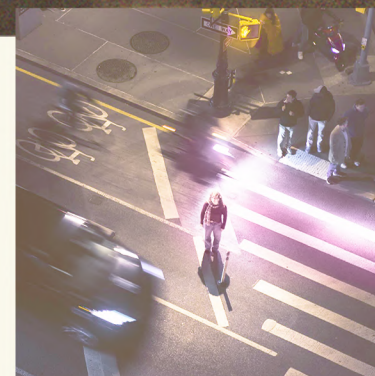
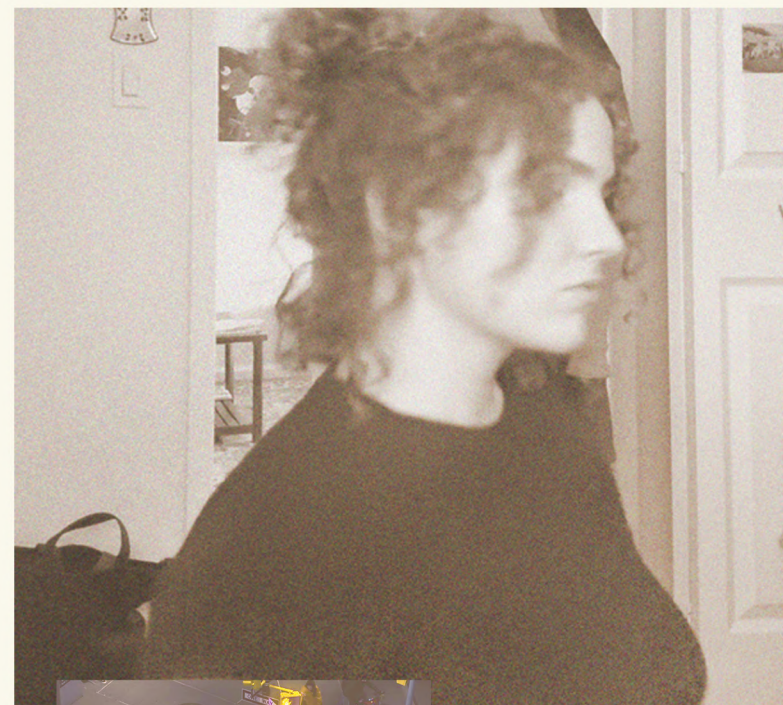
seeing repurposed playing cards???



personalising things



calendar stickers for morale



On October 18th, I listened to **The Hand** about seventy-three times. **Annabelle Dinda** is an American musician with a gift for writing songs that feel like tough love; a punch.

A natural storyteller, she weaves imagery and symbolism with melodies that will live on loop in your head for days, weeks - maybe forever.

Her tone and style is reminiscent of Alanis Morissette with a pace akin to Paris Paloma, but the complexity and reflective nature of Annabelle Dinda's songs gives her music it's own kind of magic.

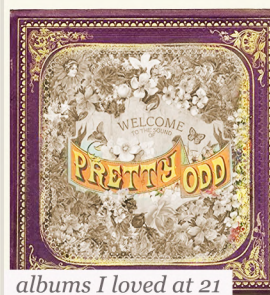
Also listen to: **Logging Field**. Only if you want to be musically heartbroken in the best way. Music video visuals overleaf from **The Hand** - **Annabelle Dinda**



plied & prejudice!



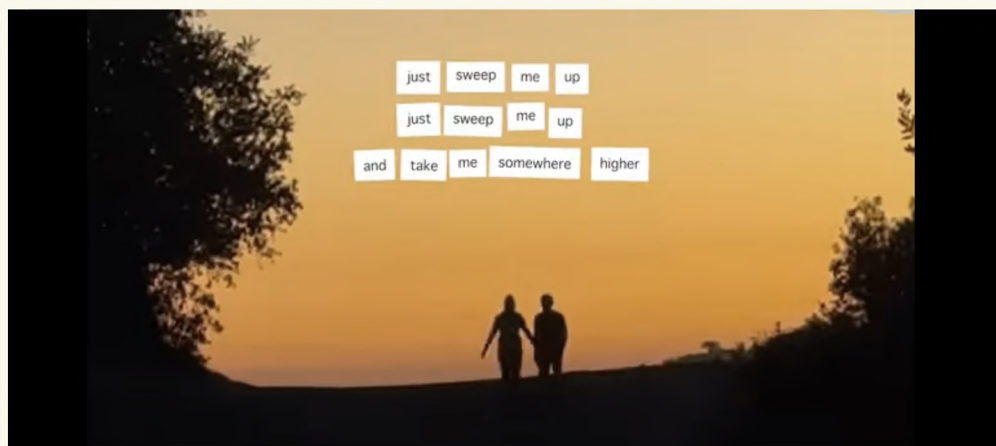
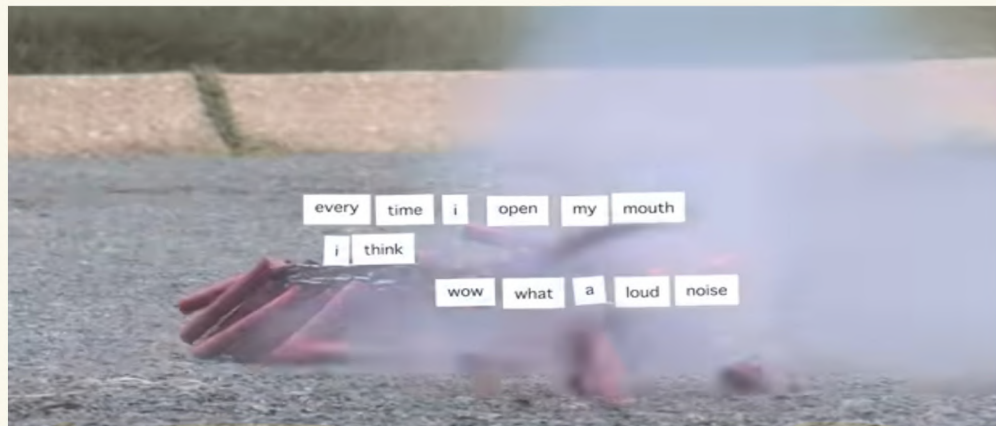
clay projects



