



revel
you saved my life

Ontario, Canada

Edited & Produced by Lea Batara

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Cover art by Melissa Dosne

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We acknowledge that this magazine is printed, sold and distributed on the unceded Treaty Land of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek.

Furthermore, we recognize that this land is home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis people today. We pay respect to them, the traditional caretakers of this land by raising awareness, offering our gratitude to the Peoples, the land and water, and fostering space for their voices in this magazine.

Welcome to the magazine of my dreams. Hopefully after reading this, it will be yours too. Rooted in the need to express myself and share in a creative community, *reve.l* is my response to Edgar Allen Poe's iconic verse: "Is all that we see or seem / But a dream within a dream?" (1850). All 24 contributors and I are ecstatic to share this inaugural issue with you, may it encourage you to keep dreaming large.

At the cusp of summer into fall, I fell into a spiral of feeling frozen in awe (debilitating fear) of life's vast opportunities. My mind raced every which way to beat myself up for doing 'too much' and simultaneously 'nothing at all' with this life and the incredible people in it. Stemming from this existential crisis was the strong urge to create, to capture the gratefulness clawing its way out. This spiral led me to thinking, if I wanted to write in a low stakes, low pressure space, why don't I make space?

Making space was the easy part. Now that my prefrontal cortex has cooked, my need for community has grown so strong that I just want to help kickstart one. Turns out, many people felt like they didn't have the time or capacity for creative projects in their daily lives and wanted that escape. Making the space for creatives to leave their mark is half the battle. The other half is my biggest weakness - execution. Learning to work with my mental state, or inner saboteur (thanks Ru) is incredibly difficult, so when I turn against myself it's a titan battle. Embracing my identity saves my life.


Like most people, my identity is so ingrained in my creativity, informing my perspective. I was raised to be smarter, better, (faster, stronger) so that I'd at least be seen on the same level as my more privileged peers - a sentiment I'm certain most children of immigrants or immigrants themselves know all too well. If I'm the best, your judgments of my differences are invalid. This kind of pressure buried my creative, vulnerable side, only to be unearthed with the help of my relationships. Connection saves my life.

My friend Lana is similar to me, the eldest afab sibling of an immigrant family. She's navigated living in different countries, away from her parents as a young adult. I had the pleasure of meeting her in Ottawa and our bond remains covalent. She says that upon moving to Canada, nothing could have prepared her for the shock of living in an individualist culture where it seemed like most people take their privilege for granted, "When you don't have the basics, you lean on each other to save each other." Truly, she maintains, the relationships in life are what save you and where you learn the most about yourself.

Much like Lana, the contributors of this inaugural issue are friends, family, and friends who've crossed the thresh into ohana. I hope to spread this growing community to include more voices and perspectives, making our mark, and anchoring dreams. This magazine you're reading is a testament to pushing forward and trusting your connections, hence the theme, *you saved my life*, resonating with each contributor through their art here.

Stigma around depression and mental health suggest selfishness but in my experience that's far from the truth. You got me here. It's a miracle we even met. It's a blessing we get to stay. I still don't know what I'm doing, but I know that every single contributor is expressing themselves so genuinely that this magazine and community will continue and thrive. Enjoy to tales told by our contributors, there will be more.

Let's jump right into it. Welcome to the inaugural issue of *reve.l* mag, where dreams live!

always, 

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Kate Prenty
Playlist: you saved my life







Playlist





you saved my life: reve.l

for reve.l's 1st edition! the theme is 'you saved my life', so I've put together a playlist of songs that, to me, define the human experience. life is many ups & downs, and to me they are all equally as important & fulfill the same function of grounding in to this absurd reality. bisous! 🍷

 Cáit Prenty • 1 like • 21 songs, 1 hr 25 min



List 

#	Title	Album	Date added	
1	 We Sink CHVRCHES	The Bones of What You Believe	1 week ago	3:34
2	 Letting Go Wild Nothing	Indigo	1 week ago	3:41
3	 Twice Charli XCX	CRASH	1 week ago	3:14
4	 Think Too Much, Feel Too Little JAWS	Be Slowly	1 week ago	3:08

I've put together a playlist of songs that, to me, define the human experience. life is many ups & downs, and to me, they are all equally as important and fulfill the same function of grounding us in this absurd reality.



Frances McCall
Beauty Anew

The mourning dove twitches; beauty rides the slumber,
Sunbeams meet the fields, trees and sky, kissing the hummer,
Crisp-nipping air pierces those awake,
Gone now is the dew of a scarcely fathomed ache.
Yesterday is past, today is greeted with a grin,
New hopes of tomorrow rush, churning thoughts now begin,
Hearts keep beating, faith is keen,
Each new day blesses a life so full, still pristine.
The greatest hardship one endures will never go unseen,
Grand gestures, great loves or wee joys in between,
Must fill minds in a rut, happiness does exist,
You and Your beauty, though discreetly, intervenes;
Stronger than a morning mist.
FM

