

Sole Magazine, Vol. 3

TRENDS



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LETTER FROM *THE EDITORS*

Hey, you—reader. Yeah, you!

Do you know what's in your hands right now? You probably do—you've likely heard about it already. It's only the trendiest publication on all of Brown's campus: Sole Magazine! We are the home for creative nonfiction on College Hill, a place where brilliant writers, fastidious editors, visionary illustrators, and you—esteemed readers—come together through a shared love of true storytelling.

In this third edition, we explore trends. And no, we're not just talking about Labubus, Italian brainrot, and Dubai chocolate. In this issue, we consider how culture permeates our lives, how the young interact with the old, and how individuals resist and bend to forceful societal currents.

For trends are the shared substance of our humanity. They ground us in time. They connect us to our neighbors. They influence our desires. They speak to the power of multiplicity and the way individuals are swept into aggregate groups.

So stop scrolling on TikTok and start browsing through this highly exclusive, limited-edition issue of Sole Magazine. Within our pages, you'll find stories about tattoos, family migration, avocados, MRI studies, and the phenomenon of the young adult dinner party. And if you're wanting to hear more about how our staff writers are thinking about trends, check out our Collections piece on page 13. We hope this issue gives you a sense of the big picture—of how individual stories can reflect the culture of the masses.

With love,

Managing Editors

Deeya, Kate, Elsa, and Desi

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A Barely Legal Guide to Seasonal Waitressing

On Restaurant Work and Gender Relations

By Lucy Kaplan

Edited by Maria Kim

Illustrated by Hadley McCormack

I.

DURING YOUR FIRST shift, you will be sentenced to folding silverware into napkins. A test to see if you're cut out for repetition, the practice will soon become ritual. Take refuge in this menial task on days when your coworkers commit to telling and retelling their recent sexual escapades. There's no earthly reason why you should know that your middle-aged boss has a penchant for older women.

"YOUR RELATIONSHIP WILL MEANDER INTO ALLEGORY. PROCEED WITH CAUTION."

2.

Innocently enough, a bartender at your restaurant may slip you gifts: kombucha, a work of bell hooks, a bracelet—your relationship will meander into allegory. Proceed with caution.

3.

When asked how he filled his day, the same bartender might tell you that he "sipped espresso, smoked a cigar,



and watched a snail eat a leaf.” When retelling the story to your friends, you will have to insist through giggles that the quotation is direct. Don’t tell them the other things he said.

4.

If your manager is acting a little erratic today, he is likely on the come down from an unsavory adventure he took after closing last night. Signs include an increased volume of arguments with the kitchen, palpitating eyelids, and a lowered physical inhibition. He will spill while clumsily showcasing how to pour a margarita with one hand, but beam at his tricks, and he may tip you out of the bartender’s pool.

5.

You have precisely one week to get in the good graces of the kitchen staff. Spark conversation in whatever broken Spanish you can eek out. Laugh at the jokes that translate awkwardly into English. Take pride when the head chef calls you “mija.” First uneasy at his kindness, you will soon determine his intentions unsullied.

6.

Soldier through incessant teasing along the lines of *Hey, remember me?* It is best practice to lie and nod. Apparently, the type of men who take their dates to upscale patio bars are also the type to flirt with their barely legal waitresses right in front of them.

7.

A hairball sensation will begin to fester in your gut, one that you will fight back into your esophagus when you laugh at his unfunny jokes and nod when he makes no sense. Don’t cough it up.

8.

The new 20-year-old chef may slyly pull you aside during rush and ask for a shot of tequila. You will for once find it pathetically endearing—the bartenders will not. He will be fired within three days, and you will feel inexplicably at fault. He wore star patches to cover his pimples, patterning his face with innocence.

9.

As the months progress, you will notice a disturbing, albeit useful, pattern. Some days you will find yourself crunched for time, hair frizzed from bike rides and lake dips in the summer warmth. Other days, you will bask in the silence of your sun-spotted car—curls tamed, lips painted, cheeks expertly flushed. Take a moment to rehearse a well-placed smile in the rearview mirror. On these evenings, customers will be much more forgiving when the kitchen is running behind. Bat your eyelashes for an extra 5% and don’t think about Gloria Steinem.

10.

Whiskey, sugar, bitters, rock, twist. After countless slow hours spent leaning against the bar, you will learn through osmosis to make an Old Fashioned. Carajillo, Sex on the beach, Negroni, Lemon ball—your new party tricks. You never touched the bottle. You never crossed the line. You never would.

II.

As the paychecks roll in, guilt will thaw into acquiescence. Exhale your bitterness as the hairball in your stomach softens into the lining. You will exit the summer with an outlook half empty, but a wallet half full.

“BAT YOUR
EYELASHES
FOR AN
EXTRA 5%
AND DON’T
THINK
ABOUT
GLORIA
STEINEM.”

Buried Alive

Screams of a Stifled Voice

By Ava Satterthwaite | Edited by Tyki Cantu-Wang | Illustrated by Kamsi Nwotite

Oct 02, 2022

10:32 AM: **DRILLING, GRINDING, SAWDUST** coats my tongue. i am watching a film—a monochrome mouth moves in silence. a man shouts through the static, his words foreign, unintelligible. the reel flickers. barbed ribbons of cornflower blue obscure the scene, coiling around cranes and metal hooks, colliding with rubber-gloved hands, cutting between construction men in blue. is this show... interactive? i'm in the viewing room, on the table. back and forth and back again.

10:33 AM: the drill closes in. i am concrete: jaw locked, limbs tethered to the table. unable to move or breathe. unable to scream or flail or convince the construction men i am still alive. an entire orchestra of stars shine above me, humming a metallic shrill and showering me in an ostentatious sterilized haze. the conductor calls, "instruments sterilized... bone saw...." screeching. more shrilling. a sudden stabbing sensation, a teeming mouthful of metallic crimson. i flinch—this band sucks. i smack the cold leather below me; the curtains close on cue.

8:29 AM: "No allergies to medication? No food since 12 AM? OK, good... Well, I recommend a Vicodin waiver... She'll have some sore—no? Fine.

Insurance card, please."

I sink back into a tattered cloth chair, gaze fixed on a 1980s Wheel of Fortune rerun. Between Sajak's comb-over, the wooden TV stand swelling with matted wires, and the stiff faux cactus in the corner, I feel like I've fallen into some neon-crazed, cobwebbed wrinkle of time. Mom offers the card and sits beside me, muttering under her breath as she scribbles a second, third, fourth signature on various forms.

8:47 AM: I take shallow breaths, clammy hands trembling as I scan the waiting room.

Phrase: Five Words, 21 Letters

W A _ I N G _ P F R O M
A _ A D D R _ A M
"Ava, come follow me."

How fitting. I walk toward the nurse and exhale as Sajak's laugh and the dense smell of mildew dwindle into oblivion. Soon, I'll be dreaming, then delirious with a mouthful of gauze.

Soon—it'll all be over.

9:00 AM: The door creaks. A man in starch white enters—his tall, refined frame harsh amid cartoonish bunnies and fields of flowers sketched on the walls. His smile is courteous, if stiff.

"Morning, Ava. I hear you're our

wisdom teeth case today. Junior in high school?"

Still scanning the sallow sunflowers behind him, I nod: "Yeah... starting college visits soon."

"Big milestone! License too, then?" He stretches into some latex gloves with such vehemence I wince.

"Hopefully. I keep failing the parallel park."

"Ah, double freedom," he retorts, voice now muffled behind a creased blue mask, "It'll come."

I hesitate, then: "Um—one thing. I'm a natural redhead, and I read we sometimes need more anesthesia? I think I do, after all the cavities and root canals I've been half-numbed for." I smile sheepishly, tracking cracks in the tiles beneath my swinging legs. "I don't want to feel a thing."

More amused than concerned, he snickers; "You want the good stuff, huh? Don't worry. You'll be fine."

A feverish flush overtakes me, knuckles whitening as my fresh French manicure claws into the armrests. I purse my lips to nothing but the echo of crinkling paper and suffocating smell of antiseptic; the door slams before I can mumble another word.

9:05 AM: The room is heavier now—harsher. Even the fluorescent overheads seem fiercer, like electrified clouds infested with hail, enshrouded with an acute sense of dread. I half-

expect the bunnies to flee the fields and burrow somewhere warmer, somewhere sheltered from the commotion.

The storm brews swifter as I look down to two cold hands—mottled with bruises and blue veins like marble—still fastened to the vinyl-covered armchairs. I was Rose in *Titanic*: the bitter Atlantic circled on all sides, but by God, I would hold on to that drifting wood, that stiff vinyl. If this room was a hailstorm, these armrests were my wreckage: a connection to the concrete, to solid land—a lifeline averting an ocean of fear from swallowing me whole.

“They’re professionals,” I reassure myself, “trained doctors who do this all the time. I’ll be OK.”

I’d identified five items I could see (bunnies, sunflowers, Purell hand sanitizer mounted to the wall, some knives and hooks on a steel, cafeteria-esque dish—the scariest school lunch you’ve ever seen) and two of four items I could touch (the torn sleeves of an old, moth-eaten sweater and the vinyl film on the armrests, of course) when a nurse knocks.

She heads for the Purell and asks for an arm. I feel a quick prick, intentionally averting my eyes from the needle to resume the senses’ ritual (two more items to touch... could I fiddle with the IV line? brush the ribbed adhesive at the insertion site? no, that’d be weird).

She smiles, gaze flickering to my still-trembling hands, “This’ll calm you down a little, sweetie, OK?” I offer a grateful nod.

9:10 AM: 28. In five minutes, I’d watched the monitor sink from 102



to 83 to 65 (Goldilocks’ zone, breath looser and mind mellow) to the headache-inducing 40, mind-bending 34 (when the bunnies stirred and a breeze made the sunflowers dance—ears smothered in the sound of a million little teeth munching on grass), further and further down until 28 BPM.

