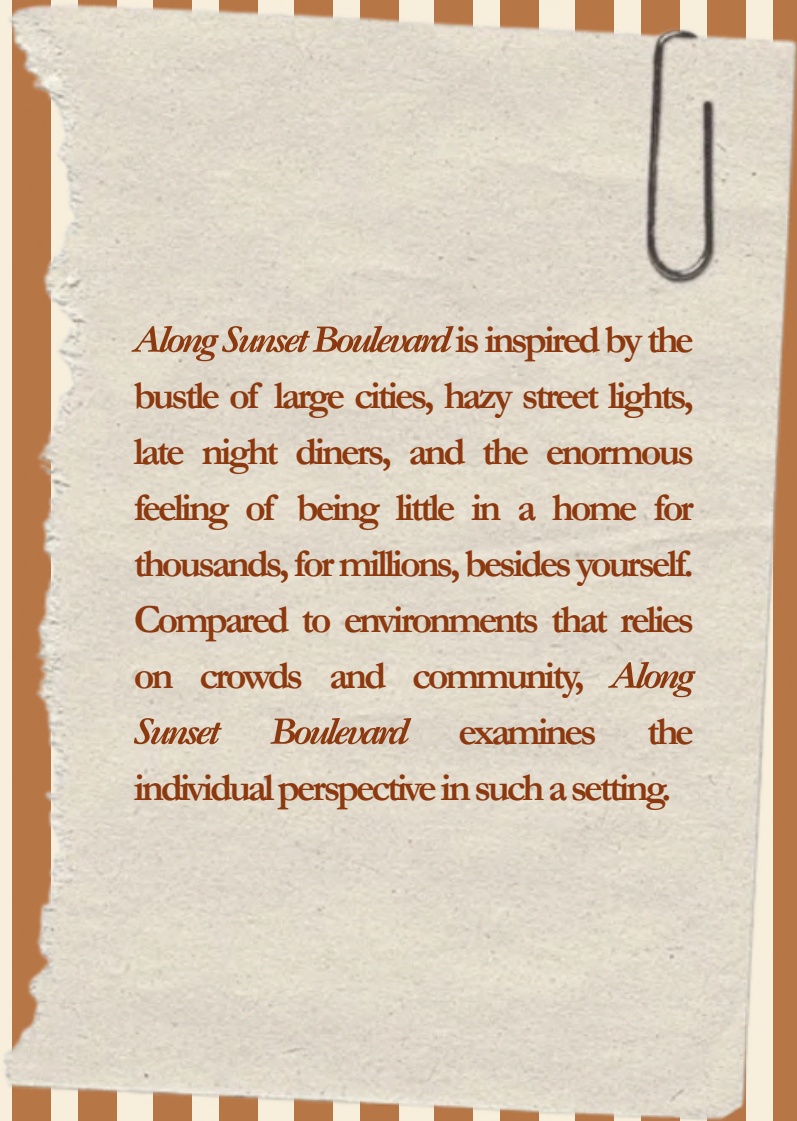


a long sunset
BOULEVARD





Along Sunset Boulevard is inspired by the bustle of large cities, hazy street lights, late night diners, and the enormous feeling of being little in a home for thousands, for millions, besides yourself. Compared to environments that relies on crowds and community, *Along Sunset Boulevard* examines the individual perspective in such a setting.

Phasthead

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the third issue of *The Literature Garden*, “Along Sunset Boulevard”! This cycle was a learning curve, as we have been adding and removing features of our magazine.

For this issue, our goal was to branch out visually and thematically, beyond the soft nature visuals of our previous two publications. “Along Sunset Boulevard” is bolder, drawing from cultural urban settings around the globe. While there are common symbols that repeat between our issues, we hope that “Along Sunset Boulevard” offers a contrast from our other works!

Beyond the issue itself, the administration of *The Literature Garden* has been undergoing some changes. We have opened up rolling team applications, changed our social media formatting, and welcomed some new team members! Izzy is our brilliant Substack writer, and Lara has joined our group of staff writers.

Our team has continued to work hard between writing, editing, and contributing to our online presence. We hope you enjoy reading!

Love,

LJ and Emma

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ALONG



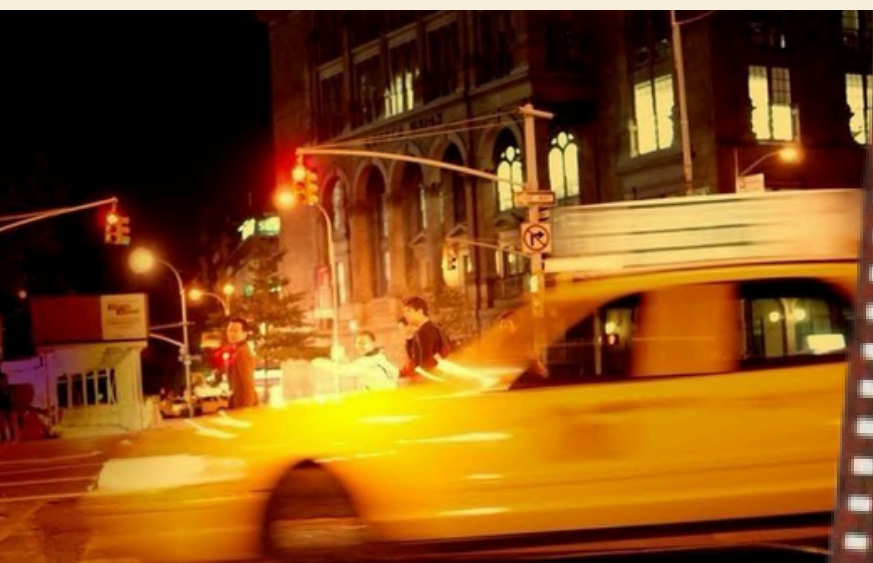
SUN



BOULE



SET



VARD



A Letter to Anyone I've Ever (Or Still Do) Love

By Gryffin, staff writer

Leaving people has always been a part of my life. I don't know why, but whether it's friends or romance, I was always able to detach so easily and move on. For some odd reason, these migrations happened with the changing seasons. In fall, when everything is cold and dry, and the leaves are peeling off branches, then fluttering to the sidewalks, and when the days are shorter and calm, I found someone to love. To learn them and to experience something new, as the bugs and flowers go back to hiding, and the rivers become icy. That love grew and grew, its branches decorated with velvet thorns and wispy leaves climbing higher and higher on everything I know. In my room, my kitchen, my mind. Along the iced-over sidewalks and the frozen windows of shops. I know how to let it consume me, to let every thorny branch prick me so I can feel it, so I can feel how love might feel if it ever lasted for longer than those six months. It's bad and unhealthy, but I do it because some part of me is starting to realize that it doesn't last. Sure enough, spring will come, and every little plant, bug, and other creature will start to wake up. The temperatures will rise; the lakes, rivers, and ponds warm again. People start to wake up, too. No creature or plant can live with the vines that I let overgrow. Suddenly everything is new again, reborn and fresh and ready to regrow. Each year the regrowth is bigger and more different, the events of those cold seasons forcing the new seasons to be different from the last. Those clinging vines start to die, and just as easily as I had let them wrap around me, I rip them off. Everything will bloom, and I will be alive and alone and free, but it'll feel a bit lonely. It's odd, being out at night and seeing you from across the street. It's almost distressing, seeing people who once could have been considered a part of you suddenly becoming nothing more than a familiar-looking stranger under a street lamp's glow. I didn't notice the change this summer, not right away at least. Time started to move quicker; I started to dread the reality of moving on, of leaving someone and finding someone new. I lay in my unmade bed, staring out the window at the sunset settle down on the road, and I realized that no amount of time would ever be enough. The school year started, and suddenly all the moments that I had with people I loved, how I always felt that I got enough and was ready for it to end again, were too short. I look at their faces, and they are smiling and laughing, or crying with their headphones in, and I'm realizing that I will no longer be ready for any of this to end. I go to sleep to the tick of my alarm clock, and the last thought in my head every night is how, even if I don't want time to continue moving as quickly as it does, everyone moves on with the seasons- not just me; it will continue to move. It will push through everything real and lovely and difficult, and those moments of being surrounded by the silently loud buzz of everyone you love talking and breathing and living will pass, come back, and pass again. One of my biggest regrets is taking all those moments with you for granted, those moments with anyone, really. We can never stop the seasons, and when you start to ache even in moments with people you love because you know the seasons will change and take everything with them, that means that it truly matters. It matters and was worth it even when things change; change is such an undeniable part of life, but it doesn't make all the love we give "a waste."



The night wind is light in Verona,
a blend of coffee, books, and golden light.
On this corner where time never sleeps,
modern streets surrender to the past.
Between the wooden tables and the warm moon,
a massive canvas breathes beneath the hazy
streetlight.

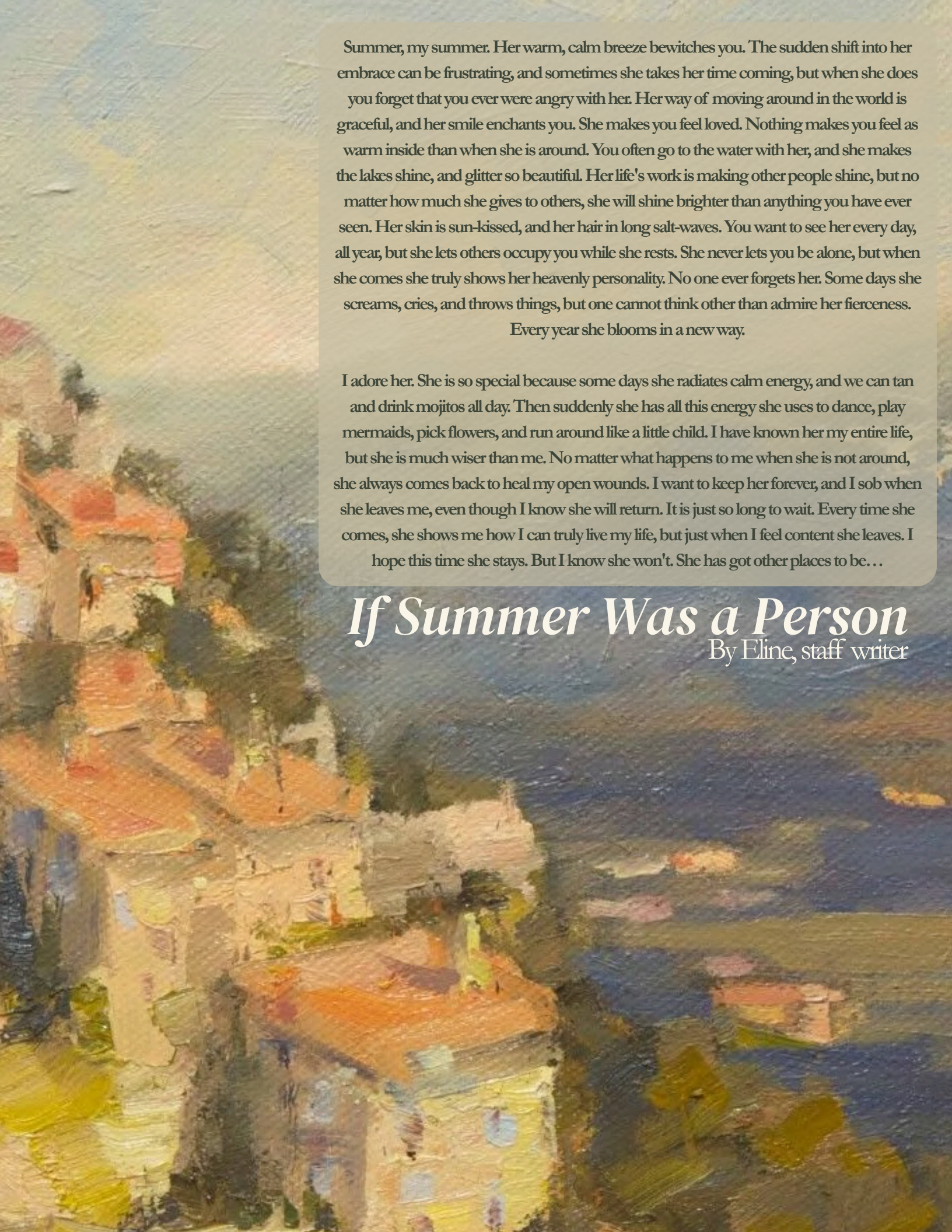
It is a Renaissance painting hanging on the wall,
among the plants and rosebushes,
it is an ancient beauty taking over the street.
People converse, with their cup of coffee in the
intimacy of words,
while the painting blends with the ethereal lights of
an Italian street.