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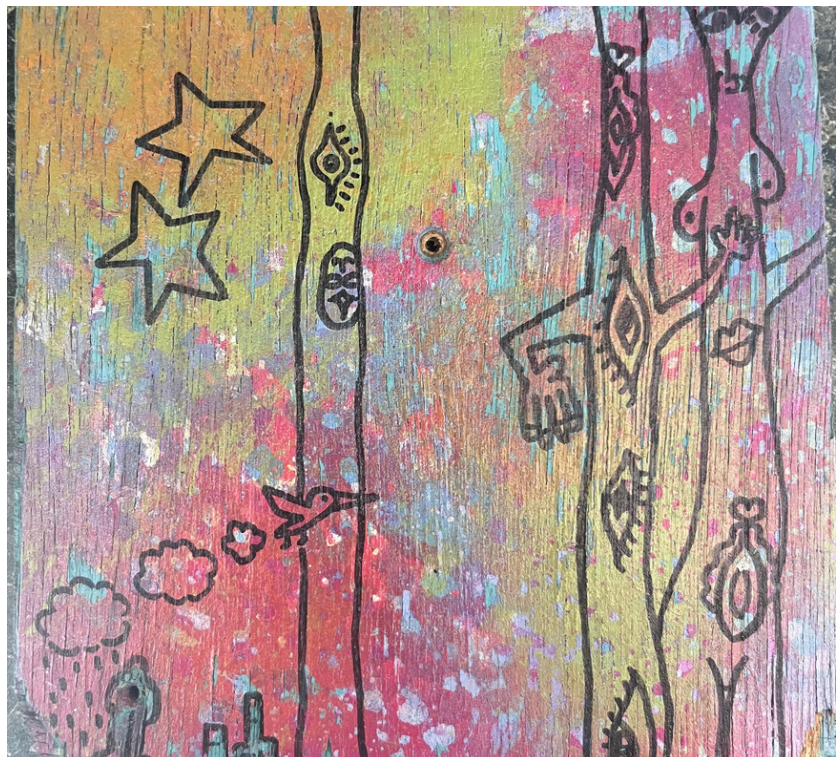
you saved my life

mili ember

a summer of storms



the queer escape



Fénix
Thank you for helping me see



Sherlyn Assam
The Life We Give

When my sister split the corner of her head open and stumbled out of my parents' bedroom, blood leaking between her fingers, so began my lifelong mission of trying to save everyone around me.

Ashley – a natural gymnast, an enthusiastic dancer, and perpetually stubborn – made a stage out of everything. At ten, it was common for me to yell at her to stop cartwheeling and front tucking her way onto a submissive floor, just for her to get up, try again, and land even louder.

That day, I was reading in my bedroom as her body crashed onto my parents' bed, legs hit the headrest, and heels punched the wall...every thirty seconds. Rage was festering more than I care to admit, not knowing how soon the anger would be replaced by despair.

I stomped my way to the doorway, screaming at her to stop fooling around. But no sooner had I relocated downstairs, there was a ruckus accompanied by dangerous silence. My feet charged back up the stairs, but my mind wanted to be left behind, scared of what was to be discovered.

When my sister and I came face to face, she was clutching the corner of her forehead, hands covering her eye. Crimson tears dotted the carpet. I unleashed a scream that shocked her into momentary silence. Then, I saw her eight years of life in hot flashes, for each second her wail matched mine.

Nailing the role of the emotional wreck, my older sister pushed me out of the bathroom as my father dragged Ashley inside to press towels to a wound I had yet to see.

I grabbed my giant stuffed dog, Brownie, and ran back to where I was reading not even five minutes ago. I squeezed him against my chest, waiting.

And I stayed there. As my dad rushed Ashley into the car, as Valmy followed closely after, as my understanding of what it meant to be a big sister slipped away from me; because at that age, going to the hospital was a death sentence.

After countless sobs, a phone call with my mother, and my older sister returning home to serve me dinner I barely ate, I learned Ashley was fine. She had hit her head on the corner of my parents' dresser, just above her eye. Any lower and she could've been blind. The doctors found the gap on her brow, wiped away all signs of blood, and stitched her back together.

When I woke Ashley up the next morning, I pulled her into my chest, hugging her until my arms begged me to ease up. That day, I walked around with a guilty awareness of the fragility of life. How could we be so careless with ourselves? How could I be so carefree with my loved ones?

I have always loved my family, but after that day, I felt like I needed to hold their hand at every cross-walk. Suddenly, I remembered each and every “I love you” we exchanged, rationing our affection so it would last us a lifetime. No one could leave the house without getting a hug from me. Going to bed in a fight with anyone, big or small, made me wonder if I would regret my anger into old age.

This kind of care is not necessarily bad, but it made me wonder why we don’t live in urgency with all the people we love before signs of trouble. Why did we remind people of our love for them when they would soon be out of reach?

At 21, I was still falling into this trap. I was doing everything I could to return home to my grandma between work and school. I feared she would die while I was away, making my mind wander into a forest of “what if’s”.

So, I prayed, and I planned, and I called her twice a week, and I appreciated her, and I loved her, and I wondered why it took seeing someone on their way out to begin enjoying their company. A trap, I say, because as I grew older, I noticed everyone around me was dying in different ways.

My sister had an accident, my grandmother is aging, my friends’ minds are convincing them that they have no significance in this world – and I was trying to defuse these bombs with an embrace.

But it simply isn’t sustainable to make a job out of calling and spending all my time with the people I love, as if my presence can deter accidents, reverse time, and medicate brain chemistry.

Some days can’t be about treating people to lunches I can’t afford, joining them on walks through the park on deadline, or hosting movie nights even though I’m exhausted. Some days I have to let myself sit on my couch, watch the ceiling fan spin, and wonder if anyone else has ever noticed the hum doesn’t quite keep pace with the blades.

I am learning this love I am trying to perfect may be a weak attempt to save myself – from the hurt I would experience when they leave, or by offering the love that is sometimes too hard to give myself.

But at 25, I am also learning this love is a privilege. How lucky am I to set reminders to talk to people across an ocean and remind others to text me when they make it home safely? How could I ever be grateful enough that I can cry for someone who crochets enough shirts to clothe everyone around him?

So maybe I'll get used to watching the fan, or the TV, or my career. And maybe I'll forget to schedule time to see the ones I love. And maybe it takes a phone call telling me they are gone when I was too consumed with someone else to notice their retreat.

