

Whispers from the Wood

H A A T E

WAR SCHOOL HYPOCRITES PREJUDICE HOLES RACISM
LOVE RELIGION TRAFFIC VIOLENCE PARTIES HUMAN
TRAFFICKING ASSAULT BRATS POLITICS SEXISM GUNS
MEAN GIRLS SPIDERS BIRTHDAYS DRUGS CLASSISM
INJUSTICE CONVERSION CAMPS PARTIES WORKING
HOMOPHOBIA OVERSHARING DEADBEAT DADS VOMITING
HIERARCHY COLORISM SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSERS
AMERICA HISTORY CONGRESS MYSELF RICH PEOPLE
TRAUMA SCHOOL SHOOTINGS WAR SCHOOL
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SCHOOL SHOOTINGS WAR SCHOOL HYPOCRITES LOVE
PREJUDICE INSECURITIES GROWING UP



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Untitled

Jonathon Anderson





TO REDACTED

Cilyce Hicks

Intense

As the eternal flames that swallow the devil's realm

Passionate

As a Noble King's love for his subjects

Firm

As the grasp of the church on a lost mind

It would be impossible to measure

The depths of my loathing

Toward whomever cursed time with your existence.

An agonizing death

An eternity of darkness

Both are merciful

Compared to another minute sharing an atmosphere with you

You lack reason,

Intent,

Remorse,

And a sense of accountability

These are human traits

Things one is born with

Then change as life continues

You, however,

Were not born

Were not made

You are an abomination



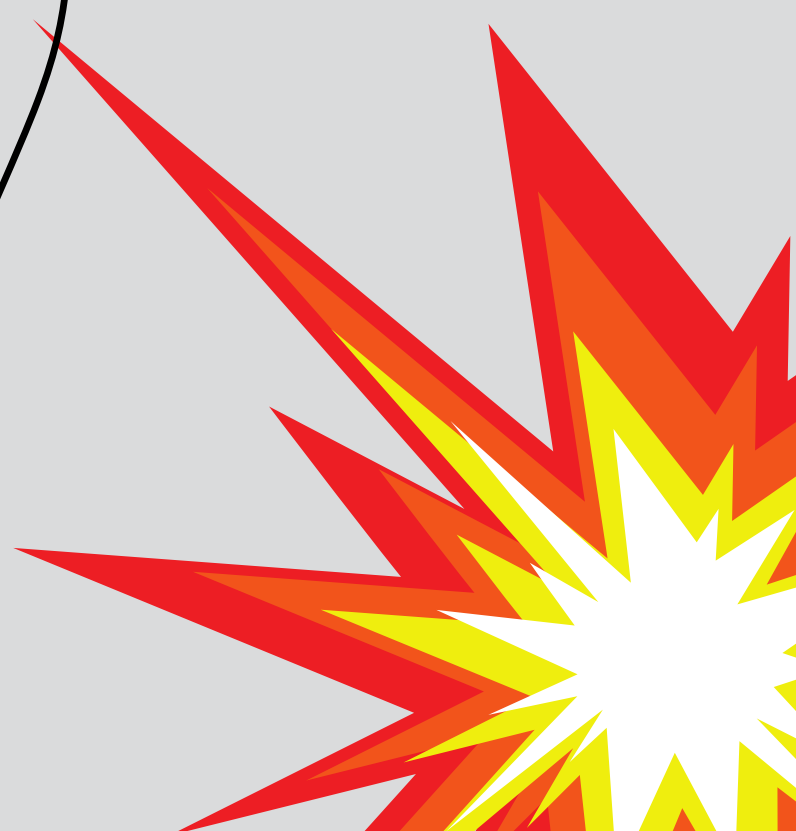
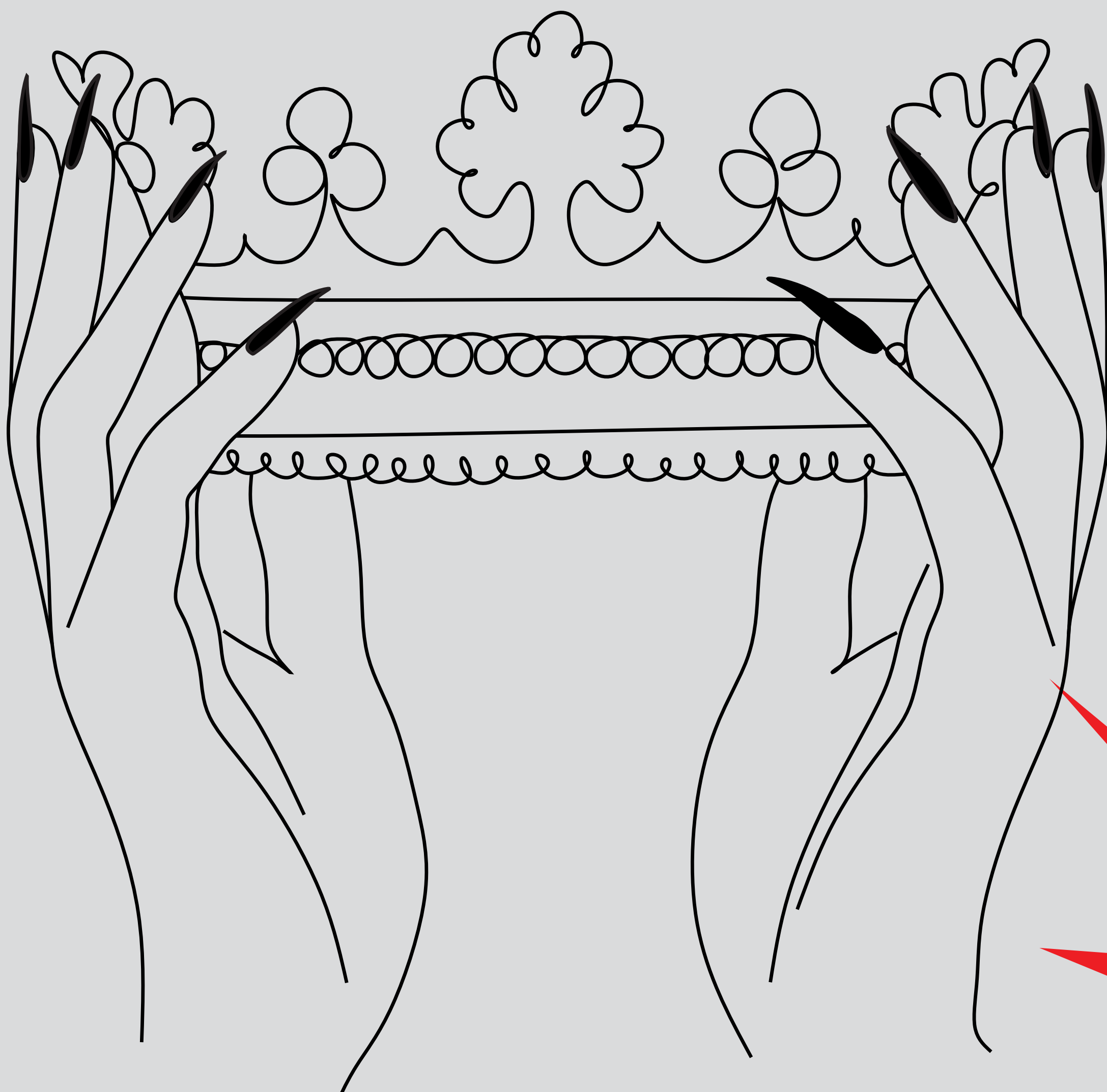