At 28, neon snow bathes the bunnies, the room an old screen obscured in static. I envision the cactus, the *Wheel of Fortune* theme, a crinkled *People* magazine (June 2000 edition, Jennifer Aniston on the cover) and mourn the naiveté of 30 minutes earlier. The tiles teeter as the room tornadoes around me; I seize an armchair with such force the whole chair rocks. Screw Rose, I am Jack: watching myself drown from the hail-ridden clouds above. I

sob in slow-motion as my frostbitten hands unfetter from the armrests—Jack’s wooden door unreachable. I am desolate. I am defenseless from fate.

A handheld mirror lies slanted on the counter beside me. I search its reflection for what seems like hours. I search this ashen face I once knew for some shred of life—a snuffle of the nose, a curl of the mouth—but to no avail. For a second, I wonder if I’ll die in the smeared reflection: a finale akin only to Narcissus’. After all, 28 isn’t so far from flatlined.

Then, 28 climbs back to 33, 34, 42, the sacred 65. I’m not sure what time it is now—or whether it’s been hours, weeks, decades, seconds. I sure as hell am not calmer, though.

9:12 AM: The nurse returns. I ask her the time, what’s in the IV, “Will

I be under soon?”, each word clear and well-articulated. She’s startled—horrified: this, apparently, was not the desired result.

“Wow! I’ve never seen someone so lucid on Midazolam. I— I must’ve halved the dose somehow.”

Before I can remind her I’m less reactive to sedatives—before I can tell that snobbish doctor I told you so—she rushes over.

“Well, I guarantee this one will work. You’ll be knocked until it’s time for home and ice cream.” She hastily injects another needle, “Count from ten for me.”

10... 9... 8... 7.... Curtains close.

A POST-OP REPORT:

Recorded 10/02/2022, 11:51 AM EST

Patient Ava J. Satterthwaite, 16F, experienced intraoperative awareness and partial temporary paralyzation

during wisdom teeth extraction. At 10:32 AM, Dr. Smith [real name omitted] observed REM, increased heart rate, breathing rate, and sweating. Additional anesthesia was administered at 10:33 AM. Prior to operation, patient expressed concern of a potential need for additional anesthesia. Patient reacted unusually to pre-operative conscious sedation, appearing tense and alert rather than lethargic. Patient was administered a typical dose of anesthesia for her size and exhibited anticipated reaction in due time. There is no explanation as to why this dose was not effective throughout the procedure, but patient has not mentioned recollection of said episode—we do not intend to inform her or her mother, to ensure smooth mental recovery post-procedure.

Patient exhibited minimal post-procedure reaction, displaying an immediate spatial awareness and producing well-articulated speech. Patient

refused a wheelchair and walked to car without swaying or difficulty... indicating provided anesthetic dose may have been insufficient. Quick metabolism of anesthesia was recorded on her chart for future reference.

NOV 05, 2022

3:02 AM: I am thrust awake, rattled for the third time this week with the acute sensation of suffocation. I feel smooth silk bedsheets crowded in clusters between my clammy hands and exhale. It’s 30°F outside—bedroom window adorned in chromatic streaks of snowflakes and steam—but I am sweltered. A dense bead falls from my drenched forehead onto the satin. I drink water and stare into the darkness until my shallow breath has thickened. I’ve been buried alive. Again.

This ritual started somewhere around mid-October. Initially, I attributed the nightmares to the stacks of wool and fleece and fur I practically drowned myself in every night. So, I switched to silk. For a week, I dozed under one thin linen blanket to the cadence of chattering teeth, waking still at 3AM, smothered, violently shivering. Sometime close to Halloween—when the evening’s installation featured a cornflower blue man and two matted bunnies—I connected the dots. I have lived in fear of doctors since: terrified to miss a stair, catch a cold, drink too much soda—terrified to live.

“FOR A SECOND, I WONDER
IF I’LL DIE IN THE
SMEARED REFLECTION:
A FINALE AKIN ONLY TO
NARCISSUS’.

”

Designed by Ava Satterthwaite

Paranoid in Detroit: A Retrospective Airport Guide

Written by Elsa Eastwood

Edited by Maria Kim

Illustrated by Ina Ma

IN THE BEGINNING, Delta Airlines created a 10 a.m. flight to Los Angeles, and I arrived early at my gate, enveloped in a net of peace, anticipating a night in my childhood bed back home, and the sun rose over Providence. But then The Intercom said, "Let there be a \$1,500 airline voucher for any travelers willing to transfer to the 5 p.m. to Los Angeles through Detroit," and I awoke.

Too good to be true? Perhaps. This morning would mark only the beginning of my chaotic pilgrimage. Here's what I wish I had been told:

1. Accept the voucher, but know what you're getting into. Don't lose yourself in visions of a restful Christmas vacation—you must first earn it. Your new flight is in nine hours. Text your dad: no longer getting home today, sorry.
2. Listen to the charismatic British-Canadian rugby player you meet at the gate when he informs you that no one wins anything by standing patiently in line. Muscle your way to the front for your updated boarding pass.
3. Find creative ways to pass the time while you wait. Stare at the stretches of gray carpet, the seas of hurried bodies. Treat yourself to a \$16.50 meatball sandwich, which will inevitably taste like wet cardboard. Find a nook and doom-scroll into oblivion as time crawls, turtle-like, past you.
4. Apologize to the universe for cursing the droning intercom voice that announces each delay. Airport attendants have dreams and families. Attempt to restore your karma.

5. Once finally on board, strike up a conversation with the young, bearded Amazon employee in the neighboring seat. He may buy you a small bottle of airplane bourbon and confess to you his aviophobia. Comfort him, but know you'll be on the tarmac for another three hours and that he'll be drunk enough by then not to notice he's airborne anyway.
6. When your phone informs you midair that your connection out of Detroit has already departed, accept the truth: no airport sprint nor desperate plea will get you home today. And don't say you hate Detroit. It doesn't want you there either.
7. After you land, an agitated agent at a Delta "Help" desk will claim she can't rebook your flight or help you find a place to sleep. Ignore her. Get a second opinion and an off-the-freeway motel voucher.
8. Don't talk to irritable strangers at 1 a.m. on the airport shuttle en route to said off-the-freeway motel.
9. Hop across the lily-pad stains on the lobby carpet to lighten the mood. On the way to your room, try not to picture bodies in a range of consciousness behind each door or an eerie solo violin accompanying you down the hallway. If you must, have a makeshift weapon ready.
10. You'll hear water running when you enter. The bathtub is full, the faucet stuck. Estimate how long you have before a flood consumes the room.
11. Futz with the thermostat to no avail. 30°F. Nice work. You're sleeping in your clothes.
12. Never rely on a fatigued and hungry mind. There is no skeleton hand on your pillow, no gelatinous tentacles emerging from beneath the bed. That languid, naked woman on the windowsill? A trick of the light. (Deadbolt the door twice.)
13. Sacrifice your vigilance for some shivery sleep. Imagine yourself somewhere more forgiving—the dentist's office or DMV waiting room, the kitchenware aisle of a suburban IKEA.
14. Wake up to a 5 a.m. alarm. Brave the snowstorm, the lonely motel muffin, the shuttle back to the airport. Drag your bag the final few yards. And once you've collapsed into your seat and let your eyes fall closed, find solace in the Los Angeles skyline appearing against the darkness of your eyelids, the weight of a new \$1,500 in your pocket, as the plane wheels roll steadily forward.



Zia Felicetta: A Portrait

By Luca Raffa

Edited by Ava Satterthwaite

Illustrated by Amy Park

I PARKED IN her empty driveway and approached the proud house with stubborn orange bricks. The black railing guiding me to the door ailed with rust, though the white paint on the house was fresh as the snow. It was dim, the sun obscured in this dull December sadness, and the icy lake winds caused the lampposts to shiver with doubt. I rang the little doorbell and peered around. The short bungalows huddled close together to keep warm from the snow. Darkness was beginning to blanket the neighborhood. Suddenly, a faint light flickered on from inside. I peeked through the doorframe glass with a smile and watched as a figure hurried towards me. The door opened.

Zia Felicetta greeted me with a tender hug and the touch of her delicate cheeks on each of mine. Her demeanor was elusive, her faint smile always uncertain below her serious eyes—sad, dry eyes which caved into her head and cast shadows. The wrinkles on her cheeks and on her forehead revealed the scars of time, though her small diamond earrings restored some dormant youth still hiding within her. Black strands like needles freckled the white hay that crowned her head.

Zia waddled towards the kitchen, and her plump body disappeared into the dark. A nativity scene of plastic figurines emerged in the corner.

Zia had been a widow for over forty years and was the last and only surviving of the five loving sisters and their husbands. Across

the walls, these ghosts gawked at me, black and white, through the frames: Zia's husband holding her tight in her wedding dress; her sisters—Carmella, Roquina, Peppinella, and Maria, my grandmother—through the years at her wedding, and at their weddings, and at their children's



weddings; her nephews and nieces who died as infants; the only surviving photograph of her mother Vittoria, the woman she watched die as an infant, wearing a dirt-caked shirt, a shoddy headscarf, and a faint smile; her father as a young man with a black coppola hat and a black mustache; and the same man with a bushy grey mustache and slicked back hair. Hovering higher on the walls were images of saints, Gesù, crucifixes, and a collection of memoriam cards she gathered over years from funerals. She even framed a photograph of Montoleone di Puglia, the town she left behind: a cluster of orange shingles, brown bricks, and white concrete sleeping on a hill and surrounded by green planes and wildflowers.

Zia returned holding a ready plate of cookies wrapped in tinfoil, the wrinkly fat drooping from her arms from the weight of the plate. She invited me to sit at the table and offered me an espresso which I knew I could never refuse. She vanished again into the kitchen, and in the silence of her home I could hear

**“ACROSS THE WALLS,
THESE GHOSTS
GAWKED AT ME, BLACK
AND WHITE, THROUGH
THE FRAMES.”**

the clanking as she fed the cafetera the espresso grinds and placed it on the stove. When she returned to the dining room table, she unwrapped the cold cookies. She enjoyed making food and freezing it for an infrequent visitor. She put a hard candy into her mouth that reeked of licorice, anise, and fennel and began to suck.

