

THE RACKET

THE RACKET

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Hi.

Everyone doing okay?

It's hard right now.

No way around it.

And quite frankly,
I'm still processing
a lot of what's going
on.

If a worldwide pandemic
wasn't enough to grapple with
on an emotional level,
the onset of necessary and deserved
nationwide civil unrest
has left me thickheaded,
grasping for how to move forward.

For the moment,
I have no idea.

For the moment -
this moment of protest,
of revolution, of change -
all I can think to do is give
back to those who
who've had so much
taken.

For the moment,
maybe we can get by
just by helping each other
push back.

On the next page there's a
few ways to do so.

It's hard right now.

No way around it.

- Noah Sanders
The Racket

The Racket stands against
police brutality, racism and violence
perpetuated towards BIPOC
communities in all forms.

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venmo: Peoples-Programs

BAY AREA ANTI-REPRESSION COMMITTEE
BAIL FUND
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<https://rally.org/ARCbailfund>

BLACK EARTH FARMS
venmo: blackearthfarms

This is just the start.
Learn more police alternatives:
<https://www.joincampaignzero.org/>

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Where do we go from here?

WWW.THERACKETSF.COM

WE HAVE A PATREON

We aren't in it for the money. Believe us.
Funding or not we'll figure out a way to
keep getting great writing and great art
into your sweaty palms at no cost
whatsoever.

That said: there are costs in doing what
we do.

And any help with those costs (and with
the costs of future The Racket endeavors)
would be greatly appreciated.

If not, we get it and we still appreciate
you.

THANK YOU TO THESE FOLKS

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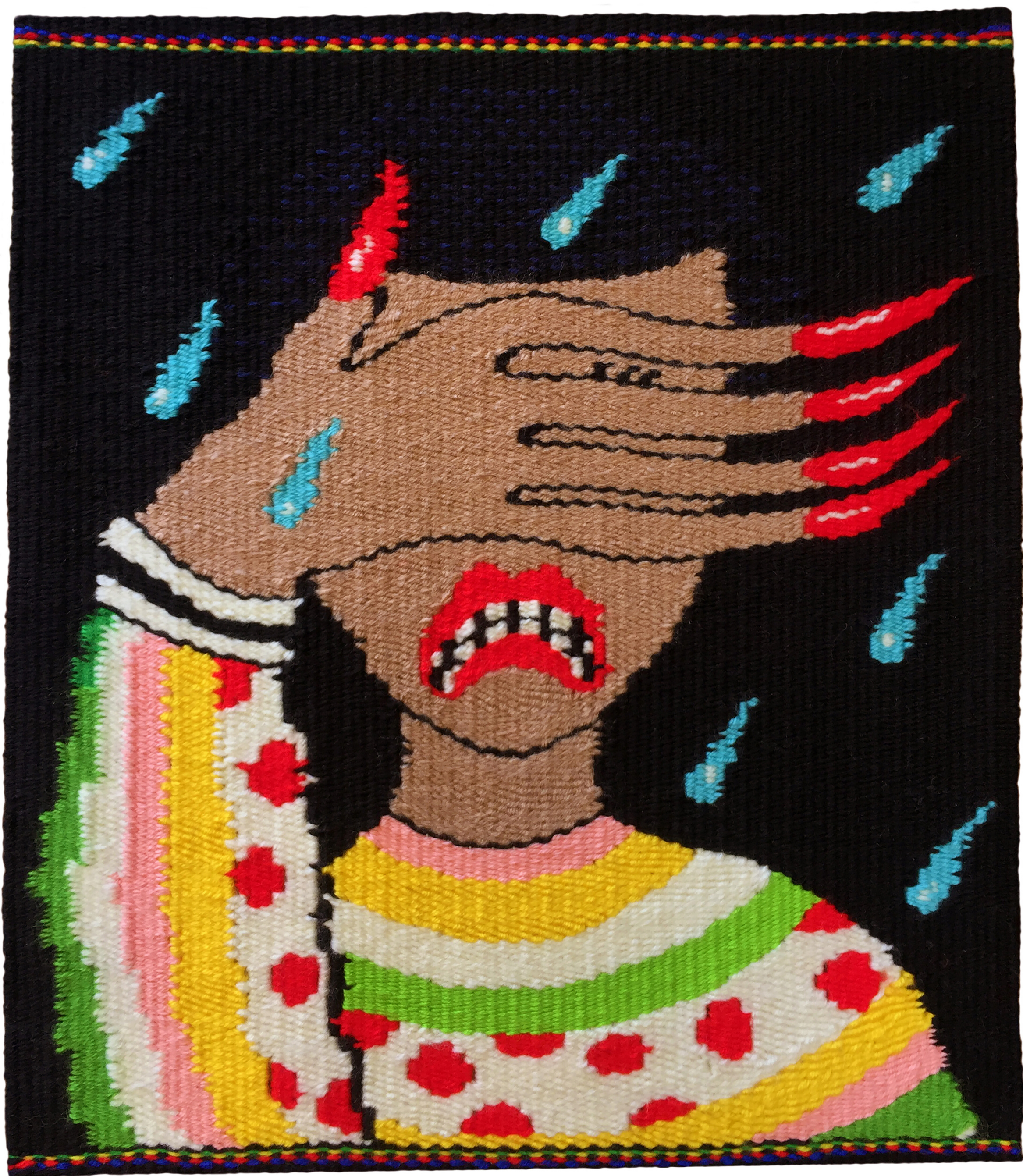
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THE BACK PAGE
BY
Laura Jaye
Cramer

