

ZIPPED



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Spring 2023



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Letter from the Editors



To Our Devoted Readers,

We have not met many of you face to face, but we consider our readers our family as well as our friends. It's a beautiful way to be connected if you think about it; writer and reader, strangers in many ways all brought together by words and images on a page. We can't help but wonder about the unseen and unexplainable forces that have delivered us all to the same 49 inked pages we call ZIPPED Magazine.

How have so many strangers ended up with us at the same destination?

Is it more than just a coincidence?

What other forces are at play in our lives?

These are the questions we asked as we began creating this issue.

Our staff worked tirelessly to analyze the human experience and delve into the complex notion of invisible forces that surround us all.

This issue of ZIPPED explores the raw, unexplainable, and complicated aspects of life. Our intention is to tell stories that push the boundaries of the factual. This magazine was made with strong intention as we tried to bring the intangible a little more within reach. We invite you to join us on this journey as we think about karma, twin flames, astrology, energy, déjà vu and many more invisible forces that touch our lives in deep and meaningful ways. These stories often go beyond fact and flourish when given the gift of a new perspective.

Before stepping onto the Syracuse campus four years ago, ZIPPED Magazine lived in the comfort of our fantasies and wildest aspirations. We walked into the first meeting of our freshman year, September 2019, looked the editors in the eye, and confidently agreed that their positions would be ours one day. Indeed that day has come. This full circle moment is truly indescribable. We could not be more proud and overwhelmed with gratitude for our team and this magazine. A massive thank you to every single creative on ZIPPED, and thank you to our always engaged readers. We hope you enjoy and walk away from this issue feeling more appreciative of the invisible forces many of us so often overlook.

With love,

Nell Schwartz and Malia Riviere

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sounds that inspired
our issue

Where do the Good Vibes Come From?

By Josh Lee

Last Friday, some friends and I walked into a bar to grab a drink. From outside, I could hear the crowd singing *Don't Stop Believing*, a timeless classic that gets even the grumpy old men with a lone glass of bourbon moving. The smoky scent of each Old Fashioned and the lingering aroma of cigarette smoke escorted me in. The place had a nice vibe. That vibe was ruined minutes later when I stumbled into a conversation no one wants to have while standing at the bar waiting for your drink — questions about what I'm going to do after college.

The conversation meandered this way and that, and when it finally fizzled out, I walked outside, hoping to reflect. Dressed in all black with a leather jacket paired with perfectly tapered jeans, was a guy grabbing a smoke. I was immediately intimidated. His aura pierced through me even as I just walked by him.

Vibe. Energy. Aura. The go-to way for Gen Z to describe people and environments is by using these words referring to vibrations and forces that we cannot even see. So where do these words come from?

The root of these concepts is energy. Of course, we have the energy within our bodies that was first discovered in 1807. But I'm talking about the idea of energy, the type emitted from people — the energy surrounding each of us with a unique force. We may feel this when we are attracted to someone at a bar and want to talk to them, or when we want to avoid someone because their vibe just doesn't feel right. Positive and negative energy was first introduced through the field of quantum

physics, which was later adopted by Richard Wiseman, a British psychologist, in the late 2000s. He referred to the concepts of different energies, relating them to our emotions and mood.

The concept of energy surrounding living beings predates modern medicine. One of the most prominent examples is the concept of chi, the energy that flows through you and everything else in the world, originating in the fifth century from traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts. You may have heard this word at a weekly yoga class or an acupuncture appointment when the practitioner talks about centering or balancing it, but what does that really mean?

In Chinese, chi (or qi) literally means "air" or "breath." It's the life force and the bridge between your physical self and your essence, consciousness, and awareness. It's similar to the concept of a spirit or a soul and its relationship with your physical body. Although not the same as vibes and aura, chi is based on the idea that a constant flow of energy can disrupt feelings, emotions, and even your body's physical health.

Today people loosely throw around the word "energy." Motivational speakers discuss the necessity of good energy to increase productivity and a healthier mindset. In business classes, professors always urge you to carry yourself in a certain way when speaking with professionals to emit positive or friendly energy. The word "energy" is talked about too often without people truly understanding its meaning or origin.



As humans, we continuously produce energy within our bodies, and this is how vibrations are made. Everything and everyone in the world gives off a certain vibration... literally. Think about it as an energy field around you, similar to the radiation emitted from phones or the heat from a campfire. When I'm talking to someone at a bar, the "vibes" I get from that person could be the actual vibrations that person is giving off.

Although there's no solid scientific research that backs this up, some believe that one's vibrations or aura can be sensed by other people. When you say that someone is giving off an intimidating aura or that person has good vibes, it's the concept that each person has their own unique energy that they radiate that is independent of their emotions. If they are in a good or bad headspace, the invisible energy emitted from one's personality or the way they exist with the people around them is also translated on a vibrational level. Today, we see health professionals and mental health advocates talking about how having a healthy state of mind will give off a positive or attractive aura based on the notion of emanating the energy that you have within you to others around you.

To be honest, I believe all of this to a certain extent. Of course, I know for a fact that we all give off certain vibrations from our bodies. As to how it relates to positive and negative vibrations, that is a multifaceted realm. That's something that I find a little bit confusing because there are so many different factors that come into play. I can enter a room and conclude that someone is giving off negative energy. But in actuality, they might look grumpy or tired, smell bad, or are just silent. These observable behaviors subconsciously lead me to internalize the energy someone gives off, separate from their emotions. Or are these observations a part of their overall "vibe?"

One thing is certain: there needs to be more scientific research and evidence about this subject to form any factual conclusions. So far, it's been theory after theory. I'm not saying this is a bad thing. Instead, it's just like any other invisible force or thing in the world. The value it receives comes from the faith people put in it. In the end, there is energy surrounding each and every one of us; you can decide whether or not you believe this energy can be felt as positive or negative by another person. If you do, then trust the vibes that you're getting from other people because it's more than just a "gut feeling."

YOU GET WHAT

You Deserve

By Sophie Schlosser

A new moon eclipsed by an unforgiving past – the mysterious skeleton of the human experience. The relationship between mindless intention, deliberate action, and unknown outcome concocts an unseen yet vibrant force that follows us for a lifetime. The energy we emit during our short time on Earth will be absorbed by the universe at some point in our visceral experience. Some call it a universal law of nature, others call it Karma.

The ancient saying, “what goes around comes around,” is a rule of life that prescribes that what you put in equals what you get out. Positive intentions yield positive outcomes and the same is true for negative ones. Karma can be defined in trivial moments and life-changing experiences. We’ve all heard of the boy who picked on someone for being in a wheelchair, only to get hit by a car and become paralyzed. Tragedy or justice? You decide. While some would say the aggressor simply got what he deserved, others would say there are other – perhaps less egregious – ways that justice is served.

Crisp beginnings are often tainted by dark endings that reflect our past identities. Old mistakes invite fears we have yet to face from the repercussions of who we once were. Humankind is afraid of consequences that stem from human error when ironically, it is our frailties and shortcomings we grow from. Instead of fearing the implications of Karma, this energy should be embraced with open arms, as it often veers us in the right direction.

Karma is a force of nature that works for or against you, but it can also manifest in less obvious ways. In high school, I made the sinister decision to read my older sister’s diary. An utter invasion of her privacy, I felt the only way to mend my messy relationship with my sister was to peer into her secret world.

For people who share the same blood, my sister and I are polar opposites in head and heart. While our DNA may be alike, our moral clocks swing like pendulums in opposite directions at different speeds, routinely missing each other, like two ships passing in the night, except when an emotional collision occurs. The love I have for my sister is endless, but our vast differences have a way of steering us apart. It’s unclear if these differences are actually similarities that we both refuse to admit. Prone to suffer from the intensity of our emotions, we concurrently retreat, destroying our ability and desire to lift each other up. We clash, and then we crash, and burn.

“If only I knew the real her,” I thought.

When the tattered leather journal caught my line of vision, my curiosity surged past my morality. I felt the only way to save our relationship was to meet her rawest form.

“Maybe I can begin to understand her. Maybe we can heal together,” I thought.

I was wrong.

From cover to cover, I indulged in her unfiltered words. My desperate ploy for connection made me a villain in my own heroine story. In an attempt to grasp the source of my sister’s pervasive agony, I quickly learned that I was the culprit – at least in my sister’s eyes. The words I read did not bring me closer to her or myself. It distanced me further from both. The Karma was not instant, but ongoing.

While nothing tangible happened to me at first, the initial Karma emerged when I was forced to face the truth that our sisterly relationship was damaged, and she blamed me. My guilt led me to unveil the truth to my sister that I had invaded her private space. I explained that I had hoped this act of bad judgment would help me better understand her and where our relationship went so wrong. What I received in return was an explosion of wrath, glossy eyes of betrayal, and then soul-shattering radio silence. This was followed by a feeling of endless shame and growing division between us. Is this Karma? I think it is.

