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I want to speak for a moment on a *shrinking-feeling* I've experienced this year. It's a feeling that has shown up for me in the brightest and darkest moments of twenty twenty-five. And I see, too, both its positive and negative hand on my life and decisions.

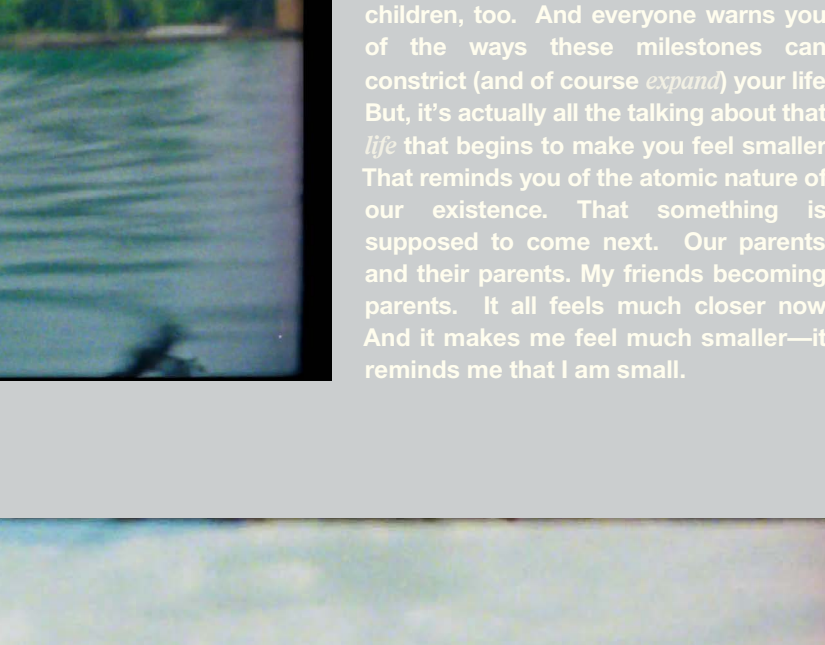
But, this *shrinking-feeling* is also still largely a mystery to me—a reason to write about it. What I know for sure is that it deeply influenced the song I shared this month, and the small body of work that is coming next year.

I can trace the origins of the *shrinking* somewhat. The pandemic played a role. It re-shaped my social life, and I relocated to Los Angeles in its midst. There are many ways to understand LA, but it is undeniably a more *separate*-feeling place than any other city I've lived in. My life *shrank*, quite literally, and has not fully taken on a new shape yet.

