UNBOUND

Issue 10 | November 2023

UNBOUND ARTS COLLECTIVE

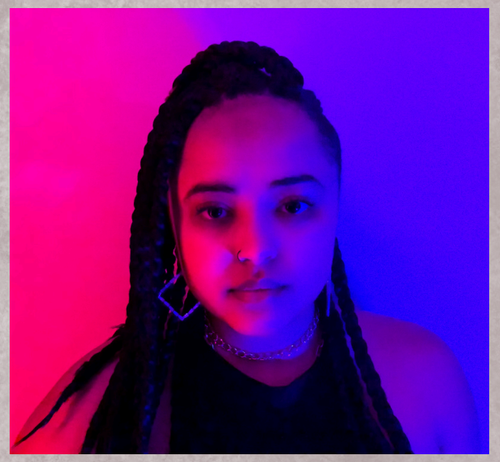
UnBound Arts Collective is a collaboration between womyn, trans, and nonbinary creatives working to share the voices and works of the marginalized, with an emphasis on the intersecting disadvantages faced by black folks, indigenous folks, and people of color globally. We aim our collaborative efforts at the dismantlement of patriarchy, racism, and imperialism through educational and artistic projects, both local and global.

For more information or to view our other projects or past issues of the zine, please visit unboundartscollective.com

If you have any questions or want to learn how to submit your work to this publication, please contact us at unboundartscollective@gmail.com

This zine is best viewed in a pdf reader such as Adobe Acrobat viewing single pages.

The UnBound Team



Lashonda Love she/they

Co-Creative Director/Quest Giver

Lashonda Love is a storyteller and interdisciplinary artist based in central Ohio. They are the author of TAKE THIS WITH YOU, creator and narrator of the Extraplanar Radio Show, and founder and Creative Director of UnBound Arts Collective. Her work is deeply informed by daydreams of rest and liberation, identity, nature & romanticism, witchcraft, death & grief, chronic illness, eco-futurism, anarchy, gender, lust, and the nuances and intersections of all.

he/they Enkfi Saviero

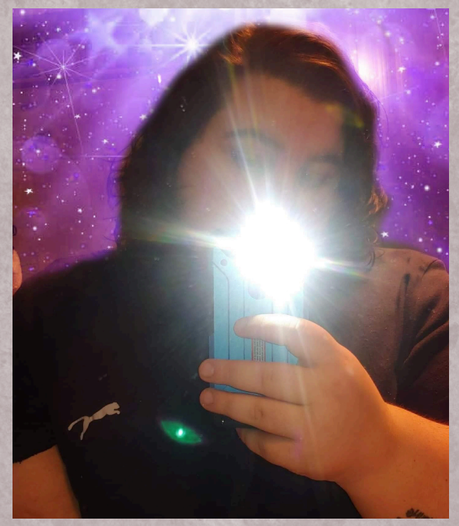
Co-Creative Director/Guild Navigator but for art

Enkfi (he/they) is an artist/anti-racism activist currently living on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong country. He loves oil painting, watching good/terrible films, video games, writing, consuming kebabs, and collecting beautiful coffee table art books. Co-host of Absolutely Feral, he adores story-telling and being an inconvenience to the rest of society by simply existing. Find him in UnBound hotboxing as much art as possible and becoming a weird spice melange mutation to navigate all of art history ever.

she/her/hers Rayna Kingston

Social Media Lead/Social Media Overlord
(read: chronically online but loves it)

Rayna is a part-time influencer, full-time video creator working and slyving in Denver, CO. She is a self taught social media guru with a love of connecting people and places. She once believed herself to be an extroverted-introvert but now knows she is the definition of an extrovert. Rayna loves to be around people and make new friendships, and is always down for a good chat about Marvel, Climate Change, fashion and Animal Crossing.



Jaid Saviero she/they

Audio Production Manager/The Phantom Power Menace

Jaid (she/they) is a writer, producer and multi-instrumentalist from Naarm ("Melbourne"), Australia. A two-time drop-out of two different music universities, and a lifelong devotee to the School of Good Taste, she has been writing and recording songs since she first fell in love with the crusading sounds of the album American Idiot at 14 years old. Jaid is currently the producer and audio editor for the acclaimed Absolutely Feral podcast, and when not consumed by this or playing Red Dead Redemption 2 once again, they like to get involved in a menagerie of hobbies from cosplay, 3D printing, and electronics to philosophy, history, political theory, and film criticism, which is totally definitely relevant to the last three things listed.

Dear Readers,

After nearly two years of on-and-off hiatus, I am pleased to introduce you to the latest issue of UnBound Zine. Our small team of dedicated and talented volunteers has worked hard to support the production of this publication and all things UAC over the last year and I am very proud of what we have accomplished, even in the midst of the ever-present challenges of our political, cultural, and personal landscapes across the globe.

Much like life, the creative work that we do is shaped by the ups and downs of experiences that are often outside of our grasp. The UAC team, comprised of real living and breathing humans, have navigated our own sets of challenges (and joys, too) in a "post-pandemic" world. The pieces contained within this issue resonate deeply with a range of human experiences and the tension between them is where we can find all of the juicy revelations about what it means to be fully authentic individuals in community with one another. How we navigate and synthesize our experiences, whether negative, positive, or neutral, and how we can recognize or direct the ways in which they shape us today.

I encourage you to sit with these pieces and take a moment of reflection. How do you show up for yourself and others? How does it feel to be in your bones, in your local community, in our global community? Where is the bridge between the world around you and the way you show up within it?

xoxo,

Lashonda

Co-Creative Director

Interested in joining UnBound Arts Collective? We are always looking for bright and motivated people to join on as blog writers, artists, editors, social media assistants, and more! Simply email unboundartscollective@gmail.com and let us know why we should have you on the team!

Cover Art

Enkfi Saviero
@enkfi_

Fonts

Yeseva One
Buenard
Optima
High Summit
Henrik Normal

All graphics were sourced from Canva or drawn by our co-director, Enkfi.

Dear Readers,

I'm so glad you're all finally here with us. There's been such change and evolution in the past few years and to be able to pause and look back is such a gift in these times. This edition has been 2 years in the making; both the Zine and the whole UAC team. Our numbers have shrunk and grown a few times now and I'm proud of all of us. We have a beautifully weird and terrifyingly smart group of people who just want to create and I'm so excited to explore this new phase of UAC with you all.

This edition is honest. It's honest in its lateness, in the team's struggles with just navigating this world, in the depth of the works, and all of our experiences curating this edition seems to have moulded the very Zine itself. Our work ethic has changed, the pressure has changed, even our very art styles are evolving to reflect a world where we aren't so deeply affected by such a colonialist and capitalist mindset. We are kinder to ourselves, a little more understanding, and we allow ourselves to navigate the ups and downs of the world with whatever grace we need in that moment. And we allow whatever emotions that come with that to flow. The pieces that have been selected reflect this allowance to just be a person.

I hope this edition allows yourself to just be. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is you need to feel without the burden of society's eyes on you. We've all changed so much over the last period of time and here, you're allowed to explore that, unburdened. Take some time to explore how these pieces make you feel, how you respond or don't, and consider how you respond to your own honesty. I invite you all to be a little more truthful to yourself. And always kind.