I wonder if the act of having pure intentions while also committing something sinister is enough to evade the consequences of my own guilt. While my Karma manifested in the form of shame that lives with me to this day, it also taught me the importance of boundaries and integrity. The consequences of my actions forced me to evolve into a better – and more wise – human being. I have forgiven myself, and for the most part, I have been forgiven. I will continue to navigate the windy road that is my relationship with my sister with great caution from now on. Somewhere between conscious intention and reaction, Karma lurks. This invisible force doesn’t have to be reciprocal in circumstance. Instead, it mutates in shape and form in order to seep into our deepest internal wounds. Karma finds a way to know the good, the bad, and the ugly. The laws of Karma rule.

Just as a seesaw only reaches a perfect balance when both sides bear equal weight, the universe teeters for each of us until it finds its own equilibrium. The push and pull of life is measured by the forces of nature, which lead us to believe we reap what we sow. Karma is the great equalizer. It does not give us what we want or need, rather what we deserve. If one is only living to please Karma, beware. But if one is living in service for others out of graciousness and authenticity, this will not go unnoticed. Eventually, the seesaw will find a balance. Karma doesn’t discriminate, but it can forgive. Ultimately, equilibrium will be restored.

Stars and Signs

WHAT YOU NEED

TO KNOW

Astrology's skeptics and believers, and how to learn about astrology ethically.

By Victoria Radis

Wait, what's your zodiac sign? It feels like these days people are talking a lot about horoscopes.

Instagram and TikTok have been primarily responsible for this rise in popularity whether it be through a video explainer, an Instagram graphic, or horoscope apps such as Costar, which provide daily horoscopes. All of these forces have worked together to create a huge astrology community online. Even with a massive online community who believes that the stars can predetermine aspects of our personalities, many people are skeptical. If you're one of the skeptics, I hope I can convince you otherwise.

It's been challenging for me to sit down and write this article, but it's not my fault, according to my Costar I'm just really going through it right now! My opinions on astrology have shifted, but have never left the arena of my thoughts since my freshman year of high school. It all started with an Instagram post that determined which cat you were based on your zodiac sign. At that time all I really knew about myself was that I was a Scorpio, but the second I saw that my sign was a picture of a little black cat wearing a witch's hat on an Instagram slide labeled "What cat is your sign," well, that was all I needed to be hooked.

At first it was a pleasurable pastime for me. All the Instagram graphics kept telling me I was sexy, witchy, deep, and mysterious. Who doesn't love a little confidence boost? But these posts only sustained my confidence for a short period of time, and as much as I loved my Scorpio identity, I wasn't sure how much I bought into the concept of astrology. I decided that I had to learn more. I soon yearned to be well-versed in all things astrology and dig deeper into what made me, me.

As I moved through college, I began to form relationships with people, some of whom believed in the power of the stars, and some who didn't really buy into it. The more believers I met and listened to their arguments, the more convinced I became.



Aries



Taurus



Gemini



Cancer

This is not to say that the entire basis of your personality has to do with your horoscope. Who you are can be shaped by the stars, but not necessarily wholly determined by them. Your birth chart is the name that refers to the different signs and rulings based on factors such as your birthday, the time of your birth, and where you were born. It's composed of several different placements that contribute to what makes you, you:

1. Your Sun Sign

At the center of our universe is the sun, and it's no different with birth charts. The sun sign represents who you are at your core, your true self. It is determined by your date of birth, specifically referring to the position of the sun in correlation to the different constellations, at the time you were born.

2. Your Moon Sign

The reflective moon shows the truths in your inner being. The moon sign plays off of your emotions and reflects how you perceive yourself. The moon sign also reveals your inner truths. Your moon is thought to be who you truly are without outside influences. Your Moon Sign is determined by your birthday, the place where you were born, and can be determined by what time you were born.

3. Your Ascendent Sign (Rising)

Your ascendent or rising sign, refers to which zodiac rose on the eastern horizon at the exact time you were born, and determines how you come off to other people, how you portray yourself. Your Ascendent Sign is determined by your time of birth.

4. Mercury

Mercury, the ruling planet of Gemini and Virgo, rules how you communicate and interact with others, and how you perceive and interpret information.

5. Venus

Venus, the ruler of energetic love, controls what you love and what you love in others.

6. Mars

The blistering Mars is associated with aggression, and how you approach obstacles and tackle difficulties.

7. Jupiter

Jupiter reflects how you grow, and what ideals are important to your understanding. It stays in each sign for about one year, so you may notice some similarities with those around you!

8. Saturn

Saturn rules boundaries and discipline, with a focus on personal responsibility. It stays in each sign for about two and a half years, so similar to Jupiter you may notice similarities with your peers and friends.

9. Uranus

Some aspects of our chart stay similar across generations because of the long length that the ruling planet stays in each sign. For Gen Z, Uranus is in Aquarius which means that innovation and deviance are made prevalent in people born from 1997 to 2013.

10. Neptune

Another generational sign, Neptune is also in Aquarius, which rules inspiration and imagination. Aquarius is known for not being bound to rules, and for breaking barriers, which seems to well reflect the rebellious values of Gen Z.

11. Pluto

As for the last of the generational signs, Gen Z's Pluto is also in Sagittarius, highlighting creativity and freedom. All of these generationally-based planetary aspects make a lot of sense, thinking about how Gen Z is characterized by our rebellious nature and the desire to deviate from the norms set forth by previous generations and create progress.



Leo



Virgo



Libra



Scorpio



Sagittarius



Capricorn



Aquarius

So... Do you believe in astrology yet?

After learning about these aspects of birth charts, I started thinking about astrology in a less generalized way. As with anything in life, astrology isn't black and white and you don't have to 100% believe. There definitely is a middle ground. I see astrology as the foundation of one's personality, how you may be inclined to react, communicate, and portray yourself, but it's not the sole controlling force that makes you the person that you are. In order to see your birth chart, I recommend downloading an app such as Charts or Co-Star, that offers not just your birth chart but a summary of what everything means for you! There is also always the option of going to an astrologer, but that is not always an accessible option for everyone.

You can't say that all Cancers are overtly emotional or that all Leos are self-absorbed or that all Aries are hot-headed or that all Geminis are two-faced—obviously that won't be true. My best friend is an introverted Leo (rare I know), and she isn't very outspoken or full of herself. There are other ways I can see Leo in her, though, through her loyalty and big heart.

So even if you don't identify with an aspect of your chart, that's okay. There are so many other factors that make up your personality, such as life experiences and who you choose to surround yourself with. Even though zodiac signs surely do not predetermine everything about us, I came to realize that they certainly impact how we may be more inclined to view the world.

Ethics in Astrology

While zodiac signs are fun to learn about, it is important that we recognize the issues with mainstream, social media-influenced astrology. A lot of the astrology promoted online is white-washed and ignorant of both the origins of astrology and the concept that not all astrologers are white women. When learning more about the history of astrology it is important to learn about it in its full cultural context and significance, not just as a white American fad.

Versions of astrology date back to ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia, spreading to India, and have been diffused through many indigenous cultures. Forms of astrology from different cultures and regions look different from each other and different from what we are used to seeing on our Instagram and TikTok feeds. These civilizations and cultures paved the way for astrology to reach a wide variety of people.

I've heard people say something along the lines of astrology being "for the girls and the gays" so many times, which first of all is just weird, but it also excludes the experience of people who aren't white or aren't American.

