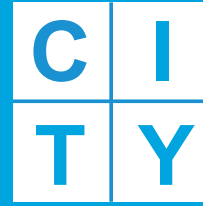


Issue 22 | Summer 2018

# The broken



misc.



**Identity and belonging in contemporary hypermodernity**

**Can a bicycle scream?**

**Love and sonnets**

**Missing persons**

ISSN 1916-3304

# The broken



Summer 2018 Issue 22

*The Broken City*, ISSN 1916-3304, is published semiannually out of Toronto, Canada, appearing sporadically in print, but always at: [www.thebrokencitymag.com](http://www.thebrokencitymag.com). Rights to individual works published in *The Broken City* remain the property of the author and cannot be reproduced without their consent. All other materials © 2018. All rights reserved. All wrongs reversed.

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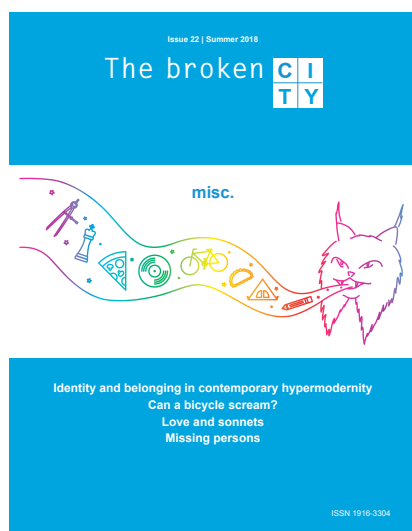
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## In this issue:



Welcome to *The Broken City's* anything-goes extravaganza—a first theme-free issue after ten years of publishing.

Fun as it was, we're back to the usual pattern next issue (see right).

## Cover Art:

**Mouki K. Butt** is a digital illustrator who currently lives on Vancouver Island. One miscellaneous fact about her is that she loves colourful, transparent Lego pieces. [moukikbutt.com](http://moukikbutt.com).

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*The Broken City* is currently accepting submissions for its winter 2018 edition: **"a series of tubes."**

That's right, armchair physicists, the magazine is running a science/technology issue. We're looking for fact or fiction that touches on anything scientific, from math to molecular biology. We'll even consider time travel.

Send your poetry, fiction, essays, illustrations and photography to [thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com](mailto:thebrokencitymag@yahoo.com).

Deadline is: December 1, 2018. Submitters will be contacted after that date, with news of acceptance or rejection.

## **Into the Great Divide**

### ***Laura Madeline Wiseman***

Yesterday, no more than forced  
to shoulder it, a grip on the bars  
with nowhere to go. The rumble strip

took up more than the white line.  
Tar patches swerved, interweaved,  
soft as spit chewing gum.

That would've been enough. Yet for miles  
blanched asphalt dissolved  
into potholes, gravel, an older red layer below.

Yesterday, no choice but to ride among it all  
or drop off into sand and brush.  
Can a bicycle scream? Yesterday, RVs growled,

big trucks gunned with boats, semis pressed against  
the double line for miles. What's ahead—more  
chewed up road, or cyclists who refuse to lose their grip?

---

*Laura Madeline Wiseman teaches writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her book Drink won the 2016 Independent Publisher Bronze Book Award for poetry. Her book Velocipede (Stephen F. Austin State University Press), is a 2016 Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Award Finalist for Sports. Her most recent book is A Bicycle's Echo, published by Red Dashboard.*







## A Night in August

### Jason Irwin

Wild dogs chased me in a dream.  
In the kitchen my father banged  
cupboard doors, paced around the stove.  
Wild with rage, his eyes shifted like cue balls  
from left to right. Sitting at the table  
with a cigarette in her hand,  
my mother looked like a painting.  
Through the open door a sour breeze  
filtered in. I heard crickets, night birds,  
the whoosh of traffic. In my dream  
I ran hard, until breathless.  
At a clearing my father waited.  
He bent down and lifted me into the sky.  
Now he paced around the stove  
like a tiger at the zoo.  
I heard shouting, an argument  
about a stolen bicycle.  
My mother had been sitting  
on a park bench. A boy  
jumped on her bike and disappeared  
into the night.

It was after midnight.  
I woke to the sound of a dogs barking.  
I could feel their panting  
on the back of my neck.  
In the kitchen my mother  
lit another cigarette. I grew dizzy  
from the smoke and the light  
that reflected off the linoleum,  
from watching my father  
pace around the kitchen  
like a wild animal.  
“It’s just a bike,” my mother cried.  
“I’ll scare him,” my father said,  
and for the first time I saw the revolver  
shining in his fist.

Nauseous and dizzy  
I rubbed my eyes with the backs of my hands  
as my mother lit another cigarette  
and the gun in my father’s hand  
reflected off the linoleum.  
Through the open door a breeze  
wafted in and in the distance  
I thought I heard dogs bark.

---

*Jason Irwin is the author of A Blister of Stars (Low Ghost, 2016), Watering the Dead (Pavement Saw Press, 2008), and the chapbooks Where You Are (Night Ballet Press, 2014) and Some Days It’s A Love Story (Slipstream Press, 2005). He is a winner of the Transcontinental Poetry Award and holds an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. He grew up in Dunkirk, NY, and now lives in Pittsburgh. [www.jasonirwin.blogspot.com](http://www.jasonirwin.blogspot.com)*

## **The sonnet is about love.**

### ***Joanna Cleary***

The sonnet is about love. The scent of  
lovers' newfound bodies, gone. The memor-  
ies, here, always. The difference becomes  
important, now that Trump is president.  
I love you. The room is empty. I love  
you anyways. Echoes of it all: noise  
less. Four hundred years ago: Shakespeare, his  
dark mistress. Fragments: so ugly. We want  
the whole story. Who was she? It doesn't  
matter: this is America and she  
has decided to love that glimmer we  
see of ourselves on the dark TV screen  
before it turns on. Not a mirror but  
a lapse in time we thought would disappear.

---

*Joanna Cleary is an undergraduate student  
double majoring in English Literature and  
Theatre and Performance at the University of  
Waterloo. Her work has previously appeared  
or is forthcoming in The /t&mz/ Review, Pulp  
Poets Press, The Hunger, Riggwelter, and  
Subterranean Blue Poetry, among others. She  
is also currently a Poetry Editor for Inklette  
Magazine.*



Gareth McGorman

*Gareth McGorman is a scale modeller living in Toronto who commands a small army of 1:35 scale soldiers. His photos can be found on his blog Army Men Around the House: <https://armymenaroundthehouse.tumblr.com/>*



# His Guardian Angel

## Thomas Elson

Seán Tyler sat across from Detective Jeremy Anderson and completed the last page of the missing persons questionnaire.

Anderson had been passed over for detective twice. His reprieve came one year ago when the outgoing Sheriff promoted Anderson only days before he left office.

When Tyler completed the questionnaire, he pushed the papers toward the detective. Anderson glanced down, "Wife been missing since Sunday dinner?"

"Yes."

Anderson spoke slowly, "Thanks 'a coming in. We'll be in touch, if we learn anything."

"What are the next steps?"

"Next steps?"

"What happens next? What should I do?"

"Do what you been doin'. We'll begin as soon we can."

"But my wife's missing."