Sincerely,

Enkfi

Co-Creative Director

Sunshine Stitching LLC has a simple mission:

"To bring a little sunshine to your day with a crocheted creation".

Use code “LOYALTY” for 15% off

My name is Aryn Reed (they/them) and I am the owner of Sunshine Stitching LLC. When I was a child, my grandmother taught me how to crochet and it quickly became my favorite hobby. Over the years, I stuck with it throughout college and never lost my love of working with yarn. In 2020, my grandmother passed away. I found myself searching for ways to feel closer to her and that's when I started crocheting even more! In 2022, I founded Sunshine Stitching LLC and never looked back.

www.sunshinestitchingllc.com

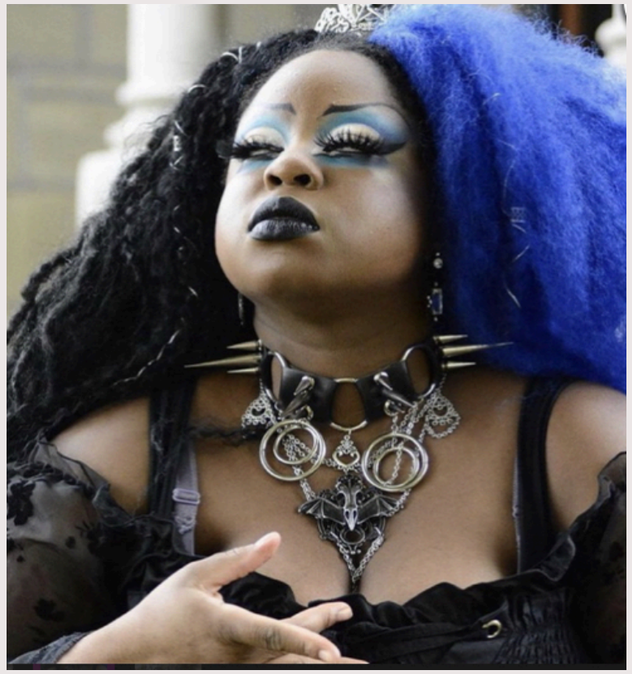
@sunshine stitching cc

TikTok sunshine stitching cc

Sunshine Stitching LLC.

My products range from fun to fully functional and everything in between. Whether you grab a "Desk Pet" to keep you company while doing your work or a "Snapping Food Fidget" to keep you focused, you're sure to find something you love! I sell over 50 different crochet products on my website and even take custom commission requests 24/7 365. The nerdier the better! Visit my website to find my full line of products (including my 21+ line), see which event I’ll be at next, or to find my social media!

Poison Apple Society



poisonapplesociety.storenvy.com/

@poisonapplesociety

@poisonapplesocietyart

www.patreon.com/poisonapplesociety

Poison Apple Society is a delectably dark Black Latina queer plus-sized woman-owned brand springing from the mind of Niara Noctyrna (she/her/hers, mae/mer/mers) in 2016 with the goal of sharing her beautiful darkly-inclined wearable and shareable art with the world.

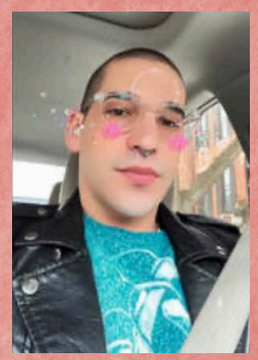
A creative child, Niara started making art and jewelry at 10 years old. Joining the Goth scene in 2013, she discovered a community that shares her love for dark aesthetics and over-the-top fashion. Poison Apple Society combines all her years of creative passion and perspective to craft a unique creative identity. Her art prints aim to counteract the unfortunate lack of representation for Black people and Black features in dark fantasy art.

Each handmade choker combines her love for opulence and dramatic embellishment with a chunky leather-and-spikes aesthetic that is versatile to complement a variety of body shapes and aesthetic styles! Poison Apple Society hopes that every POC, plus-sized, LGBTQ+, and/or alternative person who wears her accessories or displays her art feels absolutely delectable!

Max Navarro-Growick they/them

@max tattoos

www.capcitytattooco.com/



Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Max (they/them) is a Queer artist who began their tattoo journey almost 6 years ago as an apprentice at Red Baron ink in NYC. Max is a Star Wars Enthusiast, and proud cat parent to two rambunctious kitties. Max enjoys all kinds of body art but specializes in custom tattoos featuring abstract subject matter, imagining otherworldly creatures, and creating interesting shapes.

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Chere R. Hampton she/her

The Cottage: Part 1

It's hard to explain your scars to someone who thinks that theirs are always bigger. It was still daytime, but there was an overcast and the sky had a perfectly even dullness, so there was no way to tell what time of day it was, much less which direction was north or south or anything else for that matter. A two-lane blacktop road snaked up into the distance and disappeared into some trees, or a forest if you wanted to get technical about it. It also snaked down toward some lumpy hills and disappeared there as well. What sounded like a two-stroke chainsaw could be heard in the distance, but it was impossible to tell whether it was up in the forest or down in the lumpy hills. This has been happening more lately. Two different ways to go, with a dead battery and no bars, and nobody left to blame.

Blake was pulsing with hot anger and irritated. There was no other way to describe how she felt. Dropped off in the middle of nowhere, with a dead cellphone, and a heavy backpack, this was not her idea of a couple's retreat. She glared at her partner, Mischa and felt her fury bubble in her stomach. Mischa looked away from her glaring eyes and sighed. The instructions their driver had given them was to walk towards the forest and after a mile or so, they would find their cottage. Blake adjusted her backpack and headed off in the direction of the forest. She didn't want to walk with Mischa, let alone spend the weekend with her at this retreat, but her spirit told her to give this a try. She loved Mischa, but Mischa expressed her love differently, and with other women. Mischa pleaded with Blake to give this retreat a shot, to see if they could get to the heart of their issues. They'd been together for ten years, a lifetime, in lesbian years. Blake gave up dropping hints at marriage after year five. Mischa said they were fine as they were. They didn't need a piece of paper to define them. Blake wanted the commitment, not the paper. All she had now was a heavy backpack, a cheating partner, and a broken heart.

Mischa called after Blake, but Blake continued to walk ahead. She knew that later on, when and if they got to the cottage, Blake would have leg cramps because she had a potassium deficiency. There was still so much she knew about her, that Blake failed to realize she did. Sure, they were in a mess right now, but she was here, open, and willing to address her issues and fight for the woman she loved. The affair was stupid, boneheaded, and selfish. It had happened only once, but that was more than enough. She and Blake had started off solid, but Blake had begun to drop hints about marriage, something that Mischa hadn't been really sold on. Her folks divorced when she was fifteen and the end of their marriage was violent and traumatic for her. She vowed then, to never have that kind of commitment to someone and have it end like her folks' marriage did. It was too much to bear for her. She loved Blake with all of her heart, and wanted to be with her forever, but not legally required to be. She tried to communicate her feelings to Blake, but Blake only saw it as a snub, that she didn't want to be with her, and took it personally. Mischa tried to explain her reasons to Blake in ways that she o could understand them, but Blake refused to hear her. That's why she was here. That's why she let Blake walk ahead. That's why she was more than happy to follow.