But maybe remembering to see someone after a month of silence is the reason I go to bed with tired eyes but a renewed spirit. Maybe that phone call is the hardest conversation I have all week.

Even so, I am learning that I cannot threaten myself with this reality. Because to live that way; to covet everyone as if every breath is their last one, is not loving them, but loving a memory of them. And to spend every waking moment loving other people so hard for fear of them leaving is to make myself disappear.

I used to think that when I collapsed on my couch and watched that ceiling fan whir without noticing how much time was passing, I was running out of life to give. But these people are life: in laughter, in jest, in accidents, in advice, in attraction, in criticism, in sadness. I cannot run out of something that overflows from me. I spent too much of my life trying to reason my emotions away from my sleeve.

This affection that spills out of me, flowing between fingers that sometimes just cannot keep up, is no sign of death.

Spacey Jacey
Wake Up! There is More



Luccas Correia
When in Rome

In Rome, one night
Two youthful souls, by chance, found destiny.
They met post-party, stars adorning the sky,
With hearts that dared to dream and spirits high.

Beneath the Roman moon's enchanting glow,
They embarked on a journey, their spirits in flow
With cobblestone streets and history so vast,
These two young souls, together, the night would last.

Hand in hand, they wandered, shadows intertwined,
In a city of ancient whispers, secrets undefined
Their laughter echoed through the silent streets,
As Rome itself seemed to dance to their heartbeats.

In a cozy hostel, their laughter would resound,
As they played games, their hearts began to pound
A connection when I look into his eyes,
I could watch myself fly.

In Rome the next night, I sat by the Trevi, a fountain's gentle grace,
Tossing coins, dreams mingling with reality in that sacred space
Praying you return, our future fully formed yet unseen,
In a different universe, where you hold me beneath the moonlit scene.

Kangaroo Nik
Bellied Butterflies

A higher power
Enticingly unknown to me
Why this game and who am I playing for?
Am I truly the deserving one for this self, this beating heart?
So we seem we should be satisfied with simplicity
So how come these theatrics rehearse?
For which audience?
An unfussy creature at thy core
Something or someone in this shared space pulling us to do more
Bellied butterflies flutter within these walls
A reminder of their beauty and fragility
Though in flight, still existing with limitation
Rounded roaming, seeking their dreams beyond
The world beyond
Outwardly destinations inaccessible beyond the walled lining of a bundled core
Ready I am to free such flutters before leaving this earth as I came - alone
An individual of my own accord
A heart so warm yet hands grow increasingly cold
A city so greedy for life
Long has it left a trail of loneliness
Needing hands unheld, to grow and build
Concrete hiding the beaten path of all those who step and sleep
Rise tenderly above mapped, modern roads
The grid that leads to merely a rush and a quick flush
Longing for the hold that never held on
Riding solo again, I ride with my love
My gentle, gigantic passenger
Give it as I go to those who share themselves with me
Emptying my tank, hoping it fills again
Self love exists
Such love but a bike lane route for a carpool social structure
Society became of itself by eating together

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you saved my life

A long way from alone, unchecked - it now eats itself
Perhaps not the food, surely the experience has less spice
Void of flavour to other senses beyond taste
This so applies to love, a peculiar power
A vine looking to intertwine, to flourish together
Food to feed the soul
Feed my desire and I promise you dessert
Longing for an invitation to escape this cyber maze
This love so physical will lift you with thanks
My soothing, serenading support

I am healing.

I am calm.

I am love embodied.

I know this, I own this, I am this.