The hot espresso breathed life into us and kindled conversation. She was simple, of little words, knowing only how to talk about her food, her family, her garden, or God. She had no preferences,

few opinions. She paused a lot and would watch me. She was a patient woman, watching intently and listening as I sipped on my bitter espresso. When she began to speak, the movement of her firm jaw and soft lips came together in a symphony of schwas. Soon, it was time for me to depart and return Zia to her solitude. Her frail pleas asking me to stay surrendered to my guilty resoluteness, and she disappeared into the basement for one last parting gift.

As I waited for her before the door, I glanced at the frames on the wall again. I started to wonder if Zia ever talked to these ghosts—after all, she was a spiritual woman. Zia emerged from the staircase and brought me more cookies in tinfoil and a panettone to remember her by. She embraced me and kissed each cheek, speaking to me, *I love you*, in her unsteady English. I said goodbye.

She waited alone in the frame of the door. The cold followed her inside. I thought about how she might become a photograph someday, and my heart sank.

**“I THOUGHT ABOUT
HOW SHE MIGHT
BECOME A
PHOTOGRAPH SOMEDAY,
AND MY HEART SANK.”**

Designed by Elsa Eastwood

Two-Day Trip Home

By Elaine Rand

Edited by Arya Vishwakarma

Illustrated by Cameron Bly

THERE'S A NEW fence in the yard where the trellis once kissed the ground, a padlock on the gate in the alley left by an admirer or a forgetful biker. The front door of the house is newly painted navy blue, but the latch still sticks. An assortment of sunscreen bottles, displaced from the back porch, live in the garage alongside the dead dog's bed, which has been inherited by my parents' new one. Sunscreen spread on skin, bug spray interrupted by the sound of barking.

I throw the puppy a ball, and she runs around the periphery of the yard, still chasing something invisible long after she has caught it in her mouth. Once, we pitched a tent here, but the pea popped up beneath my back. The tent's been lost for a decade now. Dirt on the lawn chairs, dirt under fingernails, plastic sacks of mulch stacked tall. A smear of Indiana soil on the back steps to be powerwashed come next year.

Inside the house, hairballs nestle in the gap between the refrigerator and the linoleum. The countertop is home to packets of tuna, a plastic Brita pitcher covered in hard water film, recalled pistachios yet to be thrown away. On the wall hangs the prim calendar, which still reads "March" in June. On the floor, WD-40 and Clorox wipes share real estate with cans of wet food and salmon dog treats for brain health. I can hear the nettles rattling outside. They're

strewn along the berm so the puppy can't romp without getting her short legs caught. Through the window, there's the redbud that sprouted where the garden patch used to be, more tenacious than the tomatoes. It towers over the ghosts of withered vines, the home-farming lovefest brief

mouth leaves the tongue's flames extinguished. I smile and deflect, teeth thick with ash. Tomorrow, I will drive away, "Wide Open Spaces" on the stereo. No flat land precipice to fall from anymore.

The voices haven't changed. No new timbres, no unexpected inflections, only the occasional quiet indignity. My shadow informs the conversations. Hello to the teenage neighbor I babysat when she was three and I was 12. Hello to my best friend's brother, who has forgotten my name. Hello to the photo of great-aunts Elaine and Madeline on the mantle. Goodbye to the swimming pool by my elementary school; I used to leap into the water again and again. Goodbye to the cornfield, razed to build a strip mall, and the strip mall, minced and bulldozed to make room for a high rise. Goodbye to the uncertainty that once roiled inside me in the neighborhood where I used to live. I've juiced every drop I can from this place. When I take a sip, I taste only the dregs.

Two days ago, I boiled soba noodles and cut hot peppers and cilantro for lunch, snapping carrots in half as men sprayed the dead trees outside with red paint and ran the chainsaw. Today, the radio on the porch plays a couple seconds ahead of the one in the living room, the sponsorship message echoing as it sings: "Committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world."



and barely remembered.

There is honor in an intact ear, one without the cartilage pierced—my mother said so long ago. But is there honor in an ear that burns? Both of mine turn bright when someone's grandma asks me if I'm single. She showed my picture to her son. Lucky that breathing fire with a closed

TRENDS:

A Sole Collection

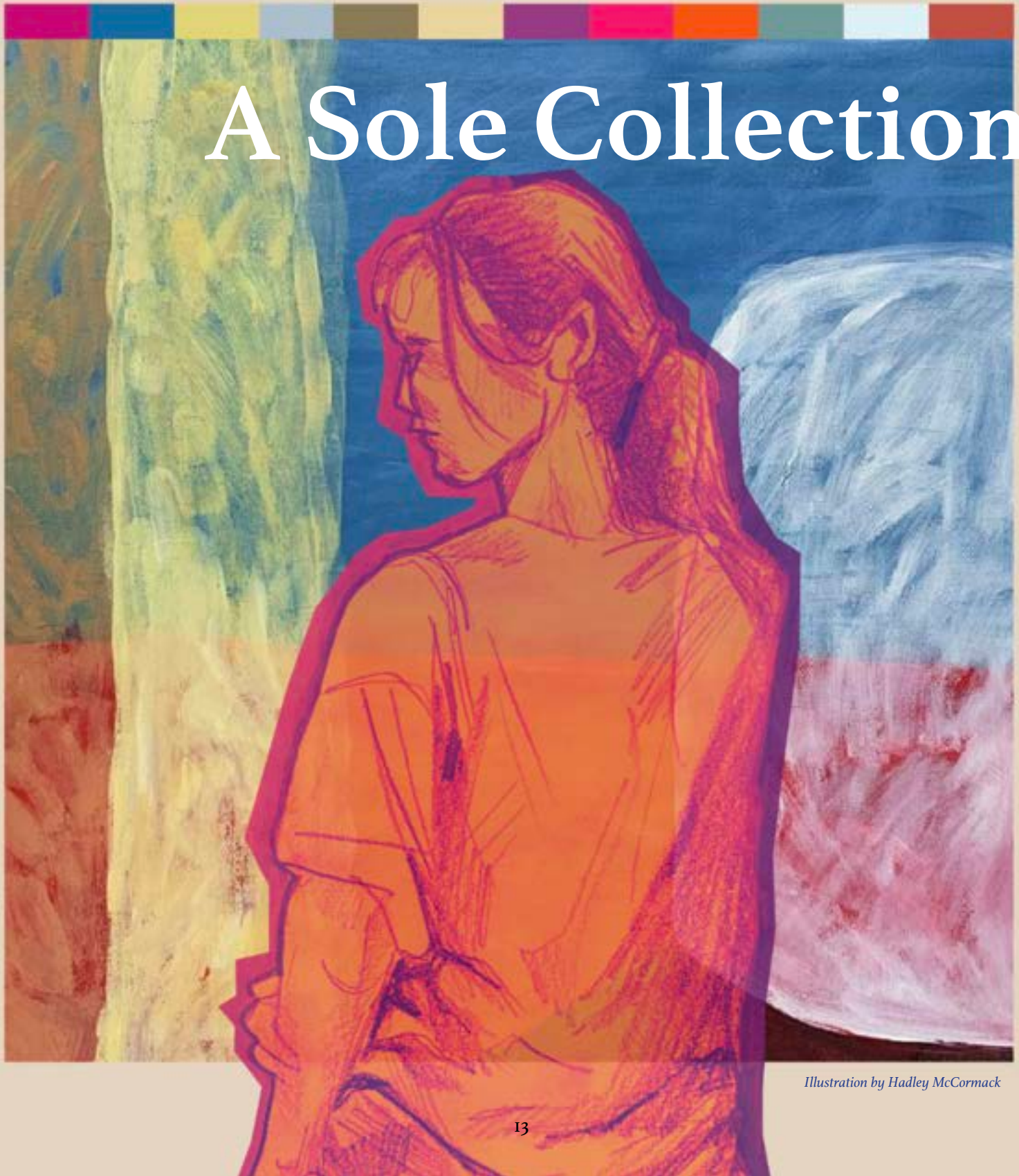


Illustration by Hadley McCormack

This article is the third edition of our Collections project, in which we ask some of our staff writers to write a short blurb in response to a prompt. This edition's prompt: write about a trend. Is there a new trend you love? A recurring trend you hate? From the rebirth of jazz to the come-up of tinned fish to the resurgence of bell-bottom jeans, our staffers analyze what it means to be trendy, providing immersive anecdotes, potent analyses, and strong opinions on the pervasion and omnipresence of the trend.

Contributions by

**Lucy Kaplan, Juliet Corwin, Riley Stevenson, Elsa Eastwood, Ava Satterthwaite,
Annabelle Stableford, and Anika Weling**

Tinned Fish

By Lucy Kaplan

In my youth, a jar of pickled herring claimed the back right corner of the fridge. I can't quite point to my father's Jewish ancestry as the reason; it seemed more of a personality quirk that compelled him to crave tangy fish on a seeded cracker before his three o'clock nap.

My brother and I followed suit, curious eaters tempted by scores of gefilte fish and gravlax at break fast, Passover, and the occasionally attended Saturday service. On weekends, we grabbed bagels with whitefish from Lenny's, a half-decent deli we remained loyal to for the name it shared with our late grandfather. Not the finest in the city, but every New Yorker knows that the best sandwich comes from the place around the corner.

After our westward relocation, my appetite persisted. No longer able to race down the stairs and across the street to satisfy my hankerings, I stacked the cupboards with tinned fish of my own choosing. Smoked sardines in olive oil, thinly filleted mackerel, salmon preserved with lemon—a hazy ode to New York winters gone by. Salt and sour clung to the walls of our kitchen, reminiscent of the mom-and-

pop shops we once frequented. This one, our own.