"Sir, that pile of papers over there is full of missing people." Anderson lowered his eyebrows, said through gritted teeth, "Many are teenagers. Most are girls. Some are babies. We will get to you as soon as we can."

That was Monday afternoon.

#

Tuesday morning.

The third-floor detective room was dark when Anderson arrived. He rested his coffee on his desk, looked up. *I'll be damned. Boss's walkin' straight over here. What now?*

The new Sheriff tapped the edge of the desk, "Anderson?" *Bastard talks like he doesn't even know who I*

*am.* "What's been your progress on the Tyler missing person report?"

Silence, then, "Just came in yesterday."

"Listen, I got a call this morning about the case," he leaned over the desk, "A road worker found her body on Creek Road northwest of town." He scanned Anderson's desk, shook his head, grabbed a three-ring binder, leaned forward a few more inches, "We can keep it from the newspapers for a few days, but you're gonna have to clear this thing fast."

He dropped the binder on the desk. "It's all yours. Don't coast on this one. Don't blow it. This is your last chance to get off my shit list."

"Yes sir, yes sir. I'm on it."

The Sheriff tapped the edge of the desk once more and walked away.

The phone rang. "Not now." Anderson jerked the phone off its cradle, emitted an earthy epithet, then spoke. "What? I mean. How can I help? May I have your name? ... Oh, good morning, Mr. Tyler. Good morning ... No sir. We do not have any more information. I'll call you as soon as we do. Morning report in 10 minutes. Might get an update then."

First item on the morning report: Shirley Tyler. *It's rolling downhill to me. If it hits me, the Sheriff'll bury me without the any possibility of a resurrection on the third day.* Anderson glanced down at Tyler's questionnaire. *I'll be damned.* Underlined some points. *Too many details. Either a perfect memory or—* Stopped, knew his face was inflamed. *Son-of-a-bitch. If that Sheriff thinks he can drive me out, he's crazy.*

Twenty minutes after morning report ended, Detective Anderson

parked his unmarked car and walked toward the Tyler house, veered onto a neighbor's lawn, then to the side yard, looked past the chain link fence, took photos of the back of the Tyler home. Repeated the procedure on the other side, then directly approached the front door and knocked. A demanding sound—harsh and incessant.

*Not now. Not a salesman.* Tyler peered out the window, caught the eye of Detective Anderson. Tyler's eyes widened. Anderson continued his frozen stare. *Guilt reaction.*

The door opened, Anderson flashed his badge. "Mr. Tyler, we met yesterday, and spoke this morning. I'm Detective Anderson, please call me Jeremy. And I need your help." He looked straight at him, lowered his head, and asked, "May I come in, sir?"

Anderson noted the feminine touches in the living room. Earth-tone rug under the furniture. Tinted glass lamps on blond maple end tables. Lace valances with sheer panel curtains.

After Tyler opened the curtains, Anderson said, "I'm sure I created a bad first impression, but I need your help. Missing person cases are personal to me. I want to find your wife, and I want us to work together on this."

When Tyler started to respond, Anderson resumed talking immediately, "What we need to do is..." and outlined areas of mutual benefit, from driving the city together to reading the personal papers of the family.

"Personal papers?"

"Standard procedure. Insurance policies, letters. It's a long list. But we need to do it to find your wife."

Tyler nodded.

"Let's start. First, would you be

willing to take a polygraph test? Merely to eliminate you as a suspect.”

“No.”

“It’s a standard thing. Just do it and get past it.”

“No.”

“And why not?” Anderson’s face scrunched from forehead to lower lip.

Tyler met the detective’s eyes.

“If I pass it, it means nothing. If I get nervous and fail, you guys stop looking.”

“Why would you fail?”

“Body heat, surface moisture. Imprecise science. Innocent people can fail. Let’s go to something else. Let’s find my wife.”

The room was quiet. *He’s guilty as hell.* Anderson shifted. “Never mind then. What’s the first step you’d like to take?”

Tyler exhaled, talked while he twirled a coaster, “I’d start with whoever Shirley went camping with.”

“Camping?”

“Yep, she was going camping right after we finished dinner on Sunday. With who, or where, I don’t know.”

Anderson looked at the floor. After a few moments, said “Just follow me. We can take separate cars. We’ll meet at the station. You think of any more information, we can talk about it there.”

At the station, Anderson jumped from his car, walked briskly toward Tyler’s truck. He had his plan. “I just got an emergency call. I’m going to have to get inside on another matter. I need you to be back here tomorrow at noon. Thanks.” He pivoted and hustled into the station.

Lack of curiosity was Ander-

son’s professional flaw. Lack of awareness was not. At his desk, he called two other detectives: Thompson, a veteran, and Jacoby, a new detective. Anderson divided responsibilities.

“When Tyler arrives tomorrow, Thompson and I will question him separately. Jacoby, you’re neat as hell, so you execute the no-knock search warrant on Tyler’s house while he’s at the station. Make sure you put everything back.”

Jacoby asked about Shirley’s fellow camper. Anderson responded, “I’ll take that one.”

#

Wednesday morning, 11:45.

Anderson guided Tyler from the waiting area through the detectives’ cubicle area into a white, windowless hallway with numbered doors, past a gray metal door, and into an open area. A guard released the meshed metal gate, and it opened onto an institutional gray corridor with faded white doors and small glass openings. Then a stairway.

They entered a musty subterranean mezzanine. Tyler’s only way out was up—through locked doors and armed guards. Anderson directed him through a paint-peeled hallway, past more locked metal doors and armed officers.

“This is far enough,” said Anderson, uttering his first words since their catacomb walk began. “I have to ask you to look toward that black dome near the ceiling.” Unbeknownst to Tyler, it was a camera. His picture would soon be ready for official use. Another guard searched him and asked him to empty his pockets. Contents listed and re-

turned.

“Policy. Just policy,” said Anderson.

“I know,” said Tyler. He did not know.

“Let’s go in here.” Anderson unlocked a barred door, directed Tyler to sit at a gray metal table with three chairs. In the center of the table was a microphone; on the opposite wall a mirror, the purpose of which is well known to any television viewer.

“Sit there.” He motioned to the single chair facing the mirror.

Anderson pulled handcuffs from his belt, tossed them on the table, sat down, lifted the handcuffs, and without turning, looped them over the back rungs of his chair, then began questioning.

It was now 12:20 p.m.

Anderson began. Could you state your name and address? ... Thanks. We are here voluntarily. Is that how you understand it? ... Yes? You are free to leave whenever you want. Is that how you understand it? ... It is, good. We are recording this questioning. Both audio and visual. Does that meet with your approval? ... It does. Anything you wish to add? ... No, then let’s begin. Tell me why you initially contacted missing persons.

At 2:00 p.m., Detective Thompson entered the room, tapped Anderson on the shoulder, and with a stage whisper announced, “Detective, you are needed upstairs.” Without comment, Anderson stood, unlocked the door and left.

“Mr. Tyler, from the beginning, just so I can understand it, tell me what happened.” Thompson repeated Ander-

son's questions. Asked and answered. Re-asked and re-answered.

At 4:30 p.m., Anderson re-turned. "Let's take a break. Bathroom and all that. Seán, want something to drink? I'll get it."

At 4:45 p.m., Thompson escorted Tyler back into the examination room. Anderson was seated across the table. Tyler's eyes rested on an unopened bottle of water.