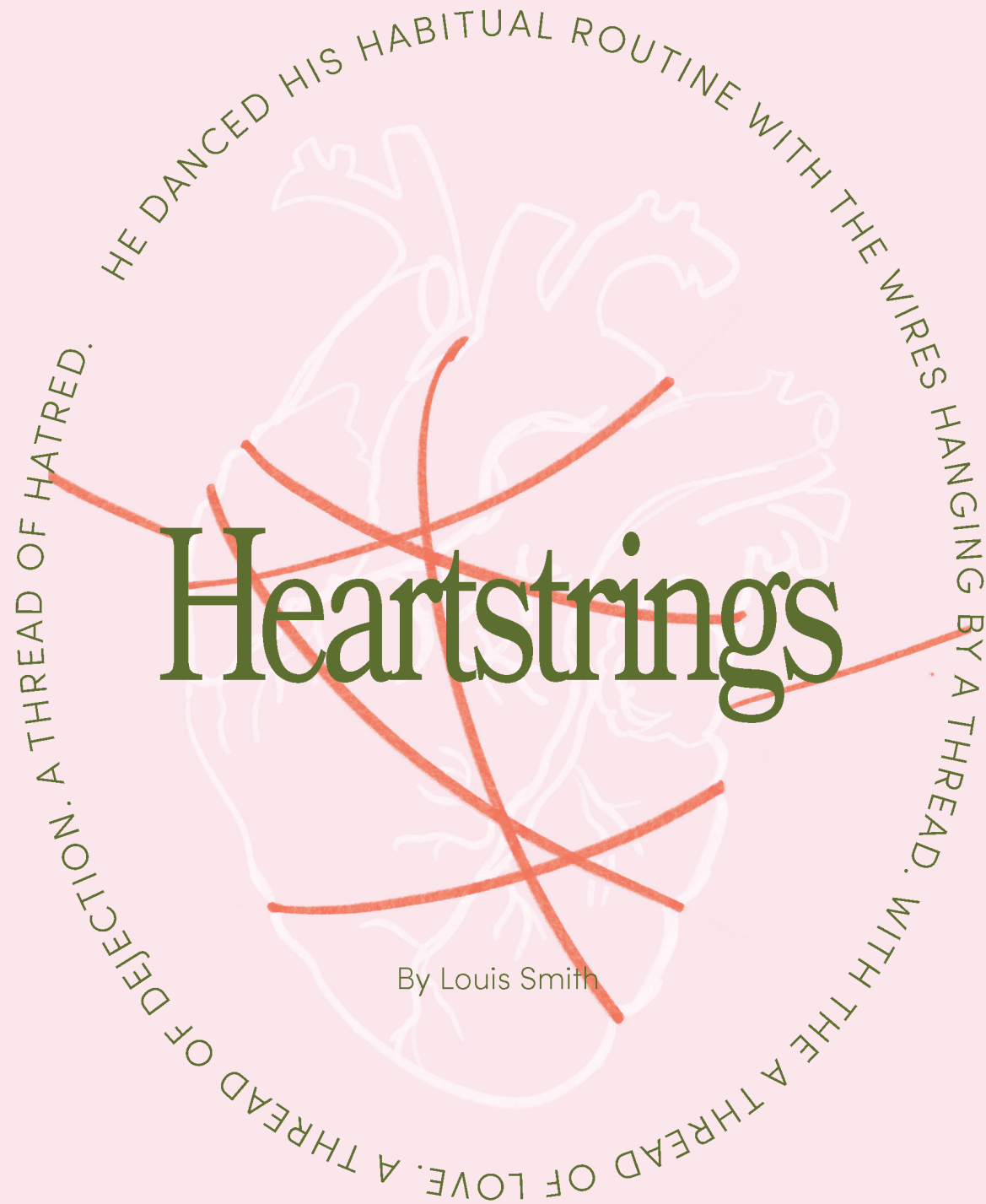
I recently read an article on Medium by Isvari on the cultural appropriation of astrology, in which white American women have created a white gender war out of astrology, victimizing themselves for stating that cisgender heterosexual men don't believe in astrology. Again, the argument the author is talking about creates a very narrow definition of who actually is able to immerse themselves in astrology, while excluding the people who have arguably made the greatest contributions to the field.

White women are not oppressed by cisgender heterosexual white men for liking astrology. It is the white-washing of astrology that has made it more generally accepted. This is part of what generates so much backlash, the fact that astrology has been invalidated as a true belief system for years, before it was white-washed on social media, and deemed "palatable."

So even though it can be both informative and entertaining to learn how to use the stars to determine attributes of our personalities, as with anything, it is important to educate ourselves first. In exploring astrology it is imperative that we maintain respect for the cultures and people who have set the path for us to be able to do so, as it is exciting to learn about astrology in a way that is respectful of its origins.



Pisces



Long ago, a lonely man sat across from his crackling fire weeping, and wishing for a friend. The wooden rocking chair that he sat in every night was the closest thing he had to kinship. He knew where each piece of wood met another, the pace at which to teeter to ensure his stability, and the beauty of the chair's wood marbling that only he was privy to seeing. He loved his chair. He wished for his chair to speak back to him under the dim candlelight, for his chair to admire his world, and for his chair to love him as much as he loved it. He wished for his chair to live.

So he did just that. He took his favorite slat from the back left side of his chair, and held it in his frail hands, a single teardrop falling on the bones of his new friend. He grabbed a sharp knife from atop his mantle and began to whittle the features of a face into the single slab of wood. Moving fervently, he carved a small arm and hand that nestled inside his own. He continued on, crafting two legs, a chest, two feet with five toes on each, and one head. Staring down at his emotionless friend, he meticulously etched two round eyes, a supple nose, and a soft smile. He made the friend in his own image. Staring down, he saw the boy he once was mixed with an aged internal loneliness and

the acceptance that they both would be strung together throughout time. A similar soft smile ran across the man's face for the first time in a long time.

As the days pressed on, the man added hinges and screws, strings and a hat to his puppet. The man closed his eyes and wished the puppet to come to life, and he did. He named him Junior, confirming his existence. The man and Junior did everything together: they ate the same stew every night, drank the same port wine, and sat in the same wooden rocking chair across from the same crackling fire. The man grew accustomed to the emptiness of the slat that now comprised Junior's gentle body. At the hands of the man, Junior would dance around the worn red carpet and the once lonely house now filled with laughter, clapping, and toe tapping as their kinship grew.

Soon, the man's neighbors grew curious about the new life that had been breathed into this once gloomy house. Neighbors would knock on his door and with a grin from ear to ear, the man would proudly show them Junior. The neighbors asked for a show, and the man and his puppet danced in front of his fireplace as if they were stars on a theatre stage. The neighbors cheered and the house roared with an excitement felt deep inside the souls of the man and Junior.

It did not take long for word to get around. Lines stretched down his pebble driveway and around his rusted mailbox as spectators came from all over to view the puppet show. Night after night, the puppet danced the same routine as the man beamed with pride at his creation. Each twirl of the puppet and dip of his lower back garnered applause and amazement from all who journeyed to see him.

One night, like any other, the man and the puppet got on the makeshift stage in front of the fireplace, the puppet's feet clicking against the wooden planks. As if on cue, the man's house filled with shrills and thrills from the audience reacting to a backflip, a trick that took the duo months to master so the strings would not get tangled. But the excitement that once came from landing the trick no longer delighted the puppet. His existence felt hollow and he no longer felt like he was performing to make the man happy, instead, he felt like he was built for the enjoyment of strangers who traveled hours to see him, only to leave and never return again.

The man, more concerned with fame than his little friend, no longer sat with the puppet across from the crackling fire, enjoying port wine and hot stew. Instead they rehearsed. They planned. They set up the stage.

They worked. They slept. They fell out of love. The man was no longer lonely and no longer wept out of self pity. He loved the puppet, but the puppet no longer loved him.

The puppet, his puppet, was not the man's anymore, and the man was not the puppet's.

As the shows continued, the spotlight exposed the puppet's cracking leg and worn arm as the man continued to pull at the strings and make the puppet dance. With splintered feet and rusted nails, Junior yearned for the life he once lived. He masked his unhappiness because he loved the man and knew how happy the crowds made the man.