Julianne Magalona
In Between Meetings



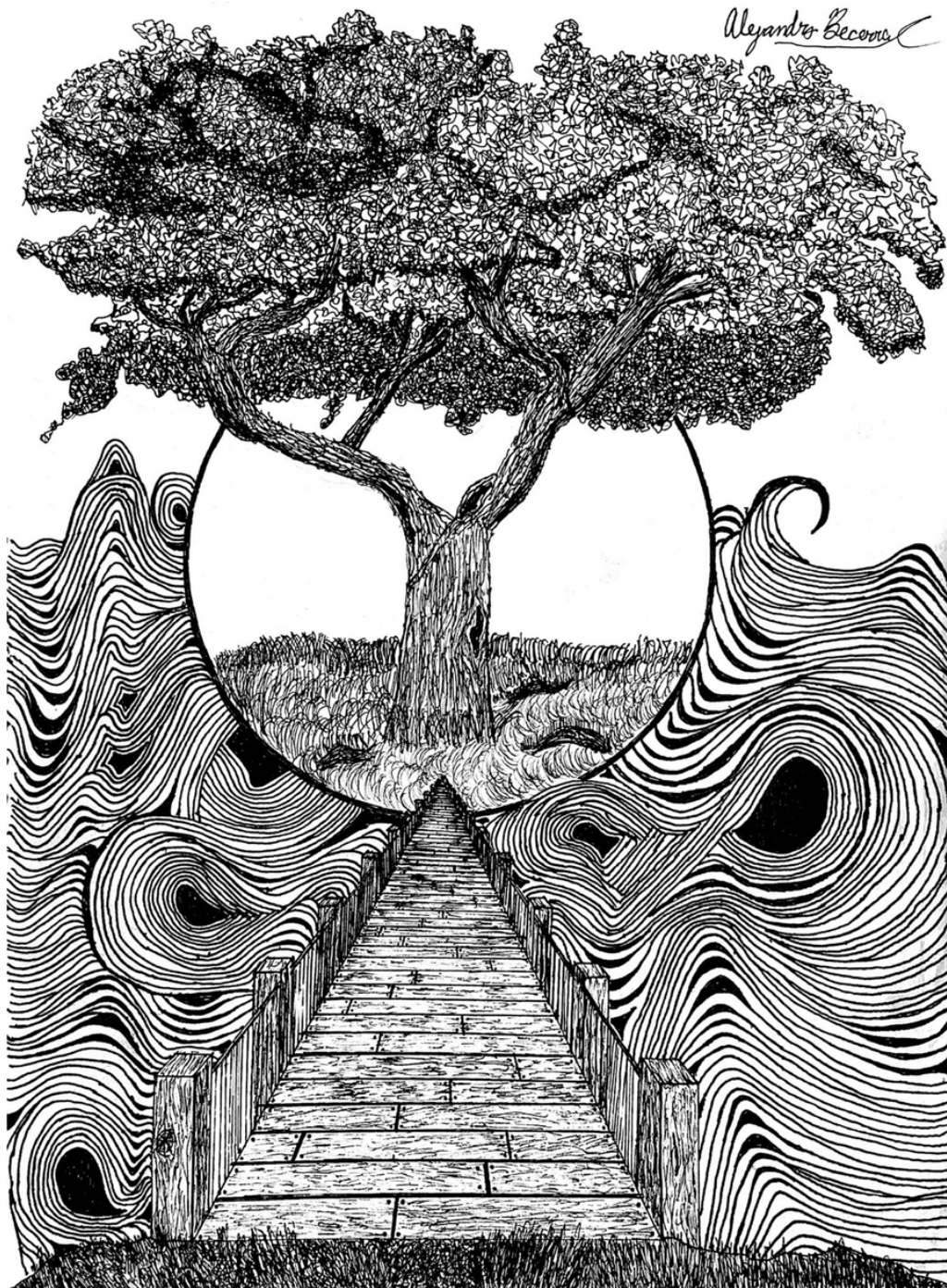
Lea Batara

it's a miracle we ever met

It is a miracle we ever met
A wonder, the world has yet to map out.
Trav'lers who cross paths are lucky see, seas crash and might beget
More waves in our flow like sister Aloysius, with no doubt
That maybe we are meant to meet when we do,
And will fall out whenever as well.
Let Fate set the date and take over in lieu
Of my forced feigning fine and shiny stiff shell.
Does it matter if you know me now -
Or then or tomorrow or never -
If i'm to die by the next line (ciao!)
Would you know me, like, forever?

Wild, how you know me in this moment, free
May this be the way you always see me

Alejandro Becerra
The Bridge



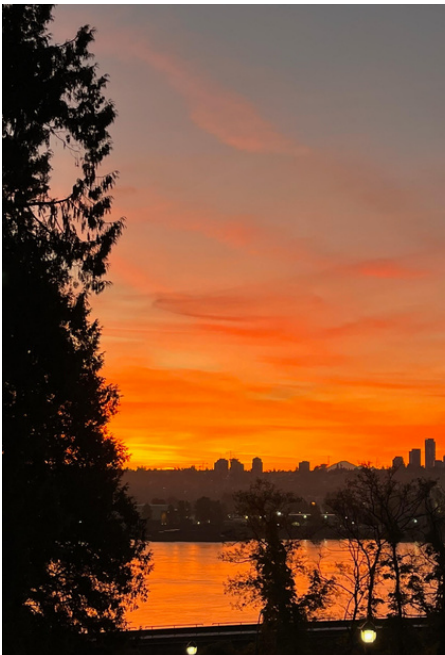
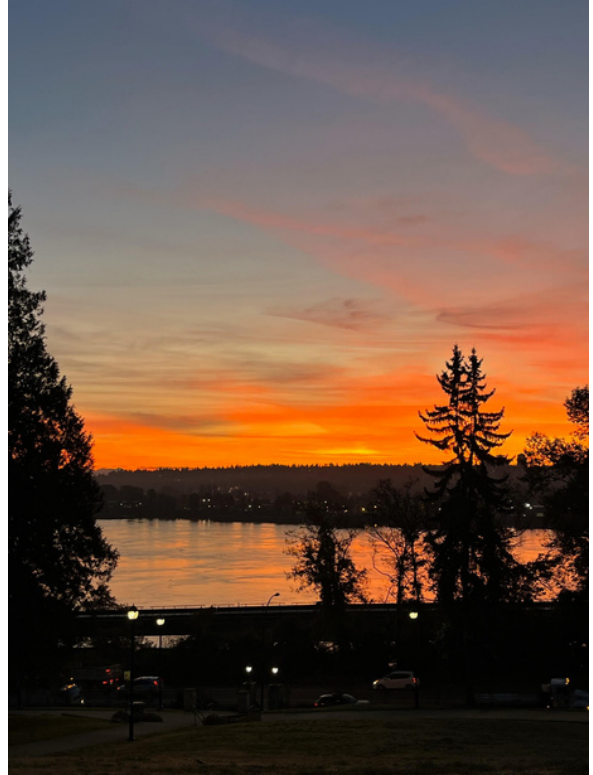
Medium: Ink on Paper

Description: When we find ourselves lost, our loved ones, sturdy and dependable, are there to support and guide us through the darkness. Ultimately, however, it is up to us to walk across the bridge they help us build.

Melissa Dosne
layers of serenity



Akeida E-Benjamin
West-Coast Shine



Since moving to the west, the sunrises and sunsets have been such a mood booster for me. Like this morning I RAN to my look out spot because the sunrise was beautifuuullll. (why am I running at 7:30AM???)

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you saved my life

KC Hoard
io

Do my icy tempests
push you away or
are you caught in my inertia
paralyzed by my gravity
Am I frozen Saturn
and you great Titan you
solid and formidable
I great and empty
full of cold air
all nothing inside
Are you heaven sent to
watch my hollow life?
What divine grace
blessed me
with an eternity of you?