To REDACTED Con't

A collection of sadism and deceit
Defaulting to a victim-mentality
And an abyss for a heart
All contained inside your disguise of flesh

When the day comes
That I gain the resources to strike you down
You will be judged by the deities of our existence

And replace Lucifer on his stygian throne.





Dying to Leave You


Taylor Bowden

I need to know how to see myself again
And then how to see you
I look at you and those eyes looking back fill me
With lingering disgust
A physical pain of dislike
Get your spell off of me
Pay me the spiritual reparations that you owe
For making me see myself as inferior.

My reflection and my body are doing different movements
Because you separated the two when you squeezed my heart
Until the veins fell through your fingers,
And you felt some sort of relief
Now I can no longer find my mirror me
I bet you didn't know that.

You didn't know that I wanted you to cry in sync with me at night
When I was attempting to kick myself
Out of my own body
Because I could no longer bear to stay with someone
Who missed someone
Who made them like this.

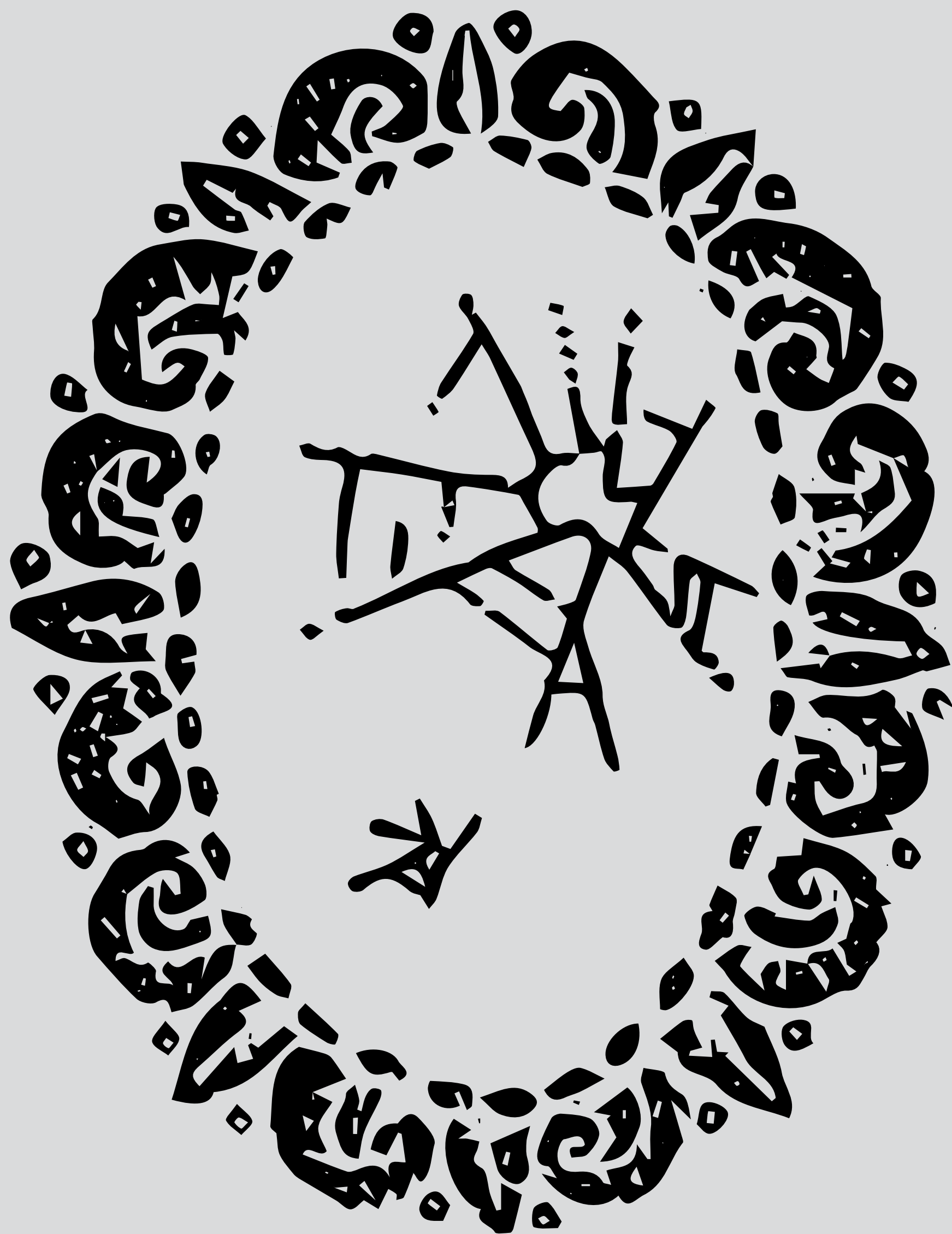
I want you to know
That you filled my head so much
That my own thoughts were speaking in your voice
I heard your own voice and you were still talking about you
I grew to strongly despise
The contradicting thoughts that my brain came up with
You know you confused me.