Blake heard Mischa calling after her, but she gladly ignored her. She had half a mind to slow down so Mischa could catch up to her, but if she did that, it would require having a conversation with her, which Blake was in no mood to do. She knew that Mischa was sorry about cheating on her, but it baffled her that Mischa would actually betray her like that. She wondered what was so terrible about herself that Mischa wouldn't want to marry her. She had always strived to be the best at everything she did. She was the best daughter to her parents, the best sister to her sibling, the most loyal and trustworthy friend in her circle, and the best graphic designer in her firm. She studied, put in the work, to not only improve her craft, but to also improve herself. She lived in the gym, watched what she ate, and dressed impeccably, but that didn't seem to be enough for Mischa.

The trail started curving into the dense forest and it was almost eerily quiet. There were no birds chirping, no insects buzzing, only the soft, haunting whisper of the summer breeze blowing through the trees. Blake trudged ahead, determined to not only find the cottage, but to also get further away from Mischa. She needed time to hear herself think, to get prepared for whatever work she was going to have to do with Mischa, and the work she was going to have to do within herself.

Mischa huffed as the distance between her and Blake grew. Blake had to be speed walking, and getting faster at it. They were deep in the forest now, and there were bumps in the grass that began to irritate the plantar fasciitis in her foot. They had to be close now. She could start to make out a dirt road a few yards ahead of them between the trees. She hoped that the path would lead to the cottage. The walking, the tension, the heat, and the frustration were all getting to her. She was ready to put her heavy pack down and rest. She called out to Blake again, but Blake continued to ignore her, and walk even faster. For someone so tiny, she sure could move. Mischa smiled and chuckled to herself at Blake's attitude. It was aggravating, but still a little bit cute. It was that spunkiness that could always make Mischa smile. It was part of what made her fall in love with Blake.

Finally, Blake could see the cottage emerging from the seemingly endless swath of trees. It felt like she had been walking for eons. Suddenly, she found herself being nervous. Who was this woman that she and Mischa were going to be working with? What would she be able to tell them? Could it possibly help? A mixture of fear and anxiety churned in Blake's stomach, and she swallowed hard as she walked up the path to the cottage. This was it. Once she reached the door, everything was going to change.

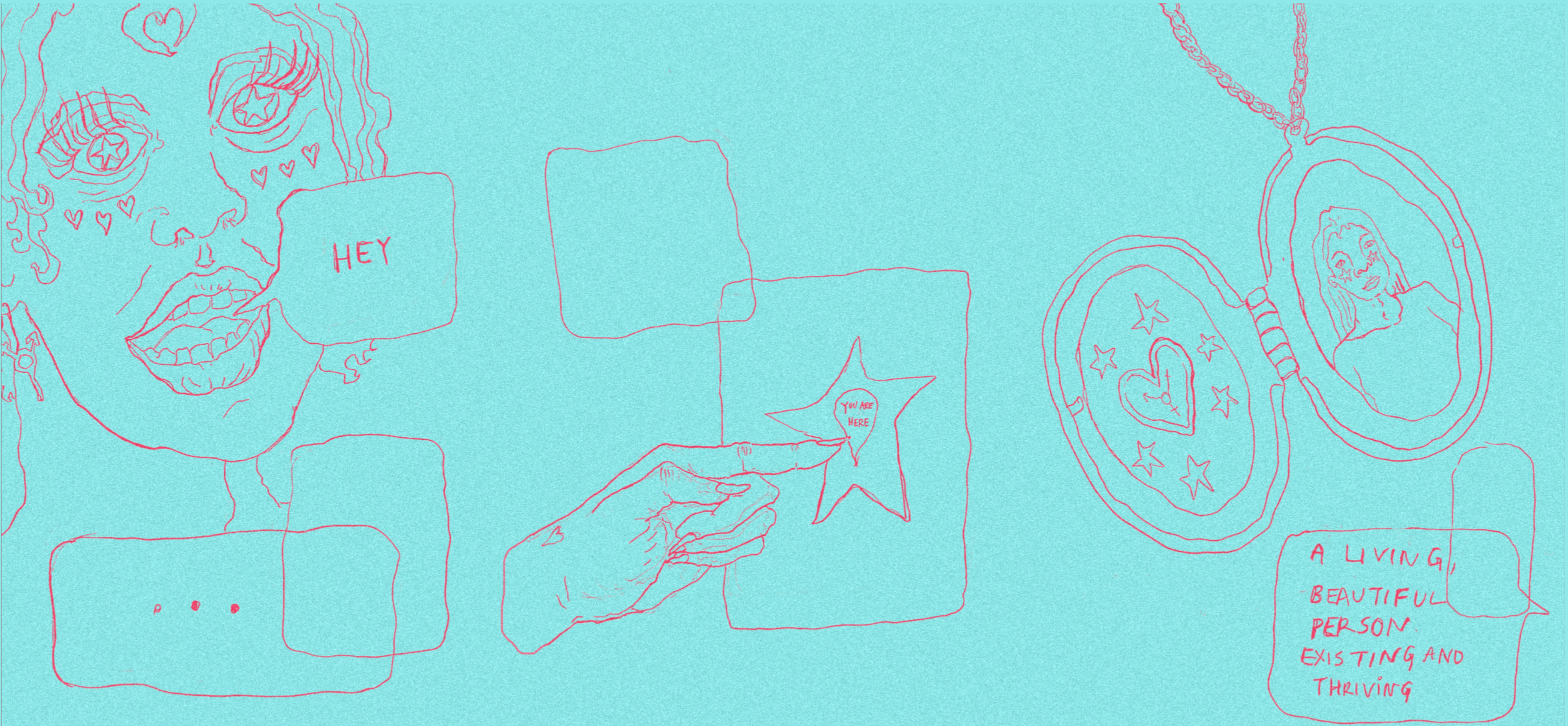
Mischa was grateful that Blake waited for her at the cottage entrance. Her back, legs, and lungs were screaming bloody murder as sweat soaked the back of her shirt. After settling in, a shower would be of first order. Mischa looked at her wife and managed a small smile. "Thank you for waiting," she said. Blake looked at her out of the corner of her eye and nodded. "The least we could do is walk in together. Who knows how we're going to walk out," Blake said softly. Mischa felt a twinge of pain hit her heart and she recoiled from Blake's words.

She shuddered a bit, then quietly asked, "Can I hold your hand?" Blake looked down at her feet momentarily, then looked into Mischa's eyes. She saw her sadness and her fear. Maybe it was important to walk through this door together, hand in hand. Blake grabbed Mischa's hand tentatively. They stared at the cottage door for a minute, unsure of what was going to happen once they turned the knob.

Chere R. Hampton (she/her) @goblkphoenix Blog

Chere R. Hampton is a queer Black author and poet who lives in Columbus, Ohio. She writes haiku, poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. She believes her work tells the stories of her people that haven't been told yet, and also says the things that people don't have the courage to verbalize. Her work has been published in More Space Zine (Volume 1), Unbound Zine (Issues 7 & 8) and is due to be published in the upcoming anthology Words of Resistance and Restoration. She is also currently working on a short story anthology that is due to be self-published in 2023.

Celina Bermudez Vogensen they/them



You Are Here

63x27.9cm, 2022
Digital and pen drawing

An illustration honouring trans people for existing, being beautiful and thriving.