Alexandria McPhail

Elsewhere

All the bodies are gone and we can't write about them anymore,
 and all the other things are small and blurry because the sun got too hot.
 It baked the grass, now it looks like crushed up Doritos and everything is a mess, like my room
 after a Saturday night.
 A couple stitches pulled, now all the feathers fell out of my pillow
 so it looks like I've been sleeping with angels again-
 See, I really can't write anything without dreaming of you.
 Run ahead so you can be there when I shoot myself into your space,
 it is always nice to go somewhere when I know you've been there before,
 everywhere else doesn't belong to you or me.

Venus

Clumsy and heavy hearted,
 now liberated and free of his own gravity
 he lacked the lightness of touch- the flowing movement, the quickness.
 He was somehow prevented from feeling
 the graceful and dazzling movement
 of how her body sways.

She's moving and it's beautiful to see.
 A sacrifice on this alter of motion, this motion- a sense of freedom
 to take yourself out of yourself
 to become martyr to something;
 to the rhythmic movement
 of how her body sways.

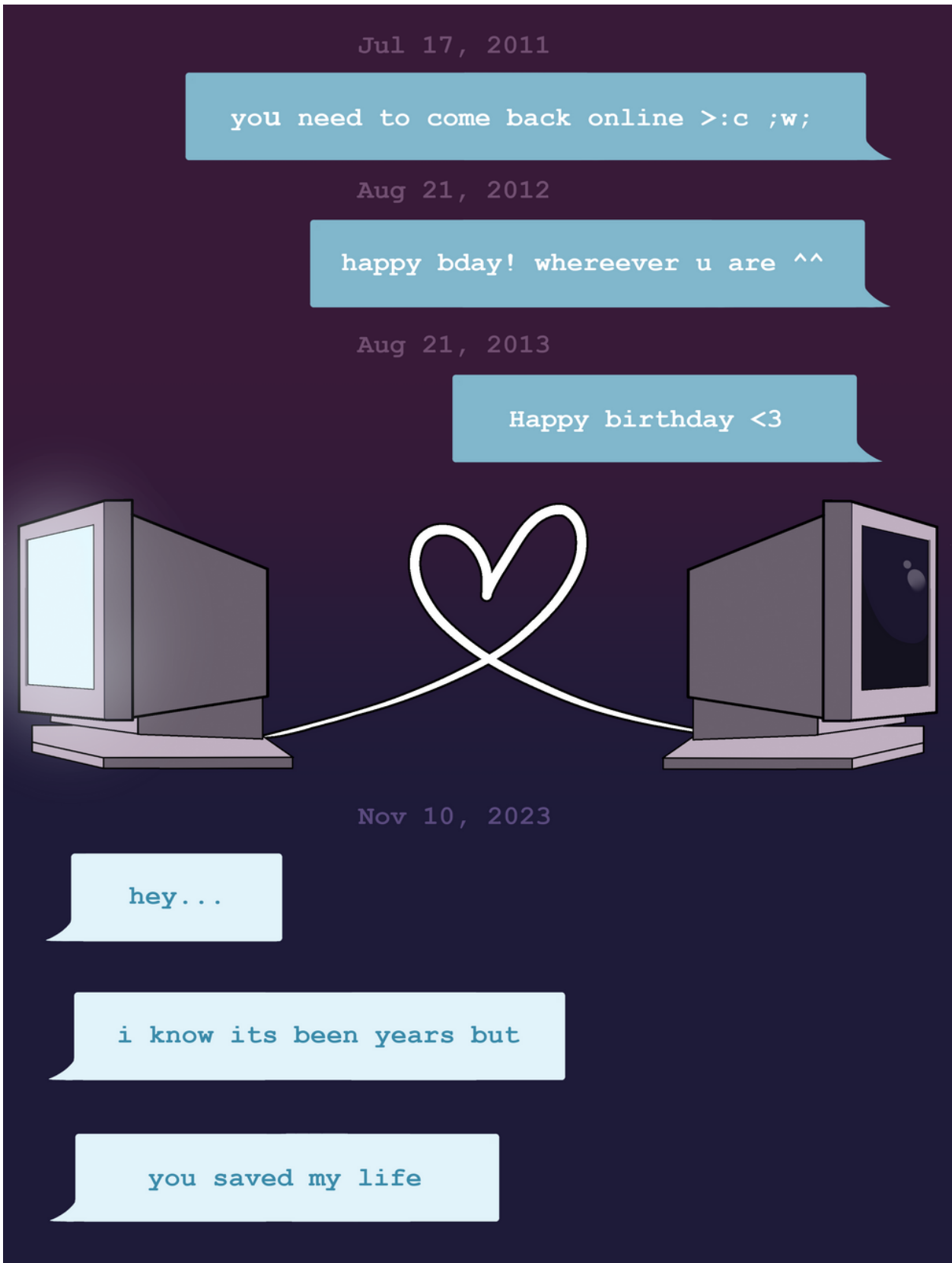
Albert Hoang on the way to you



Medium: Digital Photography

Description: A still image video that transports the viewer through a moving train window to travel the distance to the static image of two lovers in bed, one being out of frame. The video loops backward once to simulate the two lovers both traveling back and forth to and in conversation with each other. The dialogue in the captions changes halfway. The video starts and ends with the same frame but two different captions: a tender, circular routine the subjects engage in. View the video on YouTube by clicking the still above or scan the QR code.

Kyler Lee
To you, 10 years later



Fénix

Thank you for helping me see (cont.)