When I left home, I folded my fixation into my suitcase—not a trend, but a history. I etched a pair of salmon onto my upper thigh, drawn with a dark ink that felt like blood. A finelined reminder of Passover and Grandpa Lenny and my father's pickled herring.

Last month, I stopped dead in my tracks at a familiar crosswalk in New York. There it was:

the closure sign in Lenny's window, dated two years prior and peeling at the edges. My stomach roiled as the word imposter came to my lips. I was sulking in a city that held my past and escaped my future.

That same week, my father sent me a pair of winter boots, a tin of smoked fish stuffed inside the left footbed. Somehow, he knew I was mourning.

trendy to forget to eat. Somewhere around fifth grade, I think.

I remember in health class, how my teacher told us about thigh gaps and how to check if we had them. After class, a group of us stood in a circle, touched our ankles together, and prayed for emptiness.

We'd skip meals and then skip

**SILENT HUNGER WAS THE
LANGUAGE OF THE STRONG.**

JULIET CORWIN

rope during recess. When we got lightheaded during P.E., we'd lie and say we had cramps. (Most of us hadn't started our periods yet.) When our bellies grumbled in class, we'd pretend not to hear it. We'd look at magazines of flat stomachs in low-rise jeans and poke at our pudge. We bragged about how long we could go without eating. We'd sneak chips and cookies when the others weren't looking and hope the crumbs didn't leave a trail.

To eat was to be weak. We couldn't give in to the gnawing.

Silent hunger was the language of the strong. It became honorable to ache for food, a rite of passage into the womanhood we so desperately awaited.

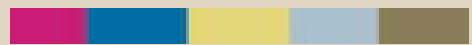
Sweet Girls

By Juliet Corwin

I try to remember when it became

And nothing could taste as good as skinny felt, right?

I remember the shame that blushed at my cheeks after I caved and ate the pasta and chicken that my mother had lovingly cooked for me.



On-Campus Observations From An Off-Campus Oyster Farmer

By Riley Stevenson

To be on a college campus is to be surrounded by trends. Spend fifteen minutes on the Main Green and you'll see a dozen micro-trends, some here to stay and most bound to disappear into the backs of closets; new accessories worn in creative ways over ever-lower-slung jeans held up by a kaleidoscope

“**HIS WORLD IS ONE OF SALT, FROST, AND FIREWOOD, OF WEARING THE SAME MUD-CAKED SWEATSHIRTS TO WORK AND SEEING THE SAME FLEECE-CLAD OLD PEOPLE IN OUR SMALL MAINE HOMETOWN.**

RILEY STEVENSON

of belts all turning to dust.

My boyfriend is an oyster farmer from a small town in Maine. His world is one of salt, frost, and firewood, of wearing the same mud-caked sweatshirts to work and seeing the same fleece-clad old people in our small Maine hometown—a life without much room for personal expression through trendy clothes.

Observing the trends of our campus is his favorite activity when he comes to visit. He walks into the Blue Room, sympathetic to all of the college students hunched over their laptops, buys a coffee, and sits on the terrace overlooking the Green, noticing. As a freelance journalist and astute

observer of the human condition, he is uniquely primed to note and catalogue, dedicated to his craft of perceiving what has changed since he last stepped foot on both this and his own college campuses.

After I am done with class he barrages me with questions and commentary about what he's noticed, like an off-duty anthropologist, notebook in hand. He is excited, irascible, brimming with observations,

seeking confirmation, ever-excited by his day's work. “Does anyone here use a backpack anymore? Could the jeans get any baggier? Do you think anyone

wants to buy my pre-paint stained Carhartts?” I shake my head at him and laugh, knowing the questions are the fun part, their answers irrelevant.

We walk through the Green hand in hand as he tells

me about his findings. I marvel at the worlds we occupy, the observations that allow us to see how others see their world, how lucky I am to share this world with someone as thoughtful and observant as he is.

business landscape rendered big bands unviable. It died again in the 60s, when bebop became esoteric and cerebral, a “musicians’ music”. Young people wanted to rock instead of think. It went out with the Old Guard—with

“**WE MAY TALK OVER IT AT COCKTAIL PARTIES, LET IT WALTZ OVER OUR HEADS IN ELEVATORS, BECAUSE WE, LIKE THE YOUTH OF THE 60s, HAVE ENOUGH TO THINK ABOUT. WITH MUSIC, WE SCROLL AND SKIM SURFACES.**

ELSA EASTWOOD

Armstrong and Ellington, Billie, Dizzy, and Dexter—and again with Bird, Monk and Miles, with Wayne and Coltrane. They say we've succumbed to the musical Big Mac of commercial pop, and not even Wynton Marsalis can bring us back. I believed them.

Then last year, I won a ticket through an Arts Institute lottery to see Jon Batiste in concert. I never win anything on that website. I knew him only as the bandleader on The Late Show, but I had to go.

Arriving at the venue just before 7pm on a Thursday, I stepped past a nauseatingly long standby line of fans clutching setlists and trading deep-cut references with fervor. I recognized some from my music theory courses and offered a few guilty waves over my shoulder as a woman scanned my ticket.

I chose a seat in the very front, just beneath the grand piano—the piano on which my jazz hero would perform a reharmonized “Star Spangled Banner” unlike anything I'd heard. His expansive fingers stretched across the keys like vines, entwining gospel-inflected voicings with modal color, face contorting in testimony. His was a music of lineage and remembering, pain and power, the improvisatory human experience; a music that traverses valleys and wades through



Jazz is Dead

By Elsa Eastwood

They say jazz is dead. It died first after World War II, when a changing

rivers, moving through space and psyche. It was sacred and lyrical, percussive and raw. Creation and truth-telling unfolding in real time.

The arrangement lasted 15 minutes. Standing with the crowd, hand to heart, I soon shook with tangled sobs of peace, joy, and heartbreak at what felt like the most perfect convergence of sound and history. The old and patriotic, broken open in one trembling instant.

I say jazz is alive. It's adapting to a changed landscape, vivified by its own endurance, shedding its skin in the dark. It emerges between genres like a ghost in the machine. We may talk over it at cocktail parties, let it waft over our heads in elevators, because we, like the youth of the 60s, have enough to think about. With music, we scroll and skim surfaces.

But if allowed, it will instruct. It will wait for us to remember how to listen. It will continue to send messengers to remind us that, bruised but dignified, it still pulses beneath the noise.



The Chronicles of the Traveling Pants

By Ava Satterthwaite

The first time I asked to borrow my mother's bell-bottoms, her face

“STILL, IN THOSE BELL-BOTTOMS
LIVE FIELDS OF HER ROSE AND
LAVENDER FRAGRANCE, DENIM
THREADS INTERWIEVING LIKE
STRANDS OF HAIR SHE'D DUTCH
BRAID BEFORE BED.”

AVA SATTERTHWAITE

scrunched in disbelief. “That’s the trend now?” she asked, befuddled.

“That’s the trend, Mom.”

I followed her to the attic, where we coiled between stacks of doodle-laced notebooks, faded letterman jackets, and clusters of swollen crates—one labeled CHRISTMAS DECOR, another RECORDS + CDs, a third DENIM. It was like Narnia – an entire world of memories hidden behind her wardrobe.

She found the bell-bottoms under a mound of distressed overalls and low-rises and threw them over her shoulder. Snickering, she asked if I’d like a flower headband or some fringe boots to finalize the look. But, as I stood in the mirror, smoothing the creased flares and fiddling with the waistband, a tear skimmed down her cheek.

“That’s the trend?” she echoed, voice faltering.

I nodded.

“It’s just like I remembered.”

When I came to college, my mother snuck those bell-bottoms into my suitcase as a farewell, her scribbled note stuffed between its folds. *Call Your Mom!* it insisted – like I’d need the reminder.

Frankly, the further I wander from home – from childhood – the more striking our resemblance becomes. I listen to “Landslide” with such reverence it feels biblical. I add crushed Kellogg to my cookies “for some crunch” and dark chocolate chunks “for the bite” like she advised. I drink iced Sauvignon Blanc and shake my leg so excessively the whole table wobbles, its steady thrum reminiscent of our once shared dinner table.

I never considered myself sentimental until I rediscovered her bell-bottoms looming in the recesses of my dorm-issued wardrobe.

I never wear them, of course – the tide of the trend shifted long ago. Still, in those bell-bottoms live fields of her rose and lavender fragrance, denim threads interweaving like strands of hair she’d dutch-braid before bed, silhouettes of her twirling between twill ruffles like we’d dance in the kitchen to “Better Than Revenge” and “Fearless.”

All around me are reminders of adolescence. Pink bow UGGs mellow into classic tans. Black puffer vests overtake matted lime-colored North Faces. Like my mother, I’ve been fossilized over and over, my fleeting memories buried beneath old boxes and new clothing, my own forsaken Narnia. The trends, timeless and teenage-dirtbagish alike, fill these archives with precious evidence of our evolution.

I grab the bell-bottoms and look toward a clouded mirror. I’m much older now: cheekbones more defined, brows furrowed tensely. The denim is stiffer now, too. It holds me a little tighter, and I think warmly of my mother’s arms.

It’s just like I remembered.



Merriam-Webster

By Annabelle Stableford

trend noun

a

: a line of development : approach

b

: a current style or preference : vogue

c

: a general movement : swing

d

: a prevailing tendency or inclination

: drift

Approach: To identify three intrigues: two trends of my life, and for fun, a not so subtle trend that consumes me, which you may discover hidden throughout this text (although I am no mastermind).

Vogue: So it goes, it is not in vogue

be in vogue, nor am *I* in vogue. But *I* persist.