Dying to Leave You Con't

I no longer look at myself and wonder,
I think about myself and question
How I let myself go wrong
And then immediately dislike my own being even more
For even questioning what I questioned
I did not like how my brain worked
You gave it a malfunction
And kept the new instructions.






Cognizance

Jai Stabler

My eyes were left fiery and set ablaze
My cognizance has been lowered to nothingness
My arms pulled back and lashing forward creating squalls
I have not a bit of remorse or relentlessness left in my body at this point
All I know is to continue fighting and throwing punches until my
knuckles cry tears of blood
Yet as I fight, I think to myself, “is all of this even worth my time?”
Is fighting, despair, and hatred the only things to fuel my actions
Why is this who I am?
Why am I like this?
Fueled by unfiltered tanks of anger and violence

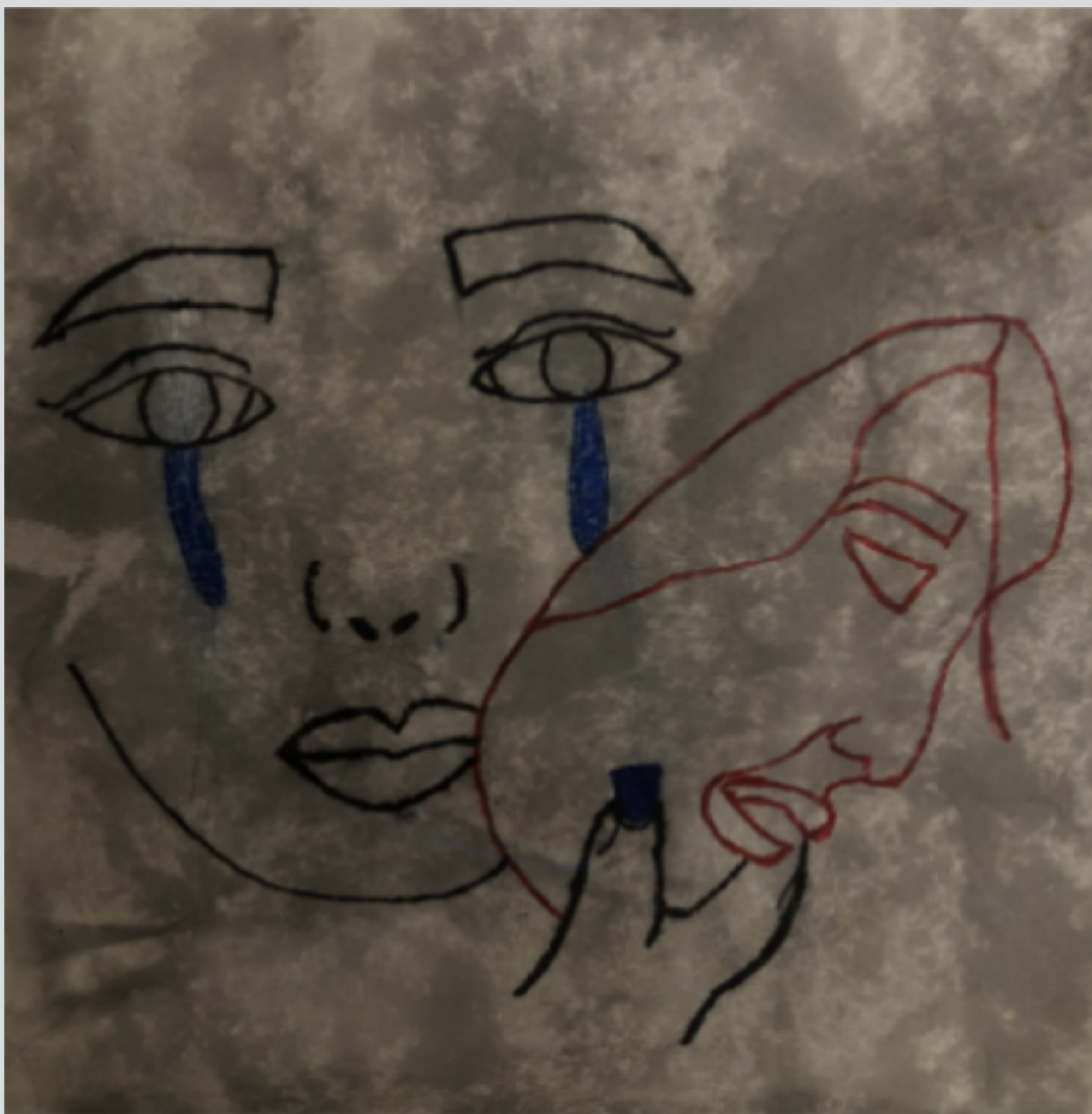
I find myself lying on the ground, hyperventilating like I’ve just outran a
train for miles on miles
Where am I?
Who am I?
What happened?
“You’re a monster Jordan,”
“Never come back, son.”

“Everything is over for you”
I’ve yet again lashed out over absolutely nothing
If only I had proper control over what I do
I’d be able to say I am who I’ve always wanted to be



Pretend

Sage Wortham





Never Enough

Alyssa Patrick

I am an object to you,
I am the lamp in the corner for you to turn off and on when you please
I am the prize for you to win and show off to your friends
An object that will never be enough
I am too fat, too skinny
Pretty, ugly
Loud, quiet
You want me to be pure and unholy at the same time
You say that I am weak
That I cannot hold my own
You hate me and all that I am
Your ideals of women are unreachable and only made in delusional minds
Somewhere along the way you forgot that I feel and touch and breathe
And somewhere along the way, we forgot too






Returned Contents

A. Phinney

I want my things back.
But not in the way that
You gave back my hoodie.
I want back all those inside jokes,
All the little things we made up
Between you and I.
I want to put them in a box
For me to keep.
For me to let go.
I want to see them all
Piled and cluttered together,
Shoved into a box.
A symbol of everything we were.
I want to put the box in my closet
And take them out when I'm feeling sad.
Remember the good times that we shared.
I want to be able to dump them in the trash,
To set them on fire,
To allow myself to release them
One by one.
All of the language I used to have.
The way I used to speak.
How you infiltrated my daily conversation.
I feel like that part of me was ripped away.
That its still with you.
And I want it back.





