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SIMMER

fall 2022





The artists, writers, and photographers in ‘Simmer’ depart on their own adventures, unleashing the tense quietude that rings through the issue. In their many moments of pause, the artists register a sense of opposition, abjection, underscoring a deviation from comforts. Whereas some of the imagemakers place an emphasis on the process of their images to assert the absence of stasis of the moment, others lean towards the abstraction in a glean towards marking their subjects and spaces surreal. The artificiality of their image thus turns us to the developing technologies of imagemaking that are rapidly advancing how and why we photograph. As artificial intelligence is contested and questioned within art spaces, the artists within Simmer remind us to question how and why do we value an image? In their strained compartments, their figures and subjects serve to visualize the lingering emptiness, anger, and grief that remains prescient on the minds of our contributors in 2022.

The poems that accompany the works in Simmer, speak to the restlessness while gleaning into the inabilities of reaching resolution within these moments of distress—urging a collective turn inward. In simmer-ing with these images we ask that you lean into the otherworldly constructions of these scenes as they may offer sites to process the pressures of late-stage capitalism and all of its painful offerings.

- Carlos & Katie



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GREEN

In my desolate,
Gentle field in
Gordonville, Texas / Ten years old
I am briefly liberated
From the presence of others
Instead submerged
In my own reverie
Of lone survival and magic.
I search for the mossy tree
That reclines across
The cotton-mouthed creek
Where I laze until
Sleep almost swallows me,
I search for the abandoned trailer
That plays hide-and-go-seek
In a cluster of foliage.
The hours slip through
Strands of my hair and
My only unit of time is
The looming nausea
From being secluded
For too long, from the
Suspicion that I am
Suddenly the only person
Left in the world.

—Anna Henderson







IN THE
MIDDLE
OF A VAST
FIELD WITH
THE ONE
YOU LOVE



What sways our skulls so much to allow foreign matter to permeate
 Then to grasp our consciousness
 Blindfold it spin it around
 Before it blinks back open and squints
 In the new strange light?
 Instinct hurtles our minds back into that easy darkness
 But the afterimage remains, a spectacle
 That beseeches our hands to reach for it, blindly through dark matter
 Until we have the stomach to lay ourselves bare

The self that is the smallest atom between the collar bones
 That lurches the jugular to faint hoarseness, eyes to screaming water
 provides a doughy face as the morning sun strokes our cheeks
 draws back to the spine and cheats lungs when gold-bricked
 balloons into the brain and lifts our feet with roses
 drops us into a pool of molasses, mouth agape and soft-pedaled