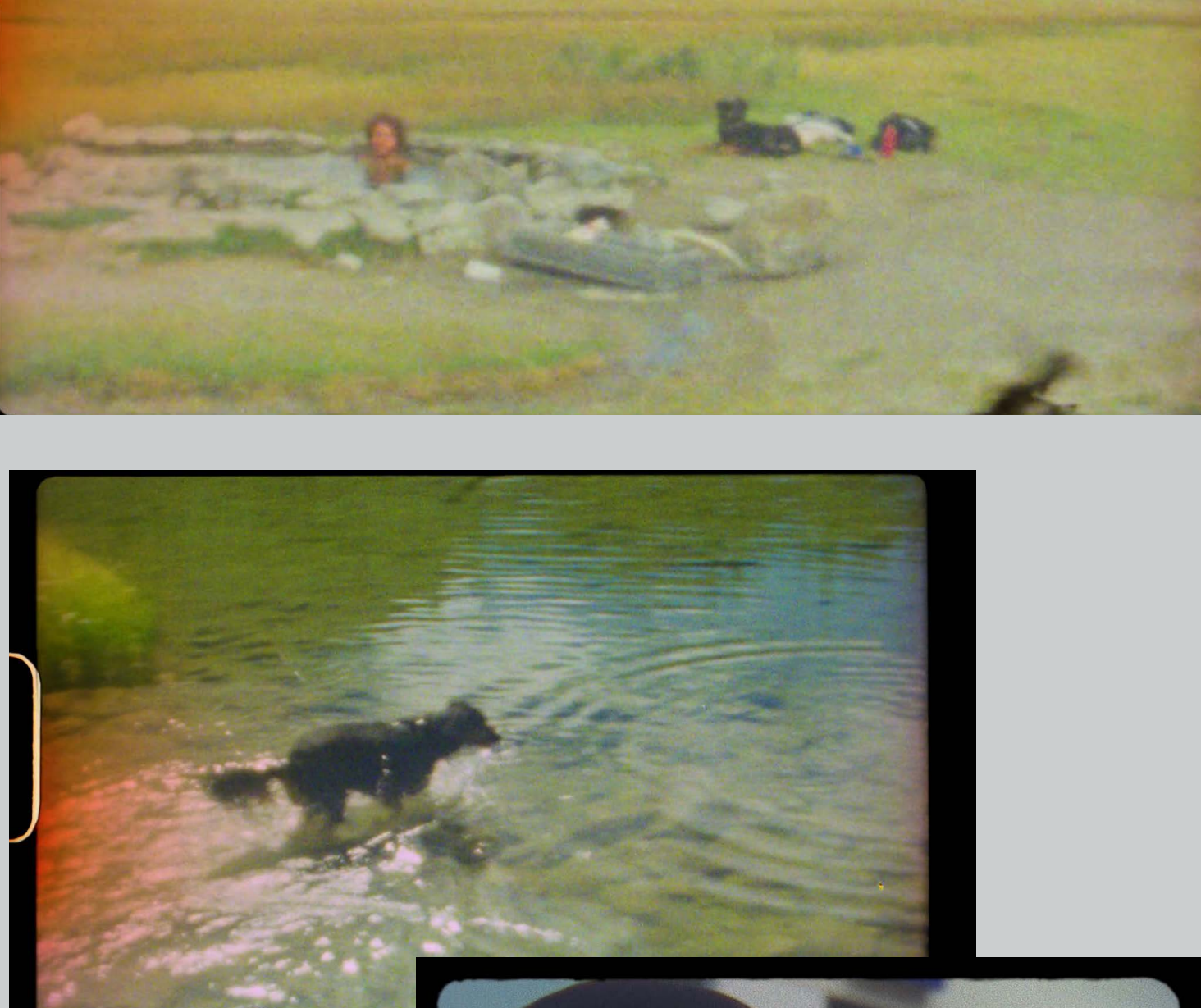


But, more broadly, the *shrinking* feels like a reaction to the current cacophony of the world. I imagine there is a broad spectrum of responses this cacophony elicits. But, mine, it seems largely, has been to *shrink*.