Worn-Out Dreams

Imani Lane

(QUEST enters the room in business attire with a briefcase in hand.)

QUEST: *(enters the living room, loosening his tie. Scanning the apartment)* Hey K, I'm home!

KARLA: *(enters visibly exhausted, laundry basket on her hip with a baby monitor. Dried milk on her nightgown. She glances at him to acknowledge his presence)*

QUEST: *(places his briefcase down, making his way to the kitchen.)* You wouldn't believe what happened at the office today. The workload was insane. As soon as I got there all these cases were on my desk. *(opens fridge)* Trent was standing outside my office saying "I know, but boss said we are the only people at the firm who can handle this case-" *(rolls eyes)*

QUEST: *(opens the pots on the stove)* Baby what we got to eat? It looks like you ain't cook today and the only thing we got is leftovers. *(rubs beard thinking)*

KARLA: *(stops folding)* Yeah sorry just eat the leftovers-

QUEST: K, I'm tired of pasta we been eating it since Monday... it's Wednesday.

KARLA: *(continues folding)* Well that's all I got cooked right now. Eat it. *(quietly)*

QUEST: *(puts the lids back)* Why you gotta say it like that?

KARLA: *(shrugs)*

QUEST: *(rubs his forehead slowly, loosening his tie more)* Okay KARLA what's the issue? What did I do now, huh? Did I forget to take the trash out? I haven't washed the dishes this week? Look I'm busy right now-

KARLA: *(snickers)* You're busy. *(laughs and rubs her forehead aggressively)*

QUEST: Yes KARLA I'm busy. I got a job, I'm out there working like someone's slave to provide for this house. For you-

KARLA: *(tilts head and turns)* What you tryna'say?





Worn-Out Dreams Con't

QUEST: *(throws hands up in the air)* I'm saying that I work hard. I'm working all these hours. Studying these cases when I get home. I'm tired and I don't have time to do those things.

KARLA: *(checks baby monitor)* You don't think I'm tired? You think you the only one in this house tired QUEST? *(turns so he can see how exhausted she is)*

QUEST: *(looks at her as if he doesn't recognize her)* Yes KARLA but-

KARLA: *(laughs to herself)* No I get it you're tired. You get up early and go to work. I get it.

QUEST: What, you think my job isn't hard? Flipping through files that reach the ceiling of my office. Listening to my boss call my name a hundred times in an hour. Meeting with clients trying to figure out the best way to keep them out of jail? You don't think my job is hard?


QUEST: I don't even want to work at this law firm. I'm putting myself through hell for you so I can build my own law firm. So we can see our dream in front of us, instead of just in our dreams KARLA.

KARLA: *(face hardens)* You know that has never been or will be my dream QUEST. That's yours.

QUEST: *(exhales)* Ever since we had the baby you been acting different, acting like you mad at the world.

KARLA: Maybe I am mad at the world.

QUEST: I don't see any reason to be. We are blessed to be living the way others dream that they could.





Worn-Out Dreams Con't

KARLA: You know before we got together, I had my own dreams. My own visions for myself, how I wanted my family to be. I wanted to get my Ph.D. in law. I wanted my OWN law firm just like you. Then I met you, suddenly it became all about QUEST. What his dreams were. How to help him achieve those dreams even at the sacrifice of my own. Whenever I tried to pursue something for myself all of a sudden you would need me to drop everything; just for you. When you got me pregnant I wasn't even ready to have a baby but what did you say QUEST? "Please keep it, I'll help out, you can still work and study to get your Ph.D." It all turned out to be a lie QUEST. I had to shrink myself to fit inside your big dream and make you my world. So since you're my world, I guess I am mad at the world huh?

(beat, the cry of a baby is heard, KARLA walks off stage slowly)



Illustration

Apollo Chang





Reiteration of Falsities

Dandelion

You were my favorite broken promise
All those times you said
You had been honest

All those times I would endure
I hoped We could have been more

I learned to cope
When your words were fabricated falsities
That left me hanging on a rope


The way you left me was seething and numb
A blinding hurt bled through
Thick layers of rage
Rage that consistently defined my cage

The one you put in place
Trapping my mind
With crippling space

I've been left in much worse ways
Now the dark you put me in
Can't even be reached
By the sun's golden rays

I loathe your perfect features
And how it was 'right place, wrong time'
And how I detest that you didn't see
That I was one of the keepers

Not to be discarded
Like a rotting creature





Reiteration of Falsities Con't

I was meant to be cherished and held
Not left behind
As I constantly dwelled
On the ever looming question in my mind
Would I ever be enough?
Enough for us to be intertwined?

I deserved more
Deserved better
Not your endless lies
Of mind numbing chatter

While you find your version of peace
I know that the sickening rage
I feel toward you
Will never cease





The Sins of My Father

Ana Davis

I am burdened by the sins of my father
All of them raging through my frail body

I, his flesh and blood, can never escape
What I'll soon become.

People whisper, talk, and yell
That I am the spitting complexion of him

The constant reminders as I look in the mirror.

The people of the town all gawk
At my countenance as I breeze by

The sins of my father are ones I carry with fear

Strapped tightly on my back, restricting my air
Laced around my ankles, digging a trail in my tracks

Fear that no one will ever like me
Because of my father's prevalent sins.

Fear that strikes through me
As fierce as the lightning striking the sky

I eagerly seek day by day
Where the sins have vanished

A day that I can proclaim
That I am not my father's sins

And his sins are not mine.