CURATED BY:
Noah Sanders

THE RACKET

9



LAISSE-MOI TRANQUILLE / LAURA ROKAS / 2017

au présent de ma vie

GEORGE PERREAULT

cool spring and hawthorn
weary with blossom

the tulip enough enough
now let me bulb

such loss we know
such loss and still

a child at the table
doing her school until

broom lifts on the wind
is how we study dance

Dew Drops

GUSTAVO BARAHONA-LOPEZ

Today, my baby cries
like I cried when
I saw the photograph.
A father and toddler
floating like fallen leaves
on the banks of the Río
Grande.

My fingers follow his
outstretched arms.
I raise my son like the
present, like a promise.

His cheeks collect dew
like tulip petals.

Our noses touch,
he smiles wide when dew
drops roll into lip.

I did not know
grief and joy
could be held
in the same smile.



MORNING DOOR / PHILIP HARRIS / 2020

Zufälligkeit / ランダム

NINA DJUKIC

It's February, and my friend M picks me up from Boston Logan airport and drives nine miles to her home in Brookline.

In the car, we realize M's mother and mine were born on the same day of the same year, separated by 9,043 kilometers and several time zones. My mother is from Germany, hers from Japan; one's hands paled by years indoors, one's worn and strong from gardening.

By chance, they are alike. Both: erratic, sometimes violent, love us desperately. Both suffer from old, irrecoverable suffering. Both enclose realities we can't intrude upon. Our relationships alternate between sweet and gutting. They've never met, though M and I have been friends since we were fourteen.

These days, M works part-time at a Japanese restaurant and is a classically trained singer of early music. She lives in a studio apartment with a keyboard and a kettle. In winter her front steps are fat with snow.

From genetics, I learn human DNA replication takes place at a of about 50 nucleotide base pairs per replication fork per second. This means the entire human genome can be copied

in a few hours. But the most remarkable part of the process is its high fidelity: a replication error may occur as infrequently as once in a billion, or a trillion, base pairs. It's a mandate for self-editing that allows for (relative) infallibility.

I've always wondered why our bodies invest so much to resist the inevitable. As do we. A library book I've brought along chronologizes hundreds of scientifically accurate, handblown glass marine invertebrates, crafted in the 19th century by the father-son pair Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka who spent most of their lifetimes making them.

Why? To have something done in face of all the undone? Dante, descending into the Inferno: "I had not thought death had undone so many." We are 7 of the 108 billion people that have ever lived; a random combination of possible nucleotide pairings, blessed (or saddled) with sentience. More bodies in the body of evidence: our lives ruled by chaos.

I spend an hour on Wikipedia while M leads hymns in a Unitarian church. To not resist randomness: to lean into. On the page for Disambiguation (disambiguation), disambiguation is defined as "the process of identifying which meaning of a word is used in context". Disambiguate: literally, to un-ambiguate. To remove ambiguity, as if by force.

Memory disambiguation, I learn, is one of several common ways to rehabilitate out-of-order microprocessors. When

out-of-order, these processors are no longer able to distinguish their memories correctly. When choked by plaques and tangles, the human hippocampus is no longer able to distinguish its memories at all.

But degradation's just another word for entropy, which is just another word for our tendency to be degraded. A universal bent toward disorder, evident in every molecule. M's mother and mine boarded airplanes, had daughters, taught us languages we don't remember. In the accident of our existence on this continent, M and I forgot the first words we heard.