albums I loved at 21

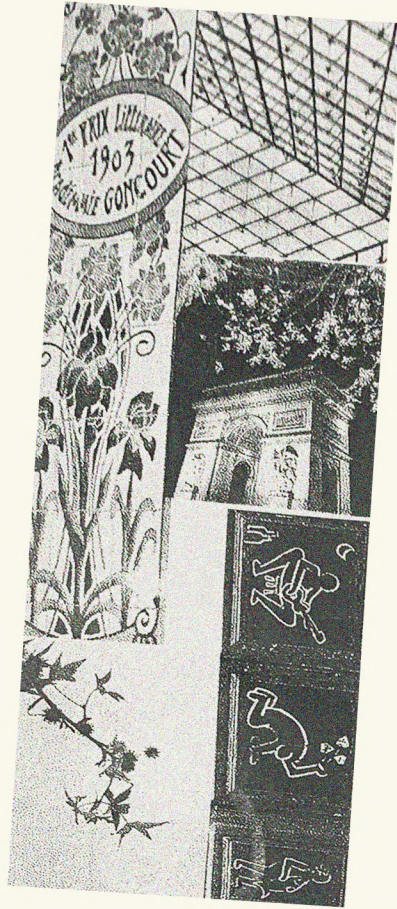


happy plants <3



Harriet
K.C



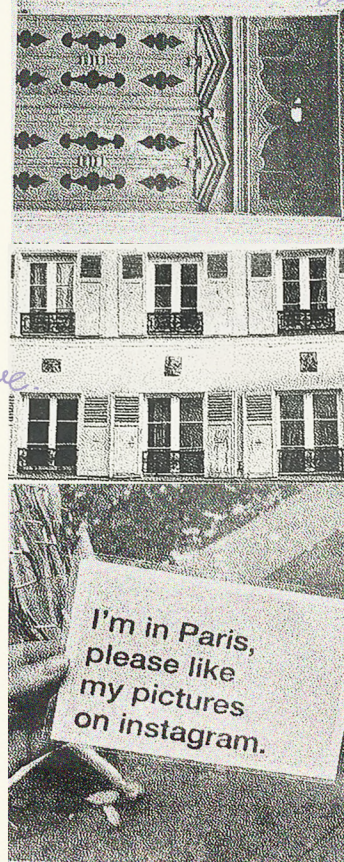


These shutters were baby blue
or lilac. Lilac - blue &
pretty

Caveau de la Huchette

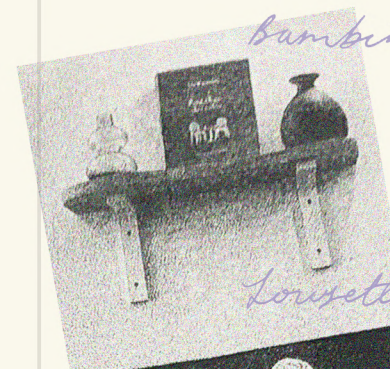


claiming people's love
looks as my own?

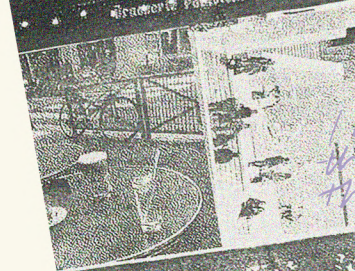


I'm in Paris,
please like
my pictures
on instagram.

Bambini - get the bear
hot chocolate



Louizette - future middle
name for my cat



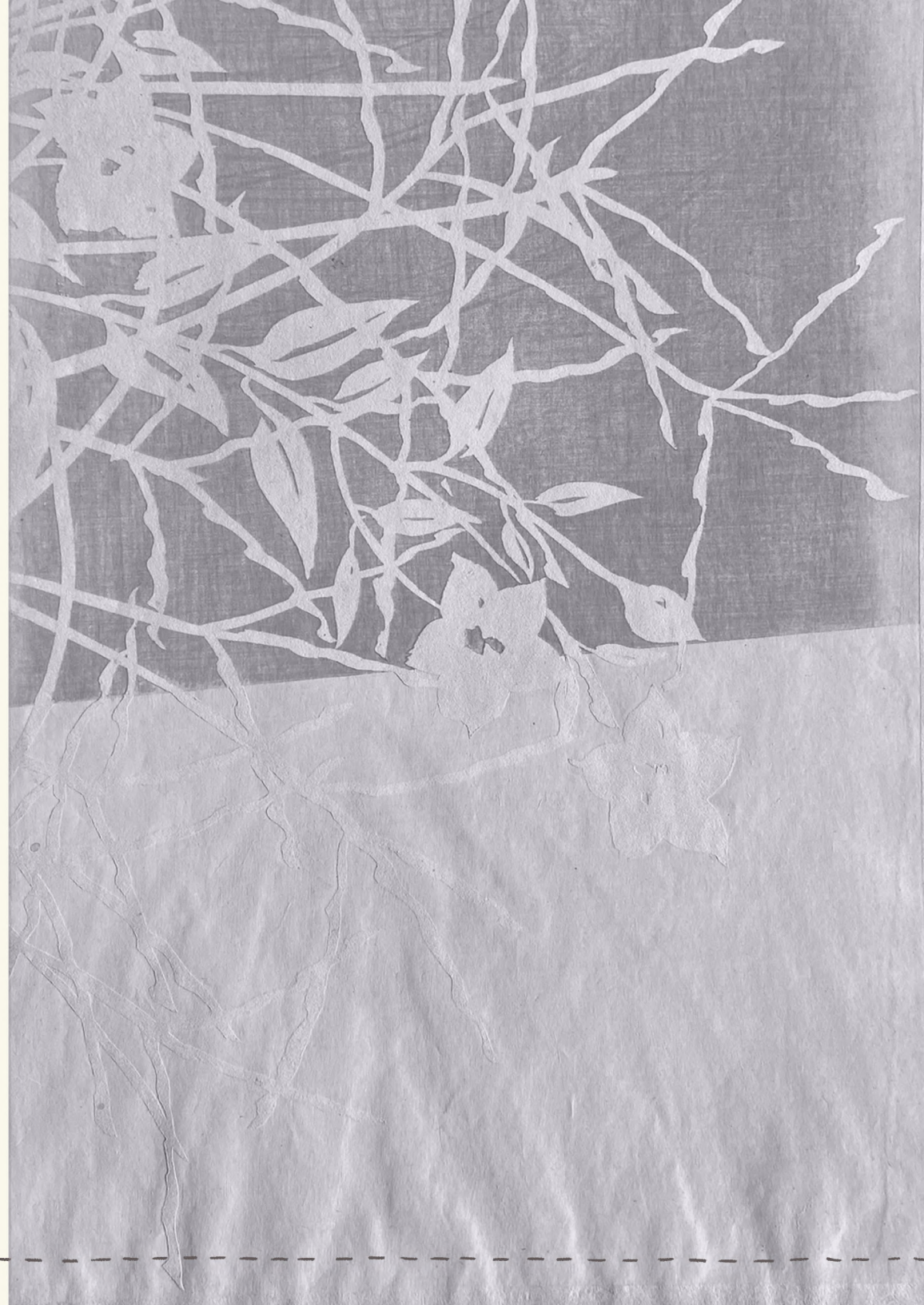
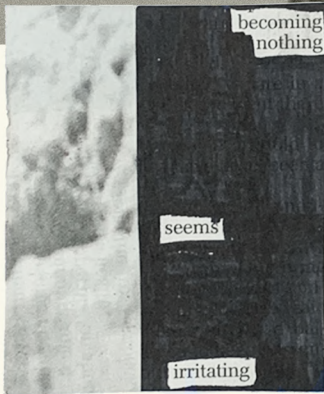
I love sitting in cafes on
the street and watching
the world carry on by...



pretty doors @ Louvre
-so many details ♡

84
hours

in Paris.



what reminds
you of home?

the smell
of rain
cozy blankets
wild
birds

orange
peels
dust,
cicadas

grandma's
recipes in
her inherited
dishes

raindrops,
chordate,
blankets

it is
imperative
that we
hope

a specific
scent of
hand
soap

my teddy
bear,
cinnamon,
2010's
music

warm
delicious
food

the sound
of waves
and
jasmine

ocean,
city,
island

reborn
fresh
nostalgic

inward
roots
cozy

cozy
warm
floral

slow
& ainty
warm

autumn mood
in three words

unfolding
cozy
relief

chilly
sunsets
nature

comfy
calm
sweet

nostalgia
surrender
cozy

melancholy
hope
cycles

long,
warm
hugs

what are you
learning /
unlearning
this season?

unlearning:
running away
from things
that scare me
learning:
take all
chances!

coming
home to
myself,
being me
again

learning to
manage
my time &
not feel
guilty
using it
for personal
interests

to live
slowly
and
with
presence

putting myself
first in all
relationships & stop
allowing disrespect

trusting myself
more to
make the
right decisions
for myself

that
change is
okay

take things
as they
come &
be present
each
day

only
respect
those who
respect me
back

Muskan

Born and raised in Ottawa, Muskan is a South Asian-Canadian writer and musician. Currently living in Brighton, UK, she writes with authenticity and truth, curious about the human condition and perspective.

What does your creative process look like?