Mila Menna
Finding Happiness

Surfing webs
Sharing apps
Flashes of Big-City living from shades of small-town
Fall out, melt away in the makeup chair
Swapping tips while blotting lips, inches away from a pretty lady's face :)
Destination glamification
New state of mind
The sparkling horizon of the brightest time, glitter sunshine, catch me grazing the tide
Until the daylight sunrise

“Untangle the back?” Corset, harness, contraption
What are friends for.
You get me
Excited
To explore
The depths of selves beneath the dance floor,
Synching to synth, moving with the flow of the universe, of the collective consciousness, harking
to something more.
Giddy beyond measure moments before the top of the roller coaster;

Always I hoped, the world would be
This sparkling
A glistening slick metallic dream
People of wonder who have crossed seas, add to serenity, ingenuity
Life is so much bigger than the silver screen
Than childhood, dull rooms, of temporary pains
Of hoping, praying, wishing for a vision unseen, that we can't quite put our finger on
It's here. It's us. We made it.

Everything is so well-written, decorated, beautified
Was the current of thrill encapsulated in us all the time?...

I remember the intense competition of capturing the flag at summer camp
 Sliding down snowy hills as 'penguins' in new garbage bags with arm/head holes cut out,
 The Raccoon Club (comprised of latchkey neighbourhood boys) beads-baiting in plastic bowls,
 12-year-old cadet outing bus ride= scary stories with a stranger seat mate, a.k.a. a new friend,
 Watching a Goblin King movie in awe followed by the cheap chaser of the perfume scene in
 SpongeBob,
 Finding meaning through watching video game theories, reading popular culture, and making
 art.
 We made do with what we had and still do
 The magic is there to bend.
 The sweet small delights: bids for connection, shared knowing looks, unexpressed love,
 Building cautiously or openly
 Learning
 Infinite crystal fractal multitudes of being
 Who and where will we be, can't wait to see.

Mila Menna Inside and Out

You are like seriously the coolest
 Relatable queen, down-to-earth, confident or not, holding the power of the universe in your
 braids
 Made of rolling thunder, weeping willows, wind-whipped leaves
 That's you babe, frfrfr
 I love you. I say it with my chest.

When we first met I immediately knew,
 Omigod I have to be this girl's friend, or be her, or date her, or follow her online and be inspired
 by her continual growth journey, supporting her from near or afar
 Move in together after a week of knowing each other because the vibes just feel right
 And we've got a good senses of character
 We're still best friends to this day
 Deffo bridesmaid

Amazing, lovely women with kind hearts and vibrant beings
 Who share in their emotions and are funny by being themselves
 How they say things loudly with different voices, move, jump up and down
 Adorn their laptop, Nalgene strawberry water bottle, resume, roster, home, with little sweet
 parts of themselves
 Spreading your light through the world is how you make your money
 And you're good at what you do
 You save lives and bring joy as a paramedic, crisis outreach, former technician for N.A.S.A.
 current teacher, academic weapon, fashion guru, country singer, journalist with integrity, and
 disability advocate, these barbies are so many things and more!

We share the same ex and they have good taste
 You have good taste- eclectic, cool, nerdy, skillful- dive into those interests!
 You danced at school events but you were the event
 You can fit a lot of marshmallows in your mouth while still being the most graceful person to
 grace this world
 You were way too good for that guy and I'm happy you seem happy now
 You spoke up for what mattered in high school, even though we ran in different circles, I think
 of you sometimes
 I don't know you like that but don't we?
 It could've been more
 You turned me on to good music, fun ways of talking, thinking, being
 You showed me
 Rejoice in collective community and all that jazz
 You changed my life for the better.
 Seriously never forget how amazing you are. And so pretty. You're so pretty. Seriously.

Alexandra Vegso
She Sits Upon a Heart

There's always a stirring within this dark forest. My tears fall, and branches twist out of the ground, reaching up to touch the edge of the sky. Their shadows cast down upon me and make me feel small. It's all I can see and I can't look away, but later I remember as if through a fog. And it isn't the product of imagination. It's real and personal, a direct attack as if I was the damned soul cast out into filth below. Everything seems so terribly slow, but when eyes turn it's lightning speed – happening fast and all at once. Dare I take one breath and attention is drawn to the suspended puff of air, then to the mouth that propelled it. My muscles are heavy beneath my skin, and it takes all my strength to drag myself through expansive black. Yet as my legs are weighed down knee-deep in the inferno, my feet rise and somehow, simultaneously, I am floating. I close my eyes and feel myself stretch out. The space between atoms expands until I'm scattered throughout the air; you could walk right through me and hardly notice. Conversely, the twisted relics around me remain intact. When the wind ripples through their boughs they do not crack from the impact but move in accordance. They're planted firmly. They watch as magnetic force is restored and I fall to the ground, pieces of myself crashing together until I'm whole once again. This heaviness and lightness, for me one and the same, is recurring. No matter how hard I will myself forward I'm always dipping beneath the earth and above the clouds. I was born squeezing my heart with both hands to keep it from ripping apart, and when my grip loosens, I explode like a firework against the dark.

This is the order of things as I see it. Nothing with substance ever stays long. It all fades so fast, and that cool calm of denouement continues to evade me. So I lay down in the darkness to await the next detonation. My self-pity angers me so much I cry with eyes stinging and a nose rubbed raw. I cry until a crater, shaking and heaving, opens my chest with a large 'crack!' and a million mice scurry through the cavity. They chew and scratch their way to the forefront with honed nails, desire in their eyes. I see the glean of their teeth and acknowledge the affinity we share. For I inhabit the breast of the person I love most, and deliverance is dependent upon an earthquake of epic size shaking this place until a tear rips across the sky. Maybe if that came to pass, things would be tipped left just enough that my atoms could hold still and momentarily forget their conflict. The thought makes me want to sharpen my teeth. I want to set this idea into action; take up arms and claw my way out like vermin on the brink of death. And so I do. I reach up into that darkness and carve away. I hack at the torrid air before me and watch as one by one the particles crumble in place of myself. The roof caves, and the mass of rage and pain I have long held in my stomach lurches up out of my gaping chest. It beams towards the egress like Pharos of new, lighting ablaze a thousand branches in its wake.