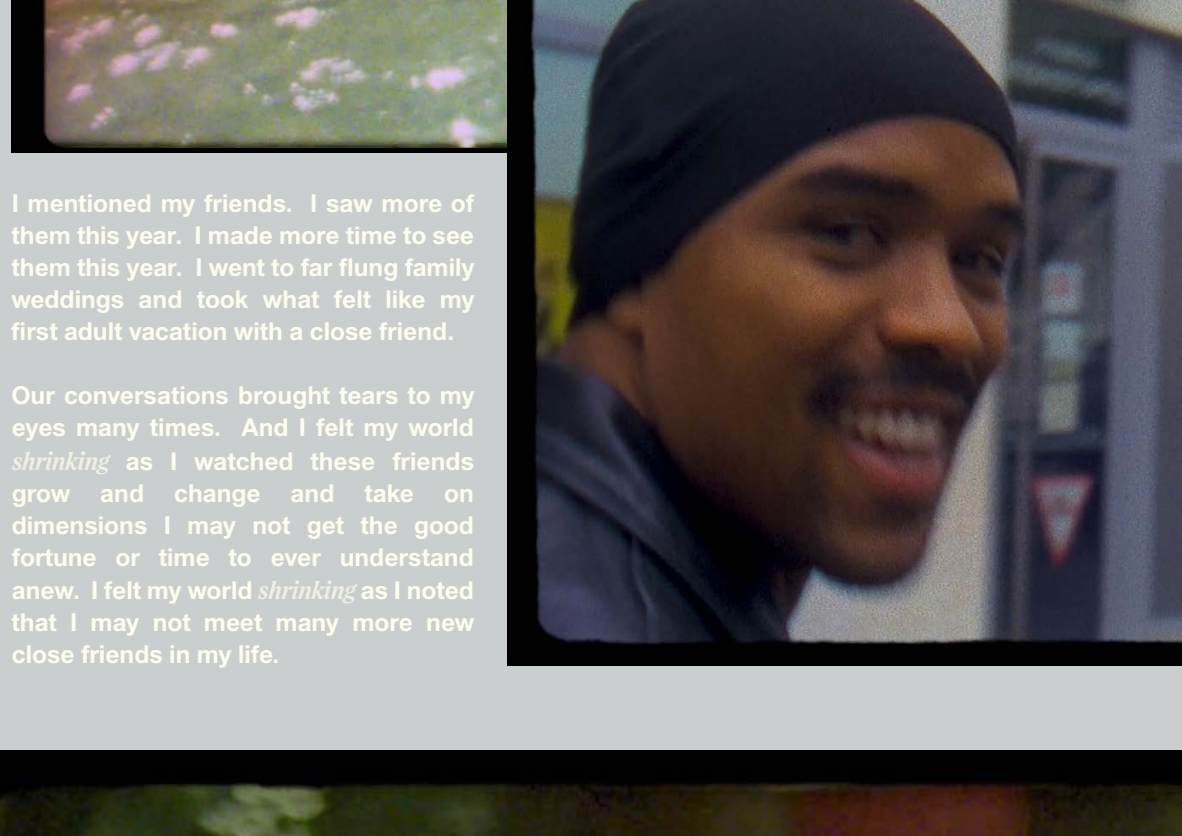
I got a flip phone this year.
I welcomed the questions it raised.
I minded the small tasks of my day.
I rode my bike more.



And there is one more factor that accounts for my *shrinking*, which is that I'm getting older. My friends are *not* having children, too. And everyone warns you of the ways these milestones can constrict (and of course *expand*) your life. But, it's actually all the talking about that *life* that begins to make you feel smaller. That reminds you of the atomic nature of our existence. That something is supposed to come next. Our parents, and their parents. My friends becoming parents. It all feels much closer now. And it makes me feel much smaller—it reminds me that I am small.

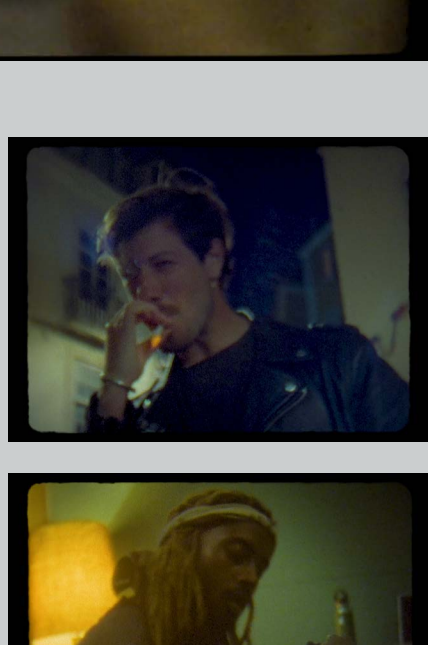


There is a peace in that, of course. There is a peace to disengaging, whether by instinct or design. The *shrinking* certainly feels as much like fate, or a knee-jerk reaction, as it does to being a choice. A choice to avoid having my most fundamental needs re-packaged and sold back to me. But, there is also a sadness to the *shrinking*, a quietness. And a guilt associated with what sometimes feels like avoidance or ducking under something.