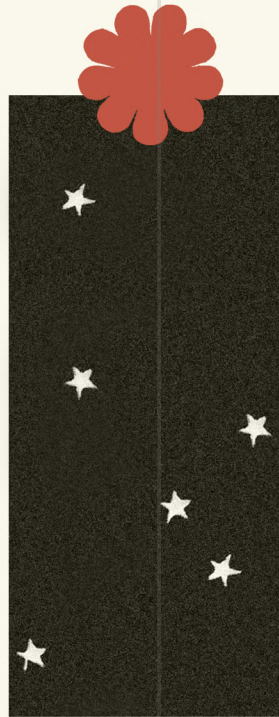
The first step is quite simple: it's just me, my instrument of choice, and a crap-ton of voice memo recordings. I really love to write primarily by improvisation. There is something very relaxing about sitting on the couch with a candle lit, strumming whatever feels right and rambling words. When I used to live with my roommate or my family, I'd often quietly whisper sing to myself late at night. These days, I sing whenever something comes to mind until it catches. Then I'll start to tinker on those lines or melodies, I'll write the words down in my notes app, or even incorporate old ideas into my songwriting session. I like the process because there is a lot of madness to the method, and as a person who loves to be in control, not knowing where I'm headed creatively can often lead to the best places.

I like to think the next stages of my creative process is where the magic happens. These ideas that live in my head are actualized into something bigger and better. About four years back, I started



working with my producer, Hayden Arp, who is a huge reason why my music exists for people to hear. He is someone I am always learning from and who understands my visions so much that I wonder how lucky I got on my first try. Working with each other involves a lot of emails and calls and ideas being sent back and forth, especially because we live in different parts of the world. This year

I actually had the pleasure to go to Vienna and meet him in person to work on my latest single, submarine. I normally record my vocals in the cramped comfort of my closet or room, so this being my first time in a studio was scary but such an incredible experience. I got to engage with a side of music production that I hadn't fully explored before and absolutely loved every minute.



Could you tell the story behind your music, how did you begin?

To be honest with you, I'm not fully sure how my music story began. One thing I know for certain though is I was always a music lover before anything. I think many people in my life can attest to the fact I have an obsession with music beyond comprehension. There is something about this art form that captivated me from a young age, and although I am not the most technically savvy person—music had struck a chord within me that used to be empty. I love taking it all in,

sitting with it, hearing what artists have to say and how they say it. I love all the different forms of music: the ability to dance to one song and in the next sequence, to be heartbroken over it. I love how songs can put feelings in words and sounds. That's really where it started. When I learnt that I could make music to satiate my own tender and raw emotions was the true game-changer though. I would say it started to pick up the most after my sister moved

away to university. Sometimes life feels like it's coming at you rather than from you, and there were a lot of difficulties I was going through that I struggled to find the words for. I remember bringing my sister's piano into my room and finding comfort there. Every day after school, I found myself back in that zone: playing the same four chords over and over and letting the words find me instead of chasing them. It was and still is a safe place for vulnerability and catharsis to live together. I loved the process so much, I became obsessed in a whole new way and never stopped from that point.

If you could speak to your younger creative self, what would you tell her?

Sometimes it can be hard to believe in yourself and your capabilities. I think that has always been something I've struggled to remember, so if I could speak to my younger self, I would tell her that I trust her and that her worth does not stem from her accomplishments.

With everything said and done, I truly just want her to flourish and be herself because she is good enough. I'd tell her to stay whimsy and imaginative and believe she is capable. I'd want her to dare to dream even if it all folds over because it is okay to care too much and to be a try-hard. Caring makes it all the more important. Because what's the point if you're not putting your entire being into the things you love? It doesn't mean you have to be good at it, because if you love it, you should continue to do it. Just be you, because you are cool in your own right.



Music you're loving lately? *★*
kansas anymore (the longest goodbye) has been my favourite album of this year. on repeat in my house at all times, no skips at all.

What feels like home to you? *★*
it's really hard to pinpoint for me, but peace reminds me of home.

Current small joy? *★*
evenings spent playing patchwork (the boardgame), listening to house music and drinking chocolate banana smoothies with my partner :)

If your music was a colour - which would it be?

it sounds silly, but i hope each song gives off its own colour. i always factor that in with my album covers too!

your music in 3 words... *★*
introspective, raw, messy





I don't want a love like the movies
because I'm afraid that I can't love right
so I keep someone who holds me while I
dance around the kitchen with the matches
Unfinished letters in my bedside
I've been changing but old habits keep tight

I know I've stayed in the past tense for years
but the bruises and scars just won't heal right
and I'm scared to witness the autumn leaves die

I promise that I am trying
cause I know you deserve someone better

So I'm learning to be her

What inspires and excites you creatively?

Something that will never not excite me is when an artist is not afraid to be completely and utterly themselves in the creation of their art and when they aren't afraid to step out of the box creatively. When you can tell they have executed a vision they personally love, it always brings so much inspiration to me. I love seeing how someone's mind has brought them to a specific outcome. When art is real and messy and tender. Art that truly inspires me is the art that dares to be what it wants to be despite any and all expectation. In this day and age of non-chalance, I love art that proves otherwise. Someone unafraid to be themselves (also because I think, as many of us do, I still hold those fears of being different and unique and cringe). I just love seeing the joy that is creation. I also get very excited over art that can make you feel, or that is authentic and genuine. I find it fascinating that we can be moved by

words written by people we don't fully know. To be reminded of the human experience, to relate and to see how someone who has lived a completely different life to your own can make you feel seen is something I have always really clung tightly to. I think it's where my obsession with songwriting started, how creation mostly begins as something for the person making it and how the second it is released into the world, the music becomes more than that. It is not just yours anymore, but it's like an embrace through art. And still, there will always be pieces that only belong to the artist, and that's beautiful. In my discography, there was something really special about knowing that there were very specific reasons why I chose the words I did. And that maybe, me being the only one to know them is also okay. There will always be pieces only I know, that are all mine. But other pieces that are ours and I find that really lovely.

Do you have a favourite song or project of yours, that is closest to your heart?

For me, I see submarine as my most emotional song. It was something that taught me a lot about who I am as an artist and what I stand for. With music, I tend to follow the waves of emotion rather than a classic structure. I've always been quite self-critical about it - but submarine is a song I've always felt deeply for, even when it hid in my voice memos. This song really solidified my ability to trust my creativity and to choose the music I want to make rather than what I believe should be made.

It reminds me of a quote I saw recently that said, "what is the point of a first draft if not self-indulgent?" It got me thinking about how first drafts aren't for the audience - they are for you. This is what submarine is for me. The song matures as I did, the lyrics flip-flopping between before and after, because as you move away

from an event in your life, nothing about it is black or white. You want to hate a person, but you still love them. You are angry but you care. Things start to get blurry, and all you know is that to love is to be understood, and for a time, these two people understood each other and now that is gone. What do you do when it disappears? I think finding a way to articulate the messiness of it all was difficult but meaningful to me. There was so much I wanted to say with submarine, but there was also so much I was scared about in the process and in confronting those feelings. So when it was finally time to record vocals, everything hit me like a truck. As I started screaming the final lyrics of the song - all this frustration and fear spilled out and I finally could let go of what three years of feeling and writing and making it my own built itself to be.