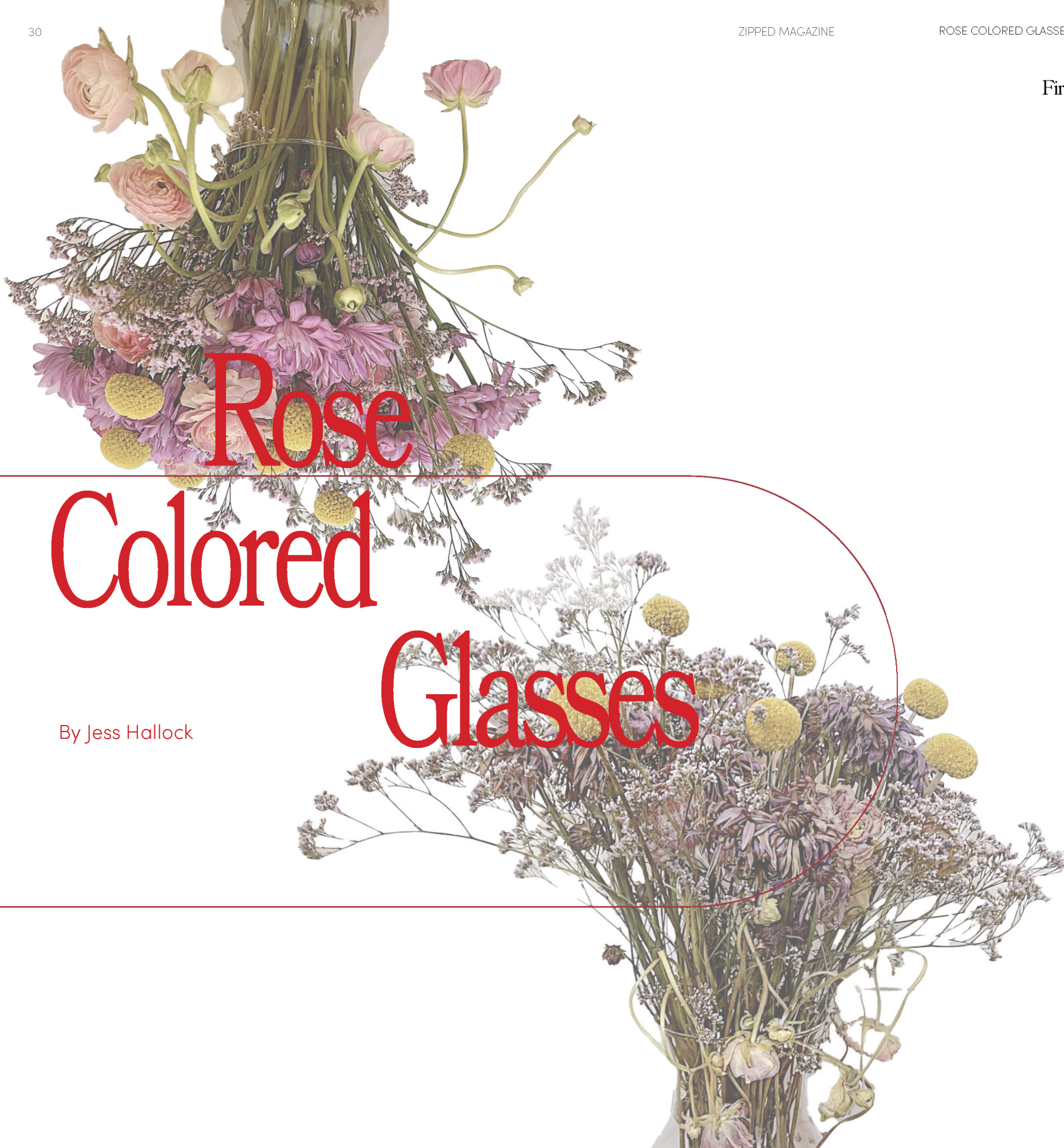
Over time, the puppet grew too worn and tired to continue to perform. The time came for the puppet's final show. With a now hunched back and broken leg, the puppet was dragged onstage for their largest crowd yet. Between the flashing lights and bustle of the audience, the puppet assumed his usual position: center stage, legs set apart, and arms in the air. He danced his habitual routine with the wires hanging by a thread.

A thread of love. A thread of dejection. A thread of hatred.

The man smiled, not from pride for his puppet, but from pride for himself. As the wires sheared with each movement, the puppet slowly detached from the man. First his right arm broke loose. The audience screamed. Then his left arm, followed by his left leg, and lastly his right leg. The puppet was free. Without strings, the puppet was again just a slat of wood, no longer supporting the old man, not even as a plank from the rocking chair.

The puppet died and so did the man. As the crowd shuffled down the man's pebbled driveway, the man was again left alone sitting in front of his crackling fireplace, weeping as his puppet lay lifeless on the worn red rug. Perhaps he too was just a puppet, bound to his past and controlled by someone else. . . . But he loved the puppet. He did not love himself. In that moment the man knew that we can all feel like puppets, putting on a show with the desperation to create connections. He realized he must cut the strings of expectation and become the puppet in its purest form, not moving under the hand of another, but joined together by love and connection, existing together equally.

The man, like the puppet, lost a friend that day. But will live a lifetime with the ghost of his puppet.



Rose Colored Glasses

By Jess Hallock

For the reader... This poem is meant to be read three times:
First just as the **red** text, then only as the *italics*, and once more all together.

Relationships tend to have this effect –

A double entendre

They don't tell you she might make you forget everything you thought you knew

As the world spins on his axis of masculinity

We watch men in spandex shorts box, making fun of the women who vaunt the same ones

Their femininity lives as an exhibition

Parallel to my own womanhood, his judgment colliding

Why not them instead? The cruelty of this universe is most obvious in her severance of duty

She kisses me at red lights

I might be a part of something bigger

Except I am finally enough

Thank God

My polarity from the living world seems much less paralyzing this morning

I called my mother yesterday and told her I loved her

My life gingerly orchestrated at the hand of ambition convincingly taking flight

I may irrevocably leave behind grocery stores and fluorescent lights

His wants inevitably become my needs

I take his pain as the earth takes her rain, It is meant to be this way

In lieu of our own hatred, we begin to love each other's faults

It heals, enduring a love so fervently tempered

My bugs but a footnote to her tattered flavor

I can't believe they make people like this

I can't believe they make people like this

Plainly groping my flaws to deny the face of his own vices

I'm a healer, an inevitable asset to those who may call themselves mine

I decorate my arms with her charms of undrinkable desire

Enough dizzying bracelets to remind the universe who I am

Now indisputably enough

This lives as my remaining purpose

I covet the day I am no longer digestible

My unquenchable need for approval thoroughly and agonizingly transpired

It is filthily raging red and orange outside

My skin absorbs this sun like it hasn't seen him in years

I can feel the sweat seep through my cheeks in foolish salty droplets

Did I put sunscreen on?

The gold of my many adornments swelter in fury and exhaust

Her ore fiercely incinerates, scorching my once lush wrists

Stop thinking about that one time with him

Where he –

And then I –

That fucking dirtbag.

My essentiality incinerated, promising breaths of life scorch my throat

I think I'll go inside

I think I'll stay out here

Sharply plagued with seeking something of unpromised tangibility

What else is there to lose but these fresh beads of sweat and tears, entirely indistinguishable

I can't remember who I was

Was I really ever someone worth being

We start over now.

She ruined me

AS WE CONTINUE TO GROW AS INDIVIDUALS AND ALLOW OUR TRUE SELVES TO BLEND THROUGH IN THE PROCESS, OUR TWIN FLAME STAYS LIT EVEN MILES APART

Flameless

By Sam Johnston



From as far back as I can remember, my twin brother and I have always referred to each other as just 'two brothers born on the same day.' With no ill-intent behind our words, we have found that we are very much our own two people.

Born at the end of June, we share the irony of being Gemini twins, that is, twins who are Geminis, the astronomical symbol of *The Twin*. Besides the fact that most self-proclaimed astrologists would consider this a phenomenon, the 20 years we have shared with one another have proven otherwise. Resisting the stereotype that twins know each other better than they know themselves, my twin and I have found ourselves being completely and diametrically different, from our personal passions to the way we dress. To us, the idea of being 'twin flames' was mind boggling. I would describe our relationship as flame-resistant.

From birth, our parents always considered us to be two peas in a pod. In the first eight years of our lives, Tavish, my twin, and I shared a 100-square-foot room, occupied mainly by our matching beds and a large wardrobe. While we were too young to have a proper understanding of our personal tastes, as we got older, it was clear to our family and friends that we were headed in different directions. We found that our flames would be lit when we were in our own separate worlds. The coveted Scholastic Book Fair is the clearest example of our different identities being unveiled. While I would run to the section with familiar characters whether it was *Harry Potter* or *Mario*, or *The Magic Tree House* series, Tavish was far off in the aquatic life section or looking at books on sports or the outdoors.

As we grew and our personalities developed, the differences between us grew insurmountably.

Always greeted by a group of friends surrounding his locker, Tavish's tall build emulated a magnetic confidence that was hard to ignore in high school. I was jealous to a degree. I hadn't at this point 'found my people' or even understood who I was entirely. Some days, I would see myself as a mere fraction of what my brother was, and being his twin, I couldn't resist comparing myself to him.

My mornings would start a little bit differently than his. Around three minutes after the final bell, my messy hair paired with glasses and braces would stumble into school, likely apologizing to the school secretary for my tardiness. We had a fairly strict dress code in high school, but more times than not my dress shirt would be wrinkled in a hundred different ways and my tie tied way too short. Our teachers often disregarded our



brotherly connection or more so forgot, as we don't look alike and appeared to the naked eye as two entirely separate people. During sophomore year English class, we shared a set of desks near the back of the room, but our teacher didn't know we were related until parent teacher conferences came along.

You'd never pick up that we were brothers, let alone twins.

We had known our fair share of twins who wore matching outfits, involved themselves in the same extracurriculars, and planned to go to college together. To us, these ideologies felt foreign. Tavish involved himself in sports, while I found solace in film, music, and theater. I feared our minuscule level of connection would be forfeited as we moved on to college, yet, for whatever reason, we found more in common with each other the further apart we were.

During our freshmen year of college, our 100-square-foot bedroom became 150 miles apart as we went off to different colleges. That's when Tavish called me to tell me that he was taking an interest in photography. As a seasoned concert and street photographer, having shot digital and film throughout high school, this new interest baffled me. How could we have something in common? Why did he pick up an interest in something he knew I was interested in? Didn't he know that it was my thing? At first I was angered. Was he going to outshine me in photography now too? But soon, I realized that this was an opportunity for us to actually share a common interest.