I find David Shields' book "Reality Hunger" on M's shelf. Shields spends 240 pages questioning the opposition of reality and fiction, or reality and art. It seems, to seek a defining feature present in the real and not the invented is to ask larger questions about the neurobiology of memory and our perception of the real world.

But I think the problem is opposite from that posed by Shields; it's not that it's impossible to remove reality from fiction. It's impossible to remove the artifice of fiction from the narrative necessity to narrate our lives; to shape story from the endless and astronomical randomness that governs us.

Like M, whose father met her mother by chance in a restaurant in Irvine. Whose body, like all bodies, rose from a

transfer of elastic energy; a collision of separate worlds. Who must now invent her life.

In Spanish the word for randomness does not require that English suffix of essence-denoting – ness – and instead stands as its own noun, accompanied by article: *el azar*. It's almost personified – almost given omniscience. An entity which dictates. An unrelenting singularity.

There's an idea implied by the zodiac that people reoccur in predetermined patterns: enough variety involved to keep the circle moving. M's mother and mine, pushing the same revolving door through time.

Then there's M and I. In the car, a pocket of shards; glass from different mirrors, assembled into visible coincidence. Moments we'll spend years taxonomizing. In chronology, they make a life.



NEIGHBORHOOD STILL LIFE #4 (TIRES) / JOEL DANIEL PHILLIPS / 2018

Slow hike, mystery

MAW SHEIN WIN

Zippy lighter, milk tea, dumbbells.

They had packed the essentials.

Unknowing of blizzard.

Fleece suits, yes. Cough drops, no.

They were unprepared for slipping stones,

Fanged pandas, ice fauna.

Ascending slope of Slumber Mountain.

Fevered breathing.

They flung the dumbbells off cliffs.

Drank tea from leather canteens.

Exhaustion dreams. Frostbitten limbs.

Rested that night against the elms that remained.

blue flame last flicker

The Sea Wall

SHARON FERRANTE

I'm not alone, eel grass waves
beside Weeping Willows
with hugging houses once safe

then able to see beyond The Sea Wall
the foam after the ebb
spelling out words for me

revealing stones shaped like hearts
for philosophical Witches
so to stand steady
feeling the more that comes with a kiss

hungry for fireworks, sailboats
lily pads arriving "The Same Time Next Year"
a photographer captures
some of the Same,

tepees erected with weathered hands
and washed up sticks
seeing the homeless
that's what I think

then he carves faces, dragons
birds and fish
watching the brave barefoot soul
told to beware

under sliced moonbeams
it glitters, the litter
of bloodying broken glass.
I'm not alone , that's what I think