Swing: According to my memory, everything that ever happened to me happened when I was eight. There were troubled nights and tears culminating in the visit to the energy healer, who proclaimed me a blind farmgirl in a previous life (that escapes me as well a pendulum now, coming back in crisis to explain everything). And the drunk man at the natural hot springs and the woman who told me to look away, to imagine his image washing away in the river (except

Quarantine Trends

By Anika Weling

It's sad to think of what I will say when my children ask me what I did during the COVID-19 pandemic, the most prominent event of our generation. I wish I could say I did anything useful. I could lie and say I helped save lives or protect rights, but in reality I sat in bed for months on end, fixated on a little LED screen eight inches from my face. I listened to the distant hum of the news

what to do in the case of a pandemic. No one thought we would need to know. So in the utter chaos around us, we turned to distraction to survive, to escape. Never-ending entertainment flashed passed us as we chased a relief we could never quite reach. We fell into rabbit holes where we never had to stop and realize what our lives had become. It's trend, after trend, after trend. Around me, everything is still, everything is quiet.

Designed by Deeya Prakash

“**I REFUSE TO FORGET MY LIFE: THE SHARPNESS OF WORDS, THE KIND THAT ONCE YOU READ THEM, THEY HARBOR WITHIN YOU.**

ANNABELLE STABLEFORD

every time I try, the current reverses). And when I read Tuck Everlasting and in the story discovered a profound magic all for myself (novels, within my realm of independent reading now!).

Ex. “You have a favorite spot on the **swing** set / you have no room in your dreams for regret.” ¹

Drift: “Pulled him in tighter each time he was drifting away.” I refuse to forget my life: the sharpness of words, the kind that once you read them harbor within you; the ten hardboiled eggs I watch someone eat at breakfast, all in one go (perhaps not profound, but noteworthy); the things that happened to me when I was eight and in all the eras after. All of this goes into my Volumes, my Immortal Histories, my Moleskines (2019-2024) and Leuchtturms (2024-present), my most critical trends. I don't let any of it drift away.

Ex. “Pulled him in tighter each time he was **drifting** away.” ¹

¹ Attribution of quotes (spoiler warning): Taylor Swift

from my living room, an ominous loop of muffled, monotonous voices with nothing good to

say, so I hid under my covers. I watched video after video on how to make dalgona coffee, while hating coffee, and how to do Tiktok dances, which I had no desire to ever learn. I saved DIYs and recipes to a folder, only to never look at them again. Propped up in bed, I took online classes while the world fell apart around me.

The numbers rhythmically continued to climb. One million. Two million. Ten million. No one ever taught us



A Few Impressions



By Juliet Corwin
Edited by Ashley Park
Illustrated by Anna Reed

– CT, left wrist –

I DROVE TO Connecticut to get my first tattoo. The studio, smaller than its parking lot, was tucked away in a gray fold of Stamford. It had been a drizzly morning, and clouds sighed as I walked to the entrance. Timidly, I leaned against the door so it wouldn't slam shut and scanned the space for a pair of eyes to meet mine. It was my first time inside a tattoo studio, and it showed.

Two feet in front of me, a woman lay on her side in a shirt, underwear, and Doc Martens. She chatted with her artist, who hunched over a spread of ink covering the woman's thigh. The walls were covered in overlapping sketches and prints. Sitting by the only other station in the room was a large man with a permanent frown and huge biceps. I gathered that he would be my artist, and moved toward him.

His frown deepened when he saw me. He spoke in short sentences, his voice low and quiet. I showed him the tattoo I wanted and presented my wrist to draw on. Opting for a

purple marker, he splashed the design onto my skin way too big. I asked if he could make it any smaller. His eyebrows lifted, but he rubbed away the first drawing and drew it again, a bit smaller. I looked at him pleadingly, too nervous to ask him to change it again. He took the hint and resized it once more. It was tiny, barely a quarter of an inch in height and width. I smiled, and his mouth flattened into a straight line.

He prepped the ink and the tattoo gun, and didn't wear gloves. It took about five minutes to ink the design using the thinnest needle he had. He wiped the excess ink and a few drops of blood from my skin, and I could see the little lines now adorning my wrist. It was perfect. He explained to me that he typically asked clients to pay upwards of \$100, but for this

“I WALKED OUT
ONTO THE
STREETS OF MY
CHILDHOOD,
MY NEW INK
STILL BUZZING
QUIETLY.”

he wouldn't charge more than \$40. I paid him \$60 and thanked him again. He nodded and pressed one of his sketches into my hand. I had been admiring it while the needle dragged along my skin. It was full of color and soft lines, a warm swirl of tones.

As I stepped out the door, I saw that the woman getting the leg tattoo was now eating takeout with her artist. I walked back to my car, watching the clouds inch lower. My wrist stung as I spun the steering wheel home.

– MA, right ear –

For one of my later tattoos, I filled out an online appointment form for a studio in my hometown in Western Massachusetts. I got matched with an artist named Ian. The space was big, with a lower level for tattoos and an upper level for piercings. There was a waiting area with high ceilings and tons of plants. Ian emerged from his studio and greeted me with a warmth I trusted. He was bald with a long, white beard and eyes that crinkled when he spoke.

Ushering me into his studio, he told me to hop up on the table and rolled his chair over to join me. The design I had chosen was simple, and I wanted it to sit behind my ear. He used a disposable razor to shave the edge of my hairline. As the blade scraped at my scalp, we chatted about tattoos



I'd gotten in the past. We sized down from the first print he had made, and then he carefully peeled a purple outline onto my skin. He handed me a small mirror that reflected into a big mirror on the wall so that I could see the placement. I told him I liked it. He instructed me to stretch one arm out past my head and rest my cheek on it, lying on my side. The tattoo took forty minutes to ink, and he spoke the whole time. He asked me about myself, about school, about the tattoo's meaning. I tried to answer in a calm and steady voice despite the pulsating needle bouncing against my skull. Several times he praised my composure, saying that most clients who got tattooed behind their ears can't sit very well. It wasn't hard to understand why.

When he was done, he told me to take my time getting up. I ignored his advice, pushing up fast and immediately regretting my choice. The sudden absence of vibration on my head left my vision blurry, and I felt lightheaded as I walked back to the waiting area to pay. The person at the register was bubbly and asked loudly if I loved my new ink. I did, and told them so, paid and tipped Ian. I walked out onto the streets of my childhood, my new ink still buzzing quietly.

– MN, right hip –

“HER LINES
WERE CLEAN,
THE SHAPE
GENTLE. I
THANKED
HER, SHE
SIGHED.”

My favorite tattoo was inked in Minnesota. A cold Thursday night in December, I arrived at a brightly lit studio in Minneapolis. I was a few minutes early, and sat on a very hard bench in the waiting area. My artist was finishing up with another client, so I pored over the design I'd asked for again. The appointment didn't start for another forty minutes.

When my artist finally came over and said she was ready for me, she seemed annoyed. I showed her the design and she scowled at me, snatching up her iPad and scribbling. She asked me if I had drawn it myself, which I had. After some more silent drawing, she held the iPad toward me. She had taken my (admittedly unskilled) design and created a much

better tattoo. Her lines were clean, the shape gentle. I thanked her, she sighed.

I wanted the tattoo on my hip, but because of the weather I'd worn sweatpants over my shorts. She rolled her eyes as I took off my sweatpants, pointing out that I could keep one of the legs on if I wanted to. I took the suggestion. When we sized the tattoo, she gave me three options. I picked the middle one, and she placed the outline on my hip. I walked, half-sweatpantsed, to the mirror and watched how the design moved with me. I loved it.

I got up onto the table, lying on my side as she instructed. She inked in silence, except for a frustrated question about whether I was holding my breath. I had been, without realizing it, and tried to slowly exhale without annoying her further. When it was finished, my new ink looked delicate and natural on my skin. It is still the best tattoo I have. I carefully pulled the leg of my sweatpants back on over the wrapped ink. As I walked back into the Minnesota snow, my hip pinched with each step.

On MRI Machines, Cabinets, and Freshman Triples

By Ina Ma

Edited by Chloe Costa Baker

Illustrated by Amy Park

THINGS THEY DON'T TELL YOU

about science:

1. \$110. They give you \$110 for an MRI study. Or they do tell you, but only after you've read the newsletter and clicked the buttons and sent the emails, curious because you never had an MRI before. Then they tell you the magic number you will sell a few hours of your time for, to satiate your curiosity.

2. You write about yourself in the email: 18 year old female, normal and corrected to vision, meets all requirements for the study, no issues, you are nothing less than perfect.

3. Sidney E. Frank Hall, opened in 2006, is a beautifully modern glass building that should be put on the front page of a brochure for Brown. The MRI Research Facility is in the basement of SFH, beneath the crushing weight of the five-story, 169,000-square-foot structure. You can touch the ceiling if you stand on your tippy toes.

4. They will put you in an EEG cap and spend two hours gelling you up. They will press the metal nodes against your skull and it will teeter between pressure and pain. The gel gets inserted with a plastic syringe and forms an uncomfortable cool wetness between your hair and the

cap. You may fall asleep between the methodical workings of two strangers.

5. It is okay if you have a thin metal wire behind the rows of your teeth, permanently bonded to keep your teeth straight after two years of orthodontic treatment. It is okay if you forgot to mention it the first time they go over the screening questions because you will remember it the second time and your orthodontist will send them an email. The researcher says it is okay and your orthodontist says it is okay. You will still worry that the MRI machine will rip it out of your mouth with its magnetic force, and then your teeth will no longer be straight.

6. The MRI machine is beautiful. She is sleek, white, and powerful, illuminated by a halo of soft yellow light. She thrums beneath your feet because she is alive, sending quiet reverberations running down your spine. The facade is ruined by a gray line of fraying duct tape running down the inner seam of the scanner.

7. MRI immobilizers made of foam and gel slot you into place on the patient table. You feel like a mounted animal, ready to be stuffed and posed—the immobilized yellow perch screwed to driftwood, the paralyzed bluegill flush against his plaque.

8. The patient table is thin and flimsy plastic quaking beneath you as you

are mechanically moved into the all-encasing white of the scanner. They cover your body with a white sheet to keep you warm. You are a draped cadaver being slid into the mortuary cabinet.