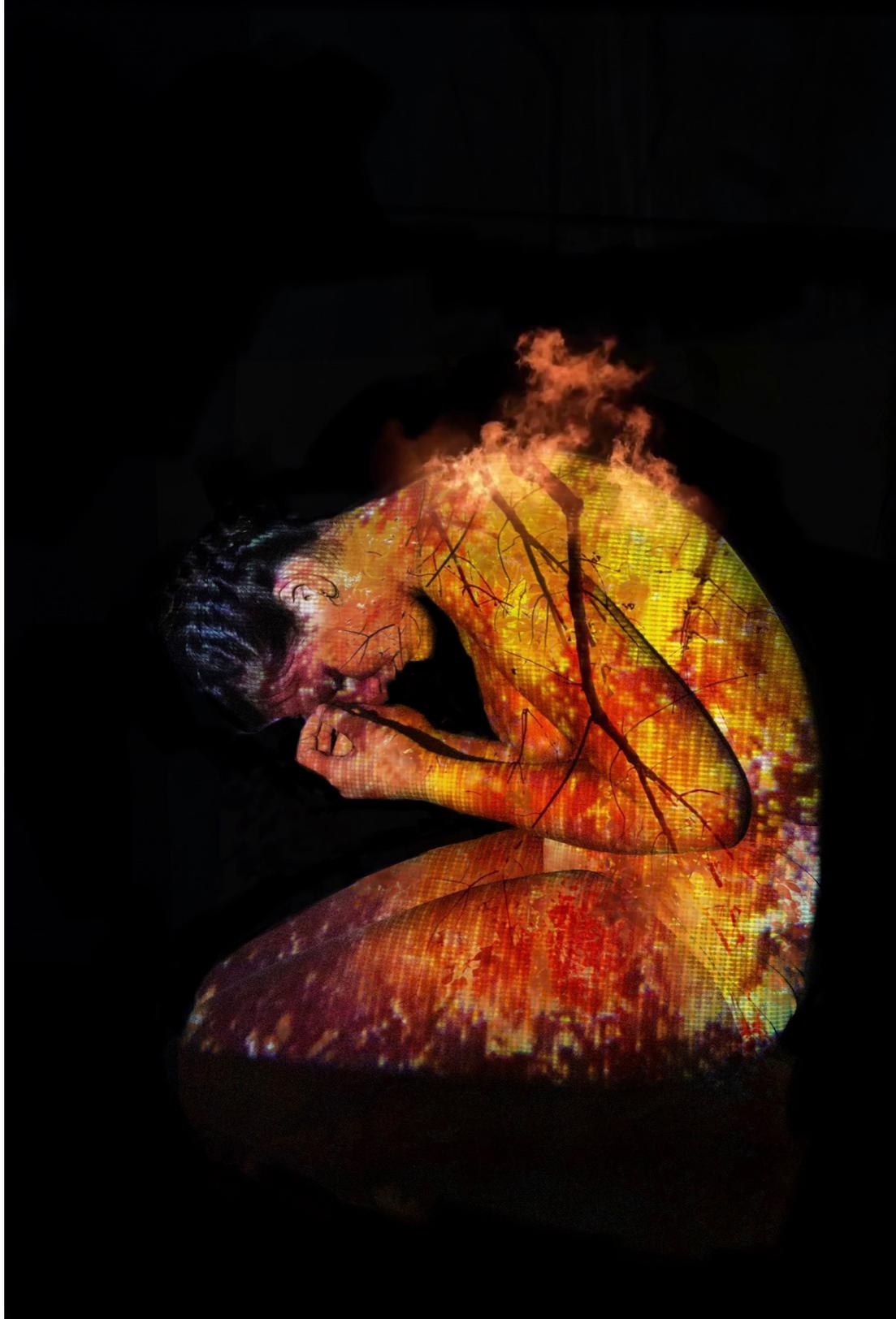
Why do we dare?

— Anna Henderson

**BRICK WALL**

My soul,
Griped fear
For four weeks long.
Begged this easily bruised,
Throbbing thought
To sink eyes shut,
Somewhere
Between light
Bouncing off the
Brick wall.

— Pilar Alejandra Paradiso





REBIRTH

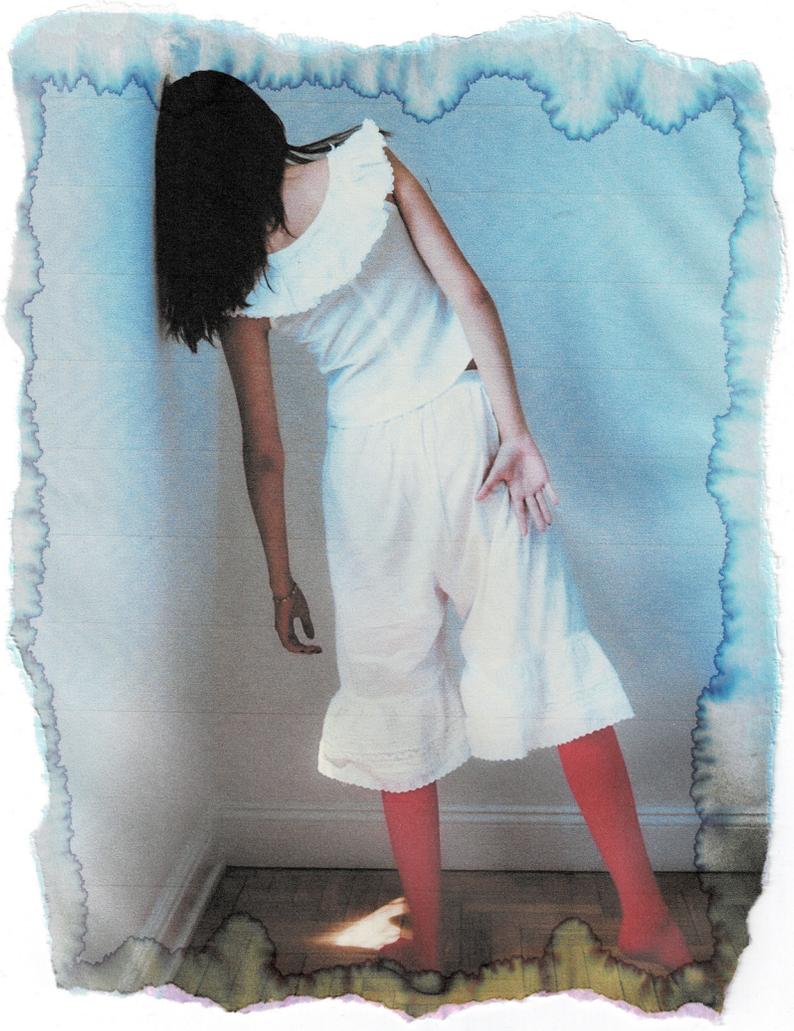
The noise of life fills the air
The flowers begin to bloom
Light takes over
For darkness, there is no room
Yet, I remain
Hoping to be reborn
Praying for mother earth's for-
giveness
Still I face the scorn
Neither the song the bluebird
sings
Nor the pattering of the rain
Will shield my troubled
thoughts
Or ever constant pain