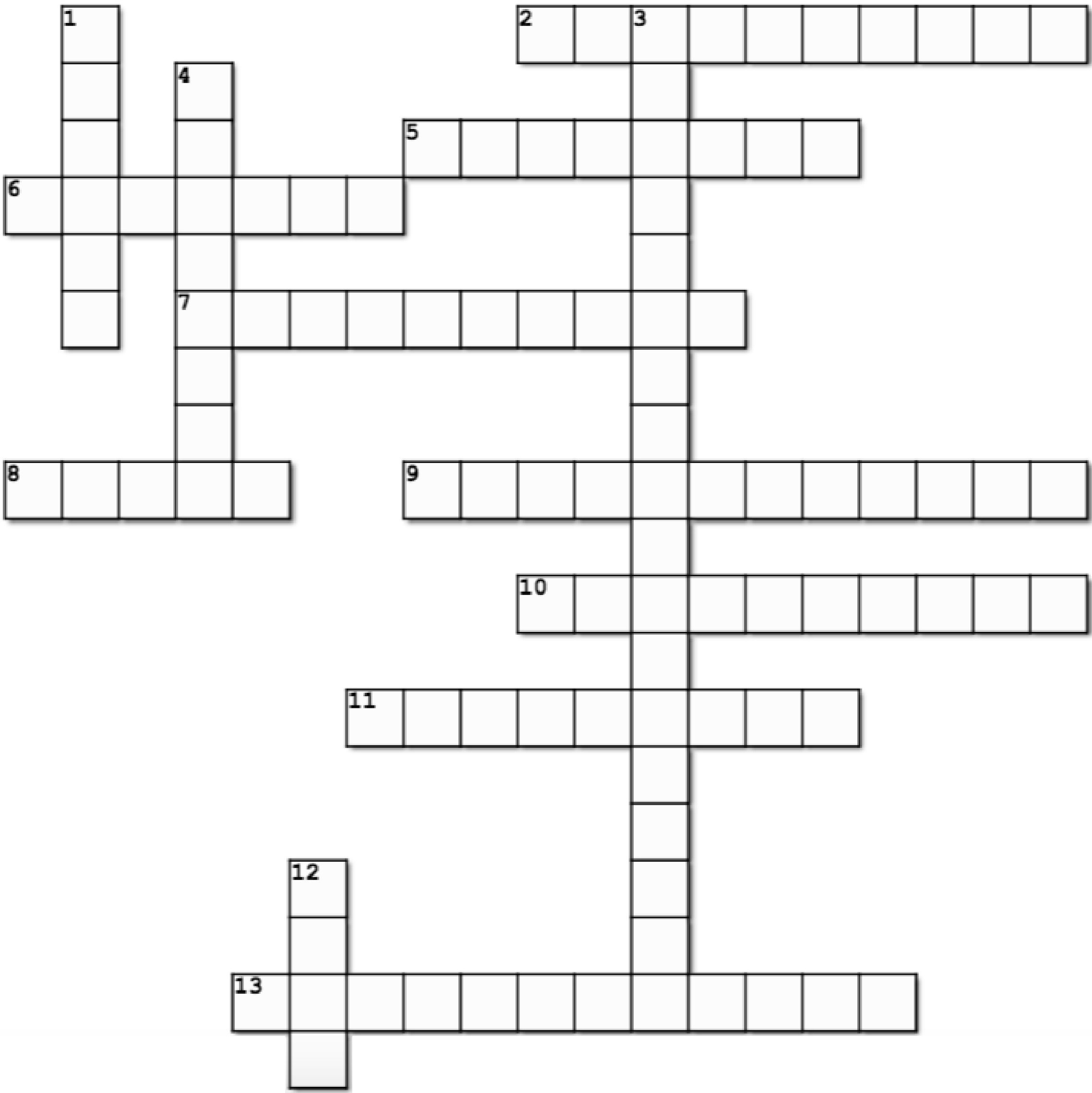
as I hear nothing
but soft rustling
a shushhhhhh

THE BACK PAGE

BY
LAURA JAYE CRAMER

CROSSWORDZ

A CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 2. Suppression of any media considered “obscene”
- 5. Second season of Netflix’s “_____ Things” set in 1984
- 6. _____ Williams, the first black Miss America in 1984
- 7. Host city of the 1984 Summer Olympics
- 8. Christopher _____ of “This is Spinal Tap”
- 13. Pen name of author Eric Arthur Blair

DOWN

- 1. Teenage _____ Ninja Turtles were first introduced in 1984
- 3. 1984, spelled out
- 4. Who you never, never feed after midnight
- 9. Close observation
- 10. He is watching you
- 11. Apple’s personal computer was introduced in 1984
- 12. “Where’s the _____?”

EAT MY SHORTS

AN ILLUSTRATED HAIKU

Coffee and Pick Your Brain?



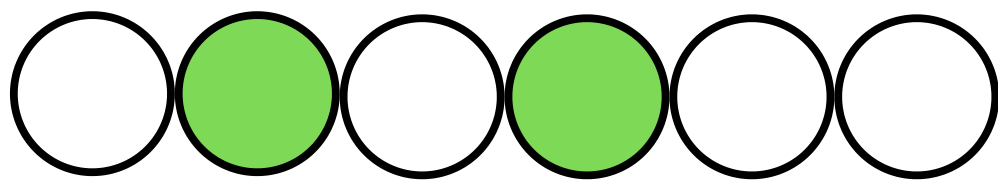
People tell me no.
“No, you can’t meet with the boss.”
”No, you don’t work here.”

THE WEEKLY MUMBLE

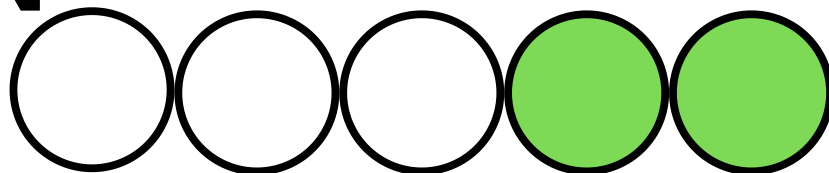
WORD STUFF

Unscramble each Mumble to form five ordinary words.
Then, arrange the green letters in the highlighted spaces to
complete the punchline.