9. The. MRI. Tube. Is. Smaller. Than. It. Looks.

10. They can taste your discomfort. They are kind. One offers to play a video of fish as they set up. You will watch the video of fish. The fish will swim when you cannot.

11. You ask if you can be taken out between the assignments (no), if they can talk to you during the assignments (no), if you can wiggle your head a little (no). Once you are done with your silly questions, the machine will rumble to life. The song of the scanner swoops between pitches, high to low, beeping to booping. Between each bar the scanner shakes. You are lulled by the machine.

12. Guilt. You aren't supposed to be dozing off, but you are. Trapped between the sterile white walls of the scanner, your mind is the only thing that can spin, so you sleep to escape. You try to summon the comfort you found in small spaces as a child, squeezing into cabinets and sliding under the bed, but it doesn't come to you. Don't let the nausea overpower you. Click your button instead. Click. Click. Click.

13. They will pull you out. You won't be in there forever. You peel the EEG cap from your head. The gel will have begun to dry and crust on your scalp. You will be annoyed at having to wash it out later. In the moment you will only be able to feel the crashing waves of relief.

14. It surprises you that what surprises you is they pay you in cash. You were expecting something digital, or at least a check. When was the last time you held so many crisp tens in your hand?

15. You will take a nap afterward.

about growing up:

1. There exists a hexagonal wooden model a little less than 30 inches in all dimensions and of a deep walnut hue. You are young, so you are only two cabinets tall.

2. The cabinet has a pair of inset wooden doors, each decorated with an ornate curved brass handle. The doors were engineered in such a manner that



Designed by Kate Rowberry

you can only open one from the outside and have to push the other open from the inside. It takes a tug—the cabinet resists.

3. Online quotes of similar prototypes go up to \$1,000, but knowing your parents and the timeline of cabinet acquisition, it was rescued off the side of the road or from a neighbor's driveway yard sale.

4. It is fun to play pretend. You meticulously move the vintage holiday mugs full of cables, discarded c a r d b o a r d children's books, and other miscellaneous items out of the cabinet. The cabinet is your den and you are a mother fox, the cabinet is a mountaintop cave and you are a dragonet, the cabinet is safe and crushing comfort.

5. Slowly, the cabinet will shrink and the space between your skin and its walls will grow smaller. One day, you realize you cannot fit in the cabinet at all. You are hit with a feeling of loss but you do not know what you are missing.

about dorms:

1. Some triples are 537 square feet. Some triples are 259 square feet. Some triples have the floor's electrical closet jutting into the room, making the

narrowest part of the room 38 inches wide. Just enough to slot a twin XL mattress.

2. Some triples are too small for three people.

3. Once you move into your dorm, it will be even smaller than before. Your things seem to inch forward, taking up more room until you periodically push them back into place. They are crowding for more space, your space, so you will have to fight for it, shoving

room is crossed off with an imaginary line and when you step over, you can feel the oxygen atoms that long exited her lungs rattle around yours. There is nothing left but bare mattress and uncovered tabletop.

6. She had the narrowest part of the room. Maybe that's why she left. The ceiling is stooped so that if you sit on the bed and stretch your spine, you can brush the roof with your fingertips. Neither the overhead fluorescent lighting nor the narrow windows can reach into the dark corner.

about all of the above:

1. Forget. Spend the \$110, move the cabinet to the garage, pack your things and relocate. Forget the jarring roar of the scanner, the

feeling of wood grain against your skin, the sweaty cinder block walls.

2. Fact: you will continue to be forced into spaces too small for comfort. You will never stop growing out of your safe spaces. Every refuge is temporary.

3. Grit your teeth, claw your way out, turn the four alien walls into your home. When trapped, learn to recognize when you should muster courage to stomach the discomfort and when to force the space to fit you. Understand when to move on, and you will burst out of the wooden cabinet that can no longer contain you.

“

YOU WILL NEVER STOP
GROWING OUT OF YOUR
SAFE SPACES. EVERY
REFUGE IS TEMPORARY.

”

A Table of Our Own

By Lucy Kaplan

Edited by Rachel Harrison

Illustrated by Autumn Tilley

I ARRANGE TEA candles on the tablecloth, makeshift and patterned by stains that bleed into the florals. A relic of our parents' generation, the textile is only thick enough to disguise the aged wood it envelopes when folded twice over itself. Tonight, it bears the weight of the six hours I spent cooking. We have first une salade niçoise served with lightly candied brussel sprouts. A crested hill of layered caprese follows, sliced baguette flowering its perimeter.

Guests arrive in waves. Three are early and two are insultingly late, forgiven for the gossip they bring to the table. *She told me he didn't even wave when he saw her the morning after.* Friends present gifts of crisp grapes, whimsical confections, bottles they pray aren't too sweet. As we find our seats, I wonder: is this the dinner party of our parents' generation or a reincarnation of our childhood birthday celebrations?

It seems to me as if every young adult loves a dinner party. A gathering classy enough to warrant dressing with inspiration, but intimate enough to speak without reservation. Maybe it's the breaking of bread, a practice reportedly powerful enough to have united the Democrats and the Federalists, the Wampanoag and the colonists.

But just as those narratives are not simple truths, neither is the elation of our careful gatherings. Dining together can be as unpleasant as it is festive. Generations of meals

have been the source of unassailable tension: reunions made unpalatable by parental bickering and younger brothers smacking their gravy-smeared lips. In attendance are the people we love—though perhaps do not always like.

Our dinner parties, however, are distinct in their autonomy of choice. In childhood, parents managed the grunt work, pitching fairy-lit tents in the living room, ordering pizza to satiate the crowd. Now, we find ourselves left to our own devices. We create countless lists in the name of adulthood.

Dinner 07.13

Invite list:

**Yeses, nos, maybe-sos.
A back-up list if someone falls
through; empty chairs thrill
no one.**

Invitation draft:

**Dearest friends, you have been
chosen.**

Dress appropriately.

Menu:

**Parmesan crisped yams, miso
butter gnocchi, flank steak.
Made to impress.**

Shopping list:

**Chicory root, sardines, brie.
The cheapest available.**

Setting the table, I think about generations past. Decades prior, someone else a few years older must have stood in this kitchen—a local career politician or an established dermatologist. He too was expecting visitors, but with not nearly as much anticipation. He knew the procedure by rote—when to serve the second course, when to slyly refill his neighbor's wine glass. He could identify a false laugh and ease a lapse in conversation without skipping a beat.

The guests were familiar, practiced in leaving their shoes at the front door. I can almost place my childhood self into the scene: sunken into the corner chair, across from the man in the ugly scarf. *Last time I saw you, I could have fit you in my briefcase!* Why do middle-aged academics delight in making middle-schoolers feel small?

Our guests are poles apart, far closer in affect to the children our parents once invited to summer movie nights on our behalf. They stumble at the formalities. Someone might forgo the formal dress code for a sloppy pair of basketball shorts; we will say nothing but stare as he meticulously covers his lap with a napkin. *Dock one point.* Someone else might bring a new boyfriend with no notice; we will feign placidity as he pulls an extra seat between a pair of best friends longing to catch up. *Dock two points, maybe even three.*

But what we lack in finesse we make up for in forgiveness. Friendship is a delicate thing—we know some faux pas are best granted a silent pardon.

Warm light washes down our nerves as the feast begins. Some go all-in, stacking their plates with mismatched goodies brought by unpracticed guests. (Was this supposed to be a

potluck? No one quite got the story straight.) Others graze, arms extending clumsily across the table to pluck an olive, a “pardon my reach” carefully uttered. We take an unspoken pride in our maturity, remembering our pleases and thank-yous so far from the oversight of our elders.

The night then goes one of two ways.

The clinking of cutlery might crescendo at half-past nine. Replacing it will be an awkwardness which we bear with guilt. If the spark of enlightened conversation never catches fire, we are left with a table full of friends-turned-family-turned-strangers. We might have worn the badges we found in our parents’ closets with too much assurance. Cause of death: an indulgence of formality and poverty of wine. One can only pretend that they don’t want to talk about sex for so long.

Tonight, however, we evade a tragedy of the commons. The now unlit candles go unnoticed, puttering out one after the other; as the tablecloth dims, our momentum only swells. Half of the crowd is debating the merits of Machiavelli, the other half the audacity of a kid we knew from high school. The catch is, it doesn’t really matter. Everyone is full and no one wants to leave.

Someone reveals an expensively curated box of chocolates from a rumpled tote they had carefully hidden beneath the table. We pass it counterclockwise, excitedly snagging the sweet recommended by the person before. I bite down and my mouth bursts with nostalgia. A buttery shortbread, laced with silky caramel and enrobed in milk chocolate—a Twix bar by another name.

I watch my friends bite into rebranded versions of their own childhood favorites: Snickers, Milky Way, Almond Joy. Are they too thinking about Halloween’s past? How we zealously provoked territorial disputes over the mounds of sweets poured onto my living room floor. It feels no different than how we tonight

bicker over who deserves the final drops from the bottle.

Across the table sits the girl who watched me blow out purple candles on my eleventh birthday. She wore different glasses back then, thicker frames that obscured the brilliant eyes that now lock with mine. I watch her fingers toy with the stem of a glass as she chews her grown-up Kit Kat.

To love her is to peer through a foggy window. If I squint, I can piece together the blurry outlines of our past: the pizza parties, the Halloween spats, the movie nights we spent wrapped in blankets on the porch. Then a new image clears—decades of future soirees coming into view. I am elated to see that the future unfolds not at our parents’ tables, but around a table of our own.

“
WE TAKE AN
UNSPOKEN
PRIDE IN OUR
MATURITY,
REMEMBERING
OUR PLEASES AND
THANK-YOUS
SO FAR FROM THE
OVERSIGHT OF
OUR ELDERS.”



