

SUBSTRATE

START
SEEING
DEATH
HONOR each
life, attend every
funeral

24
SPDG



note from the editor

1. i am very very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
very
tired

2. and yet

with love,

cort hartle

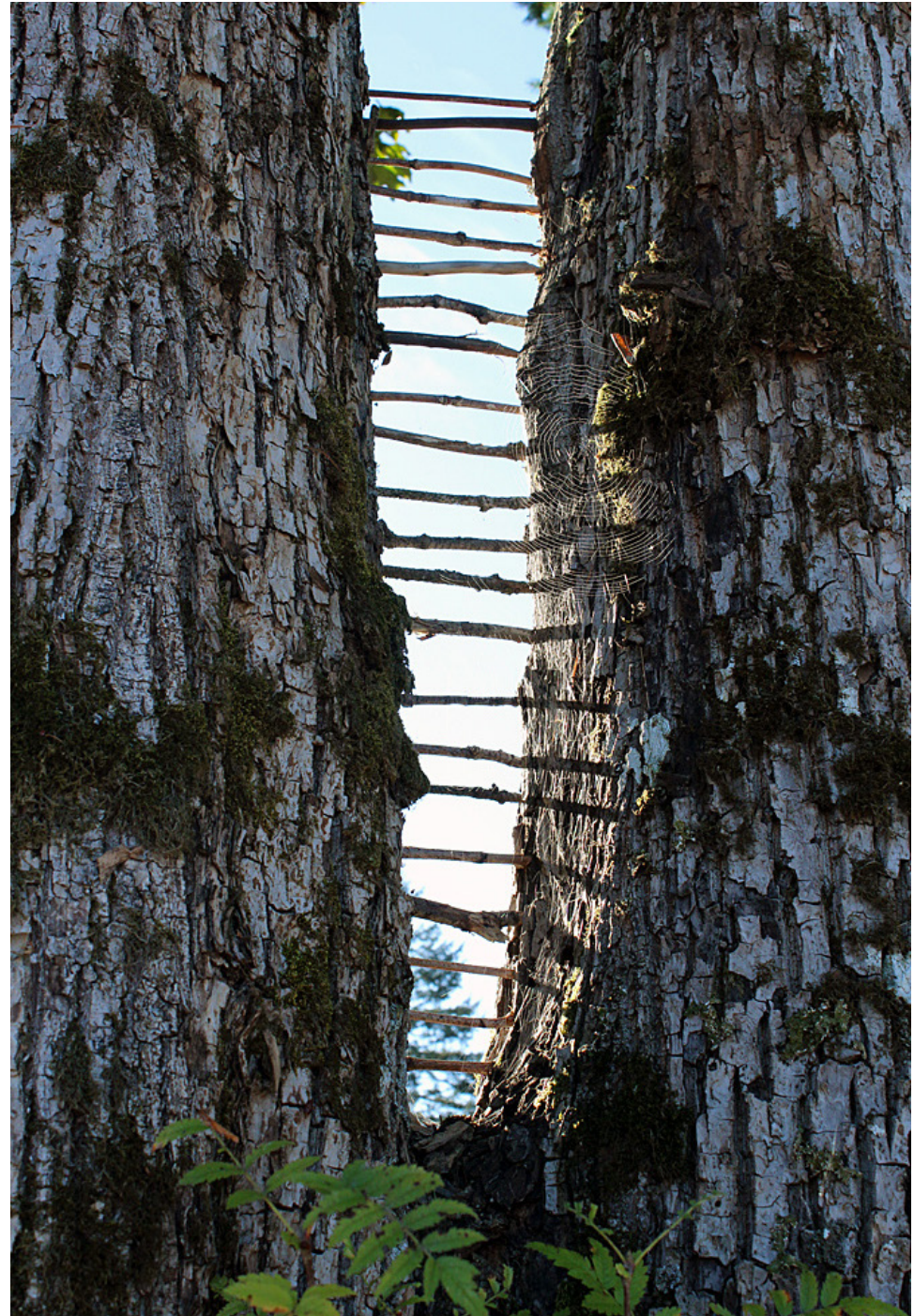
cover image: Elliott Sharpe, "Art See Eat"
@spogart