Scents of honeysuckle
Tickle my nose and mind
Making me relive my youth
Where things felt so sublime
I pray as the tulips grow
Mother earth hear my plea
Make me one with the dirt
So that I may be redeemed
Wake me

—Julien Goulet











NOT MUCH LONGER

not much longer now
the snow melts, the sun fades, and my cigarette burns
into ash
impermanence is inevitable
but tonight can't seem to end soon enough
your cheeks are red from the cold
and mine are red from the wine
but truth be told
I think we've overdone it this time
still I'm scared to walk alone
it would be smart to run down this hill
but I've been up here for a year
waiting for a sunrise that never came
and you look so beautiful in the shade
so I may linger for awhile longer

—Brant Austin Simmons



ORIGIN, RAGE, JUSTNESS.

Yesterday were the ashes.
Today is the torrent,
Tomorrow is sooner.

Have I been gentle like the light,
With contrasting incandescent fury?
Have I festered like the rage,
Through simmering blood to the edge of boiling?

Birth was the gift converted into curse,

The cycle is observed,
But always overthrown.

Has the earth haven't seen someone quite like you.

But the glass in sand will stop falling,
And so, the fire shall burn.

Intermittent tribute...

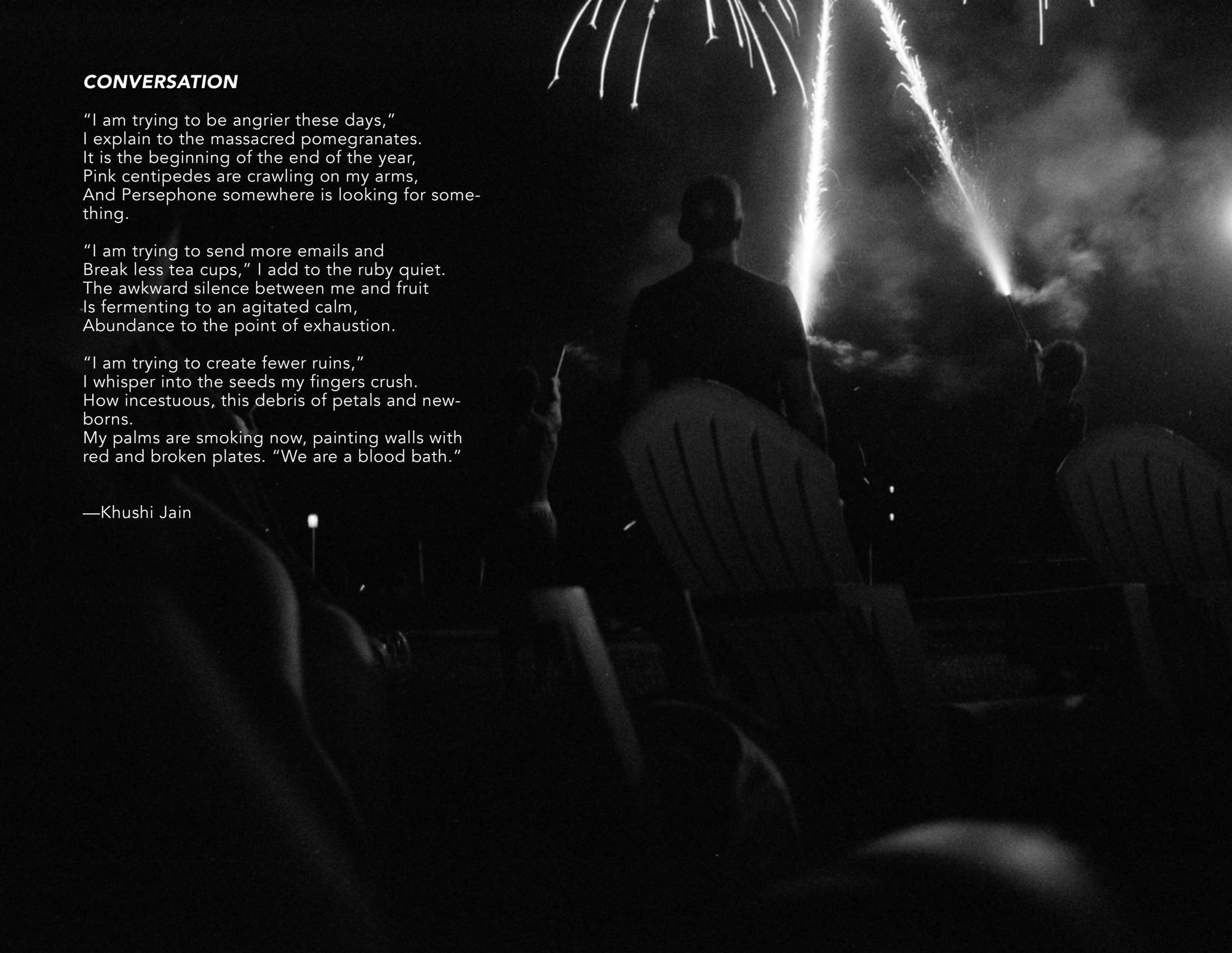
Am I not the Storm and Thunder that knocks on the door?
Is it not death always waiting for me to open?
Is it not the ghost of your charred promise?