The flame was ignited, faint at first, when we began texting back and forth about cameras, gear, the proper settings in the proper environments, and our personal tastes. We had never really had a conversation about something that was a genuine interest to both of us the way we did with photography. Suddenly, our relationship

felt stronger than it had when we shared a bedroom.

Come that first Thanksgiving break, it felt like I was looking into a new set of eyes. Fresh out of the freshmen-year-culture-shock, my brother and I had a more nuanced relationship. Instead of looking at each other through the blurry lens of child-like immaturity, airing our grievances over our minute differences, we began to see each other for our similarities. Suddenly, we were chatting about music that we had both been listening to. As both our senses of style shifted, we found each other dressing more similarly, grabbing almost identical clothing from thrift stores in our respective cities. Looking into Tavish's eyes, I saw more of myself, including the same exact mustache we had both worked all semester to grow. We looked as close to twins as we had ever looked. Our flame had begun to get stronger.

It might have taken this set of Gemini twins to go off in our own direction to grow closer as a pair, and we did. It's our reuniting during spring break, or a day at the beach during the summer where we seem to find more in common than ever before. It's easier to confide in one another and share what it is we're up to. With less societal pressure to relate to one another, we've been able to harness a genuine friendship behind the layers of our familial relation.

As we continue to grow as individuals and allow our true selves to bleed through in the process, our twin flame stays lit even miles apart. Our early passions still pull us towards different career paths, but we've begun to see each other as siblings with a unique bond that transcends our physical birthday.

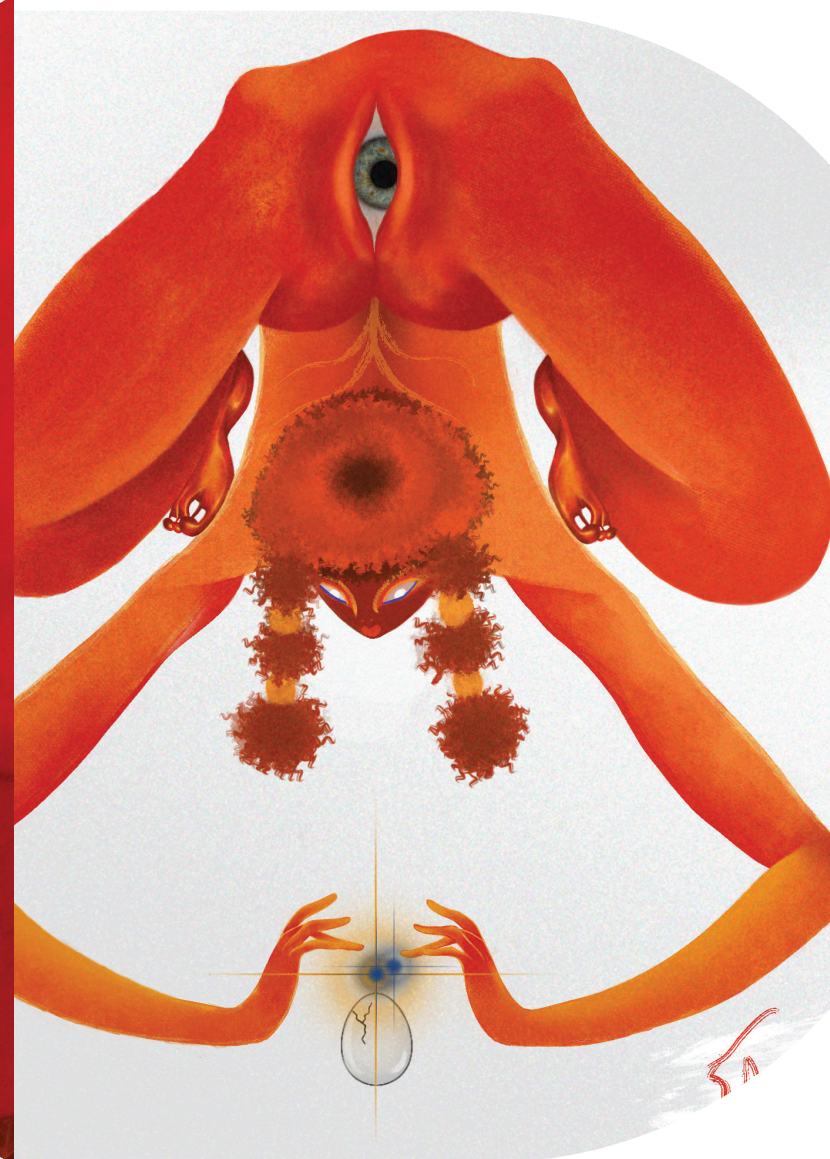
While we've never been twins in a traditional sense, or 'twin flames' as it is so infamously penned, we've grown closer, sharing this nuanced connection where I no longer feel flameless.



Fractions OF MY Soul Everywhere

By Nell Schwartz

I GO



Naturally, as a self proclaimed tattoo lover, I constantly find myself scrolling for hours through tattoo accounts on social media, admiring the different styles and searching for new inspiration to add to my own body art.

It was around 1 a.m. on a Thursday night when I stumbled upon Sanyu Nicolas's tattoo page. Immediately I was blown away by her craft. Her drawings depicted detailed illustrations of otherworldly creatures, often meshing animal and human body parts together to create a fantastical being, many of which were shaded in with bright hues of red, black, blue and orange.

I caught myself wanting to know more about these drawings; it seemed that each one told a unique story. I realized I had been scrolling through her page for almost half an hour and knew I needed to contact her.

A cover star to fit this issue had to be someone specific: a person who recognizes the invisible forces of the world and oozes creativity. Someone who can help this edition of ZIPPED put into words the indescribable. I didn't know what to expect as a reply when I reached out via Instagram direct message but I was sure she was going to be the epitome of cool, and I was right. Just a few hours later that very day we had scheduled a time to meet virtually.

When Sanyu picked up the Zoom call I instantly felt like I was catching up with an old friend. Sanyu has the gift of the gab and an ease to her aura that makes whoever she is talking to feel relaxed and heard. Everything about Sanyu Nicolas, her boldness, style, creativity, innovation and inspiring life story embodies everything that the invisible forces edition of ZIPPED is all about.

Diagnosed with Lupus at eight years old, Sanyu details her childhood as lonely and always in and out of the hospital. At just 12 years old she had already had a spinal tap and kidney transplant. Sanyu didn't always know she would become a tattoo artist, but her love of expressing herself through art started at a young age and kept her company during those dark years growing up. "Being isolated as a child during my Lupus treatments I feel that my imagination and mind developed way faster than my social skills. I was constantly questioning things around me and my life, such as my religion," she said.

Raised Catholic in her younger years, Sanyu never truly believed what she was being taught, "I was always resistant and searching for more. I started to view my religion as esoteric, too matter-of-fact for me. This is





when spirituality grew into my life. It allows for so much more freedom and different possibilities and that really speaks to me as an artist."

I asked Sanyu about these beliefs and she explained that anything and everything can hold spiritual energy. As she let go of her past religious teachings, she found herself drawn to quantum leap meditation, a practice that Sanyu describes as letting your imagination travel far and wide to show you new perspectives and astral projection; a practice common in many Eastern cultures such as Hinduism, Buddhism and found in yoga, is the process of separating one's consciousness from their physical body also known as "an out of body experience." She also applies breath work, certain Afro-Caribbean practices and her own personal rituals to her daily routine. Sanyu adds that she wouldn't give complete credit to just one specific form of meditation as her spirituality has been an amalgamation of different practices throughout the years that has impacted her life.

Syfy Media Company, a multimedia platform that gives science fiction fans "a universe to call home" described the form of quantum mediation as the practice of visualization and states that "practitioners believe that through effectively visualizing another version of your life and applying the right kinds and amounts of energy you can push yourself from this reality and into another one." Think about it as using your deep visualization of your future self, to shape who you are in the present so you can manifest your desired future.

Quantum leap and astral projection meditations are practices anyone can learn, as these guided meditations have become popular on platforms such as Spotify and YouTube. "I look for them online and just let the video guide me as I listen to the recording. It gets extremely

spiritually mind blowing with the sensations I feel during the meditations. Recently, she's begun doing the meditations while looking at herself in the mirror and says that it has completely transformed her self perception. "It's amazing how facing yourself and gazing at yourself with intention can provide inner peace and confidence. I trust myself so much now and feel strong when I look into my own eyes. When you doubt yourself, it's difficult to believe in yourself and thus difficult to love yourself. Self-love, like life and happiness, is not a constant. It's not a destination that you arrive at and stay at. It all undulates and so you do your best to feel your best when and if you can."