Find Muskan's music on all platforms, and read her writing on Substack



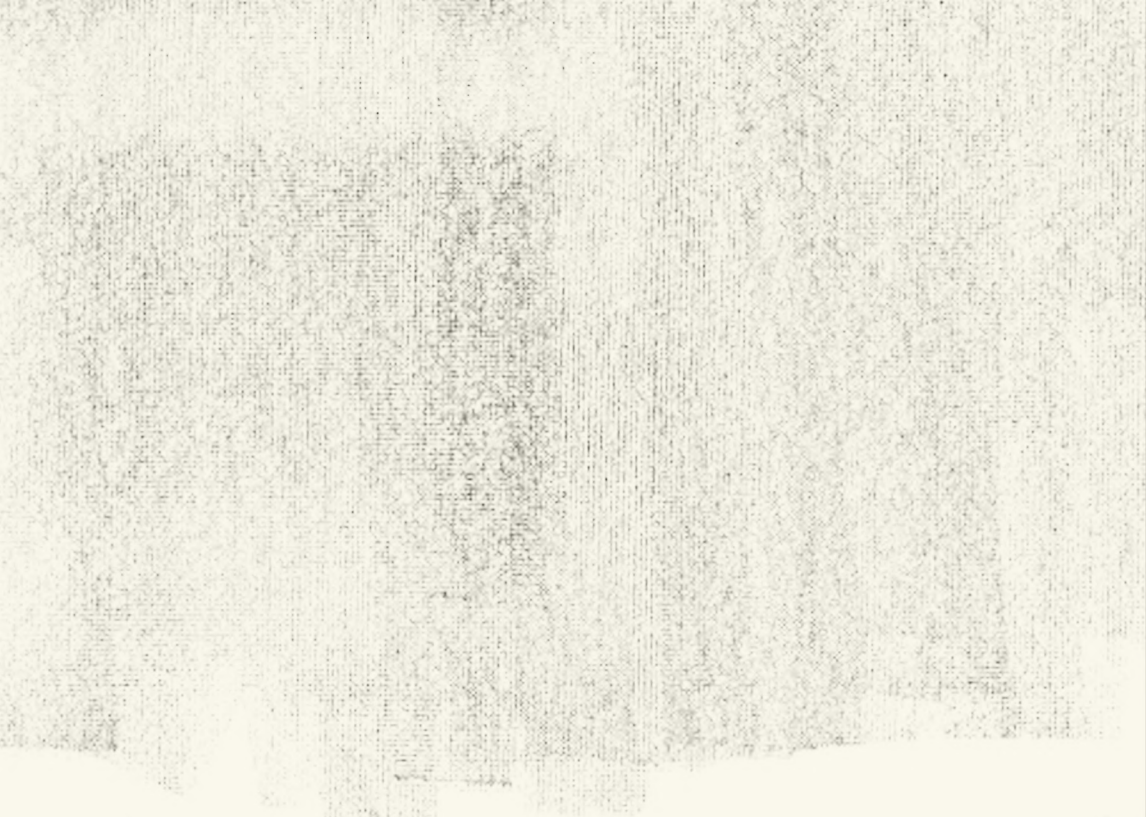
First

In your kind bed is where I wake up first,
The venetian blinds cause the sunlight to intersperse,
I pour your tea first and stir affirmations in,
My cup used to run empty when I first began
to provide men with a perfect people pleaser,
because he wouldn't make my tea or his own either,
He didn't bring me any sunshine; he just brought the rain,
and on occasion, I got a pewter overcast day,
With you, I forget about checking the forecast,
You proved that all bad weather comes to pass,

Anytime we happen to be under the stars,
Your head is thrown back, looking for hours,
Castor and Pollux, Eros and Aphrodite,
Changing natures from our constellation's duality,
Three years we've now been connected together,
Sometimes you're caught in my capricious weather,
Negative ideas that suddenly start circulating,
A doubt that evolves rapidly into ruminating,
I confront you with a teary heart and heavy eyes,
You take a deep breath and affirm that you're mine,

You've been here before, it's all too familiar,
You see through the mist, making sense of the peculiar,
It comes out of the blue, when I get the mean reds,
There's pounding in my chest and pain in my head,
I look for exhaustion in your expression,
I curse myself, I should have learnt my lesson,
Searching frantically for a signal or sign,
You shrug off my worries and say it's all in the past,
This isn't the first or second or third time
But it could be the last.

Ariana Whiteford

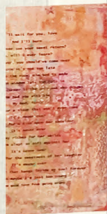


'I can't wait to grow up!' Is what they say. In the sunlight,
Unbeknownst to the hardships of life.
Laughing until tears are streaming down their faces,
until they don't run to unknown places.
They dance in the rain like a free bird,
not afraid of being heard.
They didn't care if they were seen,
as carefree as one has ever been.
Playing silly games even in the dark,
never losing their spark.
But they don't know how the skies would turn grey.
How they would worry about how much they weigh,
how much they have to pay,
how their spark would stray,
And they won't be able to find a way.
Maybe,
'I can't wait to grow up!' is the dumbest thing they say.

Karin

out past the firs,
beyond the alley of live oaks,
west of the pond-
in the place where the sweet you smell,
is either flowers or decay-
either way.

Lou Deschamps



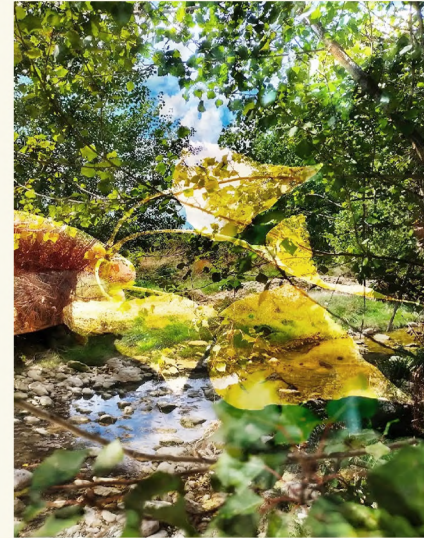
I tilt my nose toward the sky,
breathing in the soft weight of now.

In the stillness I remember:

Love is not lost in the fall.
It lingers in the turning,
in the promise of where the leaf may land.

Autumn holds me whole -
a season of reflection,
a quiet renewal.
A reminder to be here,
to be loved.

Olivia Rose



In the time of change,
the landscape is turning
yellow and leaves are
falling apart. While you
walk, you dance with
nature and you breathe
the damp air filling your
lungs, feeling free.

In the time of autumn,
red hues cover some
fruits, and your sight
connects with them.
Your heart pumps
faster, stronger, and you
feel the aliveness that
reigns in your body.
And a subtle thought
caresses your mind
saying: "Live. At last,
you are carefree"

*Mariam Wamba
Pànica*



I imagine myself made of mud... thick, wet, flexible, timeless
melting through the density of an adobe wall
Tightly squeezing out to the other side of boundaries
Resisting change for an ever fleeting moment of sorrow
And at last,
Freeing essence from the confining quality of this world
Becoming Light
Being Light
Freeing Light
Allowing a gentle breeze to thin out my thoughts
And then,
Blow them away over a vast ocean of peaceful clarity
Mindfully, continuously, and forever

Carmen Ruiz



Carmen Ruiz

Life's Bounty

On days like these, I fear
for the apples growing
in the afternoon sun.

Their heads so high up
in the branches, unconcerned
with earthy ground.

I picture how they will fall,
follow the autumn leaves,
will decay, reek of rot.

How would they know,
busy basking in the warmth
of this passing season.

Watch them bloom and prosper,
over and over, until the crown
is decked with golden bounty.

They linger in youthful bliss,
laugh in the whispering breeze,
as the wind rocks their cradle.

I fear, for they will wither,
as do we, become wrinkled
and soft in all the wrong spots.

Yet, when fog fills the air, a sea
of clouded thoughts, all there's to see
are the shining bulbs up in the tree.

On days like these, I wonder
if it might be time to fall
in love with being naive again.