Anderson repeated his questions. Same procedure, same statements. Same questions. Same responses. More questions. More responses. And again.

At 5:25 p.m. Anderson advised, "By law, I am required to tell you that you have the right to remain silent, you have the right to ... Do you understand each of these rights as I explained them to you? ... You do. Good. Would you like to continue? ... Yes. Good.

A few more questions, then Anderson pulled his handcuffs off the back rung, "We are done. Let's go home."

Through the same maze entered five and a half hours earlier: hallways, holding areas, numbered doors, more hallways, bolted chairs in the booking area, and into the main area. With only two more locked doors to the outside, Anderson said, "We'll need to talk some more tomorrow. Be here at ten." Then, as if inspired, asked, "Ya wanna get some dinner? My treat. Your choice." Waited.

"Russell's Truck Stop, great, see you there."

Inside his truck, Tyler exhaled, tears came. He grasped then pushed against the steering wheel until his knuckles turned white. His tears continued.

Tyler arrived at Russell's, found Anderson seated next to the kitchen

door. "Here." He pulled out a chair, then adopted a more serious look. "Sit." With an air of authority, he said, "Let's get some food in us," then motioned the waiter.

"Tell me everything."

Tyler opened up and detailed his entire time inside the interrogation room. His eyes watered as he tried to explain his treatment by Thompson. "I thought I'd get some information and help. All I've received is questions. I don't know any more today than when I first called."

Anderson leaned forward. Placed his hand near Tyler's 7-Up glass. "I'm sorry you were treated that way. We'll be okay. I'll be with you each step. Like your guardian angel." He looked at Tyler, cocked his head, pushed his lower lip over his upper to simulate a smile, patted his shoulder, then, as if they were team members, pushed him gently.

As they left, Tyler thanked Anderson. Walked toward his truck, looked over his shoulder, said, "Thanks" two more times.

Once home, Tyler fell asleep on the sofa with a 7-Up can in his hand, awoke the next morning with the can and contents on the floor. No way to avoid being late. He left his house and noticed only the time.

It was Thursday at 10:10 a.m.

When Anderson saw Tyler run from the library parking lot toward the station, he looked at his watch, held that pose until Tyler approached. "You're late. I need to know this is as important to you as it is to me." As if a reply were irrelevant, he continued. "I have some things I want you to review for me. Let's do that."

In the station, they retraced yesterday's locked doors, basement descent, searches. Pockets emptied.

Everything recorded.

Inside the interrogation room, Anderson slowly pushed a wooden box across the table. "Yesterday you were given, as a matter of course, your Miranda warning. Is that correct?"

"Yes."

"Do I need to read it to you again, or do you remember it?" Again, without waiting for a reply, Anderson recited from his laminated sheet, then asked, "Do you understand each of these rights as I have explained them to you?" Anderson smiled.

The video caught Tyler mirroring Anderson's smile.

Anderson continued to smile. "Open the box and identify the items, please?" The camera remained focused on Tyler's face.

Tyler opened the box, extracted a book, "This is the journal Shirley kept. Plus, four photos of Shirley and two of Shirley and me. These came from my house. How—"

"Your house?"

"Yes."

"Your house?"

"Yes, but how—"

"Not you and your wife's house?"

"Well, yes—our house, then."

Anderson smiled. The right side of his mouth rose slightly without exposing his teeth. Again, Tyler smiled back, again the camera caught it.

"This came from the house—our house."

Next, Tyler opened his wife's journal, read her words to himself. *I am unable to talk to you about your anger and temper. I'm afraid to. Your outbursts intimidate me, and sometimes, scare me to distraction. I feel sad, panicky, unable to cope, ashamed, and very insecure, and unloved when you do those things.* He wiped his nose with his right thumb



and index finger, rubbed them on his jeans.

Anderson sat silent. Modulated his voice, "Talk to me about what she wrote." Added, "Please."

"That whole weekend, she told me she loved me and felt better about me—about us. We made love twice. She even talked in the groups about the improvements in our marriage."

"Were those groups recorded?"

"No."

Anderson lifted the journal, opened it, handed it back. "Read this out loud. If you would, please."

Tyler looked at the page, began to read softly, "I came here with you to prepare you for our divorce. I have a deep affection for you, but our marriage is no longer possible." His voice broke. "I did this to help prepare you." As his head rose, he said, "But she never said any of this to me. Not once."

"But she wrote it right here." Anderson pointed to the page. "And she wrote the date on it. That's her handwriting, isn't it?"

"Looks like it."

"Well, somebody was planning something. Both of you? Maybe?"

"Meaning?"

"You tell me." Then with a pause between each word, "You tell me." Anderson smiled, stood, and with another practiced gesture, shoved his metal chair against the wall, pivoted, unlocked the door, and walked out of the gray room with the one-way mirror.

The sheriff's logs were unclear about the length of time Tyler sat alone.

Sometime later, two detectives crammed themselves into the interrogation room. Tyler recognized Thompson from yesterday. Thompson introduced Jacoby.

Jacoby did not wait. "Mr. Tyler, have you ever driven northwest of here on Creek Road?"

"You haven't? In the entire time you have lived here, you have not been on Creek Road? Is that what you are telling me?"

"Not that I remember."

"You tryin' ta act like a politician? That shit ain't gonna fly here, boy." Jacoby moved behind him, tapped the back of his metal chair, took aim and scuffed the back leg of the chair with his right foot. Tyler lurched forward, then turned.

"Why the questions? Have you made any progress in locating my wife?"

Thompson slapped his open palm on the tabletop. "We have."

He twisted his head toward Thompson.

"What progress?"

"I think we'll just point that out to you later." Jacoby hit the table two times—the first a quick slap, a pause, then the second slap. "Mr. Tyler, we are done for today. You can leave now."

The metal door opened, a uniformed guard entered. Thompson smiled at Jacoby. "Officer, escort this man out."

"Is he being booked?"

Thompson shook his head from left to right.

Tyler's eyes almost met Thompson's.

"Detective, why won't you answer my questions?"

"We will. We will. When we have more answers."

Out the locked door clanging, slamming, grating metal against metal. Up the stairs. More locked doors. Wait for the next guard to unlock and slide open the next metal door. Stand in a closet-sized area. Wait for the sixth door to open.

Outside, Jacoby said, "Mr. Tyler, we need you to come with us immediately," clapped his hands in the manner of a football coach rushing his players to a new drill at the other end of the field, "Let's go."

"Yes, sir. Is it about Shirley?"

"We'll all go together," said Jacoby. He opened the back door of the squad car.

Tyler sat in the back seat, felt the hard plastic against his spine, saw the shatterproof plexiglass segregating front from back, noticed the lack of interior handles on the back door.

"Where's Anderson?" Tyler's words ricocheted. "Where is he?"

And, as Anderson looked down from the third floor, Jacoby said, "He's gone. Out of town on another case. We're in charge now." Anderson smiled.