Celina Bermudez Vogensen (they/them)

@celinda.art.attack
Celina's Website

Celina was born in Nicaragua, grew up in Portugal, and has US Citizenship. They studied Fine Arts and Scientific Illustration.They have a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual (Portuguese, Spanish, English) background. Their background has a big influence in their artistic practice, which is why they work a lot with topics regarding migration, nationality, territory, environment, layers and identity.

Kit Sinclair she/her

Banishing Spell

How can I stay
Focused on my dreams
When you're the
Goddamn demon in my view?

Here's my circle
Of unnamed hatred,
Here's the salt of my tears
To drive you back.

Bind with iron,
Burn with silver,
Bar with salt,
Ban with blood.

Take your angelic face,
Turned Lucifer, haunting,
And scatter at the crossroads
Of my wounds and wanting.

I am Lilith
And bow to no man.

Gorgon

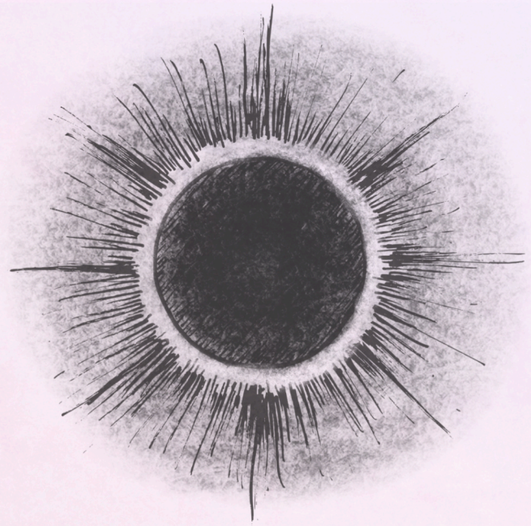
Was I a fool
To think of you as Apollo?
Am I Medusa,
Are you Poseidon,
Ruining everything that matters in me?
Have I been tarnished,
Drug across this cosmic floor,
Strangled by this red ribbon
In thinking I could love you,
Or you me?
You've never laid a hand to me,
But I've let you taint me just the same;
Let you touch
The divinity of my heart and mind
When you least deserved it.
So, I rise now,
Venomous,
Gaze killing,
Cold,
Creature of the original sin:
Serpent,
Devouring apples of knowledge
And devout to the dark goddess
Who makes a punishment a weapon.

Shadow Side

One of the greatest things I ever did
Was learn to dance with
All my demons; to fall down a well so dark,
I was left with confronting my
Darkest reflection,
Shadow Side,
Dark Star,
Monster and dragon beneath flesh.
To embrace it, or drown beneath it.

I railed against that creature for years,
Before befriending it,
Cuddling up against it,
Fucking it into submission—
Before we were more than friends,
More than lovers,
More than sides of self,
Reflections of each other, same.

And all the while, we danced,
A chaotic oscillation
Of tenderness and
Suppressed violence, fury,
Self-harm unacted upon.



But we danced, and danced,
Until we fused.
And I was made whole, imperfect,
Flawed, dark, dangerous,
Glittering, weapon, Queen,
Dark star, beautiful, unafraid,
Full of fear, untouchable,
Fragmented, stained glass,
Colored shades of Gray,
Gentle, violent, empathetic,
Sociopathic, all things,
No things.
Alive. Hungry. Fighter.

Learn this lesson. Know it in your heart.

Embrace darkness.
Burn through fear.
Shine, Dark Star.

Kit Sinclair (she/her) @kit.a.sinclair

Kit Sinclair is a licensed counselor by day, and a writer by night. She has a B.A. in Creative Writing, and a M.A. in Community Counseling and has been writing poetry and fantasy novels since she was twelve. When not writing or being a therapist, you can find her haunting Columbus and going to a lot of concerts.

Finn Brown they/them

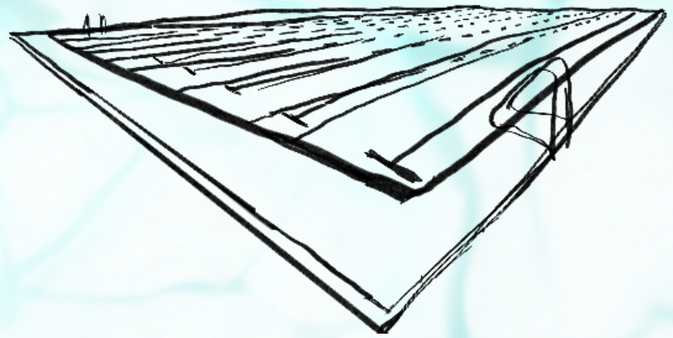
The Lane

I swim at the local leisure centre as often as I can, before or after work, in lunch breaks that I return from wet-haired. When it's busy, the lanes are thin and packed. When it's quiet, they keep them wide and open.

As I swim, I watch people.

I am fascinated by what happens in a lane, this small and temporary community. We arrive semi-naked and vulnerable. We join wherever we can and the rhythm of the lane adjusts to each person who arrives and each person who leaves. We slow to each other's paces, match tempos and strokes. We leave space between each other, room to breathe. We allow people who are faster to pass, gesture forwards as we empty out our goggles.

No one needs to say anything, although sometimes people do. I speak to a man who keeps losing count of his stroke. He is still going when I get out and I wish him luck. I speak to a woman who has an hour before she needs to pick up her child, ought to be swimming but can't keep going. We talk about the importance of rest.



I swim after a man who glides his way across the pool and remember to point my tongues. The person in front of me kicks their legs through a shaft of light and I remember to look at the way the sun cuts the pool in half and the water moves through it.

Of course, a lane also holds the things that make community hard. Early in the morning when there is a deficit of time the water boils with frustration. Swimmers move to achieve a set amount of lengths before they have to be at their desks or on a train. Those moving too slowly, pausing for a moment, hold them up. In the evenings, the pool is halved. Four lanes are taken up by swimming lessons, groups of young people swarming up and down. In the other half of the pool, the swimmers have time but they do not have space. Bodies move too close to each other. Frustration is all over people's arms and legs. A thigh grazes an elbow and the bareness of skin makes it worse.

Where there is a lack of something, community struggles. In and outside of a swimming pool lane.

Community in a lane takes generosity, kindness, patience, and then offers it all back. Community in the wider world is no different.

Now, when there is an empty lane available I do not take it. I prefer to swim with others.