As Sanyu found her footing as a young adult and tattoo artist, her spiritual beliefs and practices of different meditations began to impact her work in a positive way, "I am a believer that spirit trails have a non-linear impact throughout existence in terms of how they affect the energy of spaces. I feel that this also correlates to the spiritual, conversational and physical experience of tattooing."

She went on to explain this correlation saying that tattoos are carried on the physical body and though the ink is in the skin, the design represents what is in your heart and emotions. "A tattoo is a commitment to the art, to a feeling, to a moment. When this journey of life is over, even the tattoo is impermanent once the body sails away. I think what lasts is the feeling, the stories, the spirit and the memories. I feel that when I tattoo someone I leave a fraction of my soul with them that travels wherever they go in life."

Sanyu's proclivity for tattooing and meditations have combined to create a perfect coexistence of her spiritual practice as it relates to her work. "I used to tattoo whatever people wanted when I started, but now I'm much more intentional. I prefer to do pieces that allow me to explore my imagination." Sanyu's meditations have allowed her to harness her imagination even more which she says has allowed her to explore the balance between pleasure, pain and magic in her designs. She describes her artwork saying "there's so much beauty and freakish wonder in nature and beyond. All of these species have different and unique elements and so when combined in this chimeric fashion they make for really fascinating creatures. Sometimes people ponder so much on what form otherworldly life would take on but I think we already have some absolutely spectacular and curious creatures all around us already."

Beyond her spiritual practices playing a positive role in Sanyu's career it has also been prevalent in her



personal life, saying that she and her partner meditate often which brings them closer together and allows for more forgiveness and understanding in their relationship. "Meditating together has become an important means for us to invest in our well-being and focus energy into strengthening our bond. It eases our ability to be vulnerable with one another, set goals and reduce stress. It's mental, spiritual and emotional."

After discussing the inspiration behind this edition with Sanyu, she explained that her partner, Shay Williams, would be taking the photos that accompany this article and creating the cover art together. Shay's vision was to create a perception of Sanyu in the presence of her spirit through the use of a slow shutter speed, various light manipulations and different body positioning. Sanyu said "while in conversation with her about what this issue of ZIPPED is centered around, we discussed how all of these elements together will encompass the experience of spirit trails." Their relationship goes beyond the physical, as Sanyu described their bond as spiritually romantic, saying she feels that they met through magic. It feels meant to be that the two could collaborate specifically on this piece for this issue.

Talking with Sanyu and getting to know the beautiful inner workings of her consciousness helped put into words the way I feel about my own body art. While I only have nine tattoos and none particularly large in size, each and every one symbolizes something important to me. Some might seem trivial, such as a disco ball on my upper arm, but the experience of getting it inked on me in Spain will be a moment I will never forget. The artist, a young blonde and bubbly Ukrainian refugee, named Margarita Rashitova, shared with me her life story as she carefully tattooed a design that I felt symbolized my twenties. She detailed the last year of her life as it was ravaged by the war but expressed her hopes and dreams for the future despite such personal pain. After she was finished we both felt bonded to one another. I felt so moved by my encounter with her that I scheduled another tattoo with her for a week later, in part because of how well the tattoo came out and in part because of my desire to simply be with her again. Looking back on that experience I know that a fraction of Margarita's soul lives with me, just as Sanyu said.

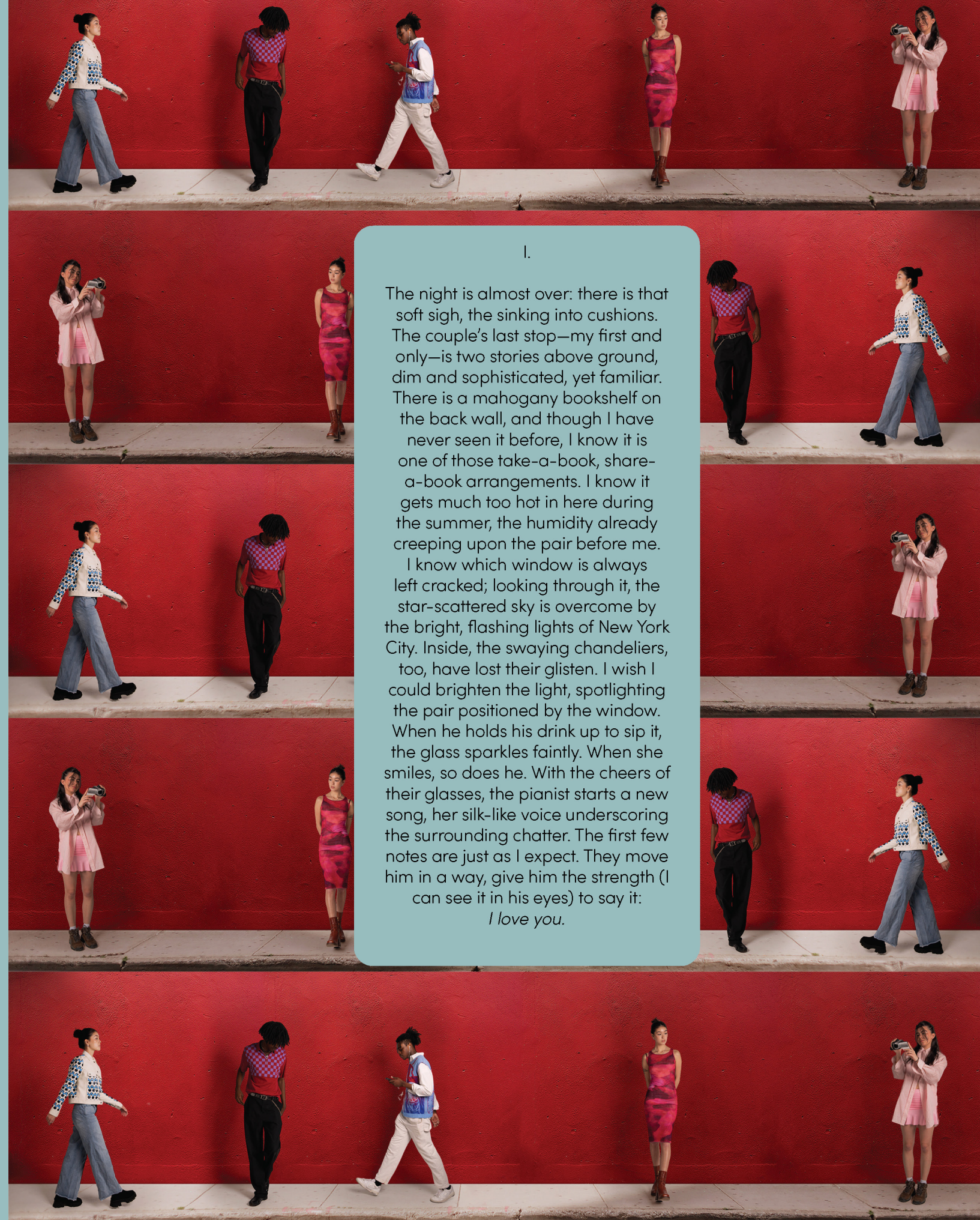
Sanyu was truly able to verbalize the hidden but powerful influences that guide her tattooing and mindfulness. These invisible forces are all around us and it's important to tap into them at times to give the world a new perspective. Although we might not all have the ability right now to tattoo someone else or quantum leap, maybe we can all take a page out of Sanyu's book and leave fractions of our souls everywhere we go on

Déjà



Aimé

By Natalie Dolenga



I.

The night is almost over: there is that soft sigh, the sinking into cushions. The couple's last stop—my first and only—is two stories above ground, dim and sophisticated, yet familiar. There is a mahogany bookshelf on the back wall, and though I have never seen it before, I know it is one of those take-a-book, share-a-book arrangements. I know it gets much too hot in here during the summer, the humidity already creeping upon the pair before me.

I know which window is always left cracked; looking through it, the star-scattered sky is overcome by the bright, flashing lights of New York City. Inside, the swaying chandeliers, too, have lost their glisten. I wish I could brighten the light, spotlighting the pair positioned by the window. When he holds his drink up to sip it, the glass sparkles faintly. When she smiles, so does he. With the cheers of their glasses, the pianist starts a new song, her silk-like voice underscoring the surrounding chatter. The first few notes are just as I expect. They move him in a way, give him the strength (I can see it in his eyes) to say it:

I love you.

II.

The weekend is almost over: a break taken, a table reserved, a reunion. The mother holds her drink up to take a sip, and the glass sparkles.

I shouldn't drink these anymore, she says.