Alison Ehringer



Divya

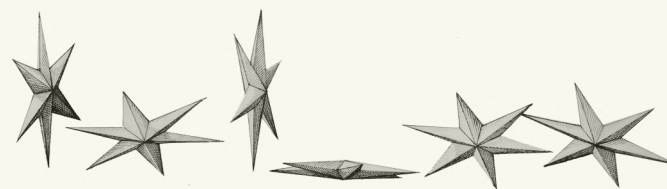
Oak

In Summer, the live-oak stands tall, swaying in her dominion. branches fill to the brim with leaves waxy and oblong. She grows them knowing they will fall, knowing they will die. An ecological act of resistance. Yet the cycle repeats itself year after year, she relinquishes herself to the will of the season. Her wide stable trunk snaps in Fall hurricanes. Charred and lifeless, she lays across the forest floor. In Spring, oak shoots rip from ground, dancing along a mother's corpse. They push away her broken pieces. Is a mother still a mother to her children once her children become herself?

i am the leaf the tree the twig the branch the thorn i am the wind
the water the world i am the one true self the fire the pyre
the saved the sanctified
i am the end and the beginning
the fruit the womb the blood
i am the wood the thorns the branch the twig the tree
i am the leaf.

Each cell slowly decays, replaced, now new. The cycle repeats itself decade after decade, further removing you from yourself. These are not the feet that carried you past the threshold of night, into days ahead. Each day passed, each cell lost—a sacrifice to be who you are now. If my body has changed, and I only have memories in-common with myself, am I still me?

Carolina Gutfreund



Everyday Altars

Trinkets on a shelf, a fireplace topped with flowers, art propped on a window ledge. Allowing yourself a place to collect, gather and display is a small way to appreciate the everyday - somewhere to keep your treasures, big or small. I've been thinking lately about the tiny shrines we make without realising. The bowl where keys and loose coins gather. The corner of a desk where receipts, doodles, dried petals, and half-written lists begin to stack. Even the clutter we promise ourselves we'll tidy holds a quiet significance. It's a record of the everyday in motion; fragments of a life. Maybe this season, with its early dusks and softer energy, invites us to build these tiny sanctuaries. Autumn has a way of turning us inward and makes us want to gather... Thoughts, objects, ourselves. Altars are a simple way to create and cherish intention. What I love most is how it doesn't take much - just to slow down long enough to recognise the significance in the smallest things. A feather, a postcard, a scribbled note, a stamp. The world is full of tiny offerings if you let yourself find them, and give them a place to be treasure.



Papilio Neptunus, Guér.

creepy crawly

don't try and kill your grief
stinging metallic reminder of life
catch it in a cup and let it outside
let it crawl around the patio
and find it's eight legs
for that grief has a belly
full of flies and feelings mispronounced
to squash that creature
between trembling fingers
is to instead kill your love
numbing metallic absence of life

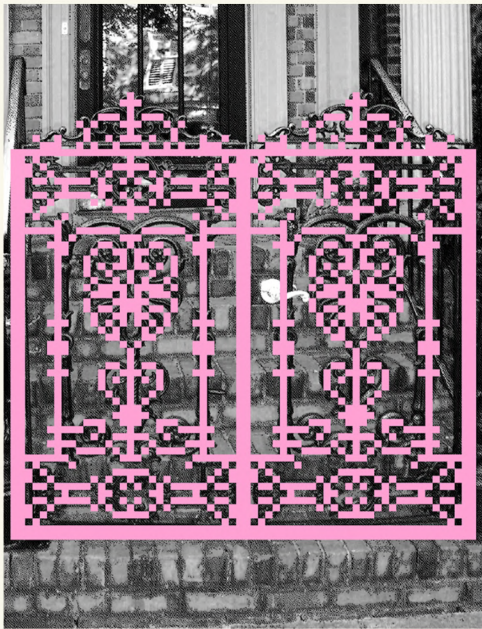
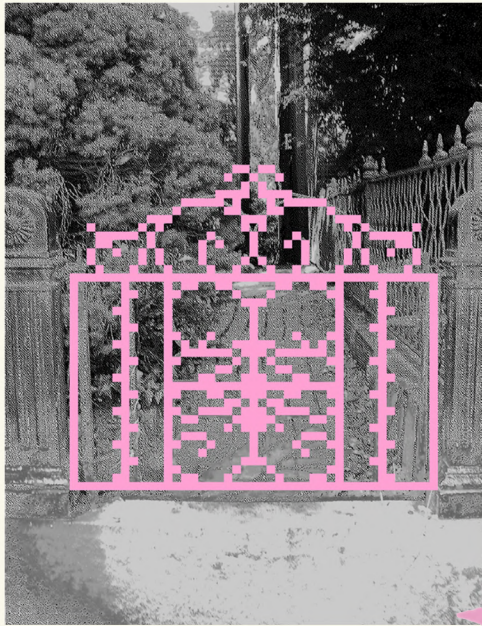
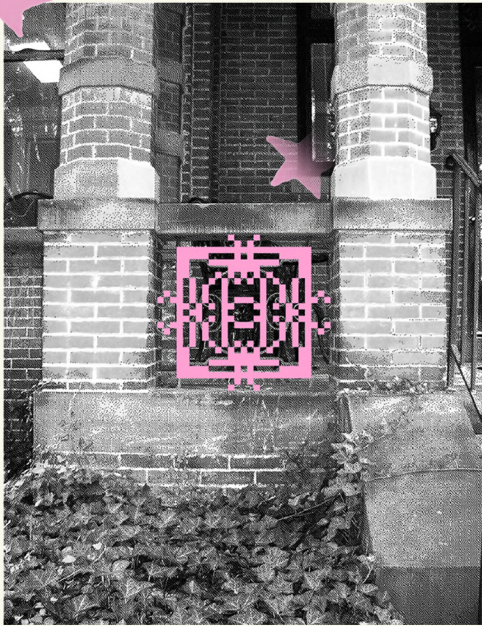
Holly Allsop

When Autumn Comes

Autumn comes in gold and brown and I turn bare, curl in on myself, fruitless and barren. My summer self sits stagnant while she is stripped of her crown of evergreens, the wind blows and she bends to him. Twigs and thorns tangle in her hair, leaving unpleasant memories like bad dreams. an oaky aftertaste in her mouth. Each year she sheds her glory, and I am left alone. The love that sustains fickle, fernered, fair weather friends spills its last drops, parched and withered through her branches, and with nothing left to drink, they fall to feed elsewhere. Again, I am naked. Cyclical, we weave around each other, a dance of our seasonal selves. I count her gains while she counts my losses, exchanging pennies and pleasantries, she wishes me good health as I weep and whither, creaking relentlessly in futile release. My roots keep me tethered to this Earth. And while I am stripped of lovers and companions, Mother Earth made me well, she sowed me as a sapling and watered me with tenderness, so I might grow and withstand the death of parts of me. In Summer, she will bloom again and laugh at this sorry sight, pitifully glancing back at what once was. For now, until the sun starts to shine on my back, I will reminisce and long for the blossomed soul I used to be. At least here, I appreciate each fibrous root that stems from where Mother Earth established me, the ones that strengthen me within, wholehearted and unwavering. They will keep me warm while the world waits to cover me over

Lois Frome





*Taylor Elise
Columore*



Holly Jackson

Consume

Oh, to be loved by a writer—it's everyone's dream but not in everyone's fate. For being a writer is easy, but being a muse is next to impossible. That is what the world doesn't understand, what it mocks and ridicules us for. Writers are not like others. We are not measured by logic or clarity. We are not tethered to the earth like mortals who live by routine. When we love, we do not love gently or passively. No, we love like a storm, consuming everything in our wake.

What the world fails to see is that when we fall in love, we don't write to sing praises. We don't write to confess or to seek validation. We don't write to prove the depth of our feelings. No, we write because there is nothing else left to do. We write because love is no longer a choice; it is a state of being. Every day without you feels like drifting in an endless, empty sea. My muse consumes me so wholly, so utterly, that even breathing without the thought of you feels like a betrayal of existence.

We write because we are lost. Lost in the head, lost in the soul. Love, for us, is not a gift. It is a punishment. Writers don't simply fall in love—they fall into obsession, a deep, all-encompassing need. It's a tether that ties us so tightly to the object of our affection that we no longer know where we end and they begin. And more often than not, the muse doesn't even know of our existence—or worse, doesn't care. But somehow, that indifference doesn't break us. It fuels us.

