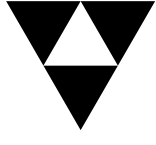


THE RACKET | 83





THE RACKET

Hey folks.

When I first started this journal in the midst of the earliest, most terrifying stretch of the pandemic, I knew I was going to include a "Letter From The Editor." I believe in introductions and in setting context with just about whatever I write, and the idea of just getting a small space to write about "things" to a captive audience felt like a small, much needed pressure release.

The tone of my initial introductions was "dark, but like trying to find a little light in the darkness." The Racket Journal was conceived and composed as a short, enjoyable, distraction from our long days of doom scrolling and fearing for our lives. The introductions originally strove to find a similar tone. The outside world is invariably fucked, but look, there's always art, there's always writing, there's always someone making something amazing out of all the horror. It felt timely and in some small way, it felt necessary.

Time went on, the pandemic surged and receded over and over again and my ability to find lights spots in the overwhelming gloom became more and more difficult. Eventually, The Racket Journal's Letter From The Editor slowly sloughed away the joyful aspects, leaving only the bi-weekly slog through the grimmest headlines that it has become.

Which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Even if we aren't in the midst of a pandemic, the world can still be a festering, garbage fire many of us have just collectively agreed to ignore. Why not poke the embers if not to remind people, then to inspire them that even when a house is burning, you can still grab the cat and the dog.

What it is though is a sort of 2-D version of my own beliefs and my own thoughts. I am, on most accounts (and even in most of my writing for the various arms of The Racket) a decidedly positive, even optimistic, human being who leans towards overthought problem solving more than existential dread. Yes, sure, there's always the slightest aura of cynicism floating around me, but it's such a small part of who I am, and more so of what The Racket strives to imbue.

The Racket Journal—and to some extent all the many things that are now cluttered under the umbrella of The Racket—was, and always has been, intended as a

THE RACKET

way to first, put a little bit more writing and art into the universe and second, to create an opportunity for someone to lose themselves in that writing and art. And with that in mind, it's become more and more apparent each issue as I struggle to mine some terrible news story for something to rant about, that this Letter From The Editor no longer represents what we're trying to be.

If this is a space to explore and share art, why is the introduction to every issue just a page-long slog through the worst of what's happening in the world?

It feels off, for my own world view and for the intention of this journal. And as my own life moves closer and closer towards some big, BIG life changes, this introduction is going to change along with it. What does that mean? I don't know yet. Will I say goodbye to endless pontificating on the worst the world can offer? Not entirely, I need something to anxiously spin out on in the quiet moments of my life.

But writing these intros has become more a burden than a joy, and if I'm not enjoying it, I can't imagine how you all feel.

Change is coming. Whatever the hell that means.

N

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

STOP BOOK BANNINGS

PEN AMERICA

donate here

FREEDOM TO READ

donate here

UNITE AGAINST BOOK BANS

donate here

BLACK LIVES MATTER

<https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

THE RACKET : QUARANTINE JOURNAL, Vol. 5, NO. 83

Copyright 2023
The Racket

Cover Image: Indiana Hoover
Credit: © Indiana Hoover
Title/Date/Info:

2023.01.30_Mamma Anderson Studio / 2023

Website: <https://indianahoover.com/>
IG: [@indianahoover](https://www.instagram.com/indianahoover)

Promotional rights only.

This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without permission from individual authors.

The scanning, uploading and distribution of this document via the internet or any other means without the permission of the author(s) is illegal.

We got to get that day we're waiting for.



WE HAVE A PATREON

We aren't in this for the money.

But there are costs in doing what we do.

Any help with those costs (and with the costs of future endeavors) would be greatly appreciated.

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

THANK YOU TO THESE FOLKS

MATTHEW CARNEY
CATHY & JOHN SANDERS
HALLIE YOUNG
JAMIE ENGELMANN
CASEY BENNETT
LILIAN CAYLEE
LAUREN C. JOHNSON
ANGIE MCDONALD
QUYNH-AN PHAN
SPENCER TIERNEY
ALEX MACEDA
DAVID SANDERS
SARAMANDA SWIGART
DANIELLE TRUPPI
RUTHIE WAGMORE
GALADRIELLE ALLMAN
HEIDI ASUNDI
STEPHANIE ANN MAY
SASHA BERNSTEIN
ELIZABETH BERNSTEIN
GEOFF CALLARD
KATHRYN CLARK
PAUL CORMAN-ROBERTS
CASEY COVIELLO
YVONNE DALSCHE

RHEA DHANBHOORA
KEVIN DUBLIN
LYNN E.
YALITZA FERRERAS
HADAS GOSHEN
KAREN JANAS
KIMI LYNN SUGIOKA
ERICKA LUTZ
TOMAS MONIZ
ALEX NISNEVICH
NICK O'BRIEN
LAUREN PARKER
EMILY PINKERTON
KRISTA POSELL
FRANCESCA ROBERTSON
TIM RYAN
DANIEL SCHWARTZBAUM
SAMANTHA SCHOECH
SAMANTHA SETHNA
NORMA SMITH
SELBY SOHN
ARJUN THAKKAR
CAROL VENA-MONDT
KURT WALLACE
ANNIE WATTLES
JUDY WEIL