Out I crawl from my microcosm into a brilliant daylight. A cool rain descends from above. I look up towards the beginnings of my new world, and I see her. She who sits in a breast within a breast. Chest ripped open and eyes crying. Her tears fall on me in progressive rhythm, her pain hangs in the air. She picks me up and carries me towards the cavity where I had emerged, but she doesn't seek to place me back inside. She simply holds me close as she breaks down in lament. The guilt of my self-interest pinches at my heart, but I don't ask forgiveness and she doesn't demand apology. When next I shatter, I'll leave scrapes and bruises on those soft palms where I lay. Still she'll wait, hands outstretched, ready to cradle my tired mind. We cry together, our tears creating a river which crests over her fingertips into the valley below. It nourishes the saplings that surround us, and their limbs rise to create a thick forest dragging luminescence into shadow. Despite her trembling, she does not exude fear. She has always been there; smudged across the night sky and rising firm from the ground. She knows that trembles turn to shakes, and shakes into seism, and before long a hole the shape of our fists will be torn straight across the atmosphere. And our tears will continue to fall. And the trees will continue to grow.

Jasmine Kuri
an angel born of the forest



Sarah Williscraft
Collage of connection



Juhi Tayal
Eugenia Falls



Mimi Olema
You saved my life

In the twilight of my darkest hours, When hope was but a fleeting thing, You entered, bringing gentle showers, A second spring, where life could sing. When shadows threatened to consume, My heart's very essence and might, You became my beacon, my moon, Piercing the darkest of the night. My fears were monsters, vast and wide, Looming giants, taunting and cruel. But you stood steadfast by my side, Your courage being the strongest tool. You whispered words of hope so sweet, Wiping away my endless tears. In a world so vast, our souls did meet, You chased away my deepest fears. With every step, you were there, When I stumbled, you'd lend a hand. With every fall, you'd genuinely care, Helping me rise, making me stand. In the maze of life's deceit and lie, Lost and confounded, I did strive. With your compass of love, oh my! You navigated, kept me alive. You were the lighthouse in my storm, Guiding me safely to the shore. In your embrace, I found warmth, In your eyes, a world to explore. When I felt like a withered tree, Barren, empty, devoid of grace. You became the breeze, so free, Breathing life, filling that empty space. Through battles with inner demons vast, You were my shield, my solid mast. Against the winds, so fierce and fast, You anchored me, holding me fast. There were times, oh yes, there were, When I felt like ending the fight. Yet, with your love, so pure and rare, You brought back the lost light. For in you, I found a purpose anew, A reason to love, to live, to thrive. And in the echoes of the morning dew, It's clear, you saved my life. You've taught me to see beyond despair, To find beauty in the simplest things. With every heartbeat, every prayer, I'm grateful for the joy you bring. The world spins on, vast and wide, Yet, in this cosmic dance so rife, One truth remains, can't be denied, My dearest, you saved my life. Now as we walk, hand in hand, Towards horizons, unknown and new. With hearts entwined, like grains of sand, I whisper, "I owe my life to you." For you are more than just a friend, More than a partner, more than kin. You're the song, the start and end, The melody that lives within. A thousand words, perhaps more, Could barely capture what I feel. Yet, in this poem, I implore, A glimpse of a love so real. In every sunrise, every twilight dove, In every whisper of the sea, I see the signs of our eternal love, And how, indeed, you saved me. Now as days turn into nights, And seasons change in endless flight, One thing remains, forever rife, Forever true - you saved my life.

Fran Mbadiwe

After

i hadn't realized i was hurtling,
falling as dead weight, waiting to stop
wasting my time.

i hadn't realized you caught me
right above the water —
walked me back across the bridge,
back to my apartment.

the next day, i woke up wondering
why i did
and where i would go from there.

everything after is just as hard
and tears don't get me far at all —
just across the night.
i work so hard, rain or shine, to exist;
i don't know why.

if we ever cross paths again —
walking past, what would you think?
"all these years, and you're still falling
short of yourself, and out of control
like nobody else ever does"?

contributors

a most heartfelt thanks to my lovely family & friends for donating their talent and time for this inaugural issue.

-lb ♡

Pathologists' Assistant by day, aspiring pole dancer on Thursdays! *Akeida E-Benjamin* enjoys doing anything that brings her joy. This includes (but never limited to) watching sunsets while listening to R&B, making playlists, cooking (and eating), laying on a beach, and traveling.

In summary, Akeida is a vibe and loves creating great vibes.

Albert Hoang is a visual storyteller based in Toronto. His photography style explores the emotional themes of romance, tenderness, and melodrama in his subjects while placing equal significance in the places we exist in. He's a big rom-com fanatic and inspired by Wong Kar Wai's oeuvre and the film *500 Days of Summer*. You can usually find him editing to one song on loop for hours on end. Catch up with him on Instagram @callmealbs.

Alejandro Becerra is a Colombian artist (among other things) who is captivated by the beauty of the planet we live on, the life we share it with, and the beauty of life itself. His goal is to explore as much of this stunning world as possible in his time here; it is through experiencing the diversity of life on our planet that he learns and grows. Alejandro's art and self-expression are attempts at creating an artery for transmitting these experiences to others.

Alexandria McPhail is a writer, mix-media artist, and social service worker living and working in a small hamlet in Southern Ontario. In her work, Alexandria reflects on the multifaceted nature of love and loving. She's usually walking through the woods. She's probably out there right now. Go find her. Go walk in the woods. Maybe you will find yourself there, too.