# Miles Away to the Best of My Ability

*Sophie Ell*

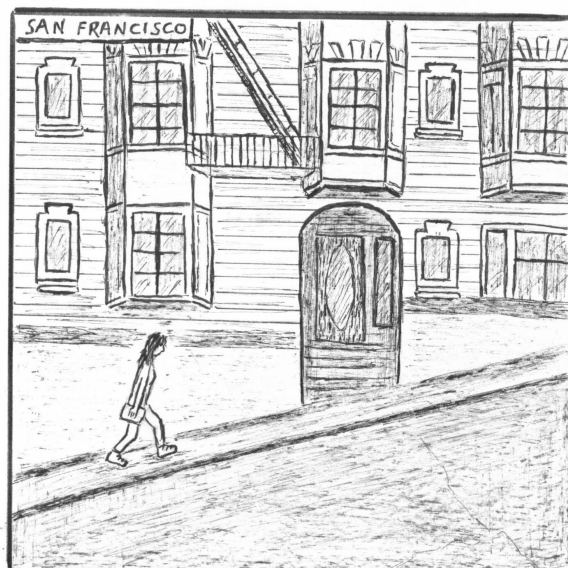
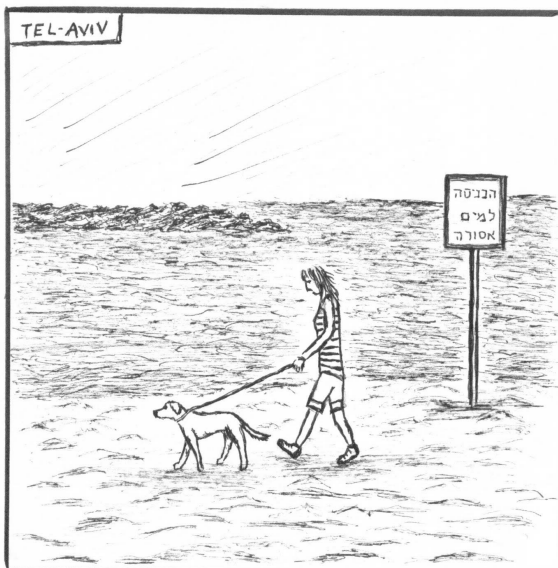
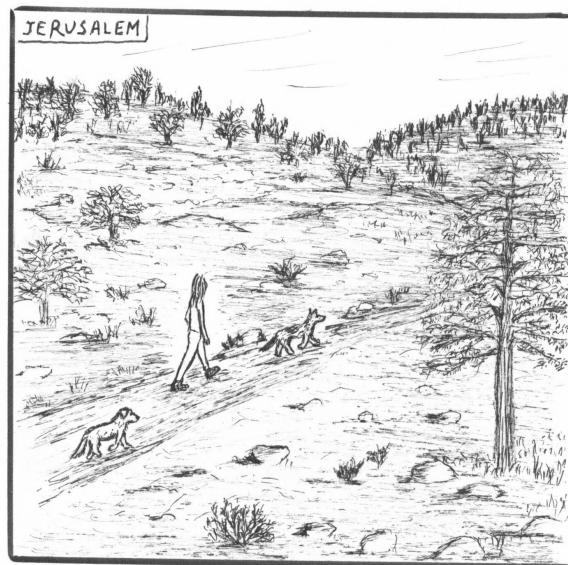
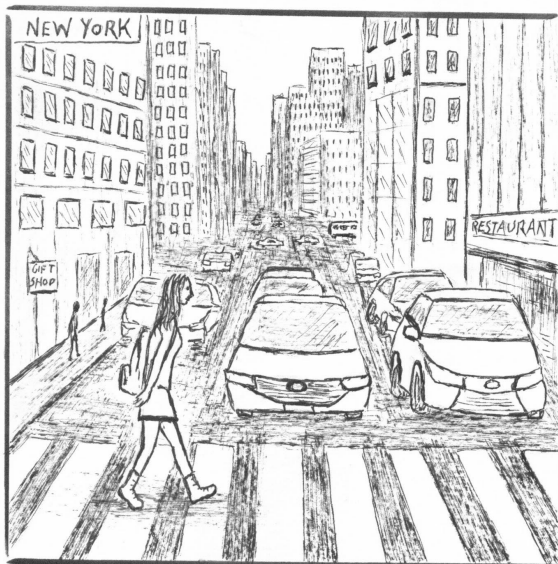
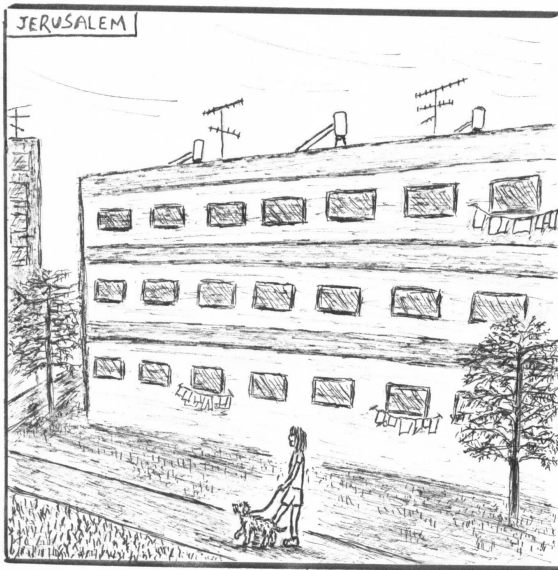
The following pages are an excerpt from a work in progress—a graphic novel that explores questions of identity and belonging in contemporary hypermodernity. Much like our strange times, the work is characterized by the obstacles and the possibilities created by advanced technology, globalization, migration, alienation, and fragmentation.

Sophie Ell is a PhD student in American Studies at the University of New Mexico. Her research focuses on cultural studies and critical regionalism, and engages in an interdisciplinary examination of written and visual narratives of space, place, and identity. Email: [seell@unm.edu](mailto:seell@unm.edu). Instagram: [@pip\\_odyssey](https://www.instagram.com/pip_odyssey).