Finn Brown
(they/them)
@amelialbrown

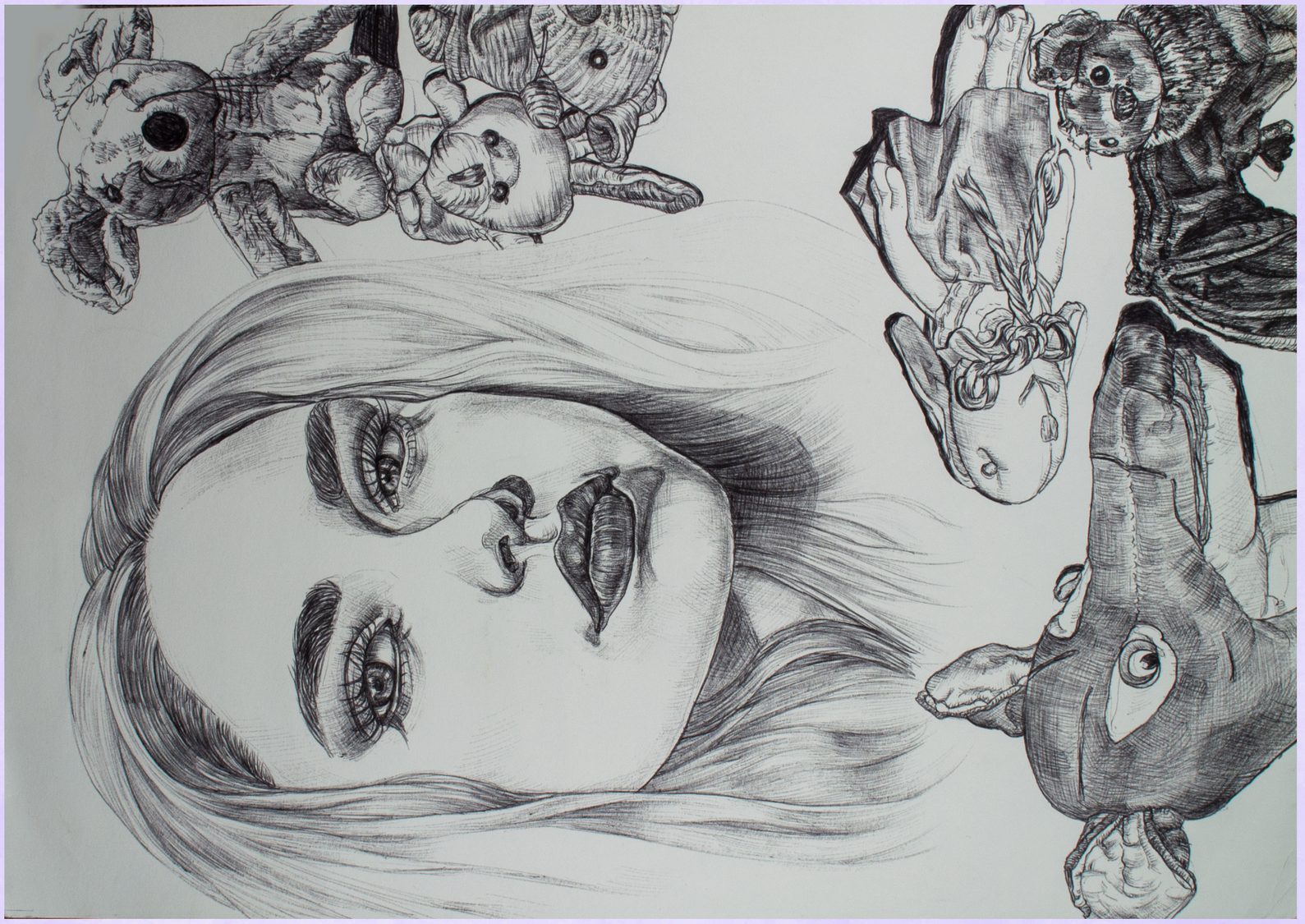
Finn Brown is a queer writer and maker, whose short stories Heat and The Girl Who's Scared of Water have been published in 'Transforming Being' (an anthology by Bridgehouse Publishing) and The Bombay Review respectively. Their short story Love and Oranges is due to be published in Queer Life, Queer Love: The Second Anthology. Their poetry has been published in Texlandia Magazine, and they have performed spoken word at Hay Festival, Last Word Festival and Brainchild Festival as part of the Roundhouse Poetry Collective. They run a queer arts and lit platform t'ART.

Vivien Solveig Hagedorn she/her

In the woods

(two women)

Don't Tell Me



Chaos

Ballpoint pen on paper

Vivien Solveig Hagedorn (she/her)

Vivien studied fine arts from 2007 to 2015 in Germany.

You can fine more of her works at

http://vivien-solveig.de.

KJ Quick they/he

Laces of Life

long hair, laces of life, love lost in the strands
strangling the past, ringing out all the missed calls like a rag,
squeezing out any grief left in my lungs
opening up old wounds ‘til i’m blue and bruised again
do we ever really heal from opening love?
i don’t know, i don’t know.

i don’t miss you anymore except for when i sleep
and you haunt my dreams with empty promises and i eat them up
each lie satiating my hunger for your hands
always ravenous for what will never exist again
i eat until i’m sick and awake in my bed, alone

oh well, it was nice to believe in you again

long hair, left behind on the swing set, losing losing losing.
afraid of oblivion in the back of a blazing blue car
choking on the worry that it may never be better than this
it’s you and it’s you and i am afraid it will never be anyone but you
five years ago, fireworks still stuck in my ears
goodbye – her cries as loud as ever the longer life goes on

oh, it still hurts sometimes
the life we never had

Palo Alto

i don't have the words to tell you
that i ache all the way down to my guts
for you to touch me

The Idea of You

i was your sock sleeper, chemical creeper, long distance fever dream
i could’ve loved you
but january was cold and cruel
and i watched you quietly
silently choking on words like cough drops stuck in the back of my throat

i could’ve let it slip but i didn’t
i was good, i was quiet like nobody ever taught me
except you liked when i opened my mouth
you loved it and you almost loved me
you almost did cause i felt it one time before the snow came and your car broke down 5 miles outside of town

your hair was getting longer
like a playground of silk to drown in and pull until i forgot my own name and then i'd wonder if you were ashamed of me
i came once just thinking about a picture of you
but that was the problem

the idea of you was better than your strong, boyish body standing under the fluorescence of the street lamp on doyer street
the idea of your hands around my neck was better than having to undress in front of you and your tattooed, flat, stupid fucking chest that i obsessed over, spiraled into, hated with all my guts in the dark

tonight i’m not sleeping with any socks so i thought of you
i’m trying to sleep on the right side of my head because of an aching ear piercing (remember that one i got for migraines before you hated me)
trying to sleep on what would’ve been your side of the bed
if you had seen me the way i wanted you to

but i can’t sleep, maybe i should put my socks back on

Living Room Curtain

i'd like to think i was your living room curtain
sheer and white, soft even
a glittering in-between
day in and day out i was there
sort of steadfast, maybe, i don't know
protecting you from the outside world that lay behind the window
sharp teeth, absent fathers, oblivion —
you know the deal.

after awhile, it wasn't enough
'cause when i moved my little cotton-nylon-mixed-blend body out of the way
you finally saw the light, which was
certainly not me.
inevitable.

but i'd like to think i let the sun slip in every once in awhile
and you'd laugh in the plexiglass light.
the sun on your spotted face,
soft, unapologetic, existing slowly —
your kind crooked teeth, warm and sweet
like sugar dripping down my throat
until it chokes me

and all the days of waving around in the winter wind were worth it,
the scorching sun on my face wasn't so bad
the ending was inevitable
the middle - so sweet
the beginning, where my life began.
and ultimately, i was a liminal space.