And while they speak, I am trapped in this oil
obsession: the sacred blue of classical robes,
the eternal brushstrokes born in the Mediterranean.

The modern city fades around me.
I see neither the buildings nor the rhythm of traffic,
only the warm color blooming from the wall,
and this timeless painting chasing me through the
night.

Oil at Sunset (On a Corner in Verona)

By Lara Martínez, staff writer



Summer, my summer. Her warm, calm breeze bewitches you. The sudden shift into her embrace can be frustrating, and sometimes she takes her time coming, but when she does you forget that you ever were angry with her. Her way of moving around in the world is graceful, and her smile enchants you. She makes you feel loved. Nothing makes you feel as warm inside than when she is around. You often go to the water with her, and she makes the lakes shine, and glitter so beautiful. Her life's work is making other people shine, but no matter how much she gives to others, she will shine brighter than anything you have ever seen. Her skin is sun-kissed, and her hair in long salt-waves. You want to see her every day, all year, but she lets others occupy you while she rests. She never lets you be alone, but when she comes she truly shows her heavenly personality. No one ever forgets her. Some days she screams, cries, and throws things, but one cannot think other than admire her fierceness.

Every year she blooms in a new way.

I adore her. She is so special because some days she radiates calm energy, and we can tan and drink mojitos all day. Then suddenly she has all this energy she uses to dance, play mermaids, pick flowers, and run around like a little child. I have known her my entire life, but she is much wiser than me. No matter what happens to me when she is not around, she always comes back to heal my open wounds. I want to keep her forever, and I sob when she leaves me, even though I know she will return. It is just so long to wait. Every time she comes, she shows me how I can truly live my life, but just when I feel content she leaves. I hope this time she stays. But I know she won't. She has got other places to be...

If Summer Was a Person

By Eline, staff writer



I ride in the back seat of a nostalgic car,
while my hair and hands feel the breeze after sunset.
At midnight, the city ignites its mystery,
historic streetlights spill a peculiar illumination,
a dense bath of gold that covers the corners of Europe.

Through the window,
urban reflections flicker like glittering jewelry forgotten on
the pavement.

But in each amber gleam and every golden shadow,
my mind traces the contours of a classical sculpture.
It is the cold marble of a Mediterranean muse,
an eternal brightness chasing me from the silence.

They are not simple lights adorning the avenues,
it is the silhouette of an ancestral art awakening,
traveling with me beneath the warm sky.

The Golden Night

By Lara Martínez, staff writer

The background of the page is a painting. It depicts a theater stage. A woman in a long, dark green dress stands in the center of the stage, her arms raised. A shadow of her is cast onto the stage floor to her left. The stage is lit with a warm, golden light. The background of the stage is a large, textured wall of vertical lines, possibly representing curtains or a forest. In the foreground, the backs of several audience members' heads are visible, looking towards the stage.

The Almost

By Eilean Lough-Phare, staff writer

I live
in the almost.

Between breaths,
I become
someone else.

I stay.
unfinished.

Even my shadow
is undecided.

I flicker
and fade.

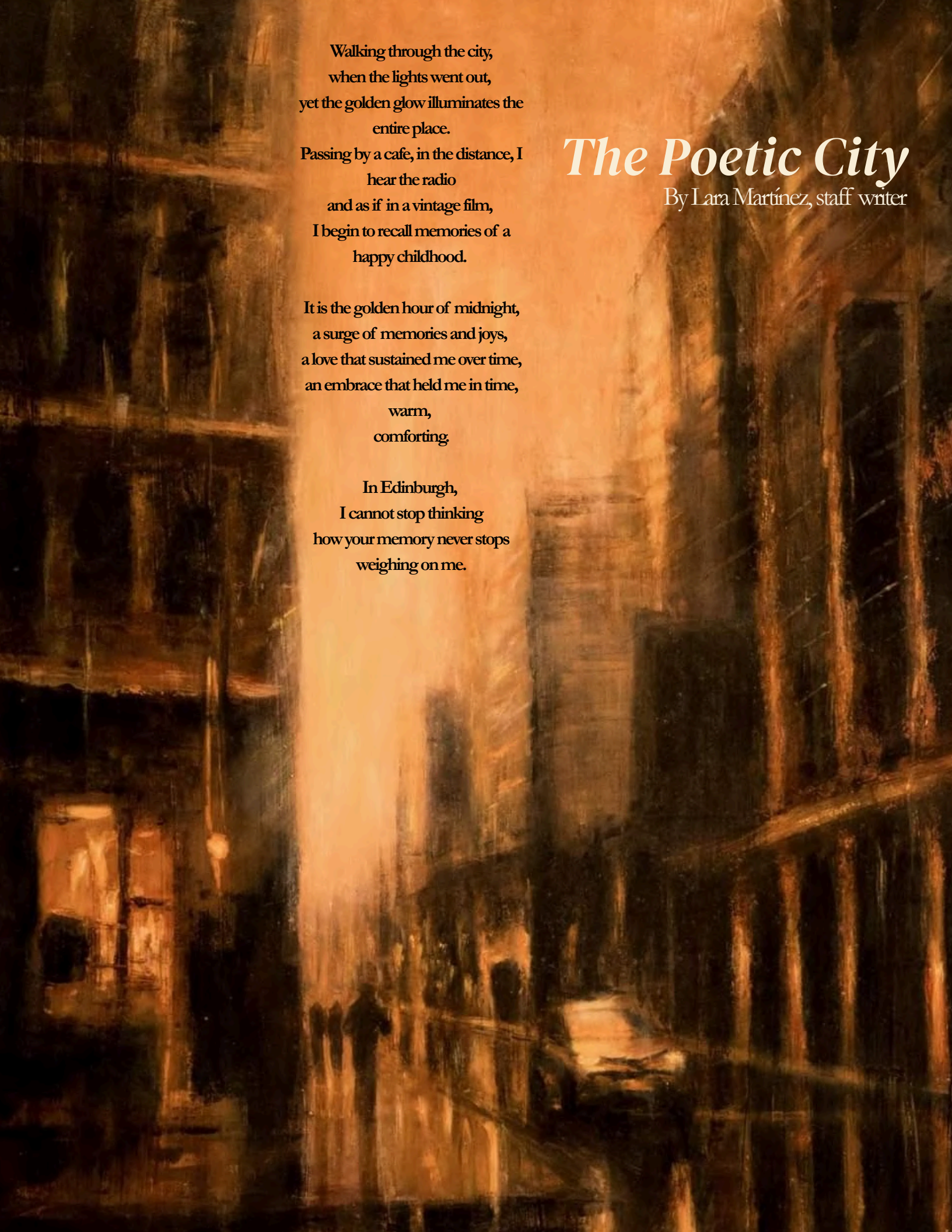
Light hesitates
before
touching
me.

Bright Hollywood Lights

By Lydia Pearson, staff writer

You took me on a drive one night
Had the new old car you wanted to
take out for a spin. You patted
the empty space besides you,
indicated you wanted me to get in.
Yet when you started driving, your eyes remained
Firmly on the road. I was a silent passenger
as we passed streets at once new, yet familiar too.
I recall as you rootled around in the glovebox,
took out a pair of sunglasses, tapped it to suggest.
I did the same.
I took them with shaking hands and put them on.
When I turned my head to look at you, I only saw you
Through shadows. Still, the lights of the streets passed on.
You smiled the way you do, like a famous old country
singer,
Denim on denim, cowboy hat, belt, even the leather boots.
Every inch of you a star, like the lights winking up ahead,
beautiful but just out of reach. I tossed the glasses off,
put a hand on your arm. In your eyes, I saw my own soul.
Those mirror-eyes widened, and you abruptly braked the
car.
Shoved me roughly out of the door in a blind panic, left me,
walking along these glamorous, glittering roads all alone.
I would see your car sometimes,
when I was still walking along your road.
You let a new passenger in the seat,
And he never throws the glasses off.
Doesn't he know that the shadows are blinding him to the
light's harsh glare?
I remember the piece of paper I gave you, that night,
a little crumpled from wear, I had kissed it good luck,
but no lipstick stains remained on the square surface.
You stared at it like it was the most precious thing in the
world,
those sad blue eyes glassy with a river of tears and hid
your face.
You chose the false comfort of the dark,
and a swig of something strong from a bottle.

I found a new path, calmer, less glamorous
but flowering fields hold just as much
beauty
as the glittering lights of your fast-track
life.
And I found myself on a walk with
someone whose hand
is warm on mine, who never makes me
wear sunglasses.
The sun shines out from behind him,
natural, beautiful light.
Not harsh or overwhelming, the only
shadow is a projection of reality.
He would never push me away and leave
me to make my own way.
We walked together, headed in the same
direction.
Sometimes, I see a winking light in the
distance,
but I turn my head away, lest I become
blinded
by a false light. He can have you. Those
sunglasses
will become his chains, and if he throws
them off,
and faces you, eye-to-eye, he will know.
And maybe you will push him out of the
car,
or perhaps he will try to get back in.
I do not stay where I am not wanted for
long.
And those bright Hollywood lights never
were for me.
I am happy to walk, unencumbered, in the
sun. Away from you now,
yet never alone.



Walking through the city,
when the lights went out,
yet the golden glow illuminates the
entire place.

Passing by a cafe, in the distance, I
hear the radio
and as if in a vintage film,
I begin to recall memories of a
happy childhood.

It is the golden hour of midnight,
a surge of memories and joys,
a love that sustained me over time,
an embrace that held me in time,
warm,
comforting

In Edinburgh,
I cannot stop thinking
how your memory never stops
weighing on me.

The Poetic City

By Lara Martínez, staff writer



Whispers Before Creation

By Anvi Karande

Enchanted, the water
Dreaming inside its Onism.

On its bed of corals
On what dwells beyond
This blanket of water
Where are the holes to peep and jump
But no doors to escape.

The painter and sculptor,
Belongs to the unknown, with
Angels around the irenic trees
Of golden doors for them of
A pure heart and soul.
Mind to mind, throw me out
The marine put me over the soil.