you're not a reindeer

the day begins with
pink telephone poles, dogs
too tired to fight, a woman
with Uruk-hai eyes.
I hold the sun like sceptres
in my arms, pick
the strangest fruits off trees.
I chip away at tombstones
of memories, dig up
the bones before them,
dress them in Groucho
and cardigans.
far away, some watch men
chip their teeth and chase
loose pucks, some work at
heights lopping off limbs,
some wait for stars
to explode.
I consume the rhythm
of engines, tinker with
a galaxy of coffee froth.
when I was young
I dreamt of fictive ships
in the sky, parts falling
into my backyard.
these days I dream
of flying.

Jonathan Focht, "you're not a reindeer"
@focht_



Racon Moran, "Tree Ladder"
Raconsmoran.com / poorquality.ca



M.I. Hall, "boat on the river at night with wet wood"

@michaelthomashall



Partners and Friends

Last year I wrestled with definitions, semantics.
Now that may sound mundane but I wanted, no, desperately needed to know-
What is a partner? A lover? A friend?

I realized these words had social meaning and significance but
To me felt unstructured.
Fractured by layered and overlapping nonsense definitions.
How can i commit to being one if I can't define them?

Lover was easy (it's the sex)
But more than that the carefree intimacy,
The gentle strokes of fingertips
The slow kiss then faster
The racing heartbeat.

It fades, don't be fooled.

But what is partnership and friendship?
Where does the venn diagram meet?
Where does hand-holding become friendly
and where does it become a lifeline?

Is it longevity? But either can last or wither.
Is it intensity? I can love my friends just as dearly.
Is it practical? A friend is fun but a partner is who
You make decisions with right?...
It seems so unromantic to define these things.

In the end I found my partner again, in time.
In who is left after all the challenges.
The spirit flying through life next to mine.
Not disappearing and not constricting.
Not desperate, not fleeting.

And honestly, that's how I found my friends too.

When I say "what can I do for you"
And hear the echo of "only what is best for you"

And the definitions melted away to confidence.
And semantics melted away into the multitudes of these words.
I realized you know what they are
and it's not in a verbal definition.
There was no string of words that made me understand.
The difference is the similarity.

A friendship contains small partnerships.
We go to events together.
I listen to you rant about anything.
You help me stop texting my ex.
We get through the work day together.

A partnership contains many friendships.
A shared video game save file.
Goodnight and good morning texts.
Laughing and crying through tax season.
Endless memories stretched back.

And when you can interchange those words,
and it all still stays true with one person.

That's rare. Hold her tight.

Megan Jalal, "Partners and friends"

@meganpluc17



above: Canego Hines, "Canego Creates"
 right: Canego Hines, "Canego Creates"



spitting up fractals

i sit
lonely in a crowded room
staring at
my heart in my hand
vulnerable
trying to heal it through my words and my tears and
i'm learning to love myself better
but it's throbbing every time my heart beats
healing old wounds reopened, raw and tender
the spark between us fueled the fire in me, my creational and worldly energies
alaze and burning love poems into my brain,,
fractals of my heart are spilling out through my tongue and eyes and
fingertips
but fires can be dangerous, the threads of passion and pain so entangled,
unsure if i'll create or receive comfort or burns when i reach out to touch
someone i love...
and yet i remain loving
i remain passionate
i remain inspired and motivated
i continue to persevere and pursue
because i believe that im here to do something good
i'm here to love

8.5.24



text: willow faith hart, "spitting up fractals"

@willowfaith.art

image: Ash High, "untitled"

@high.roglyph



willow faith hart, "cherry blossoms"