I Did Nothing

Nadia Ramos


One step outside
The sound of a police car,
Handcuffs dangling,
Hearing the words “Get on the ground!”
Feeling the pressure of their body against me

Knowing I did nothing wrong, but the color...
The color of my skin

They can speak, but if I even say a word...
“Pow”, one shot to the head

My people screaming and crying for help
Scared for their lives, wondering
If they or their loved ones are next.

All that for nothing
All of this just for you to get praised,
While me and my people suffer?



Forever Changing

Aliya Bates






We're More Than Just People of Color

Mya Pridgen

The darkest shade is black
A universal concept that has manifested into life
They see our skin and think we're different
We're foreign to them,
A statue in a museum
That is admired, critiqued, and judged for our makers
But when they feel threatened,
Feel as if their power is being stripped from them
We're animals, treated like we belong in cages
We're viewed as untamed when we revolt
When we fight back, we're terrorists
There's nothing like your first encounter
When they disagree with you, and suddenly
You're the worst being on the planet
They try and mimic us, but when we express our feelings against it
Suddenly our culture isn't ours, it's everybody's
We strive, we never give up
If we have to fight, we will fight
Because we're just humans who want to feel safe in our own skin





Too Close to the Cuckoo's Nest

Zac Jenkins

The both of us sat on the edge of a precipice. Above us were the ribbons of night that laced themselves neatly onto the cloth of the ether, dotted with shimmering pearls that could invoke the envy of summer beetles. Ahead of us was the moon, hanging on the horizon like a silver apple dangling on the bough of a tree, round and ripe until the coming of ravenous daylight, which swallows and consumes all that is and will ever be. And below us were once shades of greens, then hushed into blacks and blues, the land for once dormant and at peace with itself.

I almost gave you credit for it; the scenery simmered in its natural beauty, unafraid to show but dignified enough to not flaunt it. The night had never been as beautiful as it was before this moment. As I admired it all, my heart couldn't help but flutter when I felt your expectant eyes on me, felt your gaze swathe me in momentary nostalgic bliss.

“Do you like it?” you asked me, your voice in a soft whisper of anticipation.

“I do,” I admitted.

“I drew inspiration from your eyes,” is what you told me, and a chuckle bubbled up to the surface, no longer held back in my throat. I was feeling myself getting tipsy with affection. Already I had let myself go, languidly drinking up your attention, letting one hand of your's on the goblet and the other lifting my chin up so that I wouldn't miss a single drop.

I told you that I didn't even have blue eyes, and at first, I dismissed it. I thought none of it but as a silly mistake. You always made silly little mistakes that only I knew about, that only you'd let me see. I used to be so special to you, and you lit that spark within me again.

Then what was once ash turned into a fire.





Too Close to the Cuckoo's Nest Con't

“Still beautiful either way I see it,” you husked, and my face grew hot as your smile grew wide. As you continued to string your compliments into a hollow pearl necklace, you cupped one hand to my cheek, distracting me from —

Your other hand.

“All of you is beautiful, Hera.”

I seized you by both of your wrists, halting your caresses, and a roll rumble of thunder was heard in the distance. The illusion was shattered, yet the mirror was unbroken. The luminescence in your eyes dimmed with swift irritation, and my own was following suit like it always did with you.

“How much longer are we gonna do this?”

Of course you didn't get it.

“You had your break. I gave you time.”

Of course you didn't change.

“I even bothered to give you this.”

Why would a king change how he sees the world when his throne is so high up from everyone else?

“What more do you want from me?”

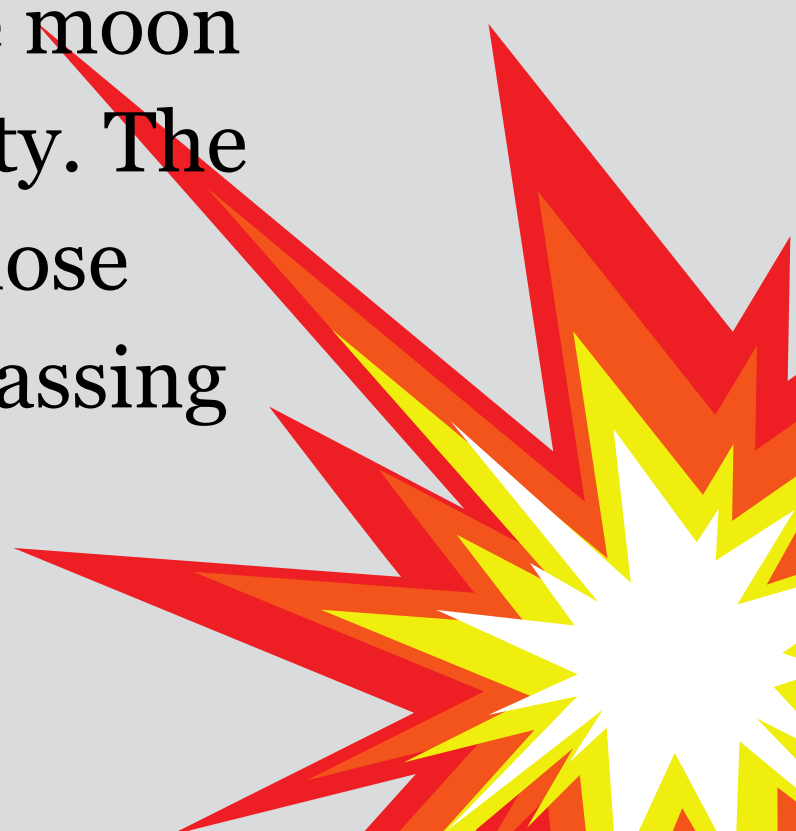
“Nothing,” I said. **“I want nothing to do with you, Zeus.”**

Thunder roared, the sound guttural and furious.

“Take that back.”

“I am not going back to Olympus! I am not sharing the throne with you! And I am not sleeping with you! Ever. Again.”