I mentioned my friends. I saw more of them this year. I made more time to see them this year. I went to far flung family weddings and took what felt like my first adult vacation with a close friend.

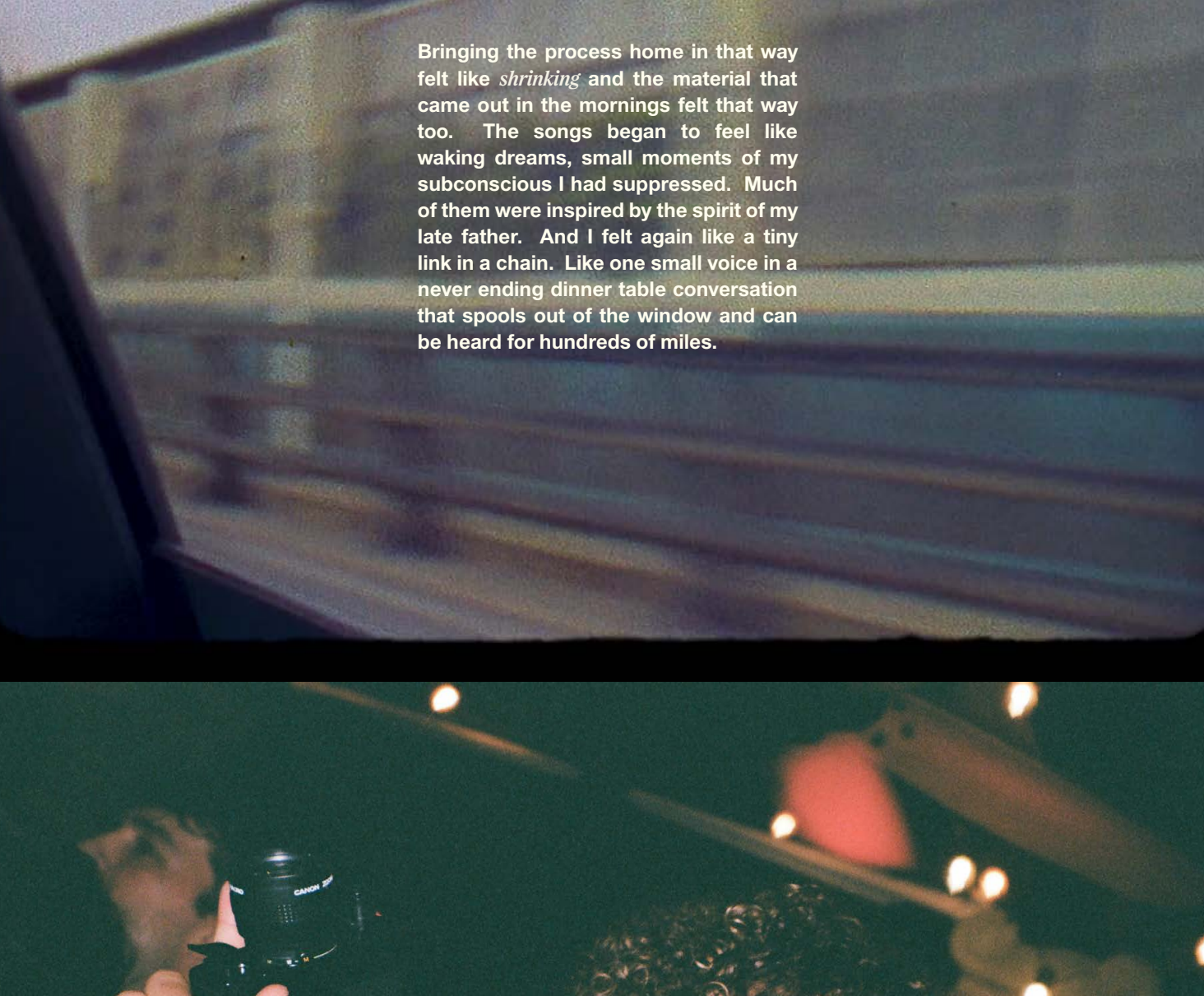
Our conversations brought tears to my eyes many times. And I felt my world *shrinking* as I watched these friends grow and change and take on dimensions I may not get the good fortune or time to ever understand anew. I felt my world *shrinking* as I noted that I may not meet many more new close friends in my life.