@willowfaith.art



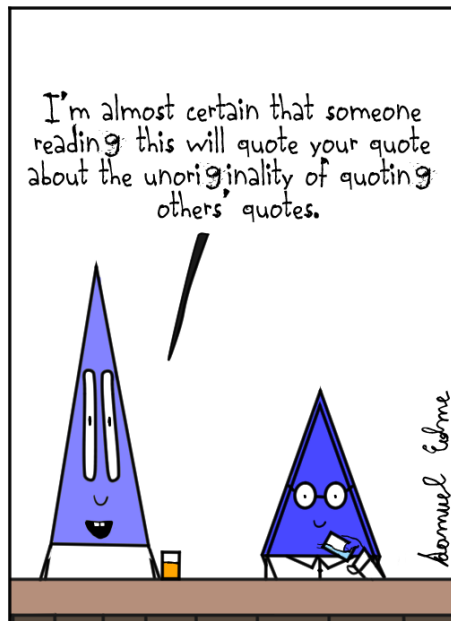
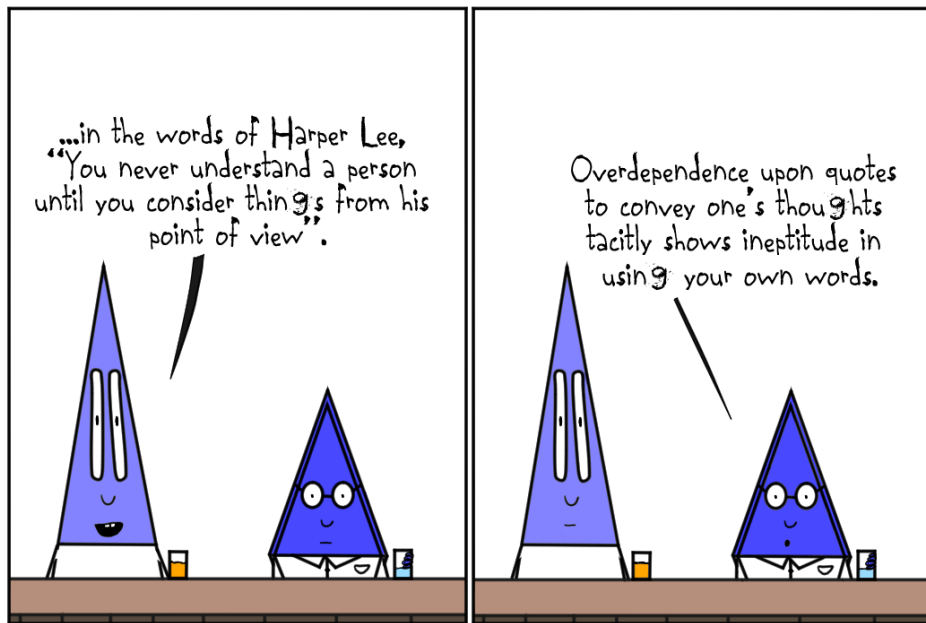
Elliott Sharpe, "Loving Yourself Deeply Is Possible"
@spogart