The thought crosses my mind: they give her headaches. *Yes, I know,* the daughter replies, *they give you headaches.* Sharing a moment that both mother and daughter dream of, smiles spread across both their faces. The daughter's ears hone in on the pianist's song—she wishes she could play like that. Her gaze turns towards the window. She wishes she could move here now, instead of dreaming about it years in the future; she is sick of always waiting for the future. I think we are similar in that way. They will sit here, letting their last moments together linger before she returns home, a long drive, a long while away. And at the end, before departing, an exchange of

I love you.



III.

The night is far from over. Two girls, best friends, begin it here, their second round of drinks already in hand. Their glasses sparkle; their fingertips with chipped nail polish tap the table out of nervous habit. The constant distraction of passing silhouettes in the doorway makes it difficult not to fixate on the arrival of the rest of their group. The two already feel out of place, much too juvenile and much too anxious amongst the elegance. I, in turn, feel the same, though it is distant, like a slow-bleeding wound from a past life. They wait for the others' arrival to establish belonging here—like they are, in fact, adults with friends and laughter and late nights. I cannot explain how I know that the rest of their supposed friends will not arrive tonight, feigning sickness and minor emergencies in lieu of their presence. The draft of a half-open window sways the chandeliers above the girls. *At least we're here,* the first one says from across the table. Agreed, the second one replies, *that's really all I need.* They mean it—at least they are here, at least they are together, if with no one else. And, from the first one again, the same refrain:

I love you.



IV.

All that I know feels over. Tonight is a desperate grasp for meaning, for purpose, for a reminder of what this world contains. Sparkling glasses.

Piano music. Too-bright city lights and not-bright-enough chandeliers. People and their people. Things I am finding, new in reality but familiar in nature, in feeling, in spirit. The seat opposite me is empty, and yet—

I love you.

I love you.

I love you.

I hear it. I feel it. And for now, that is enough.

Mystical

Gift?

MY EXPERIENCE WITH A SMALL TOWN MEDIUM

By Sophie Cohen

It wasn't as I imagined.

There was no sparkling crystal ball or weighted velvet curtains to block out the afternoon light. Nor were there glowing candles or a purple iridescent aura to transform a strip-mall space into a mystical oasis. I didn't sit face-to-face with the psychic, separated by a circular table covered with a worn tapestry as tarot cards predicted aspects about my future.

Instead, I sat in my bed on a Zoom call with Araina Daniel Asher, an Upstate New York native who owns Araina The Spirit Medium, a mediumship in Camillus, NY.

Araina sat in a naturally lit room using a white sheet as her backdrop to hide the shelves of her trinkets. We chatted for a few minutes about the recent weather, what I thought about Syracuse, and if I'd ever had a psychic reading before. I shook my head no and waited for Araina to tell me what I should expect. Instead, she shifted her gaze to the right and closed her eyes, slightly dipping her head back and forth. She told me she was waiting for a spirit to enter. "It depends on when spirits transition," she said. "Sometimes they come through right away, while other spirits take forever to come through." Prior to getting on the call, Araina shared that an older gentleman was coming to mind who resembled a grandfather figure in my life. I was startled to hear her mention the person I was also thinking about. My grandfather, who was a very isolated man, had recently passed away during this time. While my family grieved and figured out the logistics of flying from NJ to Palm Springs, CA to make arrangements, I was left feeling

disconnected and guilty for living life as if nothing happened. I had spoken to my family every day since his passing, although phone calls were brief, filled with stress and cut-short by one of them being pulled in another direction. I had no clue how much I needed to speak about my grandfather to someone so unaffected by his life.

I spent the next 30-minutes going back and forth with Araina about what the spirit was telling her and how it aligned with the relationship I had with him. Araina shared characteristics that came to her: how he was in the army, what he looked like, the worn baseball cap resting atop his head, the three grandchildren he had and the mental health and addiction issues he dealt with.

While my grandfather didn't have three grandchildren and never served in the army, he often wore a baseball hat and battled lifelong, debilitating depression. When Araina would offer an aspect about my grandfather that was inaccurate and pulled me out of her psychic lure, she would follow up with a strikingly accurate remark about how much sadness he carried from his father (my great grandfather) and the codependent relationship he had with his mother.

"This gentleman is talking about messing up, I don't know what the situation is but I feel like he pushed people away. He's saying regret, regret, regret. He is speaking very quietly like he's stuck." Araina said.

I would be lying to say I wasn't skeptical about having

my own reading. Whenever I walk by psychic storefronts, I've wondered who actually believes a stranger will provide authentic and valuable information.

"It just feels like a scam," I remember saying to my friend when she mentioned wanting to get her aura read. But here I was, listening to a woman I just met, speak in detail about my grandfather without seeing any picture or allowing me to provide any description about him.

Our session was shy of 30-minutes and I left with that drained but centered feeling that often hits me after an emotional therapy session. There wasn't a breakthrough moment where I uncovered something new or a stronger sense of connection to him, even after hearing what his "spirit" was telling Araina. However, I understood why psychic readings are helpful for people who don't know where they stand or what they are looking for with someone in the past or present.

I can't say if Araina was the "real deal" in terms of psychic abilities, but I can say I felt comfortable talking about my family and notifying her what information was correct or far from the truth. Araina took criticism gracefully and offered alternative interpretations about what the spirit was telling her. Talking about my grandfather to someone I barely knew relieved some unresolved tension, confusion and sadness I hadn't yet explored.

Araina offers tarot and oracle readings as well as psychic and medium readings during her 30 to 45-minute sessions. Her medium readings focus specifically on loved ones who have passed onto the spiritual realm, while her psychic readings hone in on one's energy, aura, and body language. Oracle readings are immediate messages for a client from a deck of 50-cards, while a tarot reading shows the client their energy in the present and future from 78 cards.

Clients can choose to book appointments on Zoom or have an in-person session on Friday or Saturday from \$85 to \$125 depending on the session length.

Araina is a mom of four and children's book illustrator. She is a self-taught psychic who had her first mediumistic experience at 40-years-old and after my session, I couldn't help but wonder about Araina's journey to becoming a medium.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

SC: WHEN DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE CAPABLE OF BEING A MEDIUM?

Araina: The story begins in March 2020. I recently divorced my husband who'd been treating me rotten for a while. I began meditating and journaling to try and get in touch with myself. I decided to get a tattoo one day without knowing what I would get. I told the tattoo artists that I was a children's book illustrator and he drew an open book on my forearm with the words, "Once upon a time" streaming out of the book along with 12 flying pages. It doesn't represent a specific book but I love how "Once upon a time" represents how anything can happen.

While I was reclining on the tattoo chair, I felt a cold breeze flow through the room. I sat up and asked the tattoo artist if someone had opened the door. He looked at me confused and shook his head. I felt the wind again and this time it was much colder, but I layed back down and let it go. Once the tattoo artist started using the needle, I immediately heard a coarse man's voice yelling, "Just tell her I'm okay!"

I thought I was losing my mind and, mind you, I was in a lot of pain from the tattoo needle.

I tried to focus on something else, but the voice came again. This time it was much clearer and I could see the old man shuffling toward me with his hands in his pockets. He looked about 60 or 70 years old and wore khaki pants with a slouchy maroon shirt. Then, a man and woman came through the door and sat on the couch to the left of the tattoo chair. The woman reached out to me and told me that she knew I was in a lot of pain and that she experienced the same feeling when she got a tattoo of her father who passed away.

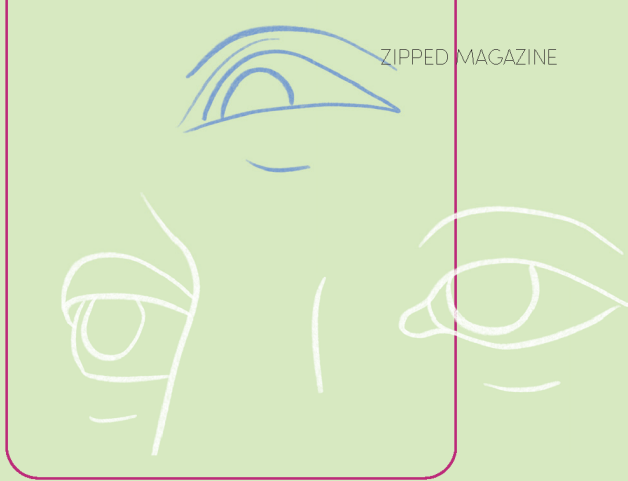
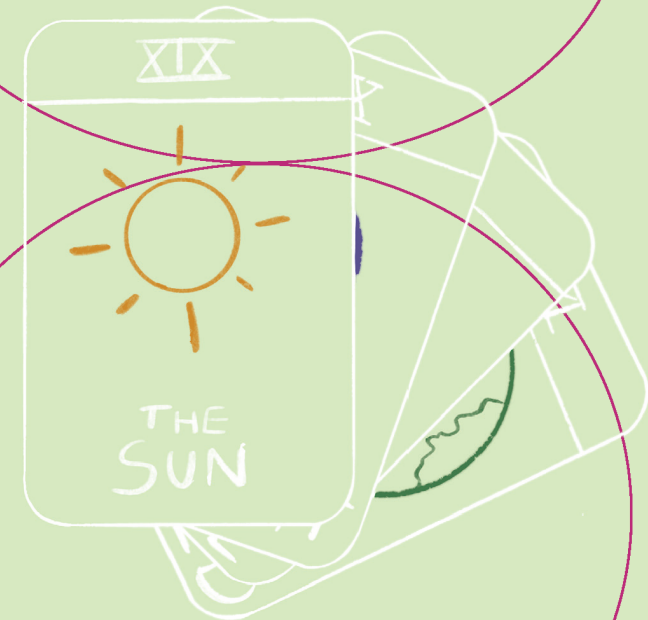
While the woman was talking, the old man was still in front of me mumbling. So much was going on and so many spirits were communicating with me, but I didn't know they were spirits yet. I put together that the old man in front of me was the woman on the couch's father and they were both trying to communicate through me.