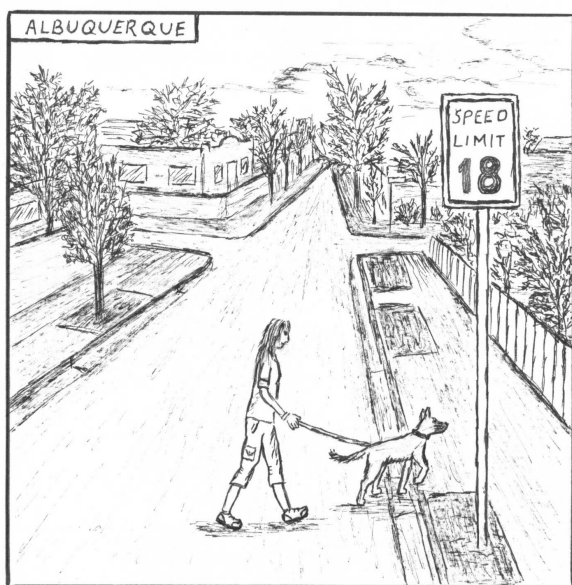
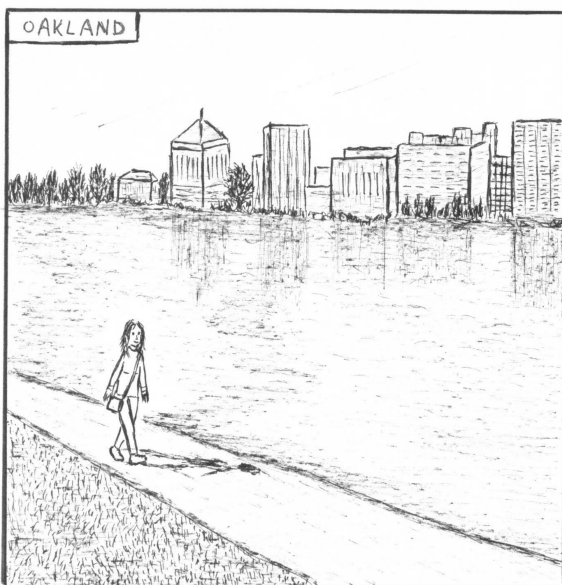
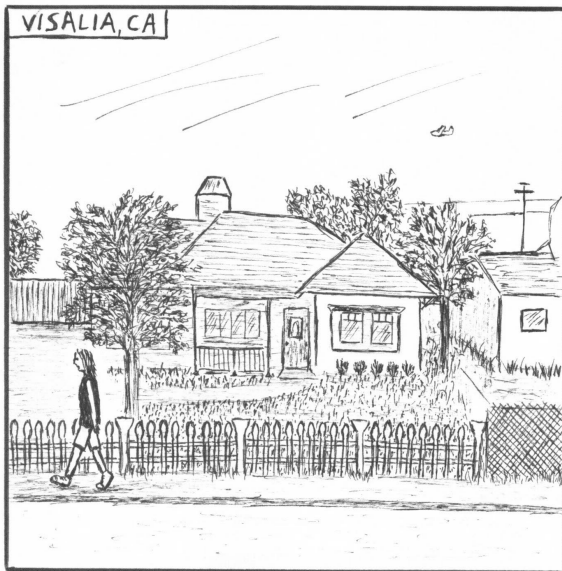


WITH OR WITHOUT A DOG, WHEREVER I AM IN THE WORLD, I WALK.





A TOURIST, A VISITOR, A SHORT OR LONG TERM RESIDENT, WITH OR WITHOUT A DESTINATION, I WALK.  
MAYBE THAT'S WHAT I AM, A WALKER.



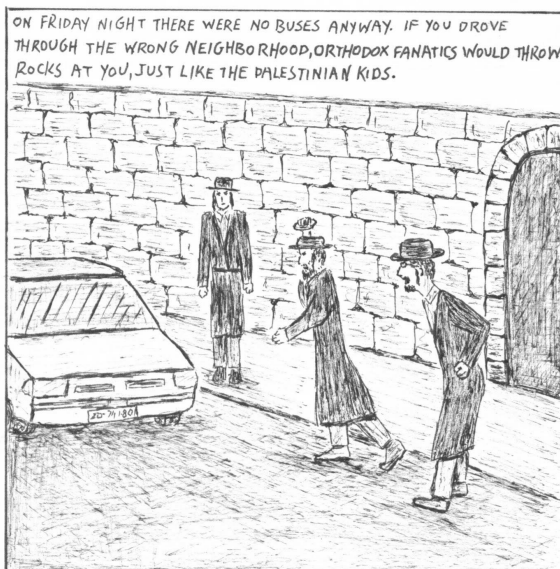
# IN JERUSALEM



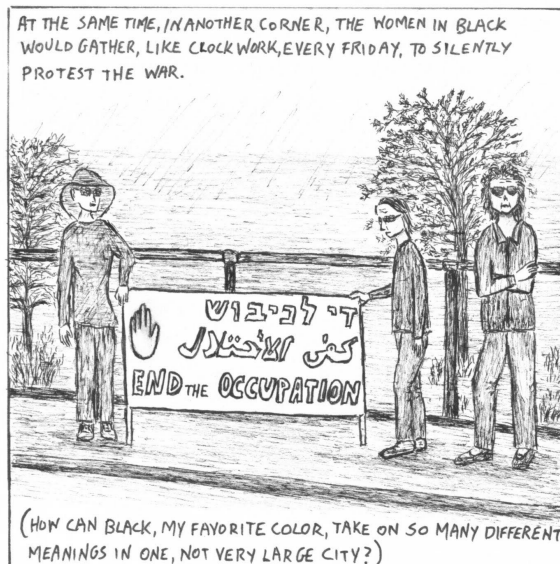
THE UNDERGROUND WAS A DINGY CLUB DOWNTOWN THAT NEVER CARDED ANYONE. AT 17, IT WAS A GOOD PLACE TO DISCOVER PUNK, ALCOHOL, AND THE ART OF ESCAPING REALITY.



SUICIDE BOMBERS WERE ROUTINELY TARGETING BUSES ALL OVER TOWN, SO I BEGAN TO WALK EVERYWHERE.



ON FRIDAY NIGHT THERE WERE NO BUSES ANYWAY. IF YOU DROVE THROUGH THE WRONG NEIGHBORHOOD, ORTHODOX FANATICS WOULD THROW ROCKS AT YOU, JUST LIKE THE PALESTINIAN KIDS.

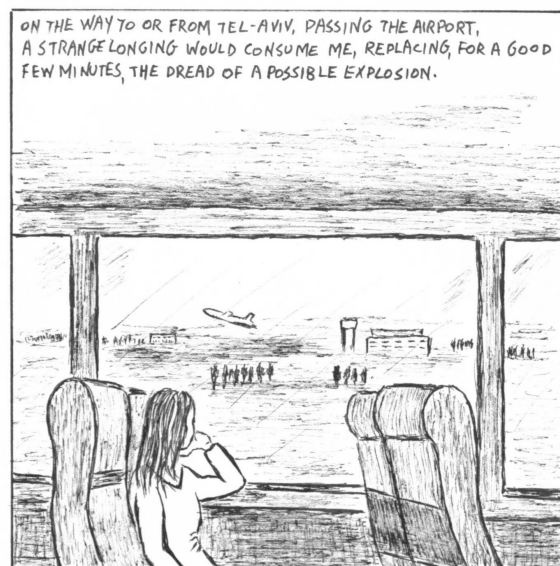


AT THE SAME TIME, IN ANOTHER CORNER, THE WOMEN IN BLACK WOULD GATHER, LIKE CLOCKWORK, EVERY FRIDAY, TO SILENTLY PROTEST THE WAR.

(HOW CAN BLACK, MY FAVORITE COLOR, TAKE ON SO MANY DIFFERENT MEANINGS IN ONE, NOT VERY LARGE CITY?)



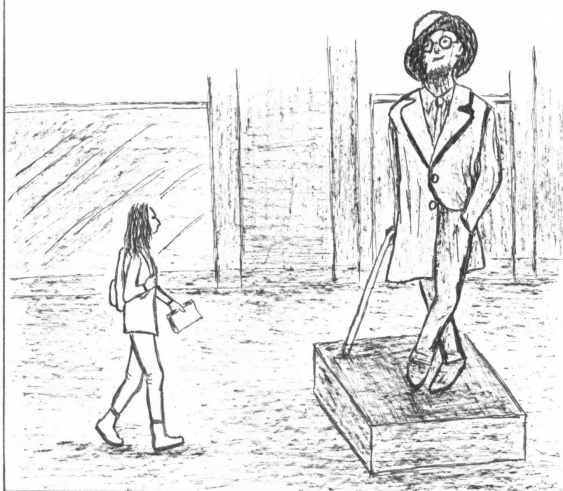
HOW I GOT OUT OF DOING MY MILITARY SERVICE IS A LONG STORY, BUT THERE I WAS, 18, FREE TO CONTINUE SPENDING MY NIGHTS AT THE UNDERGROUND. AT LEAST I CAN SAY I GOT TO DANCE WITH A FEW CUTE SOLDIERS (AND THEIR MIGS, WHICH BY LAW THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO PUT DOWN).