Into oblivion, they make
Graffiti, tremble to move
When eyes fall on.
Brains evolve, legs evolve,
Hands evolve,

which is what is yet to happen.

The graffiti, in the ocean
With relief, it takes a step
And forever creeping
Creeps onto the low-lying area,
crawls out of the ocean.

It's the beginning,
Little did it know,
The beginning of life on Earth,
The beginning of the joy and grief.
Little did it know, it starts now,
The role, history and the real world for it.

Sojourn

By Kat La Rue

The curse of beauty is that you can't see what others see.

A golden coast haunted me as I made a name. One I hoped would one day grace your lips, even carelessly.

Raised in the South, I was never meant to stay.

I never thought my green eyes were striking. They were constantly praised.

"The set lights bring out the flecks," they said.

But I felt a moment of gratitude for them when I could glance upon you.

The world shifted, like the sun greeting the earth.

A hypnotic breeze erupted as your shoulder brushed past me.

I wanted to be seen like the doves that cry. I prayed I, too, would be noticed.

I sold my motorcycle and bought a car so I could give you a ride if you ever needed one. To be anything for you.

I'm a simple person, so I try to overcompensate with complications.

I wish I were complicated. Then perhaps I could be perceived as mysterious.

The mystics have their theories.

The only original thought I had was that smoking was rude. Too invasive.

I am different when I am away from the director's call.

Drive down the coast to Waimea Bay.

Spend the day in Waikīkī.

Where the sea asks nothing of me.

Take a boat out before the sky surrenders.

Or somewhere else, somewhere secluded.

My talent bought privilege. They called me a natural.

I'm truly unnatural.

They said, "You can't satisfy someone who is never satisfied."

Why bother?

Or learn the language I speak—a convenient cover for inadequacy.

Perhaps when I get back to California, I won't be alone. Someone will listen to my record with me.

And when they listen, they will see vermilion fire on the horizon. Witness over the cliffs.

Born of December, yet I don't know how to do winter right. I spent too much time in the dimness of the artificial neon.

Now I sit in the diner, collecting photographs of places I have yet to be. Words are cheap—that was my philosophy.

I was made for summer heat—the kind that I love with. The kind I want to live with. Or disappear into.

But I will survive as I kiss the residue of stars in the morning sky goodbye.

Paradise Blues

By Stephanie Gunnz

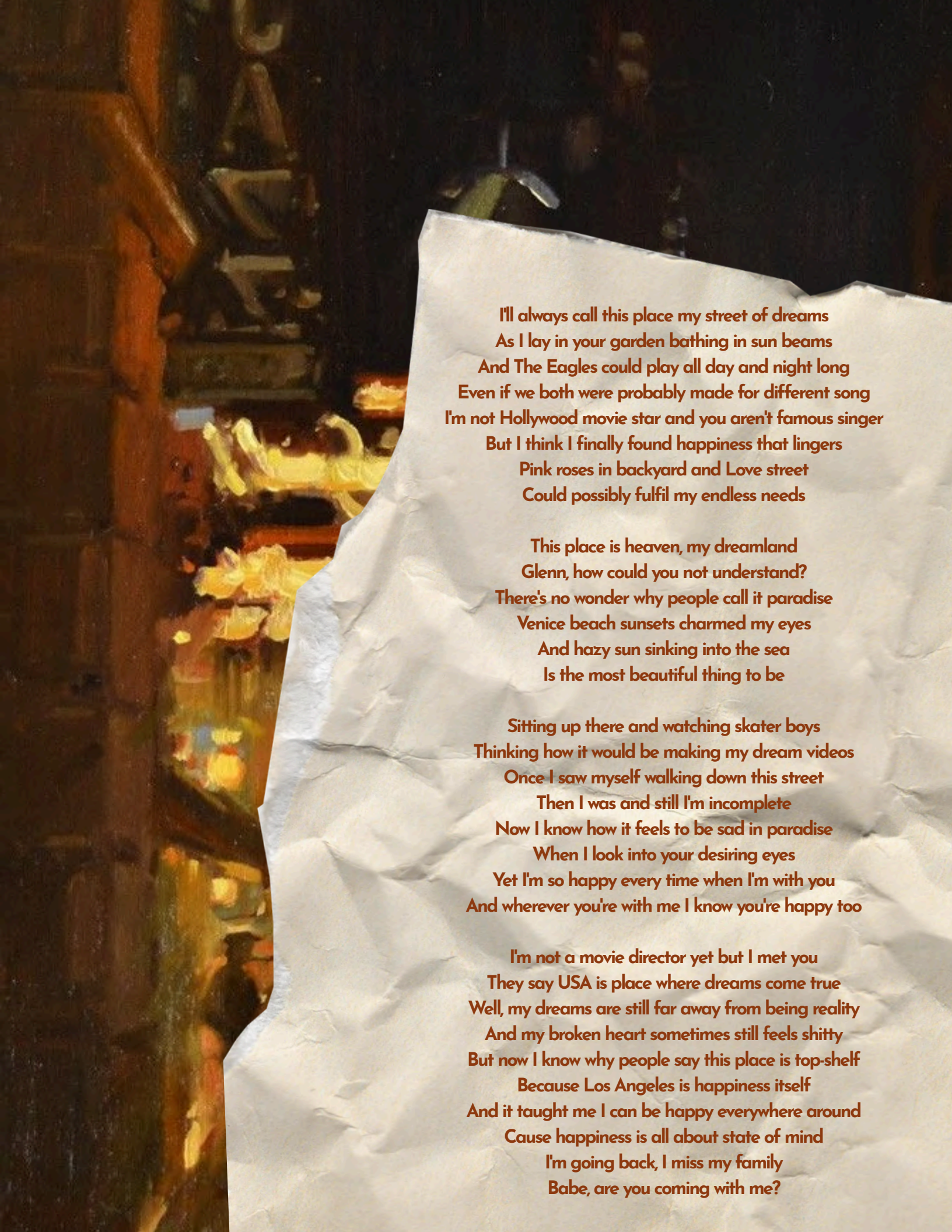
I packed my things and took a long, long highway
USA is place where dreams come true, they say
So I came to Hollywood with hope of new home
Cause dreams don't come true where I'm from

In high heels and 50's suitcase in my hand
I came to house I should call dreamland
I met a boy who taught we've already met
"Imagine me as blondie" I said
He smiled at me so I think he knew
"Didn't I see you somewhere too?"

This strange feeling was far away from my awaited bliss
And past lives probably can't save two wannabes

Laurel Canyon save my empty soul
Give me all of your rock n' roll
I want paintings and roses too
I wanna sleep on roof when sky is blue
"Be my lady with orange ribbons in hair" you say
I think maybe I could stay
If you are too
Made of Florida blues

I said come to Venice beach, I'll write there poetry every day
Instead I'm just sitting here trying to cry myself away
I came to Hollywood to be some kind of star
But I'd rather wash away my blues in bars
I would do if I didn't know this lifestyle is so cruel
But aren't the shooting stars the most beautiful?



I'll always call this place my street of dreams
As I lay in your garden bathing in sun beams
And The Eagles could play all day and night long
Even if we both were probably made for different song
I'm not Hollywood movie star and you aren't famous singer
But I think I finally found happiness that lingers
Pink roses in backyard and Love street
Could possibly fulfil my endless needs

This place is heaven, my dreamland
Glenn, how could you not understand?
There's no wonder why people call it paradise
Venice beach sunsets charmed my eyes
And hazy sun sinking into the sea
Is the most beautiful thing to be

Sitting up there and watching skater boys
Thinking how it would be making my dream videos
Once I saw myself walking down this street
Then I was and still I'm incomplete
Now I know how it feels to be sad in paradise
When I look into your desiring eyes
Yet I'm so happy every time when I'm with you
And wherever you're with me I know you're happy too

I'm not a movie director yet but I met you
They say USA is place where dreams come true
Well, my dreams are still far away from being reality
And my broken heart sometimes still feels shitty
But now I know why people say this place is top-shelf
Because Los Angeles is happiness itself
And it taught me I can be happy everywhere around
Cause happiness is all about state of mind
I'm going back, I miss my family
Babe, are you coming with me?

LIBRARY CARD

I got ten minutes tops.

My school bus ran on callous grease
And the selfish clock simmered scarlet.

Ripples of fear have raided the room.

One small shift and my cover's blown.

I see an entrance woven by drips of vile

A red carpet is rolled out to blurry backrooms

There she is

Snugly perched four feet above the floor

Primed for a manic rampwalk on a vulgar runway

"Come out! How long?!" ,Mother screamed

While the cleaning mop giggled from its corner

I squinted and sprinted

from captive air into clearance

She was one of those cellar types that had a year or two.

Have we met before?

At the library last week on Britannica's centrefold!

When my squeal earned a ban and a gross embarrassment.

Phobias are egregious. Just like love.

Twenty years tumbled down the ridges of life.

My Tree Rings darkened, and colour schemes faded.

I met the latest one from her labyrinth

Tiny yet gallantly hacking its paralysed prey.

Same place. Reformed fear.

My bathroom tiles bore the worst.

Its grout lines fed on salty dreams.

Gifts of grief and chronic cramps

From her high-hat loge, She saw it all and
snubbed it all.

The premieres of my teenage theatre.

Our paths felt the final touch.

When lines almost turned circles.

Caged by cottage walls, inked by polar past,
lineal ghosts wandered my halls .

Her slender shadows lurked from the shelves
above my kitchen sink.

Only this time, they were benign.

Too frail to balloon or build a decoy,

She crawled under my coffee skin
and grew into my bitter veins.

Medications failed, but mutual pain helped.

Under the fractals of wasted youth,

We made a silent pact

to honour what we lost and curse those we
wronged.

Two blotched souls that waited to be towed
by the wrinkled hands of time.

Our eyes whispered a bankrupt 'Goodnight'.

Longlegs
By Palak Aggarwal

Along Sunset Boulevard

By Palak Aggarwal

At 6:47,
another boulevard rises through the street everyone
believes they know.
Cars cross it without arriving.
Traffic lights keep time for both worlds.
Only those carrying an unfinished sentence
notice the pavement loosen,
as though the city itself
has remembered another version of its map.
There is a bakery
where every loaf is wrapped for the daughter
who stayed one more winter.
A bookstore
keeps a novel opened at a pressed leaf,
waiting where its author
stopped believing they would be read.
No one lingers.
Everyone knows
this boulevard does not return what it keeps.
It only allows you
to walk beside
the lives
that learned your absence.
You may pass
an apology,
still warm
from the mouth that never shaped it.

It moves beyond you
without recognizing
your voice.
When the first streetlamp flickers,
shop windows
empty themselves.
Doorways
forget their houses.
The boulevard
folds quietly
beneath the road,
leaving nothing
except the feeling
that somewhere,
a turn was missed.
By morning,
everyone calls it
an ordinary street.
Yet all day,
they hesitate
before taking
the same corner
they have always known.



On the Grounds of a Suburban House

By Lucas Lui

You'll find a pair of
underwear
on the floor that
didn't make it
to the machine. A
two-year-old
candy cane. A rose
quartz trinket.

A mother staring
down the
tomatoes because it
is their fault
for not being cooked
right by
the nanny..

A son of suburbia
pumping his body
with watermelon, its
sugar too much
for the mango juice
to pop
on his tongue.