Finally the tattoo was done and I walked to my car feeling extremely frazzled. I called my friend who is a medium and told her what happened. She told me that it was a classic mediumistic experience and that the spirits saw me as a beacon to communicate with. The fact that I had been religiously meditating and journaling prior to this experience was a sign that my third eye had opened for spirits to enter. I became super interested in this new skill and started searching for medium groups online to learn more and that's how this all started.

AFTER THE TATTOO EXPERIENCE, HOW DID YOU BECOME A MEDIUM?

I found medium circles online through Facebook and those really helped me hone in on my talents. We would meet on Zoom and all practice reading for each other. I also independently practiced reading photos for my friends and offered free tarot readings on Facebook live. I also continued to meditate and journal because you must have a tangible way to track your progress and emotions in the mediumship journey.

When I realized I could start my own psychic business, I started posting on Facebook. It was actually a lot easier than I thought to find clients because my business spread by word of mouth. I normally have about seven clients per week who come for 45-minute sessions. It takes a lot out of me because people often come in because of a loved one's death or a relationship issue.



YOU ARE A SELF PROCLAIMED "REAL PSYCHIC MEDIUM" WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

I found medium circles online thrWhen I say "real psychic medium," I'm not somebody who's going to give you a "cold" or "hot" reading which is a tactic that many famous psychics use. Famous psychics often rely on someone's body language and eye pattern. A hot reading is when a psychic will research the client beforehand and try to find tidbits of information to put together. There are even some psychics who will allow the client to provide them information before the reading begins.

I do readings solely based on what a spirit is telling me. In my experience, I believe that when you read for someone, you should not be asking too many background questions because the spirit should be providing you all the information.

HOW DO YOU REACH A SPIRIT?

I often read photos. If you give me a picture of a loved one, I will look at the photo and ask the person in the picture if they are here with me. I then have a conversation with the picture and I can hear them talking in the way that they would talk when they were alive. I then ask questions in my head for them and relay the message to the client. Other times, like the reading I did with you, I will close my eyes and wait for a spirit to enter.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE WHEN A SPIRIT IS COMMUNICATING WITH YOU?

It's so hard to explain a feeling, but I see the spirits transparently in my head. They are miniature, almost as big as a lego. I hear their voice from the back of my head and that's where they share the messages they want to impart on me. Spirits often tell me about who they miss or how they want someone to feel. Sometimes I also smell a scent of the spirit waft through the room.

WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT ABOUT BEING A MEDIUM THAT MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T EXPECT?

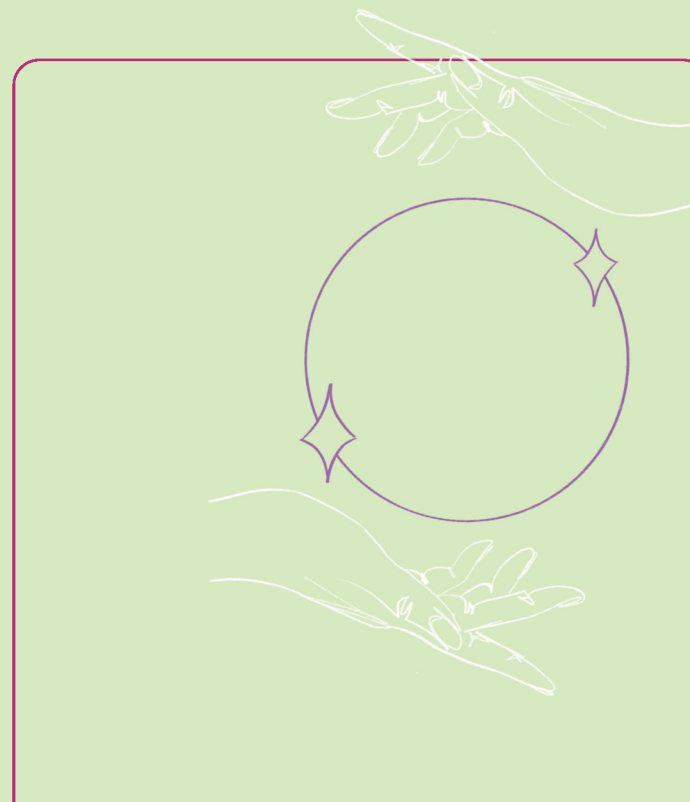
The hardest part is when a spirit enters and unexpectedly dumps very heavy emotional information on me. I always ask the client if there's any information they don't want me to talk about, but sometimes the spirit will only talk about a subject the client wants to avoid. Traumatic deaths of loved ones is probably the most common occurrence of this and it's something that is emotionally draining for me.

ON THE FLIP SIDE, WHAT'S THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT?

Being able to enter people's lives for 45 minutes. I get to peer into someone's childhood experience, what their family is like, who their loved ones are, and what they want to experience in the future.

HAVE YOU CONNECTED WITH ANY OF YOUR OWN LATE RELATIVES THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL WORLD NOW THAT YOUR A MEDIUM?

I never met my grandfather Leonard, but I've been able to meet him through the spiritual world. He helped me find the current house I'm living in and even sent me a mortgage officer with his same name. One day his spirit told me that I had something of his I didn't know about, a few days later I found his birth certificate and some other old documents that gave me even more insight about the type of man he was. So yes, I have definitely gotten to know him through my practice.



I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT MY READING AND HOW YOU WERE THINKING OF AN OLDER MAN BEFORE I CALLED, HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

It doesn't always happen like that but when it does, it's usually spot on. Last night for example, I had a reading with a couple. Before they came on a spirit entered who was running a marathon. I told them that this runner came in with a specific number on his shirt. It ended up being the person they were trying to reach.

When you and I spoke the first time and I saw your face, that's when the gentleman popped into my head. I could tell that he held a lot of regret and depression. I want you to tell your father that he feels sorry about his lack of communication and distance from reality. I know this is heavy stuff, but I hope it helped you in some way.

A Concioous Existence

By Vanessa Walker

SKY & SEA - A DUEL

Rivaling expanses of blue, holding depth and violence and mirrored infinity.
Both eager to rip the air from your lungs and command their collapse.
Storms rage in open waters, shouting matches between nemeses sparring for control.
Wind whips and waves thrash, bodies of boundless magnitude found at their most combative.
They toss you about and break you apart as they brawl.

What is life without victory?

FLAME & EARTH - A MUTATION

Liquid fire is a brutal sculptor, the architect of the falsely rigid landscape above.
The earth's texture could never exist without its constant churning.
Bursting forth from spouts on its surface, thick smoke lingers in its wake and chokes the creatures below.
Soil and stone fracture and melt, revealing the molten mass that gives them their form.
Solid ground is reduced to a myth.

What is life without transformation?

SUN & MOON - A ROMANCE

The parents of night and day, commanders of shadows and sight.
All things below are illuminated or disguised at their mercy.
That grand star kisses the earth with radiant rays, sometimes gentle, sometimes scorching.
By night its light meets the moon's muted, gray body and beams down with heatless clarity.
All that was hidden is known.

What is life without companionship?

RAIN & SNOW - A BEATING

All things are taken and returned again.
The clouds tear pieces from the waters and hurl them back with a vengeance.
The air transforms each drop to its will as it falls.
Languid fragments, icy powder, frozen bullets, all ripped from the same source.
Splattering into fluid shards as they meet the warmth of your skin.

What is life without defeat?

MAN & NATURE - A USURPING

Forged in dust, infused with breath and soul, flesh is the pride of creation.
Born of this vast wilderness in all its abundance, it is thrust into the fierce cycle of life.
So much to comprehend... to conquer... to possess.
An undoing begins, the child makes mother its subject.
Flesh will be its ruin.

What is life without dominion?