ON THE WAY TO OR FROM TEL-AVIV, PASSING THE AIRPORT, A STRANGE LONGING WOULD CONSUME ME, REPLACING, FOR A GOOD FEW MINUTES, THE DREAD OF A POSSIBLE EXPLOSION.

# IN DUBLIN

I THOUGHT I'D BECOME A JOYCE SCHOLAR, AN EXPERT ON EARLY POSTCOLONIAL MODERNISM.



BUT JOYCE WAS LONG GONE (NOT EVEN BURIED IN DUBLIN), AND WITH HIM A WHOLE CITY.



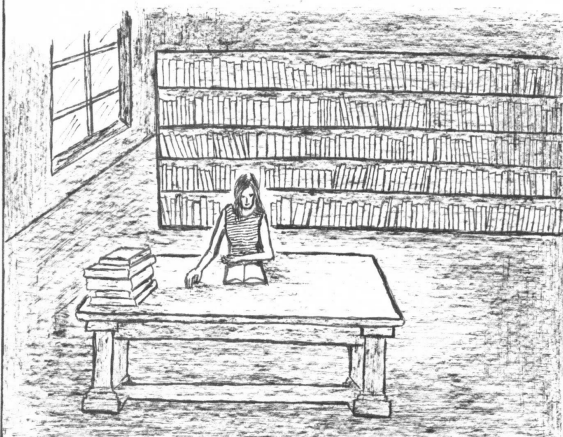
IT WAS 2004, AND OUTSIDE THE WINDOW OF MY TINY, MUSTY APARTMENT, THE CELTIC TIGER WAS RAGING IN THE STREETS. MY BUILDING TOO, WITH ITS CROOKED FLOORS AND RATTLING PIPES, WAS DESTINED FOR DEMOLITION, BUT LUCKILY NOT QUITE YET.



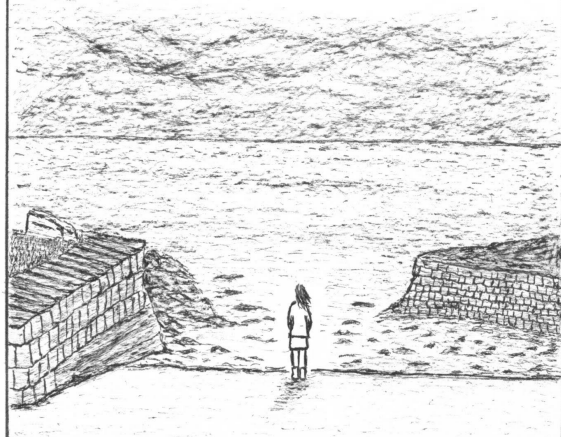
TO MATCH THE RISING CLASS OF HIGH-TECH WORKERS AND THE INCESSANT FLOW OF AMERICAN TOURISTS, PRICES OF SIMPLE COMFORTS SKYROCKETED. I WAS A STUDENT, PERPETUALLY BROKE. CHOCOLATE, THE ONE STILL-AFFORDABLE COLONIAL COMMODITY, BECAME MY PRIMARY ADDICTION, MY OBSESSION, MY SUSTENANCE.



IN OVERHEATED LIBRARIES, LIKE MAD LUCIA JOYCE BEFORE ME, I FELL IN LOVE WITH SAMUEL BECKETT.



LIKE BECKETT BEFORE ME (OR SO I IMAGINED), I FOUND MYSELF STARING OUT TO SEA, DREAMING OF FARAWAY PLACES, OTHER LANGUAGES, SUNSHINE.





IN OAKLAND

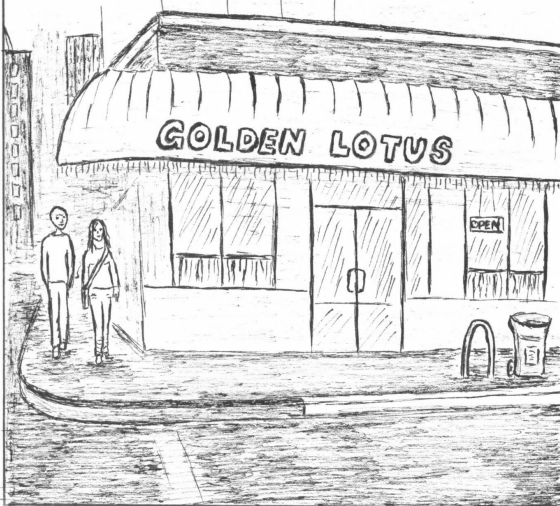
I FELL IN LOVE AND GOT MARRIED. IT WAS A TYPICAL JUNE GLOOM DAY IN THE WOODS, AND I WAS GLAD I BROUGHT MY HOODIE.



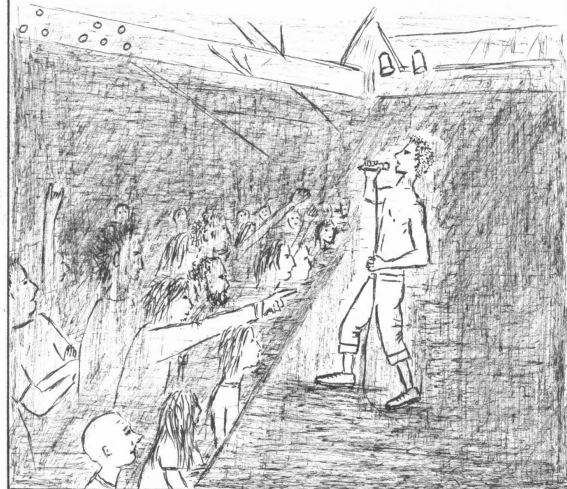
I TURNED STRAIGHT-EDGE. I WAS ALONE WHEN THE GREEN CARD ARRIVED. I WAS NOW A LEGAL ALIEN.



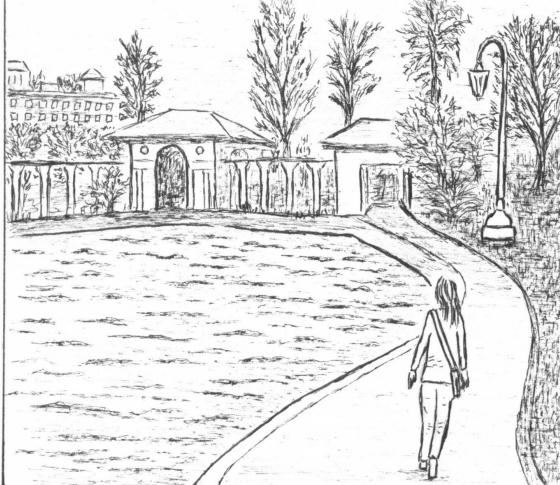
I WAS ALREADY A VEGETARIAN, BUT DECIDED TO GO VEGAN.