They will ask you
what you did today.
And it, like all the
rest, was silly.

The Last Call
By Zaina Alam



More Dogs to the Slaughter

Would you voluntarily feed your beloved pet to a vicious zoo animal?

I would.

Denmark's Aalborg Zoo sparked global debate over this exact question when, in July 2025, it received international attention for its animal donation policy. On its website, the public was encouraged to donate chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, horses, and more to be publicly fed to the zoo's animals, such as the European lynx.

Aalborg Zoo was quickly denounced by the global populace. Waves of online criticism forced the zoo to disable comments on their posts. Pet owners posed that we have a responsibility to respect the animals that belong to us, not discard them like feed. Biologist Clifford Warwick spoke with The Guardian, stating the policy to be a "horrendous devaluation of animal life." It seemed the whole world was banded against Aalborg Zoo, and seemingly under good reason.

However, amid the criticism, one critical stakeholder group was sorely overlooked: the animals themselves.

For the zoo's predators, these donations were not merely a source of food; they were critical to maintaining natural behaviors and physical health. Carcass feeding, in which predators consume portions of whole prey- exactly what Aalborg Zoo was doing with their donations- supports oral and digestive health, muscle tone, nutrient intake, and behavioral stimulation. This practice benefits a wide range of species, from reptiles, birds, and smaller mammals to lions, cheetahs, and vultures.

By Matias Gonzalez



Because carcass feedings provide benefits that conventional prepared diets cannot replicate, it's an accepted practice in many modern zoos. European institutions, such as Copenhagen Zoo and Nuremberg Zoo, had previously garnered attention for this method of feeding. While controversial, they ultimately prioritize the welfare of the animals they are responsible for; zoo animals that are historically mistreated and typically endangered.

As for the prey being fed, carcass feedings have been designed to minimize animal suffering. Once the prey is ready to be handed off to its predator, a trained, caring staff member injects sodium pentobarbital into a vein. This quickly and painlessly puts the animal to sleep, then gently stops its heart, allowing it to be fed without any fear or discomfort being induced. Carcass feedings are approved and endorsed by the American Veterinary Medical Association and Humane Society of the United States, among others.

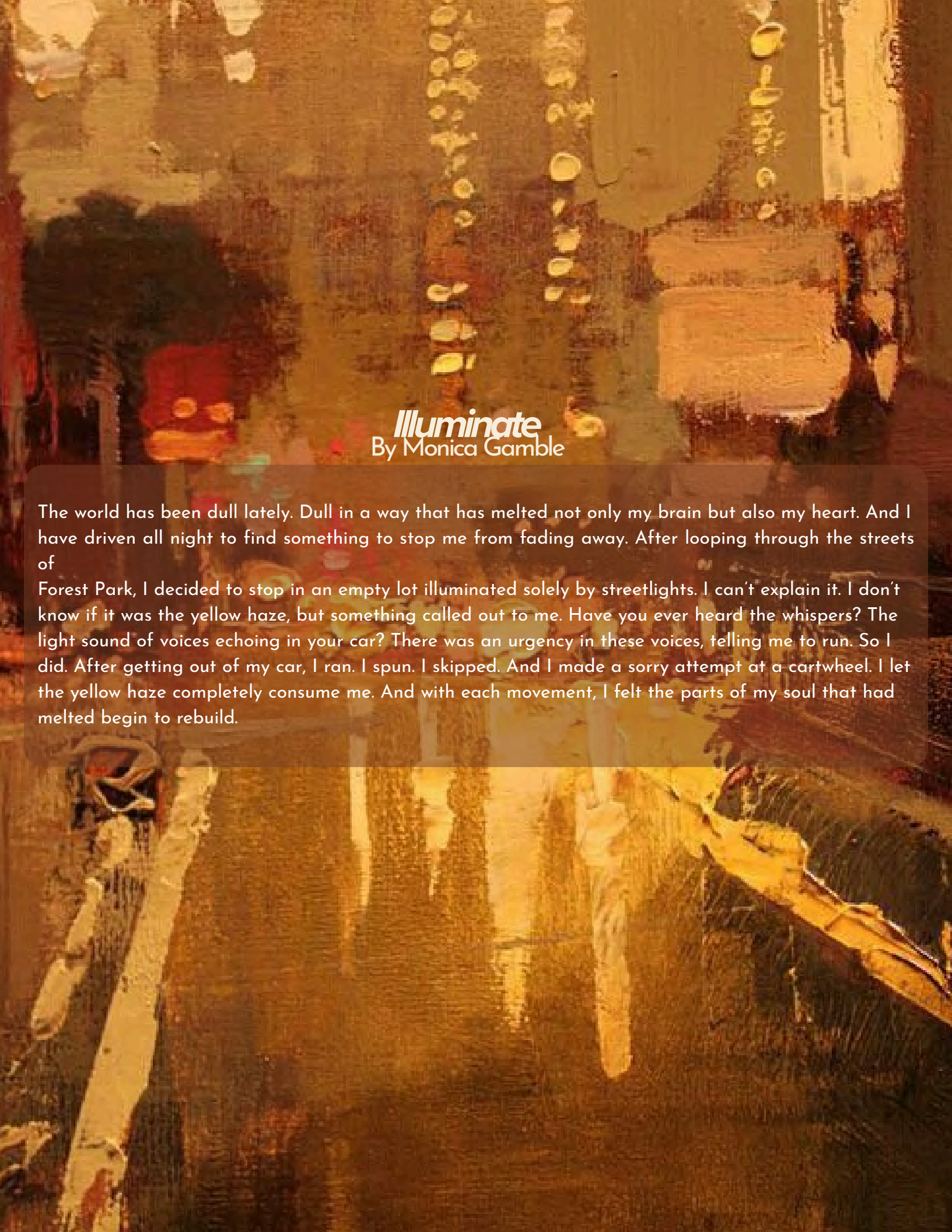
Overall, Aalborg Zoo's policies- while initially shocking- represent a difficult but defensible approach to animal care, one in which both the predator and prey are considered. This controversy reflects a difficult reality of animal care: protecting one's animal's well-being may very well require the death of another. That's a reality I'm ready to accept. Are you?

Moonsade Promise

By Lavanya Monica

As you call the waves
Call them to their bane
Let them forsake the seabed
And I'll return, to my bed
Mother of mine, Grandmother of thine, I know your face, this mine, this story,
A repository in your lines, a shrine
To a coastline
You said you'd erase.
I sought it in a coconut boat,
Adorned it in eucalypt blossoms ,
Reconstructed from manna gum
Off-key on your paleographic thrum
Yet somewhere in the brown of my skin
Or in my long, rounded vowels
You thrum, thrum, thrum, hum, I knew you there,
I know you here, Yes, you'll sing me straight to bed.





Illuminate By Monica Gamble

The world has been dull lately. Dull in a way that has melted not only my brain but also my heart. And I have driven all night to find something to stop me from fading away. After looping through the streets of

Forest Park, I decided to stop in an empty lot illuminated solely by streetlights. I can't explain it. I don't know if it was the yellow haze, but something called out to me. Have you ever heard the whispers? The light sound of voices echoing in your car? There was an urgency in these voices, telling me to run. So I did. After getting out of my car, I ran. I spun. I skipped. And I made a sorry attempt at a cartwheel. I let the yellow haze completely consume me. And with each movement, I felt the parts of my soul that had melted begin to rebuild.

no more loud car rides
and no more favourite songs
that rocked all of our childhoods
into a peaceful sleep

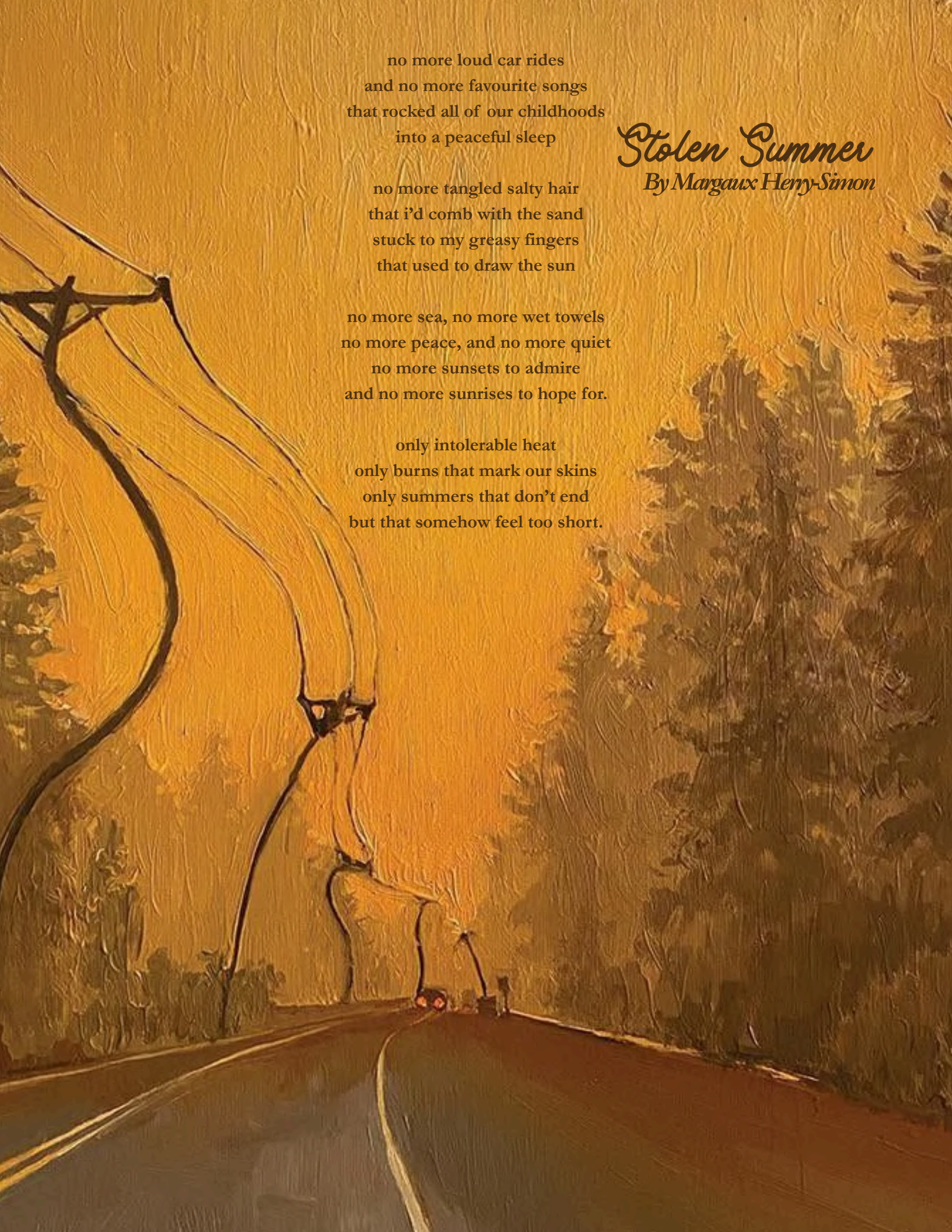
Stolen Summer

By Margaux Henry-Simon

no more tangled salty hair
that i'd comb with the sand
stuck to my greasy fingers
that used to draw the sun

no more sea, no more wet towels
no more peace, and no more quiet
no more sunsets to admire
and no more sunrises to hope for.

only intolerable heat
only burns that mark our skins
only summers that don't end
but that somehow feel too short.