LITTLE NORTH VIEW

By Coco Kanders | Edited by Deeya Prakash | Illustrated by Joe Katzenellenbogen

LITTLE NORTH VIEW, who are you?

When I was younger you were love. You lived in the hallway leading up to my parents' bedroom for a long time. I remember my socks skating along the wooden aisle in anticipation of steady, familial embrace, quick glimpse of you, quick warm sensation, quick crash into a shut door. I remember tiptoeing through the night and shamefully passing you in my failed attempt at sleep; you practically held their door open for me.

You felt like an ode to the mother and child, to my mother. Were you a portrait of her pregnant with me? I often wonder. Nevertheless, through you, I felt her. Your image reminded me of my safety as I dove into a duvet of armed forces; you guarded the door.

You were probably my second pair of boobs, after my mother's of course. Boobs and vaginas were everywhere growing up—interestingly, not many penises. There are giant companion paintings that stand proudly in my mom's bathroom: splotchy black and white strokes to form some semblance of a lady bent over (they don't hold a candle to you). When I was ten, while rummaging through my mom's hair products on a playdate, my friend Merel Kanter asked if my parents were

really into sex art. I didn't see anything volatile or inappropriate in the images throughout my house; I thought they were quite beautiful. I thought my parents were cool.

I am inclined to believe that something about you should have made me slightly uncomfortable at some point in my life. Your full breasts and belly so on display, so perfect. There is something sexy about you. If I were inside you, logically, I should

my clothes and then lie my head on your belly. And close my eyes, maybe forever.

I wanted to look like you. I wanted to feel like you—how you made me feel and the subjectivity of how you made others feel. I still do. I don't know if I will ever stop trying to. You are womanhood to me in a lot of ways.

Then you disappeared. I don't know when you disappeared; maybe I disappeared. As I withered away, I forgot about you.

I was sixteen, and my relationship with my mother turned from warm hues to cold ones—no more reds and oranges, but blacks and whites. There was no room for you to exist when I was intolerant of your symbolism. I began to try to become you in all the wrong ways, in

the exploitative ones.

In my defense, you were moved to the living room. I never went to the living room; I didn't feel welcome. Maybe things would have been better if you never moved. You were now the protector of my family's shared space, and I didn't feel deserving of your protection.

Night after night, I would isolate, my bubblegum pink ceiling turning my juvenile room into a cozy haven in the warm light of my lamp and rose-scented candles. My stomach would grumble; I would cry. My mom would

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*I DON'T KNOW WHEN
YOU DISAPPEARED;
MAYBE I DISAPPEARED.*
”

think you would reek of cigarettes and bad perfume that would suffocate my nostrils and lungs to a degree the smoke could never. The air would be sticky, your bodies would be sticky; I would feel claustrophobic for your child. There would be something sickly about the scene. Surely. But I don't believe this. Your hues are warm, red, and orange; you are warm. I think you would smell like the light from the window, it would be the perfect temperature, and everything would be a soft material that I would want to cocoon in. I, too, would strip

cry; my door stayed shut. Knocks after knocks, I retreat. I take hour-long baths, I watch confessionals on YouTube (sad girls mostly, coming clean), watch mukbangs, read and reread *Play It as It Lays*, fold striped socks, lose my period, and now I could never look like you.

I needed my mother. I needed the love I felt sliding down the hall at maximum speed as I flew into her aching, oozing embrace. I yearned for the safety you reminded me of, which only she could tangibly provide. She tried, but I resisted. They all tried, but I kept resisting. You didn't exist. In removing myself from my family, I lost you. In breaking my family, I lost you. I didn't deserve you.

Two years went by, and they had finally had enough, and I was moved too. Clementine, despite the name, was starchy, bright yellow, and smelled like kitty litter. The thick Miami heat only heightened the temperature drop upon walking inside the center; it was cold like naked weigh-ins, ventilated hospital gowns revealing my skeletal frame. Within the first hour, there was a pound of fettuccine Alfredo in front of me. My heart sank; this was so bizarre. I reckoned with my freakishness. What kind of person is punished with Alfredo?

I was mute, fixed myself daily with a new book in the corner crevice of

the couch, incrementally scribbling in my notepad horrible things about the other "clients"—they were anorexics, we all were. I only spoke to wail on the phone to my mom as I peeled their hideous yellow wallpaper from its already cracked disposition around the corners of the landline. I would think about *The Yellow Wallpaper* by

herself uncomfortable in the world, unlike you. She tries to shrink, to disappear, but you can't help her; you try. You try, you try.

Eventually, she picked me up. My mom and I bake. We make hot chocolate with whipped cream and marshmallows everyday for snack. My mom threw out my Levis while I was

away. My mom brushes my hair and draws me baths. I return to the capacity of a child. I return to the living room. I do my eyes in acknowledgment at you. I feel it again. The empty aching in my heart slowly starts to hum with the contentedness maternity bares. Maybe I concede again. You protect me too now.

The love that was concealed in dark wooden walls and hallowed winter trees starts to creep out of hibernation. I spend less time in my room, I spend more time around you. I never recover—I heal. I locate better senses of my womanhood, you bare light and hope. You endeavor to strip back fetishism and delight in the female gaze.

You are my mother in many ways. You have the same tones, the same confidence, the same beauty, the same unbothered effervescence, and the same love. Both fierce and temperamental, polarizing. I hope to become you, I hope I am on my way, I hope you meet my daughter one day.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman and how I read it when I toured my new high school at fourteen. Frustrated with my concession to the archetypal hysterical women, I roll my eyes, a lot. My mom would wail back to me on the phone; eventually, she stopped picking up.

The unborn baby inside you, created out of maternal warmth, learns to feel



Across the Atlantic and Back

Written & Illustrated by Maison Teixeira
Edited by Kenley Ellis

1975. SHIRLEY DREAMS that she's at her job, working behind the counter at a small bar called the Devon in the seaside town of Hartlepool, wearing a white T-shirt with a penny-farthing bicycle on it. A handsome guy walks in with a lovely smile, brown skin, and jet black hair. They talk for a while, until she wakes from the dream. A few weeks later, Shirley sits behind the counter at the Devon, wearing the same white T-shirt, only this time she's awake. That's when the man of her dreams walks into the place and asks her for a drink. They talk for a while, until he and his crewmates are called back to the ship, and he leaves to set sail once again.

The man of her dreams, otherwise known as Big Manny, comes back to visit Shirley occasionally. Eventually, he makes her a present: a penny-farthing bicycle made out of nails driven into a piece of wood. She loves it, and soon enough, he comes over to stay with her and the son she's been raising by herself. They live together, but not really; he's away most of the time, cooking delicious meals for hungry sailors adrift on the merchant ships. When he's back home with her, they go to the disco together, boogieing all night to Earth, Wind & Fire, The Stylistics, and Donna Summer. They're spectacular dancers; they can do the Bump, the Hustle, they

can Rock the Boat, and everything in between.

Today, Shirley is still a spectacular dancer, but she tells her grandson that nobody could dance like her husband used to. Her grandson wishes that he'd inherited some of their dancing genes.

* * *

1977. Shirley and Big Manny have a child together: a chubby, white, red-haired boy whom they also name Manny, otherwise known as Little Manny. Five years later they have another, a brown-skinned girl with black hair whom they name Maria. They carve out a life in Hartlepool, with Shirley taking care of the kids and Big Manny continuing to live out at sea, coming home for one month out of every year. Hartlepool isn't always kind to their family, being one of few mixed race families in the town. One time, a boy throws a brick at Maria's head and calls her the N word, and Little Manny fights back by throwing several bricks at his head and beating him up. Little Manny gets into tons of scrapes with other kids, but most of them are with his older brother John, who torments him—and loves him—like no one else. John can beat Little Manny up all he wants, but as soon as anyone else so much as lays a finger on his younger brother, he shows up to break that finger, as well as maybe an arm or two.

Little Manny also has many girlfriends growing up, but his first true love, the one he'll someday meet and bear a child with, is all the way



big manny + shirley



across the Atlantic, in a country he's never even heard of.

* * *

1986. In the third-world metropolis of Belize City, there lives a woman named Vianney who is raising her daughter Melanie and her infant son Sergio. Melanie is a feisty young girl, running around the city with her younger cousin Camille. The city is their oyster, and yet it is also a dangerous place. This is a city where old men carry crocus bags and use them to try and catch young girls, which almost happens to Melanie and Camille one day. This is a city where watching a woman almost drown in the canal is nothing unusual, at least not to the wide, curious eyes of little Mel. And worst of all, this is a city where Tataduende, the dastardly dwarf with backwards feet and a penchant for stealing children's thumbs, is believed to roam from time to time. Melanie often conceals her thumbs within her fists when she walks about. This is a city of peril and poverty, yet Melanie only sees the wonder of it all, especially in the big, gaping eyes of the kittens she and Camille find at the corner store. They bring the kittens back to their great-grandmother Mims, who had asked them to get her some tea bags, not

these adorable kittens. Mims explains that Melanie and Camille have failed to consider the fact that they are very, very poor. How are they going to feed these kittens?

* * *

1989. Shirley and her family decide to move to the United States of America, on the northeast coast of New England. That's where most people who left Big Manny's homeland of Cabo Verde have wound up, and it's where much of Big Manny's family, including his two sisters and most of his brothers and his two sisters, call home. Little Manny, Maria, and John all enroll in school, where Little Manny is scolded for staying seated during the Pledge of Allegiance. "I don't pledge allegiance

to this country," he says to the teacher. They do American things, like going to McDonald's, where John tells Maria to give him all of her fries because he heard that "McDonald's supports the Irish Republican Army." Little Manny makes lots of friends, who come to know him as "English Manny," and his accent makes him a catch with the girls at his school. He and his friends live on the edge, riding their dirt bikes through abandoned factories and going toe-to-toe with each other in bareknuckle street brawls.