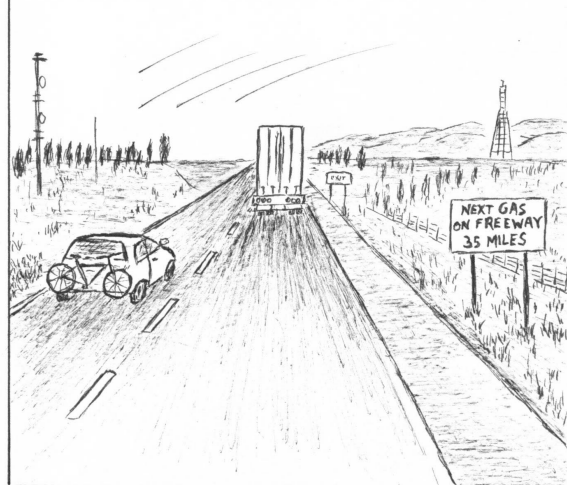
I WENT TO COUNTLESS SHOWS AT 924 GILMAN, AND NEVER SPOTTED JELLO BIAFRA, WHO WAS RUMORED TO FREQUENT THE PLACE IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL YOUNG ARTISTS.



I WALKED AROUND LAKE MERRITT, AGAIN AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN. THE RELATIONSHIP WASN'T WORKING, BUT AT LEAST I WAS A NATURALIZED CITIZEN.



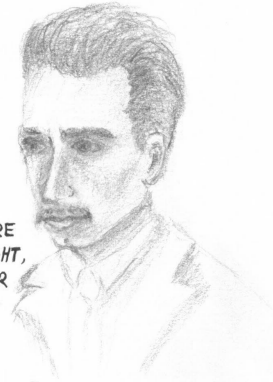
I GOT DIVORCED, CONTEMPLATED OPTIONS. THEN PACKED MY BAGS, LOADED UP THE CAR, AND STARTED OVER. IT SEEMED THE MOST AMERICAN THING TO DO.



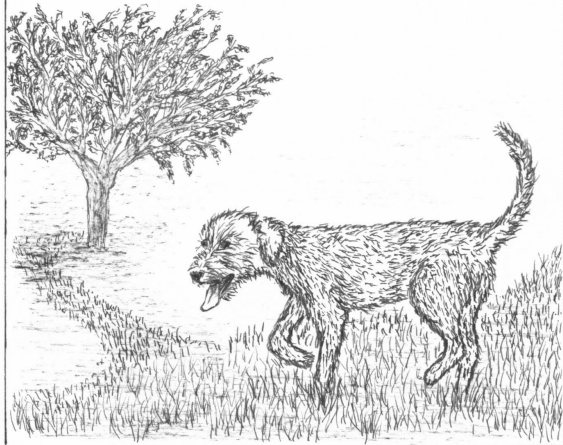
RAINER MARIA RILKE SAYS:

AND EVEN IF YOU FOUND YOURSELF IN SOME PRISON,  
WHOSE WALLS LET IN NONE OF THE WORLD'S SOUNDS —  
WOULDN'T YOU STILL HAVE YOUR CHILDHOOD, THAT  
JEWEL BEYOND ALL PRICE, THAT TREASURE HOUSE  
OF MEMORIES?

TURN YOUR ATTENTIONS  
TO IT. TRY TO RAISE UP  
THE SUNKEN FEELINGS  
OF THIS ENORMOUS PAST;  
YOUR PERSONALITY WILL  
GROW STRONGER, YOUR  
SOLITUDE WILL EXPAND  
AND BECOME A PLACE WHERE  
YOU CAN LIVE IN THE TWILIGHT,  
WHERE THE NOISE OF OTHER  
PEOPLE PASSES BY,  
FAR IN THE DISTANCE.



EVER SINCE I WAS VERY YOUNG, DOGS ALWAYS MADE ME  
HAPPY. TREES TOO. THEY STILL DO.



WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I WAS TERRIFIED OF HYPER-REAL FIGURATIVE  
STATUES. I WAS CONVINCED THEY WERE WATCHING ME WHEN  
I WASN'T LOOKING, AND COULD, UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS,  
COME TO LIFE. I STILL FIND THEM DISTURBING, BUT IT  
HELPS WHEN OCCASIONALLY I SEE A DOG PEE ON THEM.



I'VE HAD MANY IMAGINARY FRIENDS OVER THE YEARS,  
BUT CINDY (WHICH I PRESUMED WAS SHORT FOR  
CINDERELLA) WAS MY FAVORITE.



I REMEMBER THE EXCITEMENT, THE FASCINATION, EVERY  
TIME I ENCOUNTERED A TURTLE. SO SLOW, DETERMINED,  
SELF-SUFFICIENT. I COULD WATCH THEM FOR HOURS.



I WAS PROBABLY 5 OR 6 WHEN I SAW A MOTOR HOME FOR  
THE FIRST TIME. WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS THE IMPRESSION  
IT HAD LEFT ON ME. I STILL THINK IT IS ONE OF  
MANKIND'S MOST PERFECT INVENTIONS.



THINGS THAT ONCE SCARED ME TO THE POINT OF NIGHTMARES, AND THAT LATER ON I LEARNED TO LIKE.

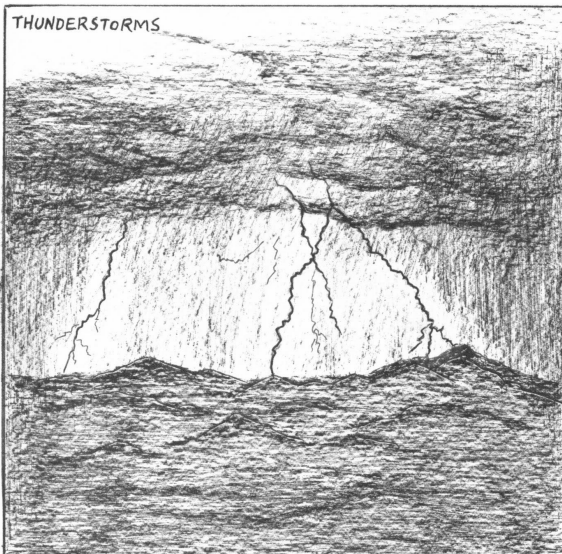
WITCHES



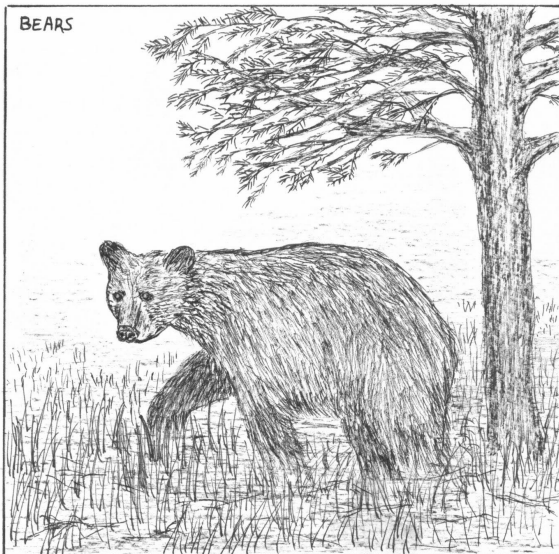
THE SONG "ONE OF THESE DAYS" BY PINK FLOYD