At the beginning of this year I shelved a handful of recordings I'd been working on and started fresh. I was hoping to regain something I feel I've become a bit detached from over the past ten years of making music, which is a faith and confidence in my own ideas. And as the songs began to unfold I realized that all I wanted from the process was to feel that I'd made something by hand, that my time, effort, skill, and knowledge shaped the work. Folk art.



This batch of the recordings is maybe the recordings I've been most involved in. I wrote and produced their beginnings alone in the second bedroom of my apartment on quiet mornings between January and June. And at the end of June I went into a studio for five days that played directly on top of the original home recordings. From there I took the music back to the bedroom and shaped and shuffled, before finalizing the lyrics and cutting the vocals alone in the same room the songs began in. (Robert Shelton at *Altamira Sound* helped me get the music over the line and held its spirit in place while mixing, he's a great hang and knows every good lunch spot in *Altamira*.)

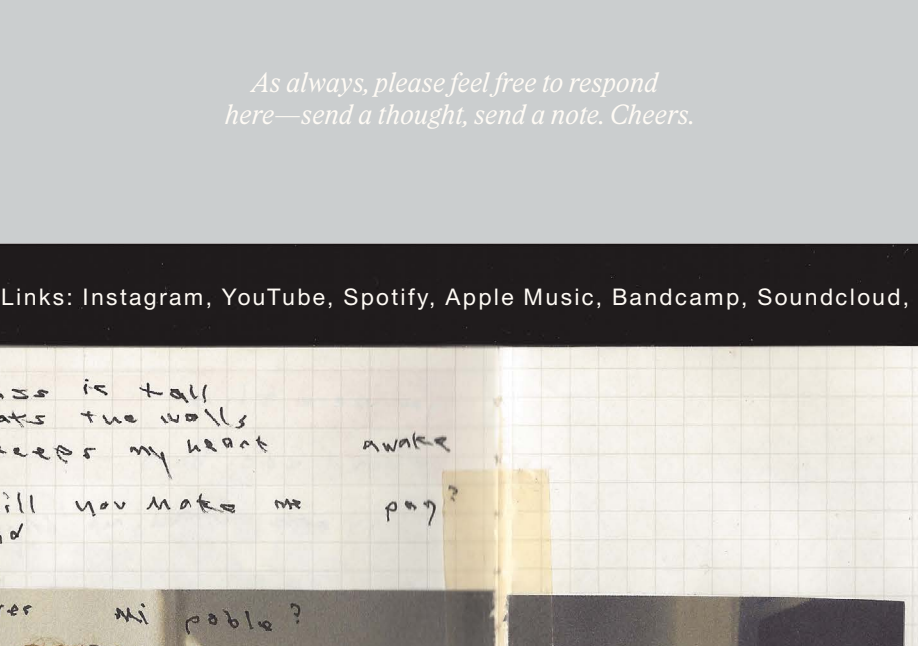


Bringing the process home in that way felt like *shrinking* and the material that came out in the mornings felt that way too. The songs began to feel like waking dreams, small moments of my subconscious I had suppressed. Much of them were inspired by the spirit of my late father. And I felt again like a tiny link in a chain. Like one small voice in a never ending dinner table conversation that spools out of the window and can be heard for hundreds of miles.



These songs feel to me like they're playing out of a mirror. I feel more and more like I am my only audience. Maybe I am paranoid. But, there is something liberating in this. There is something lost. And there is much to be gained, too.

Watch the "Angelito" Video Here



As always, please feel free to respond here—send a thought, send a note. Cheers.

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