in the way of something, someone, some place that loves you as you are now,
probably much better than i did back in the days where we laid, enamored, in the grass somewhere east of eden
with bleach blonde hair for the first time

it fills me with grief and grief and grief
which never goes away,
i have wished it away every day since you left me with your fragile offering of no goodbye
which sliced me open for the rest of my life

well, the wishes don't work,
you still wake me up in another world with swallowing hands and forgotten feet,
once i fall asleep

and then wake up on the couch in the morning,
in the warm, bright light coming through
the window that's facing the city
we don't live in together thinking to myself that, maybe,
i was your living room curtain

Beautiful Boys

i was sitting in front of them,
all of them at this government-building-turned-skatepark,
the cold of mid-february rolling off their t-shirts and bare arms,
skating away from the noise of philadelphia's heart beating behind them.

moving around effortlessly
beautiful like clouds in the country sky
mesmerizing like the way birds would fly over me in the spring when i was wrapped in the arms of the mountains i grew up in

and it hurt me watching them,
i sat there and ached for their lives.
boys who are boys in the easiest way
no knives or prescriptions or yearning for the life of another

i studied them quietly and tears slid down my face
freezing on my cherry-red cheeks pierced
by the long arms of winter wind,
the tears disappearing into an invisible box
in my mind labeled "gender envy - to cry about later, in private"

but i think this was more about grief.
a body i'll never have, the ease of being i wish i had
a boyhood i know nothing of and wish i had a say in back on that one Tuesday in October, 1998.

i aches for their lives in that moment
and they'd never know.
would never know the short stranger on the steps wanted to live in their bones to feel at home for once
to curl up on the living room rug of their soft boy hearts,
to bathe in the boy blood that runs through their veins
and makes them pretty and tall and perfect

it struck me how much this was about belonging
aside from how i wish to look or be
or the way i didn't grow up.
but about about belonging.
i am not one of them
and i think to myself sadly, probably not wanted by them either.
a sort of invisibility now in a group i grew up in,
and a group i did not.

i gave up the comfort of being desirable
a few years ago, the buzzcut seeping into my skull
my girlhood left behind in boxes at my
parents house labeled _____.

i wanted to be them and i am shocked by the pull, deep down in the gut, to be wanted by them.
i am somewhere in between
or
not even fucking close.
and it hurts. it hurts.
i wish i could tell anyone how much it hurts.

eventually i grabbed my things, all tossed up in a tote bag heavy on my shoulders
and i surprised myself as i waved goodbye
to this group of beautiful, blessed boys
pretending to know what it is they know
pretending for a moment to belong —
when i certainly do not.

KJ Quick (they/he)

KJ is a queer and trans person living in Brooklyn, NY. They love to write, read, drink tea, go to the park and lay in the sun, make art, hang out with friends, and enjoy the little things in life. He is a graduate student studying to be a therapist right now and are particularly drawn to all things pertaining to grief. Grief is often a theme of the poems he writes and he hopes you enjoy.