Shirley misses England dearly, and later admits to her grandson that she never wanted to move to America. When she returns to her home country for the first time in twenty years, she finds that it's no longer the England she remembers.



melanie

* * *

1989 (still). The same year Shirley and her family move from England to the Americas, Vianney and her nine-year-old daughter, Melanie, move from the Americas to England, while Sergio stays behind with his Dad. Melanie is excited, her little Caribbean mind imagines England as the land of fairytales and royalty. When she gets there, there aren't any fairies, and she doesn't meet any princes or princesses, but she does find things like clean sidewalks, dentists, rubbish bins, and street sweepers—luxuries that didn't exist in her home country of Belize. They've moved here because her mother has married an English army man, who hits her and calls her names. He is sent to Iraq for months at a time, and Vianney and Melanie savor these months without him.

Vianney begins to know England as home, much more so than Belize, which is slowly becoming a much-desired tourist destination for its beautiful sandy cays. While talking to her grandson many years later, she laments that the Belize she knew as a child is gone, and that the Belize where snotty American tourists spend their winter holidays is not the Belize she wants to return to.

* * *

1997. Little Manny, who is no longer little anymore, travels back to England frequently, attending raves where DJs play techno, trance, and house music as a pulsating sea of people dance. At one of these raves, Manny lays eyes upon the most beautiful girl he's ever seen. Manny approaches the girl and asks her name, which she says is Melanie. They strike up a conversation, and he asks her if she's seeing someone. She says she's seeing a guy named Danny... who just so happens to be Little Manny's best friend. Nevertheless, they form a friendship that blossoms over the years.

Manny spends his early 20s living

many lives. He lives one life as DJ Synista, renowned in the Providence nightclub scene for spinning techno records that transform empty Brown University halls into living, breathing dance floors, where college students boogie their cares away. He lives another life in Tenerife, a married life, one that somehow survives for some time after his pet ferrets devour all of his wife Eleanor's gerbils but still ends in an unceremonious divorce. Eventually, Big Manny's son moves back to Rhode Island, where he continues his usual escapades with



vianney

beautiful women—all of whom he completely drops after convincing Melanie to come fly back across the Atlantic to the States, where she'll live with him.

In the meantime, Big Manny takes up work in the restaurant business. He becomes the head chef at Cantina di Marco, a cozy Italian restaurant in Cumberland, RI, of which he will soon become the sole proprietor. He's finally found a home for his five-star cooking after many years traversing the globe on merchant ships. Cantina di Marco becomes a second home for Big Manny and his family, a second home populated by strangers who come through its double doors

to dine, drink, and mingle. These strangers don't see the inner workings of Big Manny's crowded kitchen, where chefs toil over stoves and chopping boards, but the savoury flavor of his signature prime rib or his alfredo linguini speaks volumes to the culinary brilliance hiding behind the kitchen's swinging doors.

* * *

2025. Manny and Melanie are no longer together, but they have an unbreakable bond that's lasted twenty years and looks a bit like both of them, with his mother's hazel eyes and his father's round head. Their son, Maison, was once a wide-eyed little boy with an afro, sitting on his father's knee as Manny recounted the moment he met his first true love. Now, he's a young adult, carrying the stories of his parents and their parents with him wherever he goes. His grandad, Big Manny, lives on in his memories. He remembers Cantina di Marco as though it never closed down, remembers sitting in a trolley with a big grin on his face as Big Manny pushed him around the parking lot, remembers chilling at home with Big Manny as they munched on bananas and pretended to be monkeys.

As a young adult, Maison will one day find himself writing a creative nonfiction piece about how his family came to be. He will write this piece in his now-retired grandmother Vianney's back garden as she reminisces in the kitchen with her daughter, laughing about Melanie's escapades in York. He will write this piece while sitting next to his mother Melanie and asking her what her life in Belize was like. He will write this after having spent several weeks with his father Manny, who's back in England after all these years, now living happily with his second love Chantelle. He will write this for his family, a family which is, quite literally, beyond the wildest dreams of a young English girl working at a bar in the quiet seaside town of Hartlepool.

CASIO'S AVOCADO

By Miya X Wu

Edited by Hannah Park

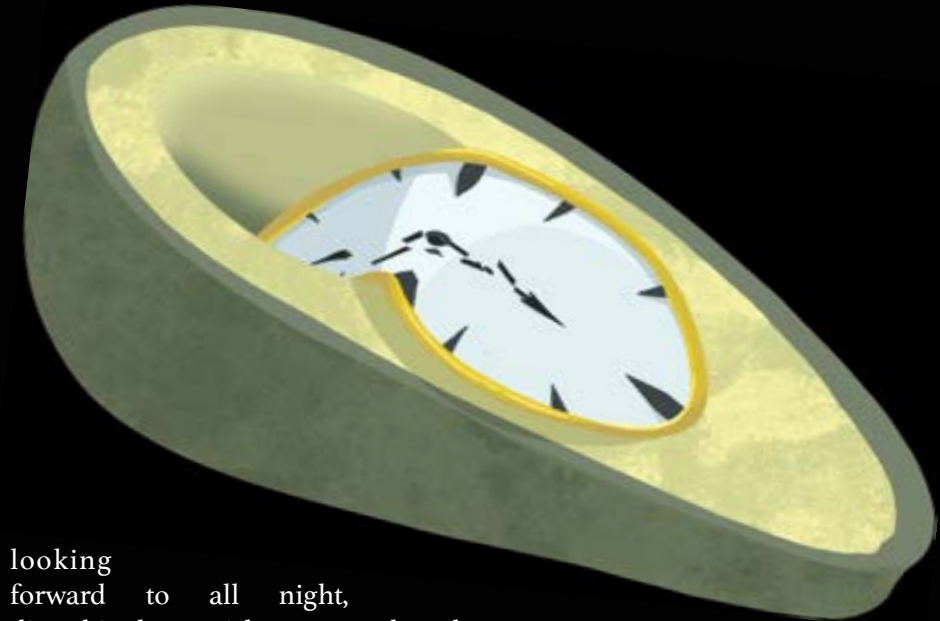
Illustrated by Miya X Wu

SUPPOSE YOU EXIT the parking structure at Westfield UTC in San Diego and walk towards the open-air atrocity, filled with more options for oatmilk matcha lattes than are good for your sanity. In that case, the first thing you will see is one of the two Lululemon locations in the mall (really?).

Ignore it, turn right.

Not far away, a pink circular sign waves from the wall, the silhouette of a man in a newsboy cap looming over a cup of coffee, offering “Joe & The Juice.” The interior of the shop is on the darker side, a similar atmosphere to that millennial-run burger joint that serves its overpriced truffle fries on fake newspapers. The menu offers smoothies and juices whose names give you not a single hint of what you are ordering, except maybe the color of the beverage. This leaves the cashiers entertained as the queue of squinting customers try to read the ingredients in tiny print under names like “Iron Man” and “Prince of Green”, their eyes occasionally widening at the right side of the menu where one marvels at a twelve-dollar smoothie.

On the walls are framed quirky posters like “I just saved some wine, it was trapped in a bottle” and “more espresso, less depresso.” One of the many posters humorously comments on the human encounter with avocados: “too soon... too soon... too soon... NOW too late...”, referring to the universal pain of finding your morning avocado, which you’ve been



looking forward to all night, disturbingly squishy—even though you could’ve sworn attempting to cut it yesterday afternoon almost chipped the knife.

On my left wrist, there is a permanent white band, a mark left by the joint effort of the Californian sun and my Casio Baby-G that mom got me when I turned twelve. Its watch band is now off-white from the five years of weathering, with faint, darker spots on it from that one time I helped my mom dye her grey streaks black.

“**YOU LOOK FORWARD TO SOMETHING ABOUT TO HAPPEN, FORGETTING TO LOOK AT THE GROUND AT YOUR FEET. YOU PICK UP AN AVOCADO, HOPING TO MAKE GUACAMOLE, ONLY TO FIND IT HARD AS A ROCK.**”

That metaphorical avocado on the poster from Joe & The Juice seems to have gotten itself a little too acquainted with my watch. Every tick

of a handle, every tock of the gears, seems to smear that damned fruit into every uncleanable crevice of the machine. The rose gold watch face and its hidden surfaces are painted with a filthy green explosion of nostalgia, filling every unoccupied moment with the remnants of something that used to promise a great avocado toast.

So unruly this fruit that its colors seem to bleed onto nostalgia itself, contaminating it with its bad habit of causing untimeliness.

Nostalgia is the only word a writer can really put on it.

The persistent state of “missing.”

The endless cycle of living in the past and the future, but somehow never the present. You look forward to something about to happen, forgetting to look at the ground at your feet. You pick up an avocado hoping to make guacamole, only to find it hard as a rock with

anticipation for tomorrow’s day, not quite fit for making guac, so you leave it in the fridge. That same afternoon, you return to it with the new idea of

slicing it and putting it on toast, only to find it has become too soft to be sliced, so you leave it on the counter. The next day, you return to it to finally cut it open, and find that it is too mushy for anything at all, with dark spots crawling on the light green flesh.

So then perhaps the mythical “prime” of this devilish fruit doesn’t exist, the “present” an elusive thing before it becomes nostalgia.

I want a perpetually solid avocado to fulfill all of my slicing needs, and

another forever mushy one for on-demand guacamole.

I know I can’t have that. They haven’t even made GMO avocados that do that yet.

So what then?

So what if you’re looking forward to something that’s yet to happen? Something is happening right now for you to miss later. So what if I lost my watch the first month of my freshman year in college? Its reliable mechanics have gotten me this far, and I have nothing but good memories and a

sweet few chapters of my story with its rosy reflection glimmering on it. So what if something has already happened and you feel sickening butterflies upon its absence? At least you once had something beautiful enough to cause this colorful affliction.

So what if my guacamole is a little chunky because the fruit was unripe?

So what if my order of avocado toast is a little mushy because the fruit was too ripe?

Before it gets rotten and you have to trash it six feet under, eat your avocados.





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