Alexandra Vegso graduated from Carleton University's Bachelor of Journalism program in 2020, minoring in neuroscience and Spanish. She takes a special interest in writing about science and health, and aims to tell compelling stories that reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Fénix is a queer multimedia artist, always looking for the queerness in every piece of art they work on, turning things inside out and looking for new shapes old things can transform into.

Fran Mbadiwe is a tired, Nigerian editor whose fiction explores the experience of introspection. Catch him in Toronto or Tampa, gaming or journaling.

Frances McCall is an amateur poetry writer who spends most of her time waiting for the "split second moment" throughout the day to inspire her. She started seriously writing poetry in 2017 and still continues to capture moments and instances that are fashioned into stanzas.

GTA-based freelance artist *Jasmine Kuri* navigates oil, acrylic, and digital realms. Jasmine is primarily experienced in portraiture. Her art intertwines tradition and technology, capturing the essence of her subjects using a variety of different mediums.

Julianne Magalona was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1998. Her family moved to Canada in 2001 and settled in Milton, Ontario. Through her father, Julianne developed an appreciation for the arts as she watched him paint and pursue photography as she grew up. Julianne went on to study Biotechnology at McMaster University and moved to British Columbia shortly after graduating to pursue a career as a Scientific Marketing Specialist - a role that has allowed her to combine her creative and scientific passions. In her spare time, Julianne loves hiking, working out, and crocheting gifts for her friends and family.

Juhi Tayal is a hobby artist who especially enjoys painting her experiences in nature. She most often uses gouache paint to depict her cartoonish scenes. She hopes you enjoy!

Kangaroo Nik is a friendly, fun-loving freak-show who is constantly expanding his style of expression in the artistic cyber space, with his pussy-popping personality. He is forming his own path as a spirited experimental writer and quirky content creator. Whether you're into sexy, sincere or silly, Nik invites you to tag along on his eccentric expedition @[kangaroonik](#).

Kate Prenty is, first and foremost, a music dweeb. She has a radio show ([Hangin' Out with Kate](#)) where she curates music relative to a specific energy that comes with a certain mood, genre, or time of the week. Curating music is Kate's passion, so she is really stoked to be contributing in this way to *reve*!! Beyond that - Kate is Toronto-based via Montreal & Dublin, and away from music, she really enjoys spending time with friends talking about life, or walking around the city with nothing to do and all day to do it. yolo!! <3

KC Hoard is an associate editor at The Walrus.

Kyler Lee is a 25-year old Filipino-Canadian and self-appointed cat lady. Her spare time is divided between video games, D&D, weightlifting, and agonizing over aging out of the 18-24 age group. She oscillates between romanticizing the past and romanticizing the future. As for the present, well - she's working on it.

Lea Batara is revelling in the creative process and is positively overflowing with gratitude.

Lucas Gomes Correia is a Brazilian psychologist and photographer who is captivated by the exploration of diverse cultures and languages. He's visited 14 countries and is looking forward to exploring more of the world. As an avid traveler, he revels in the excitement of discovering new restaurants and unique cuisines. Lucas seamlessly integrates his insatiable curiosity of the human mind into his global adventures, creating a rich tapestry of experiences. His vibrant spirit and open-minded approach mark him as a true enthusiast of life's ever-evolving journey, beautifully captured through his lens and his understanding of the human psyche. Find him on Instagram @[luccas](#).

Melissa Dosne, a tranquil voyager, navigates life's rivers alongside deeply cherished friendships. Each shared sound and silence is savoured, allowing time to flow through her fingertips. While the rivers flow, her abstract mind weaves patterns, harmonizing buildings with sustainability using engineering hymns—a melody softening our mark on this shared soil. Yet, a fear of being seen or heard lingers beneath, contrasting with her joy in witnessing others shine. In moments of solitude, she closes her eyes, swaying to melodies, embracing the flowing currents of emotion under the gentle glow of dim lights or soothing sunlight.

Mila Menna got a degree at Wilfrid Laurier for Honours English, a BEd at Queens University, and is currently teaching. They love their friends, family, and try to find and create twinkly lil' moments to celebrate existence. These poems were inspired by the French concept of *joie de vivre*; an outpouring expression of happiness! And to Mila, what comes to mind is fulfilling core memories as well as goofy silly ones, like going to a disco bar and curbing dudes by pretending to have marital conflicts with your study-buddy-girlypop. What is life for?

mili ember flies south for the winters, where the gardens still trickle with sunlight and they can plant their feet in the dirty dirt. They find community in plants, herbkin, smiles, and in soundscapes.

Mimi Olema is grounded in the warmth of close family, friendships and a love for her pets while she navigates life with a sense of adventure and a thirst for knowledge. Her home is a sanctuary for a spirited cat and a faithful dog, while her soul finds peace in nature's embrace, from lush trails to gentle beaches. An avid traveler, Mimi explores the world's vast tapestry, each culture and encounter broadening her perspective and deepening her appreciation for the planet's diverse inhabitants.

Sarah Williscraft is a journalist and podcast producer based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Living so far away from family and friends, they often struggle with loneliness and a lack of belonging. However, Sarah has never felt alone or out of place amongst the trees, the rivers or the ocean.

Sherlyn Assam is a Canadian journalist, editor and copywriter based in the UK. Her writing covers philanthropy, social justice, religion and spirituality, entertainment, culture and lifestyle.

Spacey Jacey is a digital collage artist, maker and mystic/witch. Her art aims to encapsulate the magic and emotion of an entire experience into a visual portal which can vibrationally transport the viewer into deep understanding of the experience and its lessons.

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