The sun that was once ally,
Is now destroying its old friend.
The effervescence of the passion is long gone.
Soon you will all fall,
As I will when my time comes.

—Val, The Lost Star







CONVERSATION

"I am trying to be angrier these days,"
I explain to the massacred pomegranates.
It is the beginning of the end of the year,
Pink centipedes are crawling on my arms,
And Persephone somewhere is looking for some-
thing.

"I am trying to send more emails and
Break less tea cups," I add to the ruby quiet.
The awkward silence between me and fruit
Is fermenting to an agitated calm,
Abundance to the point of exhaustion.

"I am trying to create fewer ruins,"
I whisper into the seeds my fingers crush.
How incestuous, this debris of petals and new-
borns.
My palms are smoking now, painting walls with
red and broken plates. "We are a blood bath."

—Khushi Jain

BACK TO THE CAR

On the hood of my car, I sit, trying to remember,
Observing the moment that was before us.

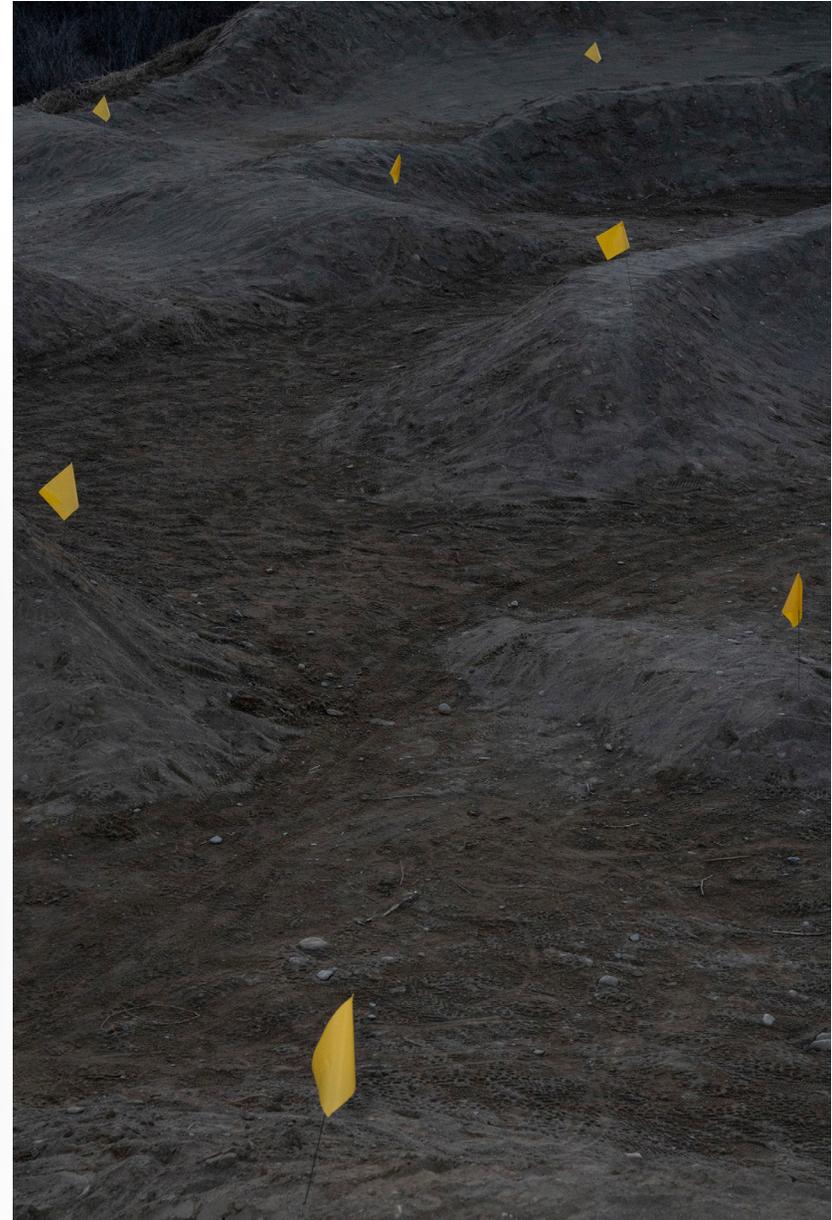
Headlights and a mountain cliff,
fog spilling over the ground,
crickets echoing the sunrise,
colorful weeds poking through the grass.
He's in the driver's seat, I'm next to him,
hands seconds away.

The leather jacket that smelled like 100 wears.
Crumpled grocery receipts, and Beach House CDs
scattered across the floor of the car.
Eucalyptus air freshener,
and us.

Memories filled with every detail except
the ones I want to remember most.
His green eyes and yellow voice,
with dark clothes and cloudlike scent.
The birthmark on his neck - or was it two?
Oddly absent from my memory,
The same joke made over and over.

I can't seem to remember.

— Lamar Kendrick-Dial



Out of all of the words on earth
 There are to say
 You've chosen the ones that burn like steam

My friends have started to march like an army
 And you've made a villain out of someone who
 looks too much like Juliet
 for me to think so too

And yesterday you walked ten miles
 to my house
 in the rain
 Because I forgot my pen
 But you hung up on me
 When I tried to tell you that I have pens here

And you love to play lifeguard
 And drag me from the deep end
 But you never listen
 When I'm screaming I LOVE TO SWIM

I used to call you something like a friend
 something like a friend in my bed
 With a hand on my thigh

There was a time when
 clothes were for girls far less brave than us
 the bed would catch fire
 And I would beg you to treat me like an ice cream
 we had never heard of a nightgown in our life
 I started as a girl
 But you changed me from a girl to an actor
 (and an actor is just a dainty word for liar)

but I am not an innocent
 I like to play with things
 Like your fingers and your lips
 my words and your words too

Kissing was for the dark
 And holding my hand
 was for under the table

Somewhere then
 The boiling stopped
 and the flames dissolved
 So I decided
 I wasn't as brave as I thought

You'd watch me prance off the stage
 To the guy in the back
 And I already knew that you would be
 thinking
 He's going to kiss her isn't he

Now here I am
 with an unnecessary wet pen
 and an unnecessary wet girl
 at the door

—Tess Ehlich







Editors in Chief: Carlos Hernandez

Katie Noble

Head Layout Savannah Faith Jackson

Designers: Lamar Kendrick-Dial

Jarod Polakoff

Faculty Advisor: Editha Mesina

Photo Editors: Anvi Agarwal

Shea Baasch

Savannah Faith Jackson

Kayla Gilly

Tierney Smith

Ethan Barrett

Elleah Gipson

Lamar Kendrick-Dial

Victoria Liu

Helen Ma

Ryan Pizarro

Jarod Polakoff

Dylan Sachs

Special Thanks: Niki Kekos

Jordan Cruz

Kalila Abdur-Razzaq

Adam Ryder

Caroline Wolfe Papocchia

Deborah Willis, Chair of NYU Tisch, DPI

Allyson Greene, Dean of NYU Tisch



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