This pain we carry becomes our lifeline. Maybe it's twisted, maybe it's wrong, but it's the only thing that keeps us alive. We are addicted to it. This ache that consumes us becomes the proof that we're still breathing, still human. We were not made to live sane, balanced lives. There is no joy in that.

What is the meaning of waking up every day without purpose, without something that burns inside you? No, my loved, I need you. I crave this madness. It's a fire that warms me, even as it scorches everything I once held as rational. It's not a dream to hurt this way, but it is my reality. My fractured soul needs you to make sense of itself.

I see you everywhere. The wind that grazes my face whispers your name. The colors of the seasons carry your presence. Every note of music, every fleeting shadow—they all speak of you. And if I can't find you, I create you. My mind forges your presence in every corner of my life because I don't know how to survive without it. I don't know how to face the emptiness of the world without chanting your name in my head.

I don't live as others do. I don't need their logic, their gods, their rules. I don't even need air—my breath begins and ends with you. I have been banished to your shadow, cursed to see the world through your eyes, even when I look at myself.

And yes, this frightens people. They see me as a fool, as someone consumed by madness. They tell me to move on, to love nature, to embrace the world as it is. But they will never understand. What do they know of the joy, the agony, the divinity of being consumed by someone else's essence? What do they know of worshiping someone so wholly that they become your universe?

I need no skies beyond because my heaven lies in your existence.

This is what people must learn—that love should consume us. To love, you must abandon all pretense of control, all notions of balance. One must love as a poet does—wildly, recklessly, completely. One must live as a writer does, devoured by their passion, unable to separate their soul from their muse.

Because what joy can there possibly be in this life if you don't spend it chasing the unreachable, yearning for the unattainable? What purpose is there if you don't ache for something so deeply it leaves you shattered? For me, that something is you.

Perhaps this is madness. Perhaps it's a kind of doom. But for me, it's the only way to live. To burn with the thought of you, to drown in your absence, to let my soul be consumed by your shadow—this is my love, my obsession, my curse, and my blessing. And I wouldn't trade it for anything in this world.

Saranya Bhat



ode to those who hurt and healed

you cannot separate me
from my first love
or my childhood dog
from Superman ice cream i don't like
anymore
and from the tomato soup and grilled cheese grandma
made on rainy days

taylor swift was a mere name
and dreams were traced in sidewalk chalk
on the sun stained pavement of my cul-de-sac
life was simple but maybe it's not as complex
as i make it

i began to study the stars
on our trampoline on clear nights
and now i study the astrophysics books on my shelf
as though they hold the key to life itself

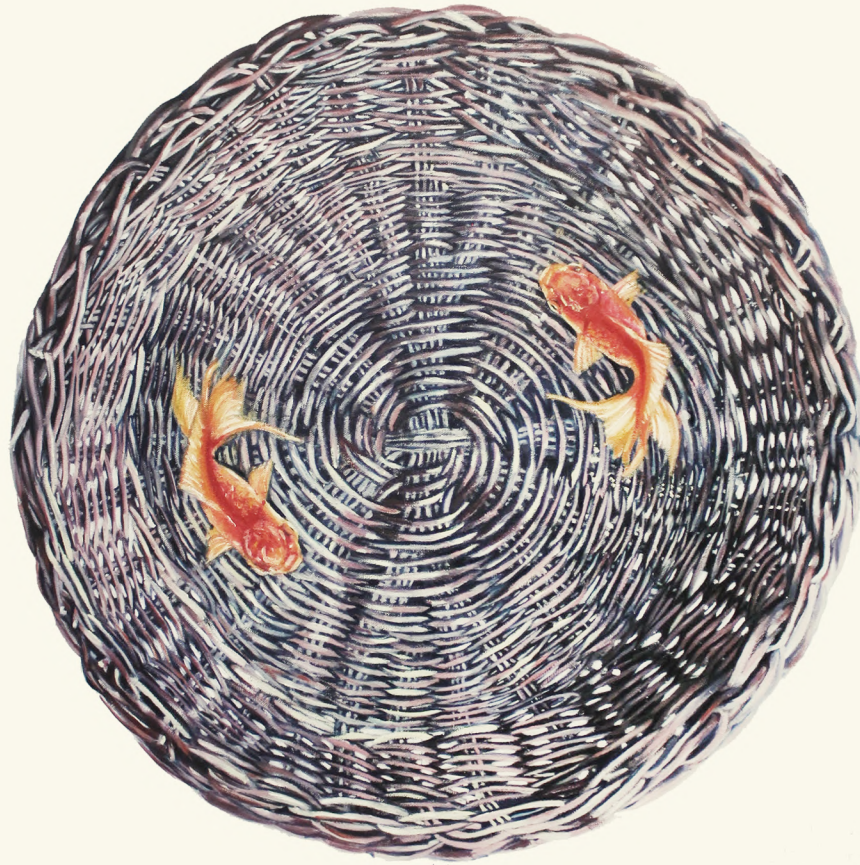
i am still the young girl
who was told she was ugly by a boy at the playground
and when the girls left me out of playing princesses
i became who i am today
you say i am beautiful but their voice rings in my ears

the clock marches forward, the hour nears
when i must go to bed
eight o'clock is bedtime
but now i sleep at two am
while the nightmare i had in preschool
haunts my early morning wake ups

i am still the girl at the movies
who watched with gentle awe and laughed
too hard at
every joke
a teenager told my parents i made the movie better
so sometimes i bravely laugh when
no one else does

you say you love me, only me,
no one else
but who am i without the
tragically beautiful past
that has shaped
my very present?

Sophie Leavitt



Sheida

Inosculate (marriage trees)

Hey love,
This song reminded me of you, the lyrics resonated with me
so I looked for more music that I can find you in, to find you in the tunes.

Hey love,
This playlist reminded me of you, so healing, selfless,
so beautiful it runs smoothly off the brain, a calm I can't explain.
Just like the way my love for you is far too much,
that i can ever express through words or gestures or touch.
My love for you is more than what I can humanely express,
it's as if my love extends into another dimension, a whole fortress.
My love, is it the afterlife? I feel for you even in the afterlife.

Hey love,
Am I memorable? Do you get that sensation too?
When you hear or see something and it reminds you of me?
I get it all the time, it's not something that is new.
You're a puppy lying on my chest, unintimidating, tiny and squishable.
You were made for cuddles, you give the best of them.
Your puppy dog eyes are zooming into my soul,
I won't let you go like this, you're mine.

We're attached at the hip.
Adjoined, never to remove
Like the inosculation of two trees.
Whereas to be grafted, someone playing God would had to have plucked
2 plants from different locations
Joining them together so they can continue to grow as one, forcefully
I believe we just naturally formed this way,
2 trees in close proximity
that fused on its own
It's often called "marriage" trees
They say it's uncommon, a biological oddity
But can't they see?
We're interlinked, we came out the womb with our souls tied with red string
Cut my roots, I cry,
you cry for me and I cry for you
We feel the same pain
You sure as hell know how to love hard without the desire for gain

It's getting late, my bones are tired from the cold
The rain falls everyday.
I think I'm starting to like the cold like you do, the way you like it's play
The sun makes me feel sticky, skin covered in sweat
With the rain, my skin feels untouched
and the coldness brings comfort
I'm becoming so much of me
What if I'm becoming you too?
But becoming is becoming, what else is there to do?