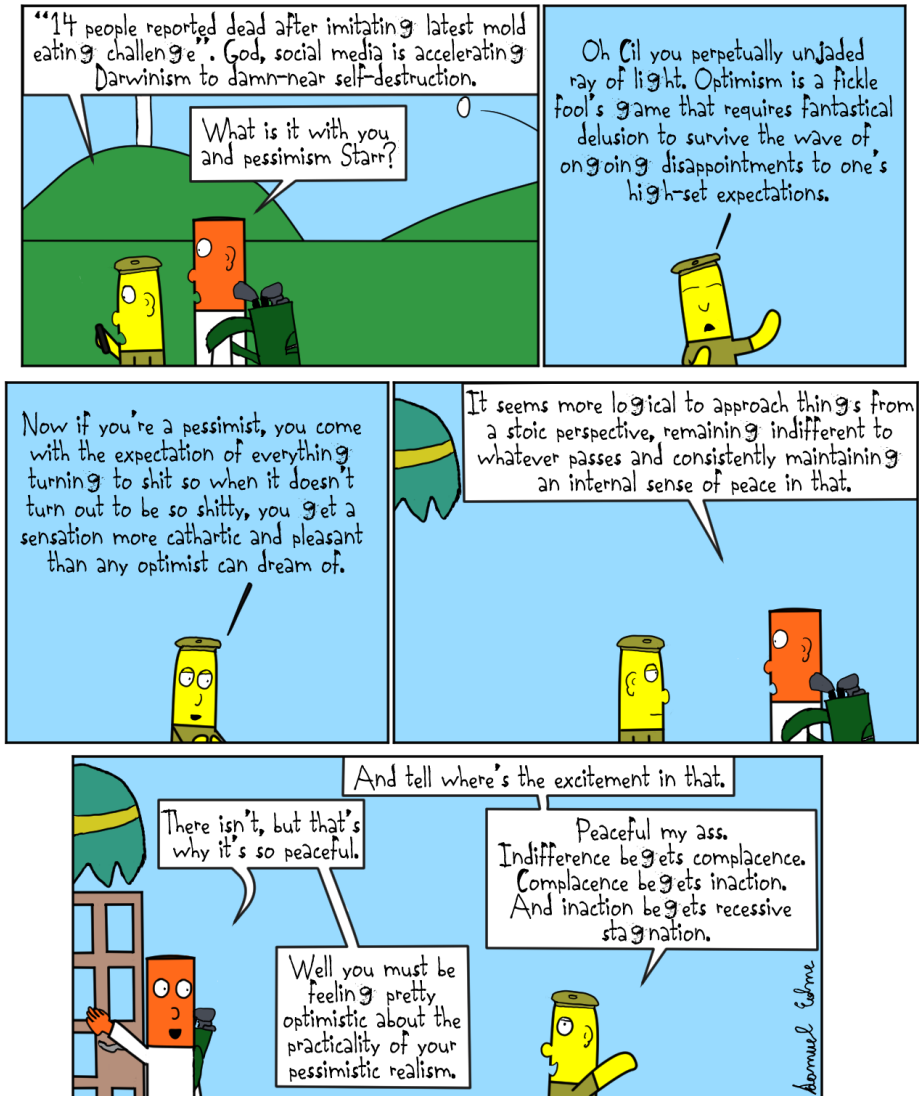
july

at the river after a sweat bum subway ride
there's ripple and cheeks and treeline sway
big city serenity and six ducks wondering
crispy old ladies eating out of jars
a Monday tinged bucolic, depression at bay
anchors away as a man floats by
I do too, distance makes me

image: Jacob Davidson, "The Playful Spirit"
@sketchbookdump / jacobadavidson.cargo.site
text: Jonathan Focht, "july"
@focht_



Samuel Edme, "The Shapes - Recursion of the Day"
link.tree/sams_studios



Samuel Edme, "The Shapes - half-full, half-empty, half median"
link.tree/sams_studios



above: Aaron Moran, "Leaf Spectrum"

Raconsmoran.com / poorquality.ca

top right: M.T. Hall, "pregnant woman in castle doorway"

@michaelthomashall

bottom right: Elliot Seiler, "A Better World Is Possible"

@h0neymush





Permission to Let Go

Sometimes humans need permission to do silly little things. At brunch today there was a table of older women celebrating two birthdays. And the waiter took their picture and said "now do a silly one and say WOOOOO" and they all embraced and raised their eyebrows and laughed and said woooooooooo and that was the best picture I'm sure of it. They needed permission to let go. They're doing what they're supposed to be doing.

And my soul is ripping but at the same time I'm sewing it back together and I'm crying and I don't know how to sew but I'm doing it and I'm using that, ya know, that stretchy string you know the one we use for friendship bracelets...

Yeah, so, it's stronger now. That stretch gives me permission to let go. My friendships help too. Like a little bungee cord for my psyche.

I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing.

So I give you permission to let go. "You" my ex-lover, "you" the audience. "You" the world at large. And me. Let go of the person that pulls at you. Let go of the things that you miss. Let go of the adventures that never came to be. Let go of the what-if spiral thoughts that lead you to remember only the good, and then let go of the bad too. We are doing what we're supposed to be doing.