*“The city is named for the angels,
And its angels are easy to find.
They give off a lubricant odor;
Their eyes are mascara-lined;
At night you can see them inserting
Gold-plated diaphragms;
For breakfast they gather at poolside
Where screenwriters feed and swim.”*

an excerpt from bertolt brecht



“HOLLYWOOD ELEGIES” BY BERTOLT BRECHT

Counterfeit City

By Adwyna Bonniela

The cars surged like a rushing bloodstream.
The palms swayed, then clapped slowly, like the hands of an old man.
The dusty shop window,
shrouded in the fingerprints of time,
held the gaze of every passerby.
As the sun sank past the horizon,
the concrete giants raced to replace its light,
casting neon beams that swirled through the night.
Imitating life, imitating beauty.
But the old man remembered
the grandeur of joy burning brighter than the moon.
His cane pressed against the cracked asphalt.
The same street he once walked in the sixties,
when people hurried toward home,
yearning for life that was real,
beauty that was real.





December 12th

By Rhea Autumn

December 12th, 20:13

Roads are too clean, I'm starring in Tokyo Drift.

Tail light streaks, volcanic ash swirl,
the world split in two.

A silent roar, trees blur like those in the back of my skull.

Blazing sunset swallows the street.

A thrill of stimulation.

December 13th, 03:26

I drill it open, my dome.

I clip, snip, then pull out.

Slimy and oozing— is that my own brain?

Casting a glance around:

'Where do I hide it now?'

Tweezers and scissors down the drain.

December 13th, 04:28

The keyboard is acting strange.

Must be a simulation game.

*Sunsets Lying in
Our Hearts*
By Sky

Phoenix wings perching on your cheeks,
Your skin dazzled in warm honey,
It seems like we're getting rougher every day, our
hearts are losing their sincerity,
And yet your skin seems softer,
Your lips...they make me ill.

Remember those days, quite long ago,
When we used to climb on that hill?
We would wait for the sun to sink,
As our bruises would melt away,
And as our hearts would open freely to one another.

Our limbs have gotten bigger now,
Our view of the world – much more vast,
And yet, why do I feel like,
It has shrunk so deep,
Like the sinking sun?

Back then, we used to walk hand in hand,
And things used to feel alright.
Tender exchanges – eye to eye –
Needn't be locked away in secrecy, beneath the fear we used to
laugh at,
We used to be so brave.



Your fingers give me shivers now,
Your eyes shrouding me in safety,
Make me fail to understand,
Why I'm the one you love,
And why you refuse to avert your gaze from mine.

Look at the sun –
It's changing colour,
Just like we change our minds,
And love becomes embarrassing,
And yet the hill's just the same – your shoulder's still brushing mine

The veil of cochineal still looks beautiful on your skin,
And our love, despite changing like our limbs,
Is still love,
Lying in our hearts so deep,
Patiently waiting to be whispered.



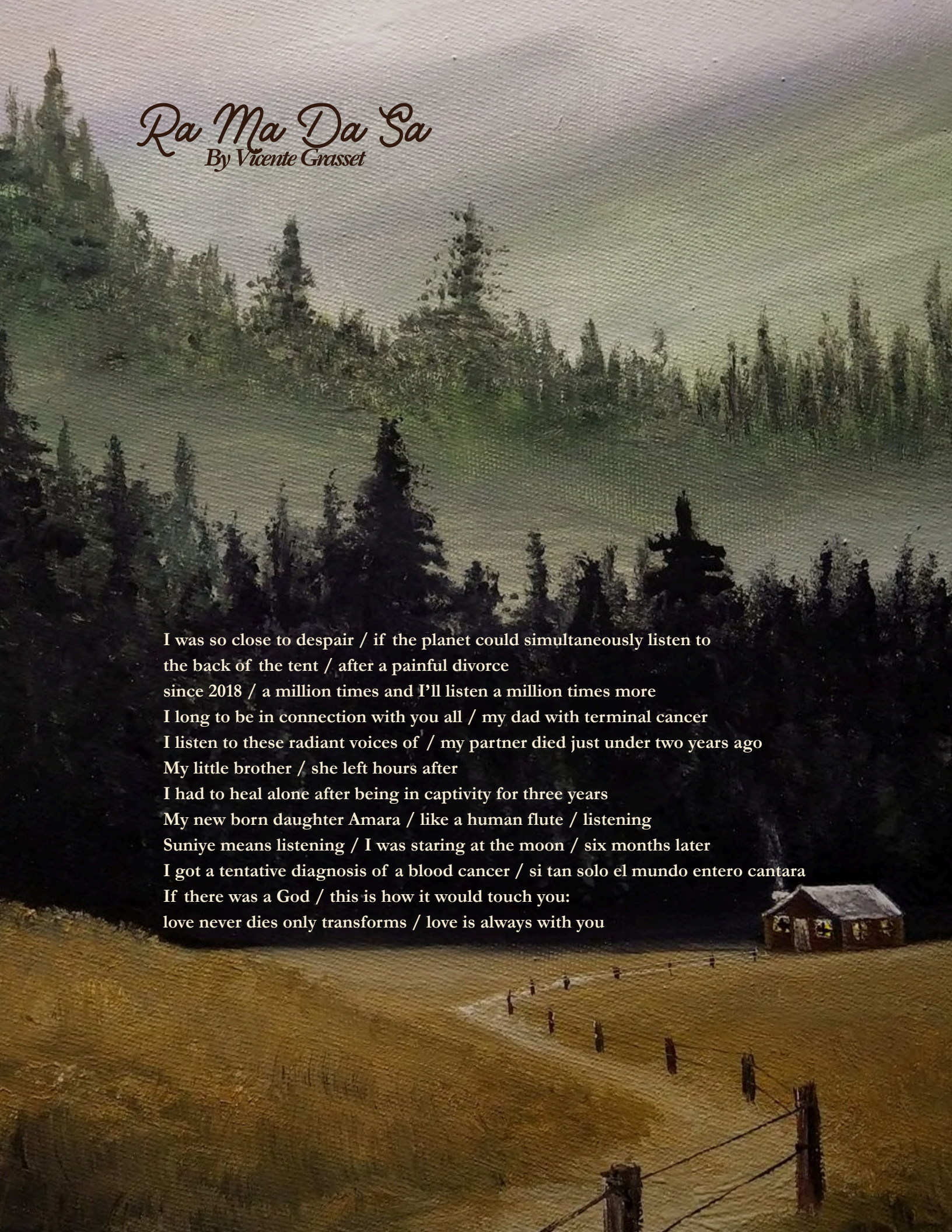
A painting of a lighthouse on a grassy cliff overlooking the ocean. The lighthouse is white with a black top and a small black door. It sits on a green grassy hill that slopes down to the right towards the ocean. The sky is a mix of grey and white, suggesting a cloudy or overcast day. The ocean is a dark blue-grey color with white foam from waves breaking. The overall style is painterly and somewhat somber.

Bogach
By Vicente Grasset

It is Irish for soft land:
Blame me blame him as much as you want
For trying to speak the language of the islands—
how many stones she asks me
how many the last one will be the last one
that provides enough height to build another stair.

In their humid dance they collide they form circles
drinking a delicious form of pain
while they wait for an answer. Our continents's ritual
of shifting two-to-five centimetres from each other
pulverises the routes we've taken, like a broken eggshell
the newly-born streams carry tiny pieces of land
that get stuck on our heels.

What will we do about waste, about footsteps, about
hunger. I only want to cause a soft crack on the land
for humankind to start worrying about it.

The background is a painting of a misty forest landscape. In the foreground, there is a golden-brown field with a rustic wooden fence. In the middle ground, a small wooden cabin with a chimney is visible, with smoke rising from it. The background is filled with tall, dark evergreen trees under a hazy, grey sky.

Ra Ma Da Sa

By Vicente Grasset

I was so close to despair / if the planet could simultaneously listen to
the back of the tent / after a painful divorce
since 2018 / a million times and I'll listen a million times more
I long to be in connection with you all / my dad with terminal cancer
I listen to these radiant voices of / my partner died just under two years ago
My little brother / she left hours after
I had to heal alone after being in captivity for three years
My new born daughter Amara / like a human flute / listening
Suniye means listening / I was staring at the moon / six months later
I got a tentative diagnosis of a blood cancer / si tan solo el mundo entero cantara
If there was a God / this is how it would touch you:
love never dies only transforms / love is always with you

Whoever said that dipping your toes in the water
is enough to discover the sea did not consider the urchin's spike
hidden in the deep sand as a treasure. Language itself
stays as humankind's biggest riddle.

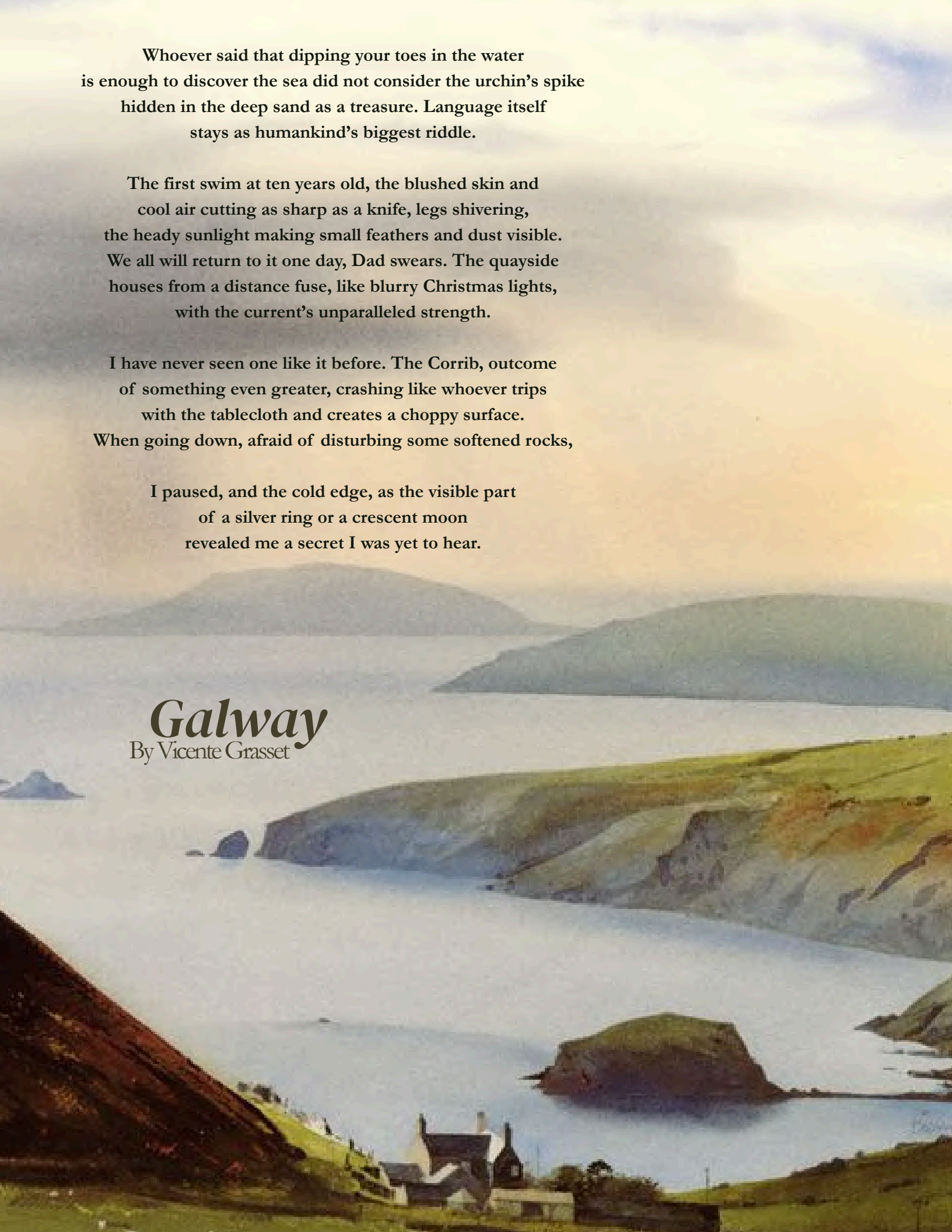
The first swim at ten years old, the blushed skin and
cool air cutting as sharp as a knife, legs shivering,
the heady sunlight making small feathers and dust visible.
We all will return to it one day, Dad swears. The quayside
houses from a distance fuse, like blurry Christmas lights,
with the current's unparalleled strength.