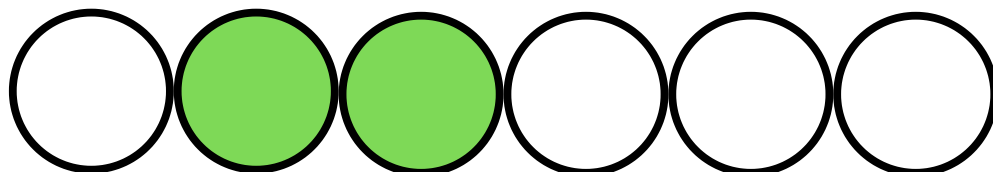
AULWNT



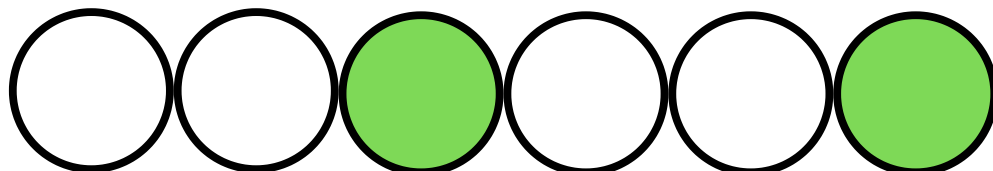
IOONN



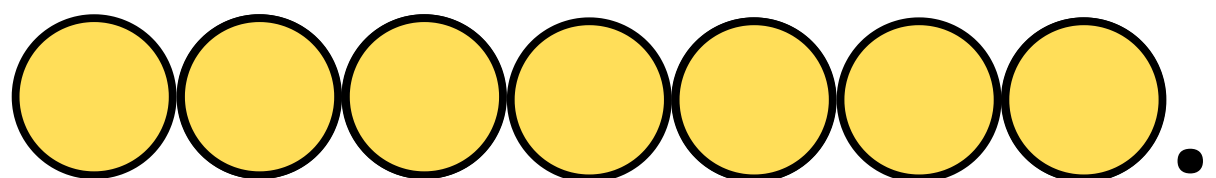
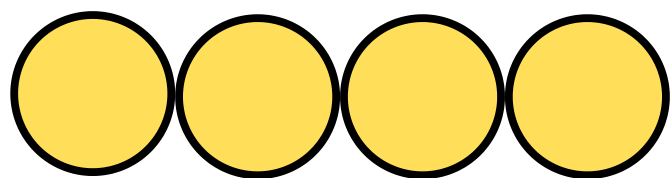
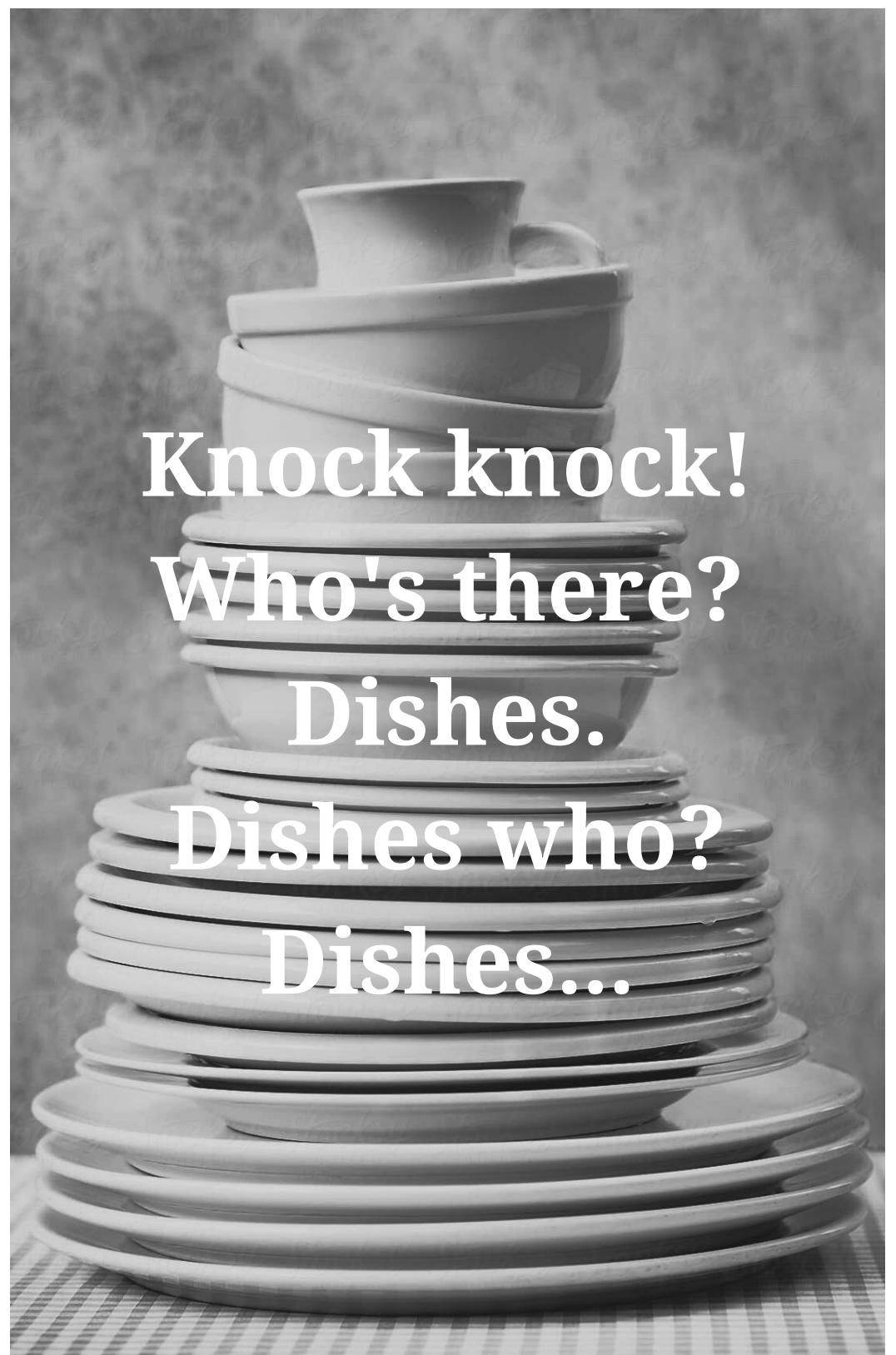
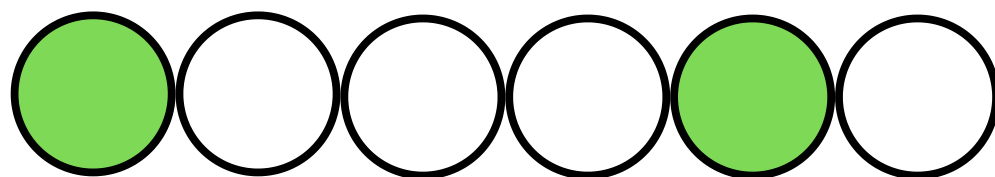
SROSCA