Like torches, the stars blew out in great succession and the moon retreated from its nesting place, leaving the sky bare and empty. The earth stirred and writhed in the wake of your stormclouds, whose cacophony of thunder and lightning crescendoed with every passing moment.





Too Close to the Cuckoo's Nest Con't

“Take it back! You love me!”

“I hope you rot in Tartarus, Zeus, with all your precious bed warmers to keep you company.”

I left you at the edge of the precipice before I could hear your response. If I stayed there any longer, you would somehow slither your way back into my heart and lay more eggs in my chest for me to carry. You may be gone but the venom still runs deep within me. It will always run deep. Normally, I would say “I hope you’re happy,” but it hasn’t stopped raining since, so I know that’s not the case. If you’re hoping that I’m happy, well... not yet. But, I’ve got the rest of eternity now, thanks to you.





Polly


Iden Williams

Rotting away, a polly rests on the verge of collapse
Ripping your petals one by one, hoping to finally reach the last
Plodding along, are you amused by my endless and chaotic buzzing?
I'm selfishly prepared for my departure, and thus, your inevitable demise

You've made me tear you from the stem
And rip you off the vine
Paralyzed by the pollen you've spewed, I'm forced to listen to your regrets
Your words make me grit my teeth, seeking pity from the consequences of
your actions

I seek your recognition, I'm nothing but a bee forced to feed on your
despicable lies
My tongue is like a stinger, a double edged blade
When my venom inevitably spews, can you endure the loss of your roots?

If you wilting away with the wind
Is my cue to taste freedom as sweet as nectar
Then by all means, fly away.



Death Continues

Aliya Bates





Untitled

Ryan Wood

I am the finger that pulls every trigger and the hand directing every dagger.

I am strife, savagery, survival, and the real original sin.

I am the king of fools who succumb to my false freedom as I force them to fight.

I am the words whispered through your mind controlling every mortal fate.

I am the puppet master pulling humanity's strings with strife.

I am every ounce of blood spilled and every death dealt by man.

I am God and Satan, I am divine and despised.

I am every human fate, I am what you call hate.






Goodbye

Abigail Antee

I just wanted you to stay
For the sadness eats away
In each passing day
Dirt falling over your grave
I despise the way you'd say
"I'll always be here"
For why did you have to disappear?
I abhor how I had to see you go
Yet the headstone gets added to another row
Just another person gone
Your time of death at the break of dawn.
Day by day and line by line
Erasing the memories of you from my mind
Heart to heart and hand in hand
The judge and jury, they take their stand.
Adoption papers being signed
Moving and adjusting
Pretending I'm fine.
Days won't fly, I think they're frozen in time
Along with my soul, my body, and my mind





don't miss me


Lola Frankenhoff

i let you into my house;
you tore down every wall
and burnt to ash
what you did not own.

you acted as though you had the right
to shatter our windows-
you clawed yourself out of hell
to ruin a home that wasn't yours
and the scars that you left
on the walls are the kind
that won't go away.

i'll never miss you,
but everyday i miss the childhood
you ended too soon-
it makes me sick to think of the things
you made me think were normal,
and the words that still visit me in my sleep;
i'll never miss you,
but i can't stop myself
from remembering.

i am still a child
and i'm stuck wondering how i'll ever stand
to lay bricks on a foundation
that you've carved your name into
with your wretched hand.



Venomous Hatred

Alycia McDowell





A Woman

Tokyo Camm

Scene Description: Sitting in the library, with three crosses placed around the room, an older man, named MARK, and SAM, a non-binary person, are sitting in leather chairs. MARK has a drink in his hand while SAM is sitting uncomfortably. The man begins to speak.

MARK: Hey Sam, what's the hardest thing you've gone through? *(Beat)* I saw an article in the newspaper that said there was a gay bashing in Wisconsin. I want to know if you heard about it, oh, or if you knew the victim. *(sips drink)* I know you care about that gay community. So do you think just maybe, if they got closer to God, they wouldn't be hurt? *(Beat)* If I were a ***, I'd definitely ask God to take me back if I were beaten for just existing. *(Gulps drink to finish it off)* I know it's against the Bible to lay with another man, but I can't make people see that. *(Starts pouring another drink)* My sweet daughter Samantha knows, yet she still wants to marry another woman.

SAM: It's Sam and not she anymore. I- *(the man interrupts)*

MARK: Not she? Yes, SHE is, and SHE came that way. God made her to be a woman not some non-binary person thing *(Sips his new drink)* and her name is Samantha.


SAM: Well- *(they stand up, take his drink, get him out of the chair, and start taking him out of the room)*

MARK: I just don't understand it because, again, if I were to get hurt, I'd stop. So how about you? I mean- *(trips up the stair on the way out)*

SAM: *(stops and sits him down on the ground)* Oh god, will you shut it?

MARK: Don't use his name in vain y- *(SAM interrupts before he finishes his sentence)*

SAM: *(sigh)* See, people like you are the problem. People that act like they care about what I'm going through and how I feel. You sit here talking about how you want to hear how I feel about the matter but talk about your feelings. You're talking about how you see it and asking me about it. *(angrily)* Why should I talk when you won't listen?! Why should I explain to you why this is happening?!






A Woman Con't

SAM: Why should I let you into my mind through this?! (*calming down*) You don't really want to know if you only interrupt and continue your side. (*calm*) I have no care or feelings toward people like you. You just want me to acknowledge that you care enough to ask me. To tell you the truth I have no real thoughts on the matter. Do you think that's something I think about? Why would I? That's sad and depressing. Yes, it is happening to people like me though I can't relate.

MARK: Like you? What are-

SAM: I'm often a target for yelling and cursing but I don't let it bother me. I know they don't have the guts to do it. Therefore, I know it most likely won't happen to me. You don't realize that this is not everywhere. Not every gay person thinks about being gay bashed. Things like that happen where it's not always welcome; gay bashing doesn't happen daily like people dying.