I have never seen one like it before. The Corrib, outcome
of something even greater, crashing like whoever trips
with the tablecloth and creates a choppy surface.
When going down, afraid of disturbing some softened rocks,

I paused, and the cold edge, as the visible part
of a silver ring or a crescent moon
revealed me a secret I was yet to hear.

Galway

By Vicente Grasset

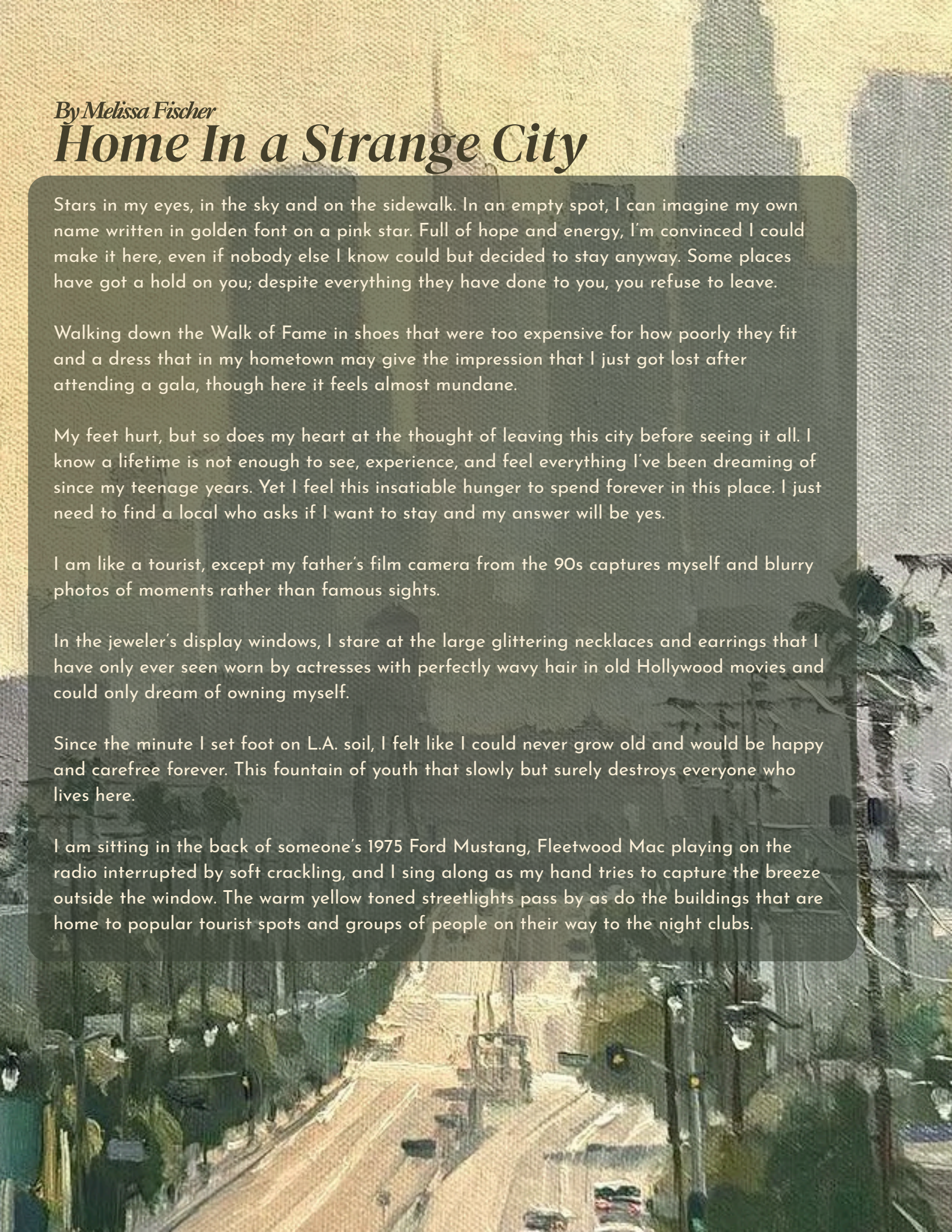


Necklace and Noose

By Sumaiyya Khan

I lived for your happiness,
Your love was a game I couldn't bear lose,
And I fell too deep to have realized,
Your necklace was a noose,
I'd worn it with such gleaming pride,
Though I wasn't one to gloat,
And I discovered whenever you got upset,
The necklace tightened around my throat,
I clawed at it to break apart,
I cried to be of it free,
But the necklace was a metal chain,
And I'd given you the key,
So I accepted fate and kept it on,
At least it had diamonds like the stars,
But its beauty was coercively kept at bay,
As my neck came alive with scars,
There came a time that felt like escape,
So I lost myself in sleep,
And the necklace became far too tight,
For me to remember how to breathe.





By *Melissa Fischer*

Home In a Strange City

Stars in my eyes, in the sky and on the sidewalk. In an empty spot, I can imagine my own name written in golden font on a pink star. Full of hope and energy, I'm convinced I could make it here, even if nobody else I know could but decided to stay anyway. Some places have got a hold on you; despite everything they have done to you, you refuse to leave.

Walking down the Walk of Fame in shoes that were too expensive for how poorly they fit and a dress that in my hometown may give the impression that I just got lost after attending a gala, though here it feels almost mundane.

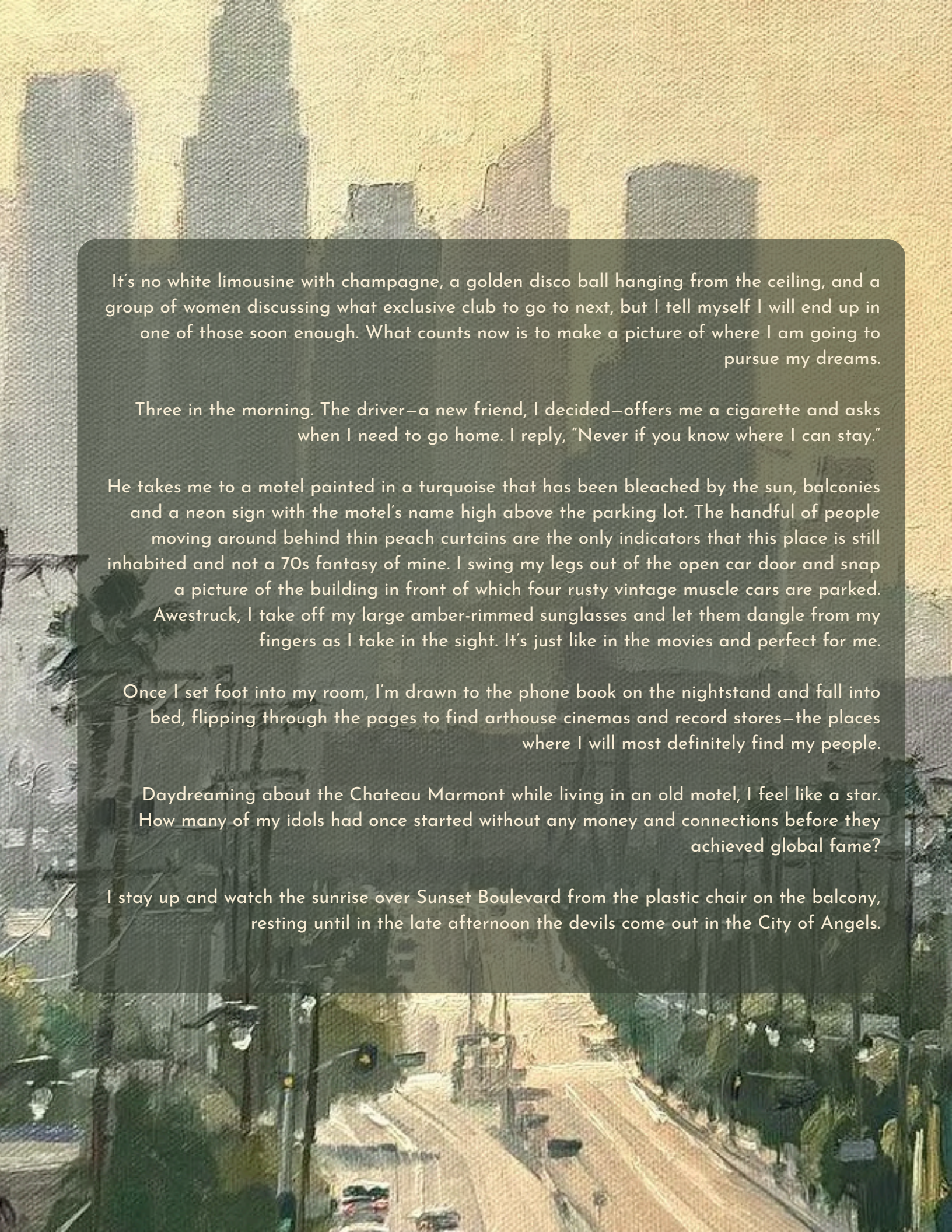
My feet hurt, but so does my heart at the thought of leaving this city before seeing it all. I know a lifetime is not enough to see, experience, and feel everything I've been dreaming of since my teenage years. Yet I feel this insatiable hunger to spend forever in this place. I just need to find a local who asks if I want to stay and my answer will be yes.

I am like a tourist, except my father's film camera from the 90s captures myself and blurry photos of moments rather than famous sights.

In the jeweler's display windows, I stare at the large glittering necklaces and earrings that I have only ever seen worn by actresses with perfectly wavy hair in old Hollywood movies and could only dream of owning myself.

Since the minute I set foot on L.A. soil, I felt like I could never grow old and would be happy and carefree forever. This fountain of youth that slowly but surely destroys everyone who lives here.

I am sitting in the back of someone's 1975 Ford Mustang, Fleetwood Mac playing on the radio interrupted by soft crackling, and I sing along as my hand tries to capture the breeze outside the window. The warm yellow toned streetlights pass by as do the buildings that are home to popular tourist spots and groups of people on their way to the night clubs.