It's kinda like my Roomba, she's so dramatic when she gets herself stuck on the ledge of the sliding glass door she's only 3 inches askew but she says like- "help I'm stuck near a cliff" It's kind of like that. It's scary to look down and see the void but... She's just doing what she's supposed to be doing.

You're closer to safe than you feel. You're closer to happy than you feel. You're closer to stable than you can fathom with that wide open nothingness beside you. You're doing what you're supposed to be doing.

You. Are. Doing. What. You. Are. Supposed. To. Be. Doing.

And you're allowed to. You're allowed to let go.

You're only 3 inches above the ground remember?

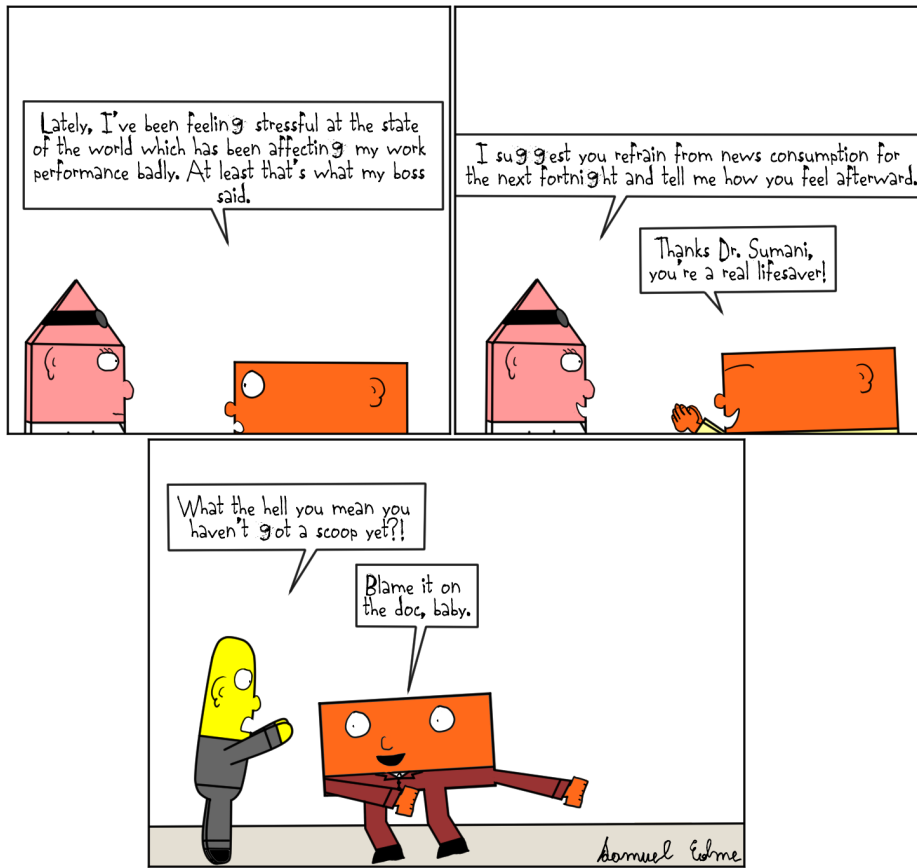
:)

image: Ash High, "ez luor"

@high.coglyph

text: Megan Jalal, "Permission to Let Go"