YESRDS



ORETSE



(Answers next week.)

Last week's answers:

HAZARD, RIVER, BOTCH, EASILY, SCREWY

How does a rabbi make his coffee?

He brews it.

CONTRIBUTORS

At our monthly events instead of introductory bios, we ask our readers a question and then share their answers.

We'd like to continue the tradition.

QUESTION:

Describe a single positive aspect of the current situation.

GUSTAVO BARAHONA-LOPEZ

I'm grateful for getting to spend more time with my wife and son

JOEL DANIEL PHILLIPS

A re-assessment of how urgent many things are. Instead of rushing off to work first thing every morning, my fiancée and I have begun taking morning coffee walks around the neighborhood, something that I would have never thought I had time for prior to the lockdown. It's made me realize how important slowing down is.

NINA DJUKIC

I have more time to watch the weather, and to watch the world go on without us: nasturtiums, succulents, peaches, moonrise, hummingbirds, rainstorms; people leaving starters on the porch.

SHARON FERRANTE

In the hardest of times, It's better knowing I'm not alone, forever the ebb accompanied by the flow.

PHILIP HARRIS

I have PLENTY of time to read.

GEORGE PERREAULT

Perhaps the best thing the virus has done is force each of us to consider what's really important.

LAURA ROKAS

MAW SHEIN WIN

Even more appreciation for flowers & trees.

THE RACKET

WEEKLY



A NECESSARY DISTRACTION

JAMES CAGNEY
WESLEY COHEN
EMILY PINKERTON
CHRIS DANZIG
...AND MORE...

THURS. 6/4
7PM / ZOOM

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**TIME TO GO.
TIME TO GIVE BACK.**