Gondra Lewis-Cox



Alarms

Why are you afraid of alarms?
You ask me this every time I jump when your phone wakes us up

Why am I afraid of alarms?
You wouldn't understand
You wouldn't even care

Why are you afraid of alarms?
You weren't there when the screeching filled that tiny white room

Why am I afraid of alarms?
I didn't know If I was going to see tomorrow
And I wish I could say I wanted to

Why are you afraid of alarms?
I had a tube shoved up my arm but it couldn't keep me alive

Why am I afraid of alarms?
Code blue echoed through the halls
Like the steady drum
Beating
Beating

Why are you afraid of alarms?
The doctors sprinted in yelling for something I couldn't even pronounce

Why am I afraid of alarms?
I lost hearing in my right ear for the next three months
But I almost lost something more
I almost lost my life

This alarm signaled a flatline
Crossing the monitor

This alarm signaled the last time
They thought i would ever breathe

Hearing is the last thing to go
I know this now
I could hear the alarm long after I could feel

Hearing is the last to return
I came back after almost a minute
I could no longer hear the alarm
But did I want to?

So now let's answer your question
For one final time
Since your confusion means more than my mental state
Your wish is my command
And here is the true reason why

Why am I afraid of alarms?
That was the last thing I heard before I died

Caroline Gilroy



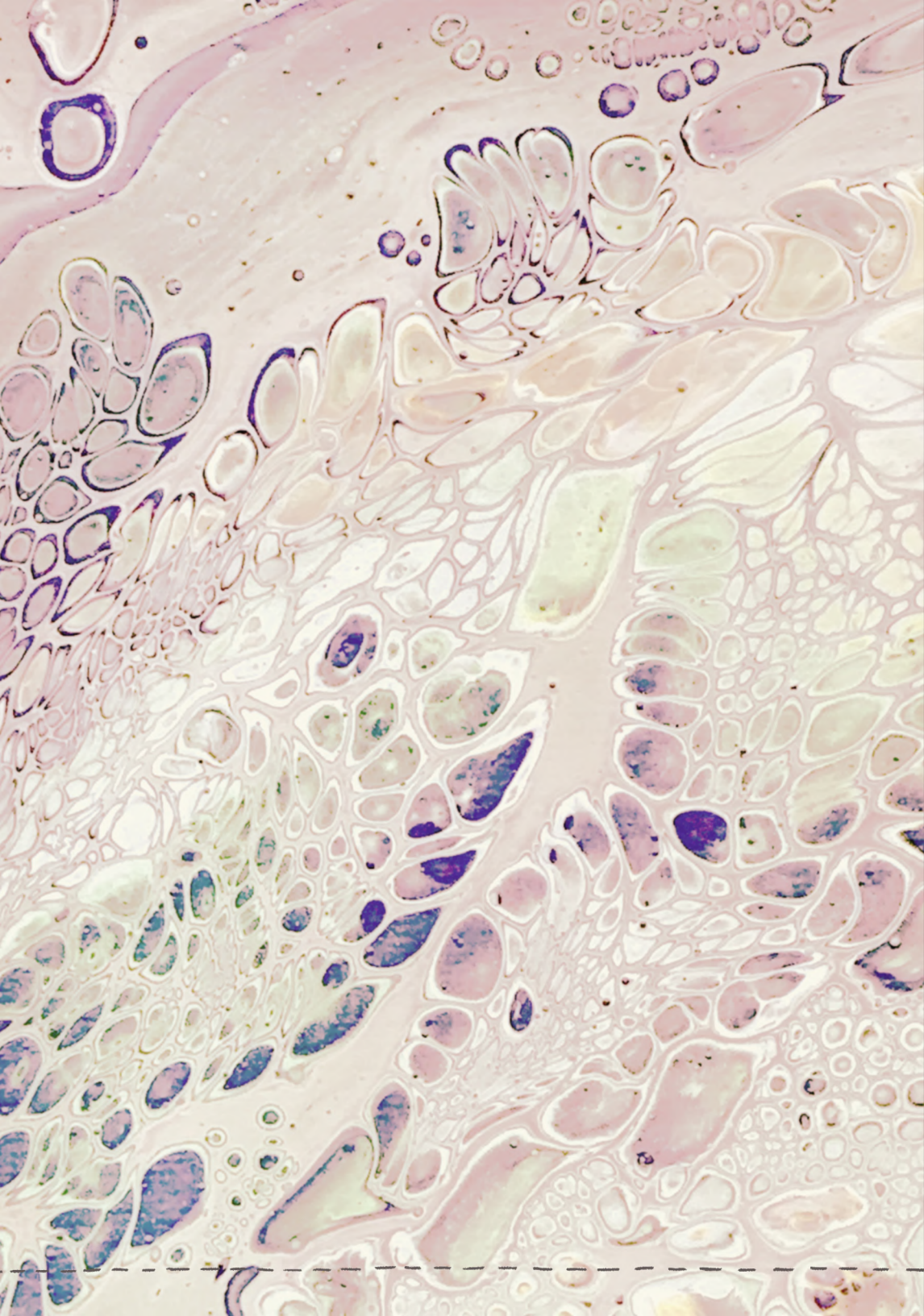
Molood Jannesari



Carolina Gutfreund



Mike Jones



I am but a droplet of water
Cycling through the phases of life
Through thick and thin
The good and the strife

Not following nor leading
Giving into the flow
Listening to my instincts
Letting myself grow

I am a cloud of steam
Rising to new heights
Heating up with passion
Not afraid of flight

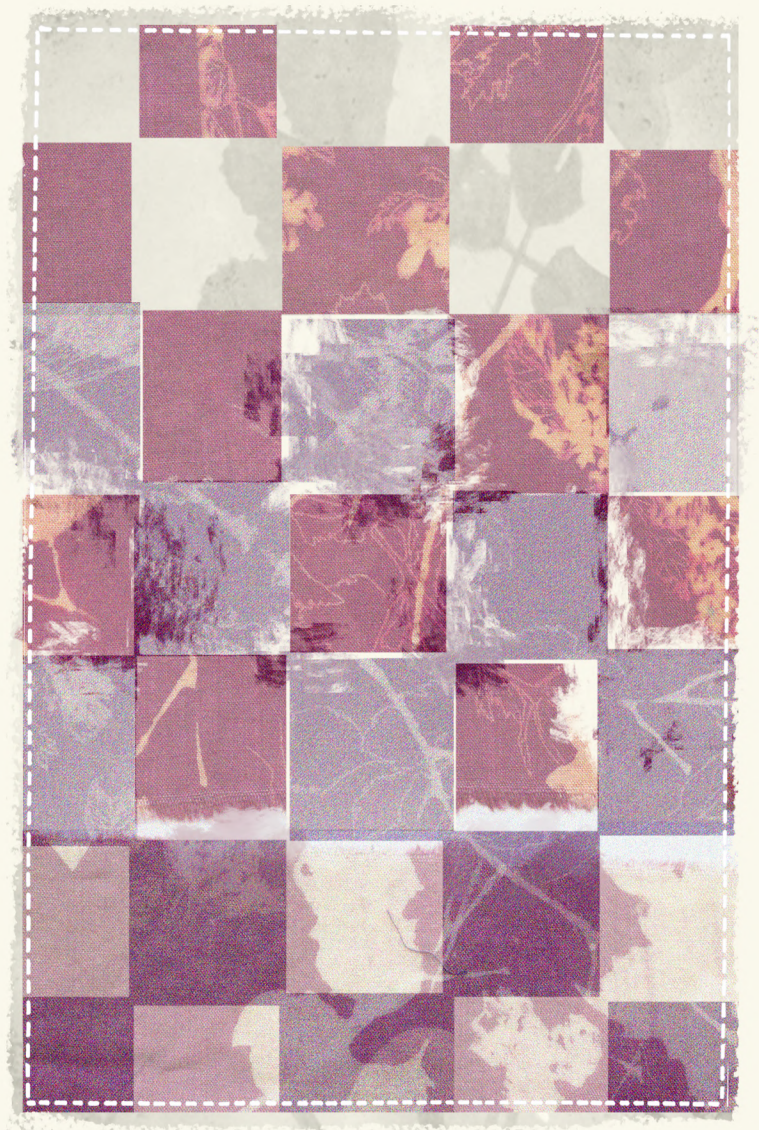
I fall with the rain
Accepting when the time comes
Letting go of expectations
Even as the thunder drums

I freeze over a pond
Expanding and staying strong
Taking up the space i deserve
Which I should've done all along

I ebb and flow
Through life's crossroads
Always changing and adapting
No longer scared to implode

As I cycle forward
I don't know where I'll go
Listening to the universe
Empowering myself to glow

*Samantha
Murphy*



Patchwork of Love

There is a blanket in front of the mirror. A patchwork of colour coming together to form something new and beautiful, complete in such a way that removing one piece would cause the whole to unravel.