It's no white limousine with champagne, a golden disco ball hanging from the ceiling, and a group of women discussing what exclusive club to go to next, but I tell myself I will end up in one of those soon enough. What counts now is to make a picture of where I am going to pursue my dreams.

Three in the morning. The driver—a new friend, I decided—offers me a cigarette and asks when I need to go home. I reply, “Never if you know where I can stay.”

He takes me to a motel painted in a turquoise that has been bleached by the sun, balconies and a neon sign with the motel's name high above the parking lot. The handful of people moving around behind thin peach curtains are the only indicators that this place is still inhabited and not a 70s fantasy of mine. I swing my legs out of the open car door and snap a picture of the building in front of which four rusty vintage muscle cars are parked. Awestruck, I take off my large amber-rimmed sunglasses and let them dangle from my fingers as I take in the sight. It's just like in the movies and perfect for me.

Once I set foot into my room, I'm drawn to the phone book on the nightstand and fall into bed, flipping through the pages to find arthouse cinemas and record stores—the places where I will most definitely find my people.

Daydreaming about the Chateau Marmont while living in an old motel, I feel like a star. How many of my idols had once started without any money and connections before they achieved global fame?

I stay up and watch the sunrise over Sunset Boulevard from the plastic chair on the balcony, resting until in the late afternoon the devils come out in the City of Angels.



Evidence

By Sarah Peters

just us
and the radio crackling between songs
streetlights sliding across the windscreen
your face
there
then gone
sometimes I think growing up is cruel
because nobody tells you the best nights are going to become evidence
a receipt
a photograph
a stupid little ticket at the bottom of a drawer
and suddenly
you're seventeen again
or eighteen
or four
before we knew what a lifetime was
I hope you know
there are versions of me that only exist because you were there
the girl laughing so hard she couldn't breathe
the girl singing badly at red lights
the girl who thought every problem could be solved by driving somewhere
else
you were there
for all of them
evidence
that i was here
that i laughed
that i loved
that i grew
one day we'll find an old photograph
and laugh at those girls
and i'll look at you
and think
there you are
still here
after all these years
the radio crackles
the light turns green
you tell me to drive
so i do

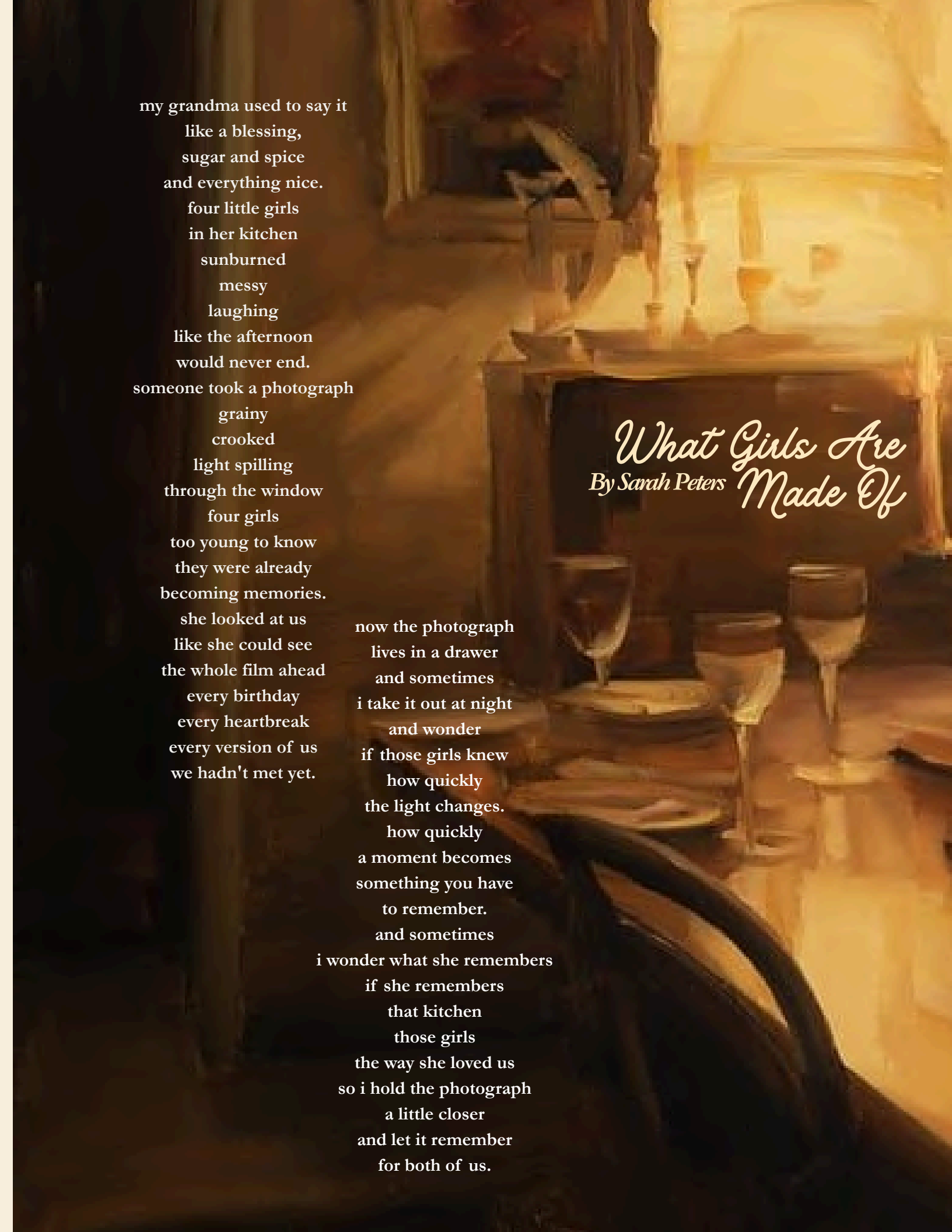
Aberration of weather studs
the sloe eyed city where change
gels in ripples after due process
I could go deeper
pry open the locked vault
below, combustible fossils bubble
in tar and petroleum beneath
Wilshire Blvd. — the jacaranda's roots
divide the house
Los Angeles
erupts in violet blossoms
each spring the profusion
is uncontained by stucco

“HOLLYWOOD HILLS NOIR”



an excerpt from laurel hill bogen

Nature needs tending, or course
every few years the plates shift
the photogenic councilman is arrested
and somebody takes a fall
That's how I came here — by a calling
as surely as the devil herself
cloaked in the need to be seen
in filtered light
latticed with faultlines
and an underground whirlpool
as profligate as oil.



my grandma used to say it
like a blessing,
sugar and spice
and everything nice.
four little girls
in her kitchen
sunburned
messy
laughing
like the afternoon
would never end.
someone took a photograph
grainy
crooked
light spilling
through the window
four girls
too young to know
they were already
becoming memories.
she looked at us
like she could see
the whole film ahead
every birthday
every heartbreak
every version of us
we hadn't met yet.

now the photograph
lives in a drawer
and sometimes
i take it out at night
and wonder
if those girls knew
how quickly
the light changes.
how quickly
a moment becomes
something you have
to remember.
and sometimes
i wonder what she remembers
if she remembers
that kitchen
those girls
the way she loved us
so i hold the photograph
a little closer
and let it remember
for both of us.

*What Girls Are
By Sarah Peters Made Of*



Fetching an Egg of Renewal

By Gargi Sidana

Sleek walls whisper the tongue of ageing
Ashes body sticks to the glimpse of reborn
The world is submerged in deep ocean water.
To fathom the reality of the ever-growing process
Foster Vishudh Satva under the heat of the sun, rays reflecting its pristine beauty
Layer by layer, it opens the gateway to Malin Satva, giving her a chance to enter into
malicious Karma.

A mass of mortal beings hung at the height of withering,
Foul smell accumulated a heap of lies and slows down the ceremony of life.
Slurp the cycle of aromatic tissues residing in the body,
Phoenix is a sheer manifestation of extreme reality.
Silence the notion or drama of disruption
Into spirit of revival

Loose flesh on fingers has heard the acronym for destruction.
The deceased one cemented in the lungs of the graveyard has a name to moan
Bestowing lush meadows, greenery all over
Crisp leaves dance in the hue of ceramic light
Oozing the spectrum of blood from the mother's womb executes the series of
rebirths.

I challenge the planetary orbits of constellations to build the heave of the universe.
Morphine desires are stuck at the core of destitution.
History repeats its name of harvesting souls into humans
Freezing humanity in the lab does not do good to the natural cycle of decay.
The occurrence of the resurrection of the old body
Brings the cyclic motion of the Renaissance.
Let the flow of new furnish the fumes of today
Let the old rest in peace

Mulling Over Pancakes & Manic Love on 8585 Sunset Blvd

By Madeleine Petersen

If someone would've told me
that one day we'd be
sitting across from one another
cozy in the left hand corner
back in our booth at Mel's diner

Each taking turns
filling in the gaps
of all the memories made
in the two years spent apart
since I called it quits

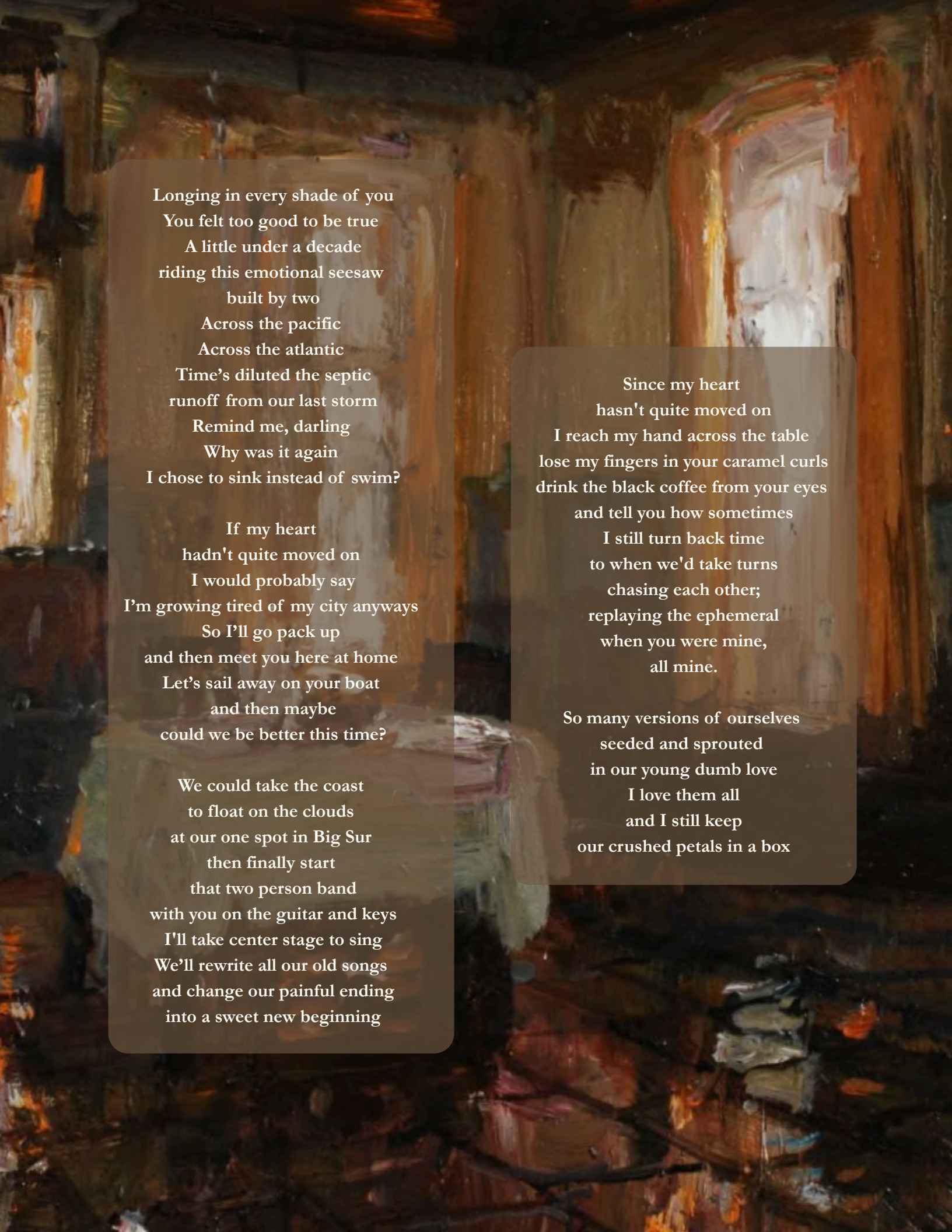
Each taking turns
slipping in, reminiscing in
our early twenty-something's daze
when we were seldom apart
I'd call it mind mischief