@meganpluc17



Samuel Edme, "The Shapes - No News, No Moose"
linktree.com/sams_studios

no thanks, i don't want any food.
 i'm full of Anxiety and Heartache and Unfulfilled Dreams

we don't need to break bread
 i'm full of Broken Promises
 from an unreliable lover

i couldn't bear to eat any dinner
 my stomach is full of Acid and Anger and Spite

but you have an appetite for two
 you feed me empty words
 then take a bite out of my heart and spit it at my feet
 you don't like how i taste, yet--
 you keep me around
 for when you're hungry for some Attention
 for some Affection
 because you Know
 i'll keep crawling back for more
 doesn't matter what you do to me
 i crave you like i crave water
 Desperate for another drop
 for another kiss
 but, unlike water
 you don't nourish me
 ...anymore

willow faith hart, "no thanks, i don't want any food"
 @willowfaith.art



don't write poems unless you want a universe

don't look up
unless you want to contemplate
don't drink beer
unless you want honesty
don't seek women
unless you want beautiful irrational
don't fill your schedule
unless you want to suffocate
don't climb trees
unless you're adventurous or arborist
don't eat cake
unless you want to eat cake
don't break character
unless you want honesty
don't go to school
unless you want to square your circle
don't wash dishes
unless you want order
don't have kids
unless you want to raise them
don't rationalize magic
unless you want to square your circle
don't climb and then sit on the edge
unless you know you won't jump
and if you sit you're better off
than the majority of the farm
for you push capability
without falling into the sun

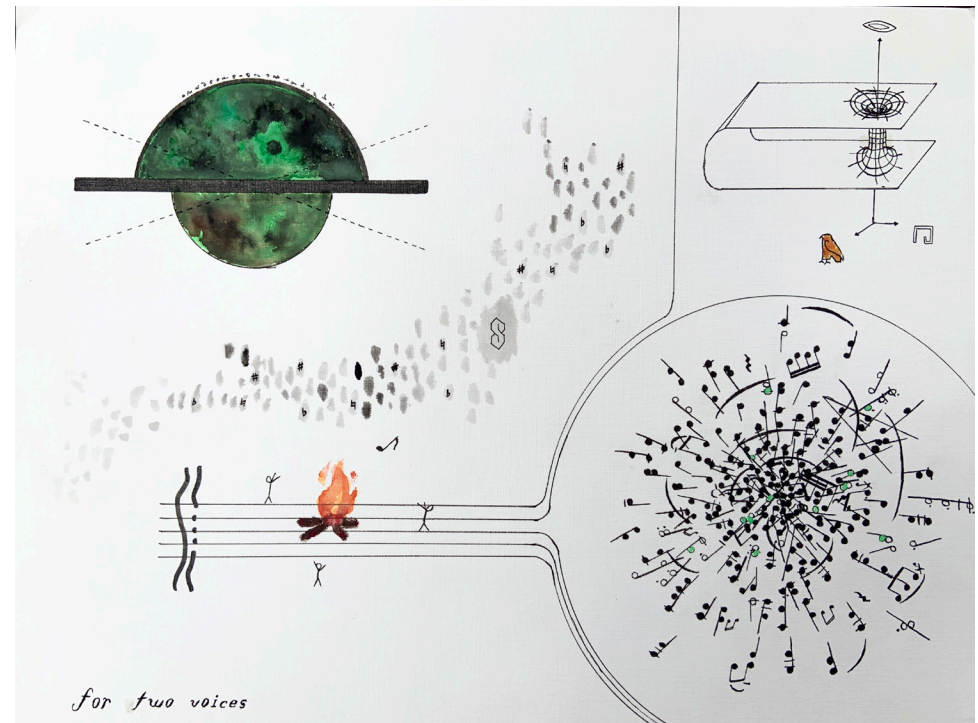
Jonathan Focht, "don't write poems unless you want a universe"
@focht_



Ash High, "a"
@high.roglyph



Canego Hines, "Not Like Us"



M.T. Hall, "two voices"
@michaelthomashall



SUBSTRATE is a quarterly anthology zine that provides an opportunity to practice revolutionary optimism and imagination as one antidote to nihilism, apathy, and despair. For another world to be possible, we must first--and continually--imagine and deeply believe in it. I want to exercise the creative muscles involved in making better worlds for us to live in and I want to do it together. To access and download previous issues, or to submit work to future issues, visit corthartle.cargo.site/substrate

Jacob Davidson

Samuel Edme

Jonathan Focht

M.T. Hall

willow faith hart

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Elliot Seiler

Elliott Sharpe