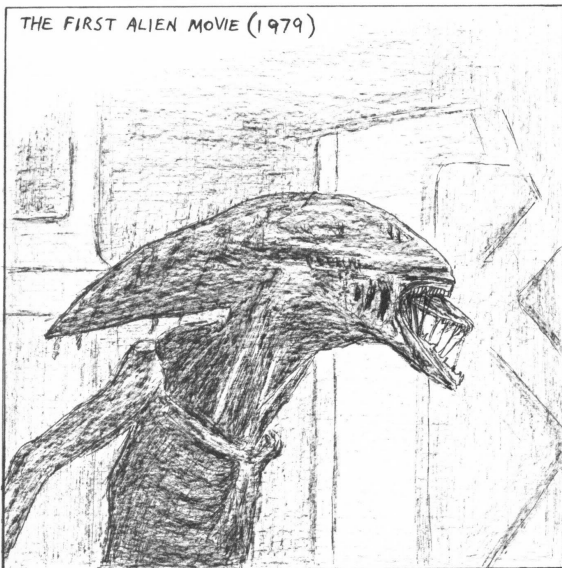
THUNDERSTORMS



BEARS



THE FIRST ALIEN MOVIE (1979)



OLD CEMETERIES



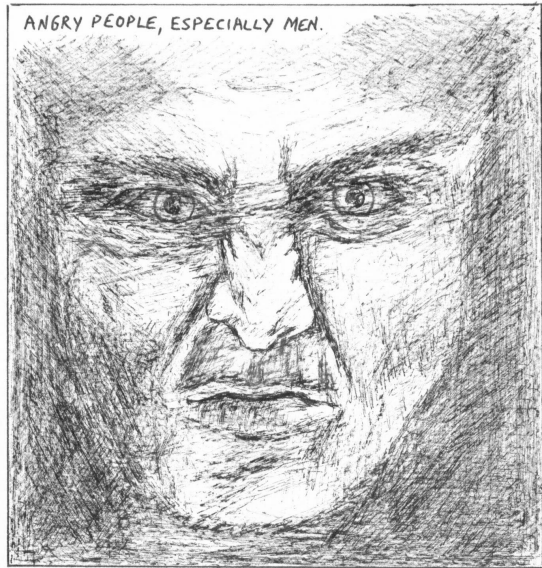


THINGS THAT STILL GENERATE NIGHTMARES AND THAT I DOUBT I WILL EVER LEARN TO LIKE.

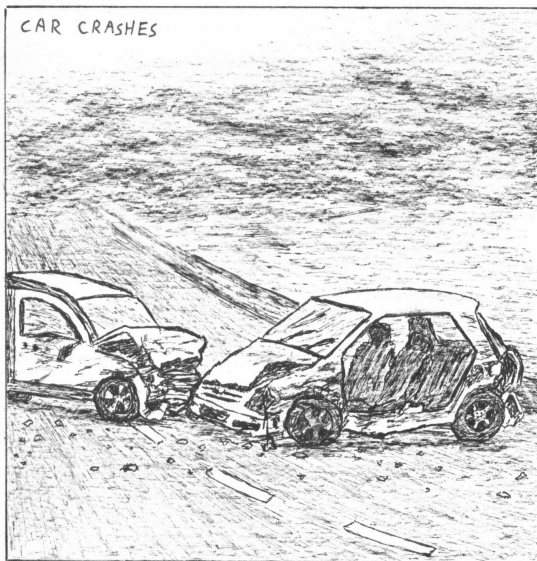
CLOWNS



ANGRY PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY MEN.



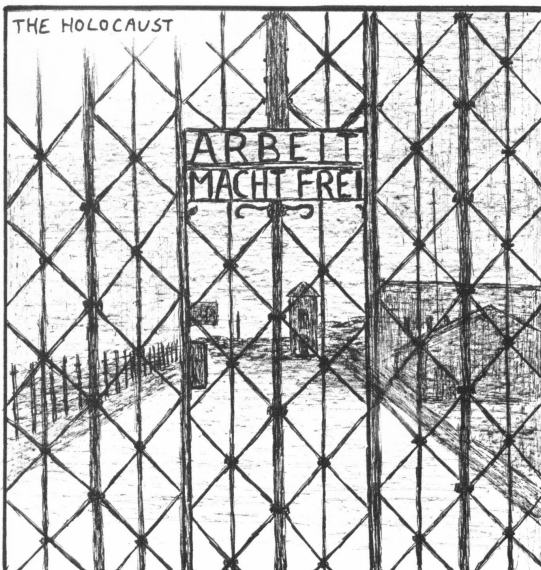
CAR CRASHES



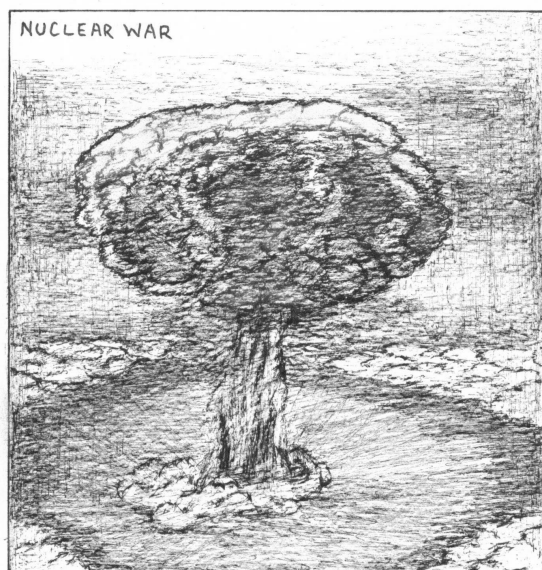
FALLING



THE HOLOCAUST



NUCLEAR WAR



## innocence in a sense

***Sophie Gullett***

they put up a bust of mrs. hayden in the library  
a little guard protecting the books  
from paint smudged hands and chocolate dipped fingers.  
they didn't quite capture the wispy strands of hay  
she'd always pile on top with a single clip  
but they slashed out her stern fishhook smile.  
*so she's in there now?* asked felicia grey  
scratching at her flakey scalp  
with playground dust under her nails  
and her eyes squared up with the carved-out pupils.  
ms. fisher had to step up with six months  
nestled in the pocket of her dress  
that spilled lions and zebras on the floor.  
i guess we learned about death that year  
along with how to make one and one create two  
and how to piece together little smudges of purple and red  
with a chorus of *does mrs. hayden still have a thumbprint?*  
on loop in the background.  
after recess ms. fisher pointed at tiny red trucks  
with fingers still printed with whorls and ridges  
while charlotte little chimed in with  
*daddy told me they burnt her up*  
which marked the end of story time.  
with the chiming of the year's last bell  
we gathered at our plaster lady  
and sean barnum placed one finger on her cheek  
saying *can she feel it when i do that?*  
he pushed harder to see if the same old voice  
like sand crunching under light up batman shoes  
would answer him while felicia turned purple  
counting six seven eight  
saying *i can hold my breath as long as her.*

---

*Sophie Gullett currently lives in Colorado, where she is pursuing her graduate studies in psychology. She enjoys befriending stray fauna, collecting novelty socks, and dabbling in poetry. She has previously been published in Star\*Line and Scribendi.*

The Broken City - Issue 22  
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