Agata Cardoso

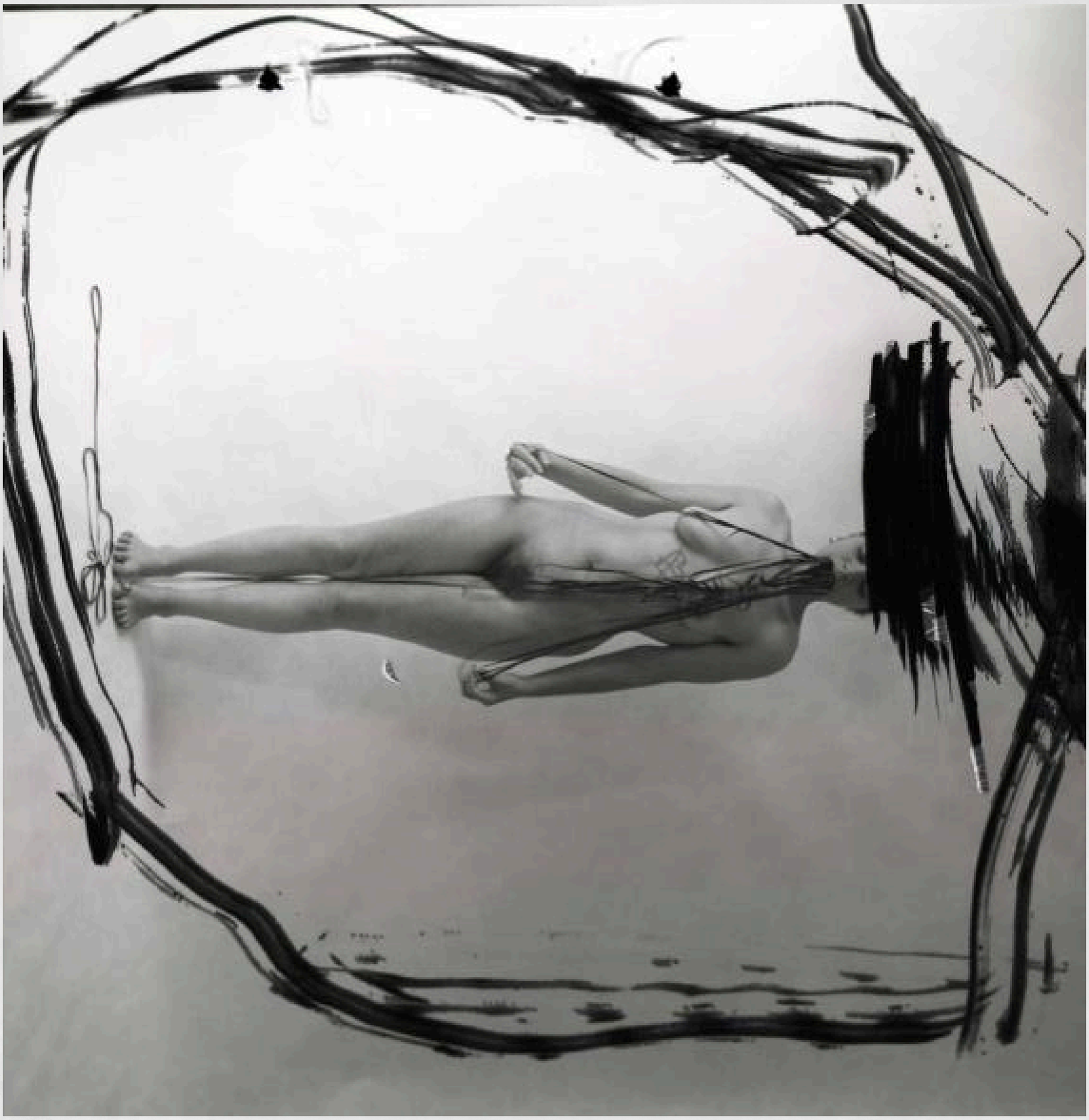
Repulsively Feminine

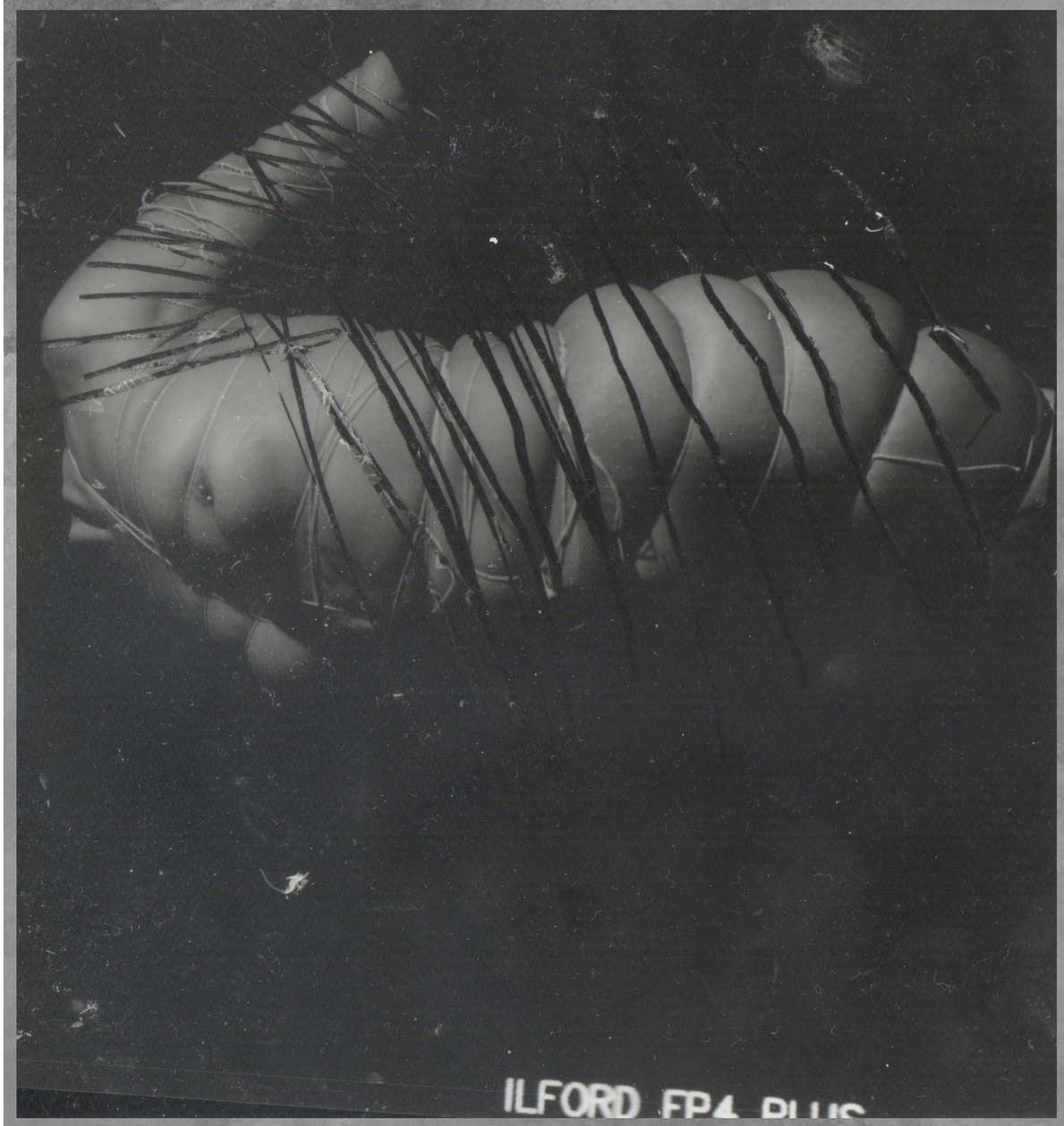
Exploring archetypes related to mental health.