Looking to the right, an acquaintance with an auburn patch is made. It's square, an imperfect one, made up of old movies, watched in a dark-lit room on a crappy couch. A father's affection in teachings of how to fish on gloomy mornings on the Mississippi coast. His occasional neglect, not perceived as such until years later, in weeks of eating only Lunchables for dinner and the badmouthing of his ex-wife. The tenderness of him staying up for hours in front of the trailer he lived in, like the guard dog of the trailer park.

Left of the auburn square, one can notice a velvet, plum-coloured circle. Pristine, made up of sewing lessons with a perfectionist grandmother, to the tune of Elvis Presley. It's attached to the rest of the blanket in gold stitching, made up of French lessons by a woman who never got to live out her Parisian dreams and had opinions far too loud to keep in. Specks of grey are scattered over the luxurious fabric; made up of constant critiques of everyone, a perpetual smoker's cough and graphite-coloured eye pencil.

Gaze moving, slightly lower lies a leaf-shaped moss-green patch. In the soft fabric hide countless hours spent hiking around US national parks, a grandfather's hand clutching tightly the one of a kid. Behind a dark green thread, making up the details, stands the scolding for a kid's carelessness, always with good intent and tender in its own way. A grandfather's love, captured in grainy film strips, in front of the Grand Canyon.

Next to it, in the center of the blanket, a dark blue patch, behind which you'd find countless teenage tears, wiped away by a best friend. Hair braided sloppily by still inexperienced hands, while watching Taz-Mania at the ripe age of six, popcorn everywhere. The embodiment of girlhood in late nights, filled with laughing until it feels like guts might spill out, and hushed secrets, night sky open to hearing it all.

The pieces of fabric start getting smaller: a cream one, made out of the love for writing due to an 8th-grade English teacher, a row of different shades of orange-coloured fabrics- writing exclusively in cursive, much like a favourite artist, making coffee in a moka pot, a gift from an Italian exchange student.

Patch after patch, they weave out in a wonky spiral, perfect in its own imperfection. If one steps back and follows it with their eyes, they would see a loose thread. Stepping further away, it becomes apparent that it isn't a blanket at all, it's a person, complex, but not yet fully formed, waiting for the patches they will collect by the end of their life.

Anna Chakarova



Judita Juknele

Feast of Our Lady

I, maiden fledgeling, plumage downy grey:
Consonant to intermittent cloud, clinging stubbornly to summer sky
The rugged mother country: brought to double life
Marigolds, their cycle fleeting, faces cheerful,
And winding riverbank turned ripe.

Here be the bait: a sprawling garden long-untended:
Feathered purple moor grazing varnished apron
And the dome-crowned tree: near bloomless
And burs of jagged green, embracing their bough.

Her bare bones still: clad in slimming shroud
Sitting stalwart, sockets vacant at the head
And her mirror: reflecting naught but glinting jewels
Of tourmaline, an abstruse noose
Draped about delicate collarbone.

The stately feast, foraged through tremors grip
Taproots pilfered from their promised harvest
Meager ghostly fingerprints – tainting tender flesh
And splintered urn of potent palliative not yet prime
Gurgling atop waning orange flame.

The entrée: bradan rich and dripping pearl
Raised under wing of river deep
Preceding mutton pluck, encased in pall:
Humble haver, incendiary spice, and tablet
Tawny, crystalline, and of our sandy strand

Keen eyes, conker-brown, once anchored in her orbit
And soft stomach, neither depth altogether sated
Tempted, those same precious stones as fruitless
In death as in life.

And yet another beckons, skin of rose-wax porcelain
But ovate faintly gleaming is well past its renowned prime.
Though forever moored to devil's lonely sculpted throne
A single finger twitches unheard warning
Sharpened core at odds with polished silver spoon
But for now, I – the vulture,
Will not moult and soar alone
For her feast of features was consumed by autumn's eve.

Anstice Maren



Carmen Ruiz

Muskan Thakkar

Holly Jackson

These photos are a literal interpretation of second nature whilst exploring themes of endings/new beginnings. There's also a photo of one of my cats, because spending time with animals is second nature. My cats are the thing I look forward to the most every day.

Molood Jannesari

My artistic purpose is to amplify the voices of women who endure pain and hardship, yet whose strength and resilience often remain unseen.

Samantha Murphy

Taylor Elise
Colimore

After a year of living in Richmond and taking many evening walks up and down Floyd and Grove, I have familiarized myself with all the neighborhood cats, but also admired the architecture throughout the neighborhood. I find the ironwork particularly charming

Alison Ehringer

Sondra Lewis-Cox

i write from both lived experiences and external inspirations. i'm an artist but when everything feels like too much i go to writing. it has a special place in my heart

Olivia Rose

Just a hopeless romantic learning to be hopeful

Mariam Wamba
Pànica

In the time of change, the landscape is turning yellow and leaves are falling apart. While you walk, you dance with nature and you breathe the damp air filling your lungs, feeling free.

Holly Allsop

this is a poem i wrote recently about the start of autumn and the feelings that come with it.

Lois Frome

'When autumn comes' is about seasonal depression and reflecting on previous versions of myself, but throughout it, continuing to appreciate those who stick by me and keep me strong.

Arstice Maren

'Feast of Our Lady' is a tribute to her maternal grandmother, whose guidance she carries with her, even from afar.

Judita Tuknele

This image captures faceless, shadowy figures that are floating against a wall, textured with the past. The wall that is partially made of light and partially of shadows of memory.

Sheida

Mike Jones

The Muse boyfriend gets his zine debut. Elite hobby painter and the loveliest person ever (unbiased)

Carolina Gutfreund

A fourth year student double majoring in English with a Creative Writing concentration and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences. She is currently an editor at Thread Magazine and the USF Tampa Her Campus chapter.

Karin

I wrote this when a wave of nostalgia hit me on a random day in may....near my birthday. For me, my childhood was a time i can never afford to forget, it was too precious.

Harriet K.C

Ariana Whiteford

A poem about a destructive habit that isn't kicked, but rather, wished away.

Divya

Through my lens, I capture essence of autumn where fading leaves, bare branches, and quiet streets reveal a deeper beauty in stillness and change.

Saranya Bhat

Being a writer comes naturally, its how I make sense of the world. My ink pen knows me best. This piece depicts that thought process.

Anna Chakarova

This piece was inspired by the feelings of heartache and hope that are associated with the memories of childhood. life is rarely simple and you are never merely 'you'. You are a mosaic of all that have pressed into your life in good and bad ways. perhaps your second nature is from all the experiences you've had; perhaps we were created to reflect those around us.

Lou Deschamps

Sophie Leavitt

This piece is my take on a concept that has fascinated me for a while now- the influence of others on us and truly how much people in our lives shape who we become. Of course, in the spirit of influences I did end up pulling inspiration from my own life and upbringing, while keeping real life at arm's length, but don't all writers?

Caroline Gilroy

My piece is essentially about the pitfalls of things that are second nature and the impacts they have. Trauma and PTSD give a whole new meaning to second nature and it encompasses our whole life.