The truth is you can't beat or pray the gay away. So you can't talk to people about this. Go to an activist center and ask to talk to a gay man. Ask him if he is comfortable living his life even though he could be attacked. Listen to him and learn a different perspective. Otherwise, you will just keep being one of those people, the people I hate. (*sad and shaky voice*) Dad, you're drunk so I have to get you to bed now. (*They pick him up and take him out of the room*)






derealization

Sav Dycus

sometimes the moment catches up with me
i'm much more different than i used to be
the person that appears in my reflection
is far too difficult for me to recognize
everything becomes an imperfection
this new sense of distress implies
this is a moment of disconnection
where i seem to have disrupted my peace
i take myself outside, gone is my solace
but i hope my stress will soon release

i look at the sky in despair
a dark blue that stretches for light years
bright little stars scattered everywhere
to us, they are specks of radiant white
a fraction of the millions that exist
in our universes' everlasting night
but our vision is often deceitful
for those stars could be planets, and thus
they are unparallel compared to us
to them, we are nothing greater
than specks walking along earth's equator






derealization con't

out on the streets, people pass me by
the silhouettes of each and every face
that i will never encounter again
memory of each other will soon erase
still, the thought lingers on my mind
that each of these figures passing me
have individual lives of their own
stories that will follow after them
it only makes me feel more alone

pushing through the crowd of people
to which their presence i cannot feel
it's gradually getting more difficult
for me to identify what is real
trapped in a dream i can't escape
rather, this feeling is a nightmare
a brand new sense of perception
nothing else could ever compare
even sleeping cannot get rid of this
but for awhile i'll think i'm complete
until the person in my reflection returns
i'll realize then, that the cycle will repeat





Brand New Person

Dylan Fox

When you left you took my breath away,
Quite literally.

You took away my ability to give sweet innocent love
To freehandedly care without a thought
Trusting someone with my entire soul,
Letting someone see me in the light that I shined for you.

I try not to let you have control over my mind, still
Seeing that you have your perfect little life together
While mine slowly gets shredded one by one,
Trying to piece together my new person together.

Seeing that you still have that ability to love bring daggers to my eyes,
Doing things we used to do with her,
The presence of me is washed out of your mind,
While she brings in the new tides, I was your ocean
I taught you how to fill those spaces, she didnt.

You tore apart my mind,
During you, even after you
You carefully dissected every part of it until it was no longer mine.
Taking fragments with you showing it off like a prized possession,
'Toxic' plastered across every piece of me,
That binding label tearing every image of me apart

.






Brand New Person Con't

I don't miss you or the things you did,
Your ugly personality that washed over mine
Toxicity that spilled out your pores
Or your anger that stuck to me like hot tar
Dating you was like stepping on broken egg shells
One wrong move and blood is dripping from my soles.

Before you dating was like a dream,
Something that happened so perfectly it was only in the movies
After your time expired, love had a whole different meaning
And that high school love did in fact only last in the movies.

You played me like I was your puppet on your strings
Getting tangled in every knot you created
Carrying your loads of baggage like it was a job
Twisting and manipulating my every thought for you
While a life for myself got tied away in the endless ropes of your problems.

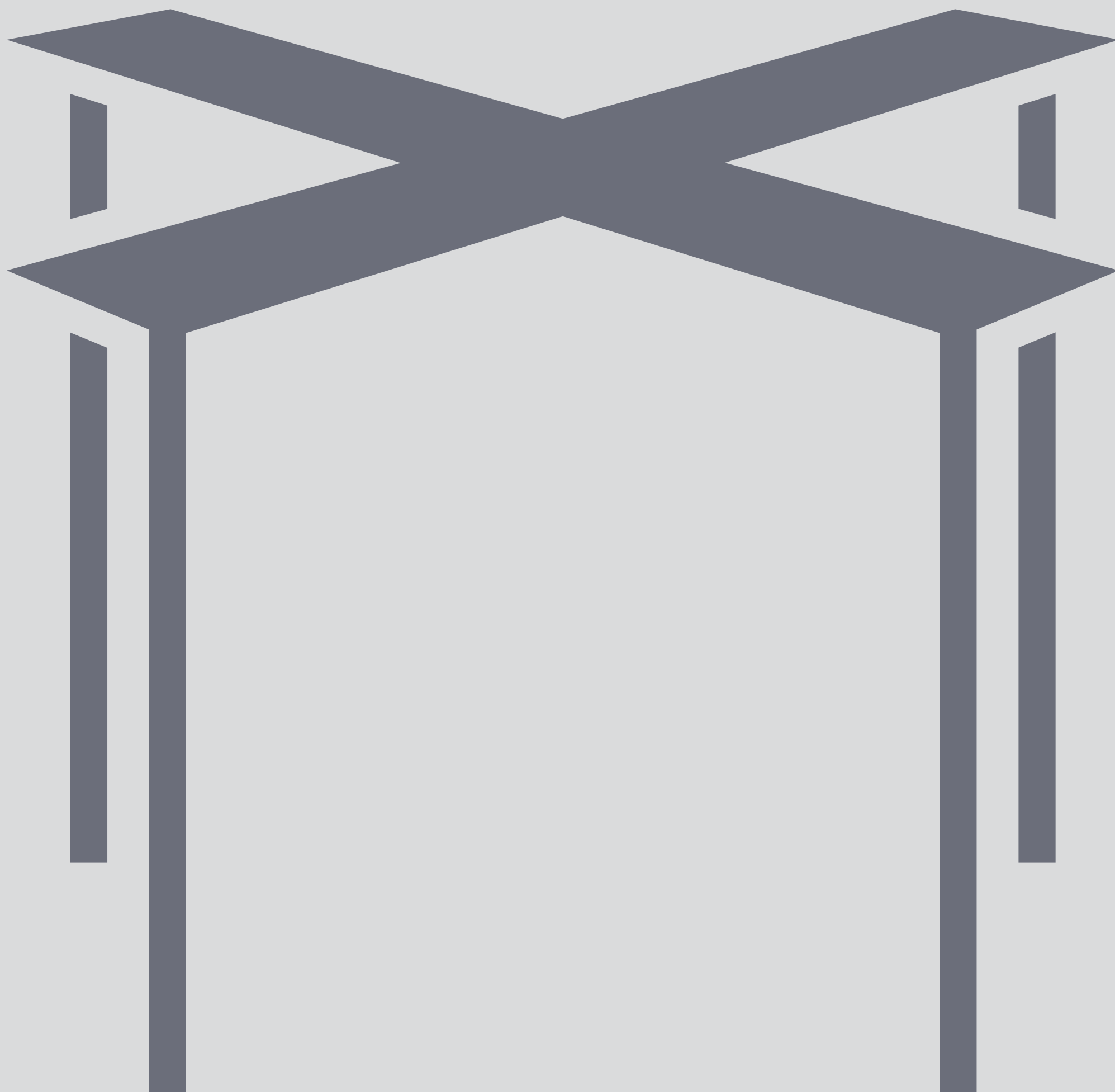
You permanently changed my views on love,
But you also taught me what I don't want in a boy
I don't want one that's simply pathetic,
Where his actions have never fallen in line
Where he holds his head higher than everyone else's
And where my mistakes were far greater than any of his.