7.5x11

Analogue photography format

Printed in the darkroom on paper resin coated

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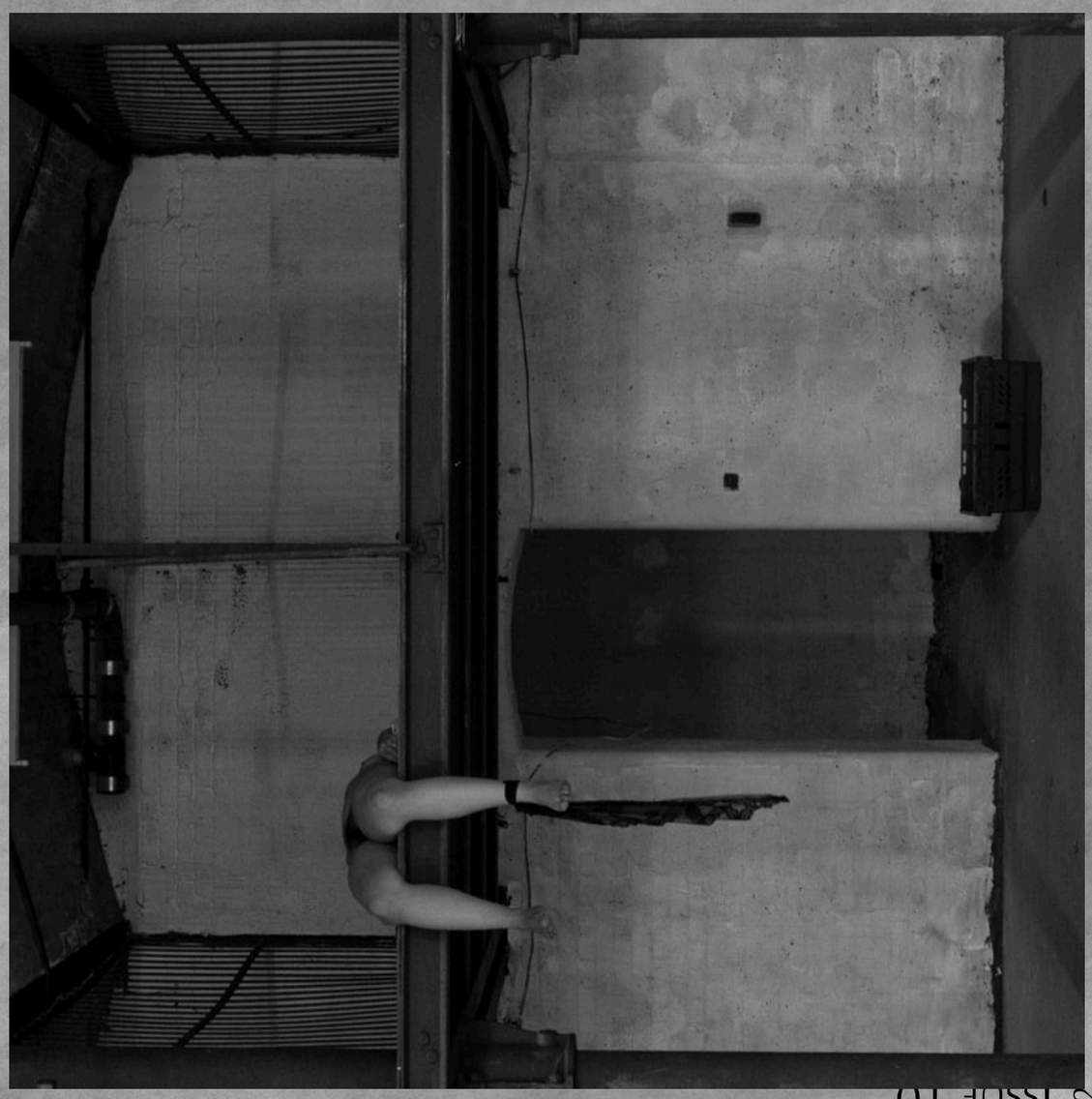
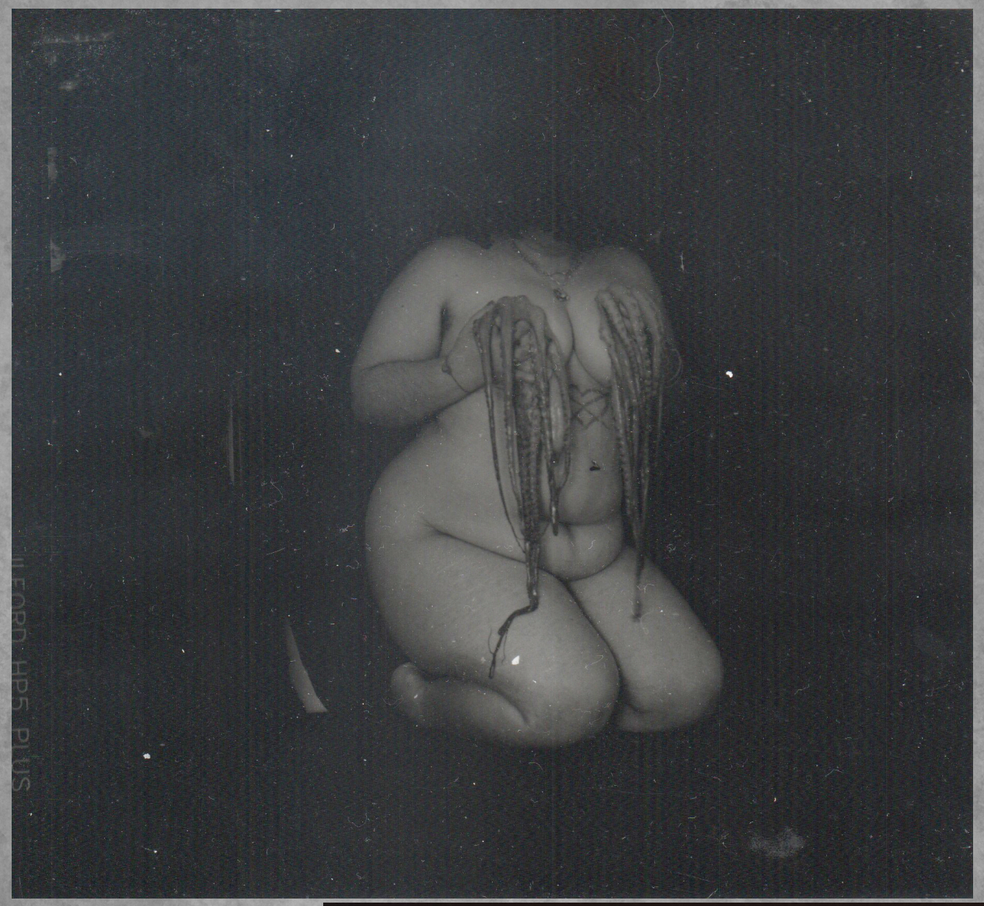
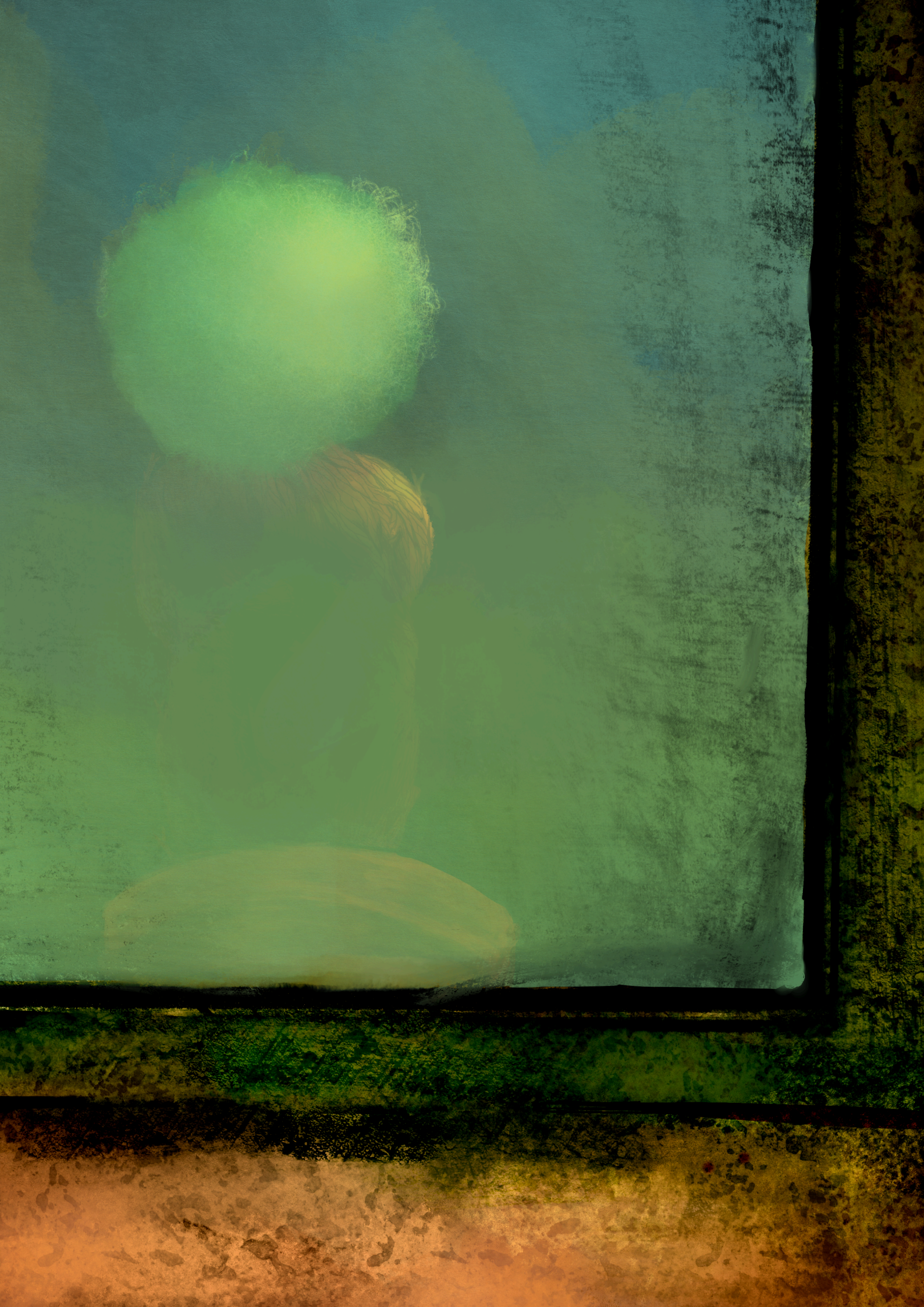




Agata Cardoso has been a photographic image maker since 2007 where Agata completed a BA and then an MA. Agata's theme is of a dark distress, an archetypal comment on mental health; a topic that is dear to Agata and this series is of a dark distress.

You can find more at www.agatacardoso.org