Cause I could've sworn
that you were gonna marry her
You moved to my city
for her
I always wondered
if she got the version of you
that I deserved
A version that exists
because of my love

Now I wonder
full on buttermilk pancakes and
sweet guilty pleasure
if my beloved New York
has burned your tongue
And now all that you're left with
is seared flesh
and the bittersweet taste
of the two women you couldn't keep

Yet when you tell me
you're moving back to our city
The diner starts spinning
I fall back into the beginning
when we were high and barefoot
midnight walking the sea

You grabbed my hand and took me
swimming in maliblues
Our clothes
left a trail of evidence in the sand
Two naked creatures
dissolved into one



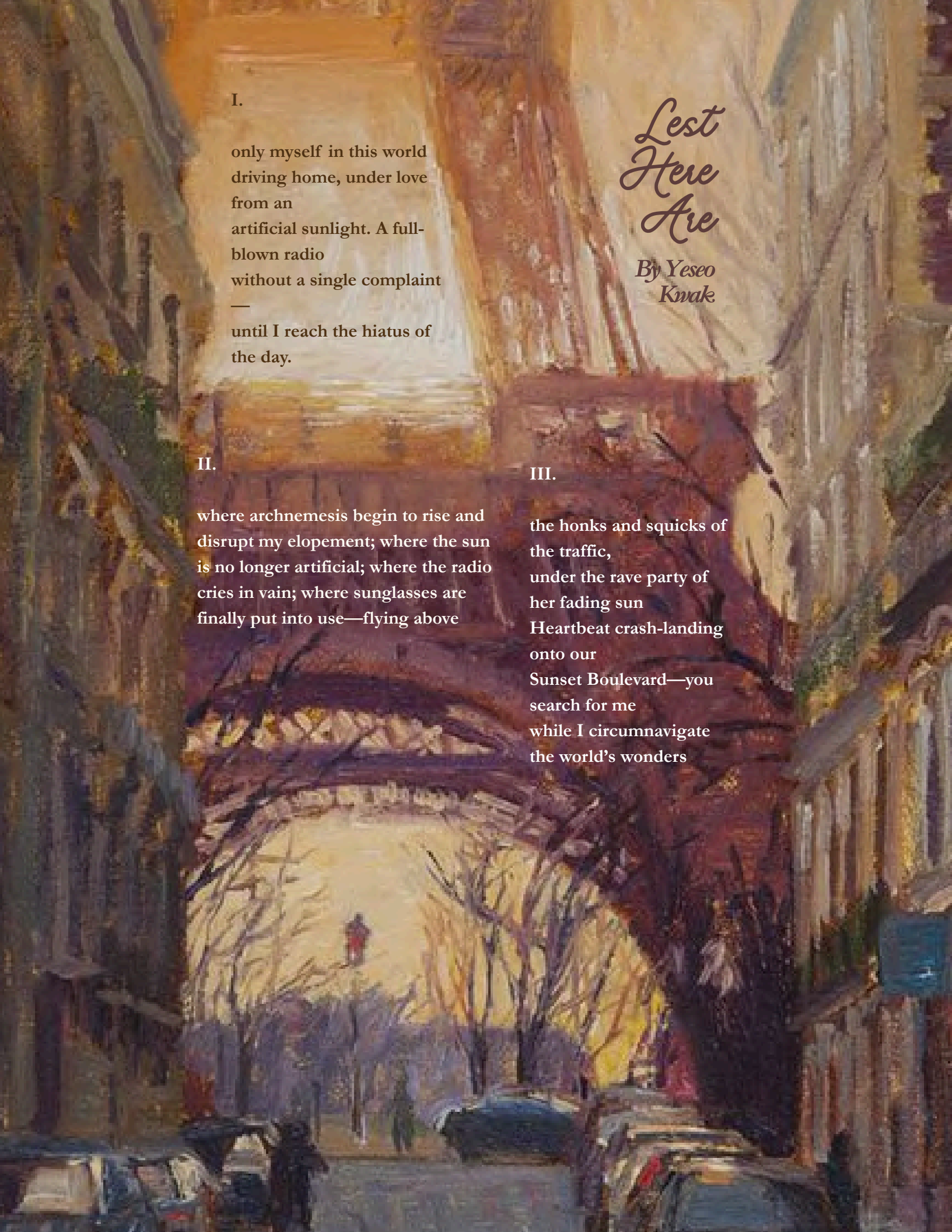
Longing in every shade of you
You felt too good to be true
A little under a decade
riding this emotional seesaw
built by two
Across the pacific
Across the atlantic
Time's diluted the septic
runoff from our last storm
Remind me, darling
Why was it again
I chose to sink instead of swim?

If my heart
hadn't quite moved on
I would probably say
I'm growing tired of my city anyways
So I'll go pack up
and then meet you here at home
Let's sail away on your boat
and then maybe
could we be better this time?

We could take the coast
to float on the clouds
at our one spot in Big Sur
then finally start
that two person band
with you on the guitar and keys
I'll take center stage to sing
We'll rewrite all our old songs
and change our painful ending
into a sweet new beginning

Since my heart
hasn't quite moved on
I reach my hand across the table
lose my fingers in your caramel curls
drink the black coffee from your eyes
and tell you how sometimes
I still turn back time
to when we'd take turns
chasing each other;
replaying the ephemeral
when you were mine,
all mine.

So many versions of ourselves
seeded and sprouted
in our young dumb love
I love them all
and I still keep
our crushed petals in a box



I.

only myself in this world
driving home, under love
from an
artificial sunlight. A full-
blown radio
without a single complaint
—
until I reach the hiatus of
the day.

Lest Here Are

*By Yeseo
Kwak*

II.

where archnemesis begin to rise and
disrupt my elopement; where the sun
is no longer artificial; where the radio
cries in vain; where sunglasses are
finally put into use—flying above

III.

the honks and squicks of
the traffic,
under the rave party of
her fading sun
Heartbeat crash-landing
onto our
Sunset Boulevard—you
search for me
while I circumnavigate
the world's wonders

Dream World
By Stephanie Gunnz

Fiery sunset in Hollywood and walk of fame
Diamond jewels, girl looking like real dame
Yellow fast car, rich handsome man
Rock n' roll, Def Leppard and private plane
Ballroom and lights, all dressed up ladies
But I wish you were here with me, my baby

I wish I could be stuck on telephone line
While I'm walking down Sunset and Vine
Because I'm missing your sweet voice
You know now leaving was the best choice
But right now if I could I would go
Straight to your arms but I guess you know

Palm trees and big mansion on the hill
Bars, girls selling pleasure and thrills
Lush apartments in expensive hotels
Stars, dollars and empty champagne bottles
Fur coats, gold chains and leather
Fast motorbikes, what can be better?
Everyone dream about living in this world
But it means nothing to me if I can't be your girl

All those beautiful things
That only money can bring
Will never compare to what I'm feeling inside
When you're looking at me and holding me tight



My lips
cling
to you
like pastry.
Like warm.
Fresh.
Out.
Of.
The oven.
I've never known hunger
like this hunger
like your smile
like
sand in my chest.
Maybe
all I want
is to lay my head
on your shoulder
and forget
the weight.
Deadlines.
Dishes.
Texts.
Brain spinning spinning spinning
2 a.m.
I'm awake
awake awake awake.
Maybe
I just want soft.
The you things.
The laugh that rattles
my ribs,
my walls,
the way we talk about football
and my chest
is like a drum.
Your hand.
Finds mine.
Every past life waiting
folded inside it.
I touch you
and the world
falls out.

Pastry Lips

By Sarah Peters

All I was carrying
drops.
Floor.
Air.
Heart.
You are
coffee in a mug I didn't own
Part of the song
I close my eyes for
before the chorus hits.
Before anything hits.
Math doesn't know this.
Equations can't hold it.
Why you?
Why me?
555555
9999999
222218222
I don't care.
I lay there
on your chest,
arm around me,
the world
too small,
too calm,
too ours.
My lips
taste like you.
Honey.
Home.
Fireworks.
Pastry.
Shoulders.
Breathing.
All of it.
And shoulders.
And finally
breathing
with someone
who never asked you
to be anything
but exactly this.

lana del rey • ABBA • madonna • fleetwood mac • the cure • lorde • the 1975 •
oasis • the smiths • beach house • cocteau twins



OUR TEAM'S RECAP DURING THIS ISSUE

IJ:

- favorite book: "hamnet" by maggie o'farrell
- favorite movie: the hunger games
- goal for the next cycle: continue to work on social media presence and cohesion

emma leaha:

- favorite book: "bones and all" by camille deangelis
- goal for the next cycle: consume less, create more

rai:

- favorite book: "lowland" by jhumpa lahiri
- favorite movie: before sunrise
- goal for the next cycle: continue to build something from scratch

emma:

- favorite book: "the priory of the orange tree"
- favorite tv show: sterling point
- goal for the next cycle: manage running a 5k

lil:

- favorite tv show: the originals
- goal for the next cycle: balance uni life with social and work, have writing turned in

gryffin:

- favorite book: "the secret garden"
- favorite tv show: hannibal
- goal for the next cycle: manage time better

eline:

- favorite book: "after you" by jojo moyes
- favorite tv show: rekvien for selina
- goal for the next cycle: get the time to read the whole issue

kylie:

- favorite book: "the prison healer" by lynette noni
- favorite tv show: outer banks
- goal for the next cycle: grow our community more to reach out to more creatives

izzy:

- favorite book: "solitaire" by alice oseman
- favorite movie: little women
- goal for next issue cycle: keep writing pieces for the substack and for the magazine

lara:

- favorite book: "the price of salt" by patricia highsmith
- favorite movie: letters to juliet
- goal for the next cycle: explore more complex emotional themes in writing and actively participate in brainstorming sessions with the team

sheena:

- favorite book: "mrs dalloway" by virgina woolf
- favorite movie: the punk singer
- goal for the next cycle: doing more interviews with aspiring creatives



along sunset

BOULEVARD!

thank you for reading

offshir