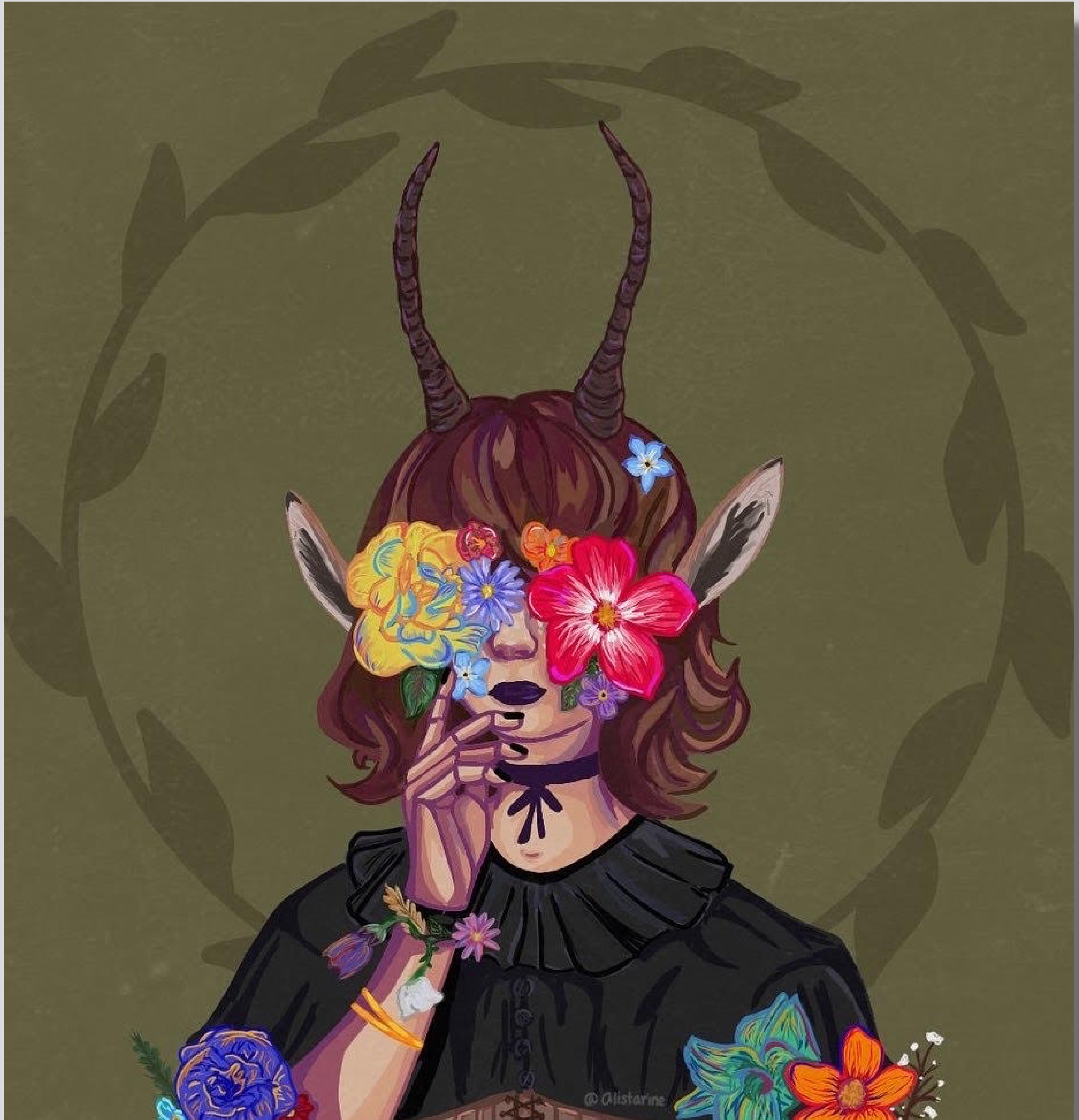
Brand New Person Con't

But, I hope you and her work out.
She is my replica through and through,
You knew this from the minute you laid eyes on her.
From her style to her smile, she is my mini-me
To her boy-like name, her porcelain skin
You really did good at finding my other version
You couldn't have me so you found her.



Loss of Oneself

Aliya Bates





The Tithes of a Traitor

Cameron Brown

The best way to describe how I feel for you
Is pure unfiltered abhorrence.
Your laugh could drive me to murder
Your smile could be motive alone.
I didn't know that one could feel so strongly
But alas here am I,
Loathing your existence,
Detesting your presence.

Do you understand how you make me feel?
I thought that I was clear but apparently not,
Seeing as you're still here.
I guess I'll have to be blunt:
I loathe you.
I detest you.
Your existence makes me sick like a stomach bug
Contracted from a classroom of children.

My feelings for you taste bitter like the blackest coffee,
These feelings smell sour like spoiled milk,
And my feelings have no extent and know no boundaries.
I think this hatred was born
In the deepest, darkest pit in Hell,
Forged at the hands of Beelzabub himself.