OUR PATREON:

WWW.PATREON.COM/THERACKETREADINGSERIES

SUBMIT YOUR WORK

P O E T R Y

P R O S E

A R T

2 0 0 0 W O R D S

O R L E S S

Send to:

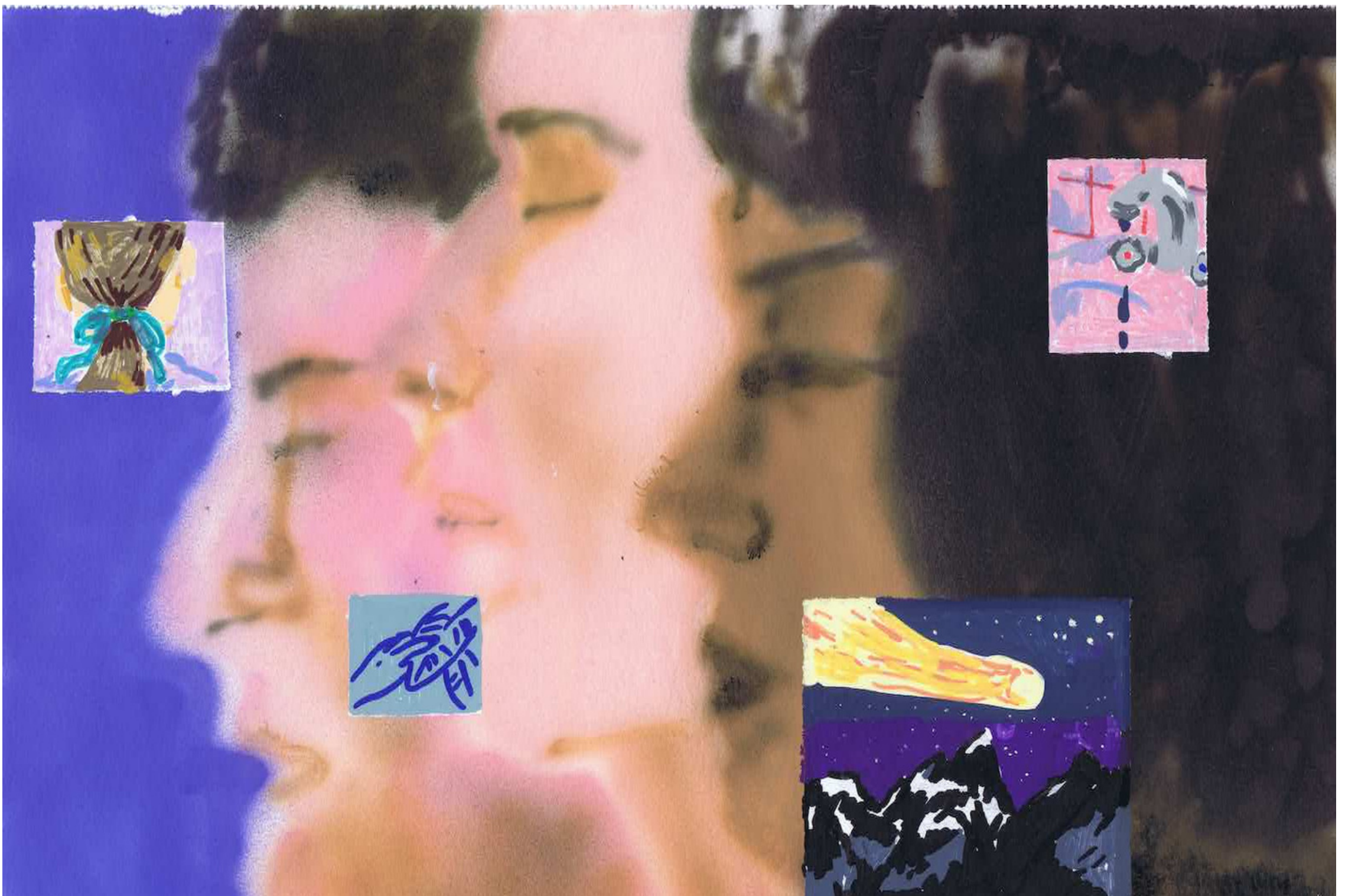
theracketreadingseries@gmail.com

CONTENTS

JANNE MARIE DAUER	<i>Orte, Gesichter</i>	1
BEE LB	OUT OF TOWN	2
JANNE MARIE DAUER	<i>Conditioning Behavior</i>	3
JANNE MARIE DAUER	<i>The Conversation</i>	4
BETHANY JARMUL	I Feel Guilty About How Happy I Am That My Husband Got a Vasectomy	5
HENRIQUE COSER MOREIRA	<i>Casinha</i>	6
HENRIQUE COSER MOREIRA	<i>Casimhas Mil</i>	7
KATIE SVEDMAN	i must fucking hate you	8
LIESL PFEFFER	<i>Outline [for B.K-O.]</i>	9
LIESL PFEFFER	<i>Outline [for M.H.]</i>	10
JESSE MALMED	Strophy Life	11
LIESL PFEFFER	<i>Outline [for G.A.]</i>	12

THE RACKET

83



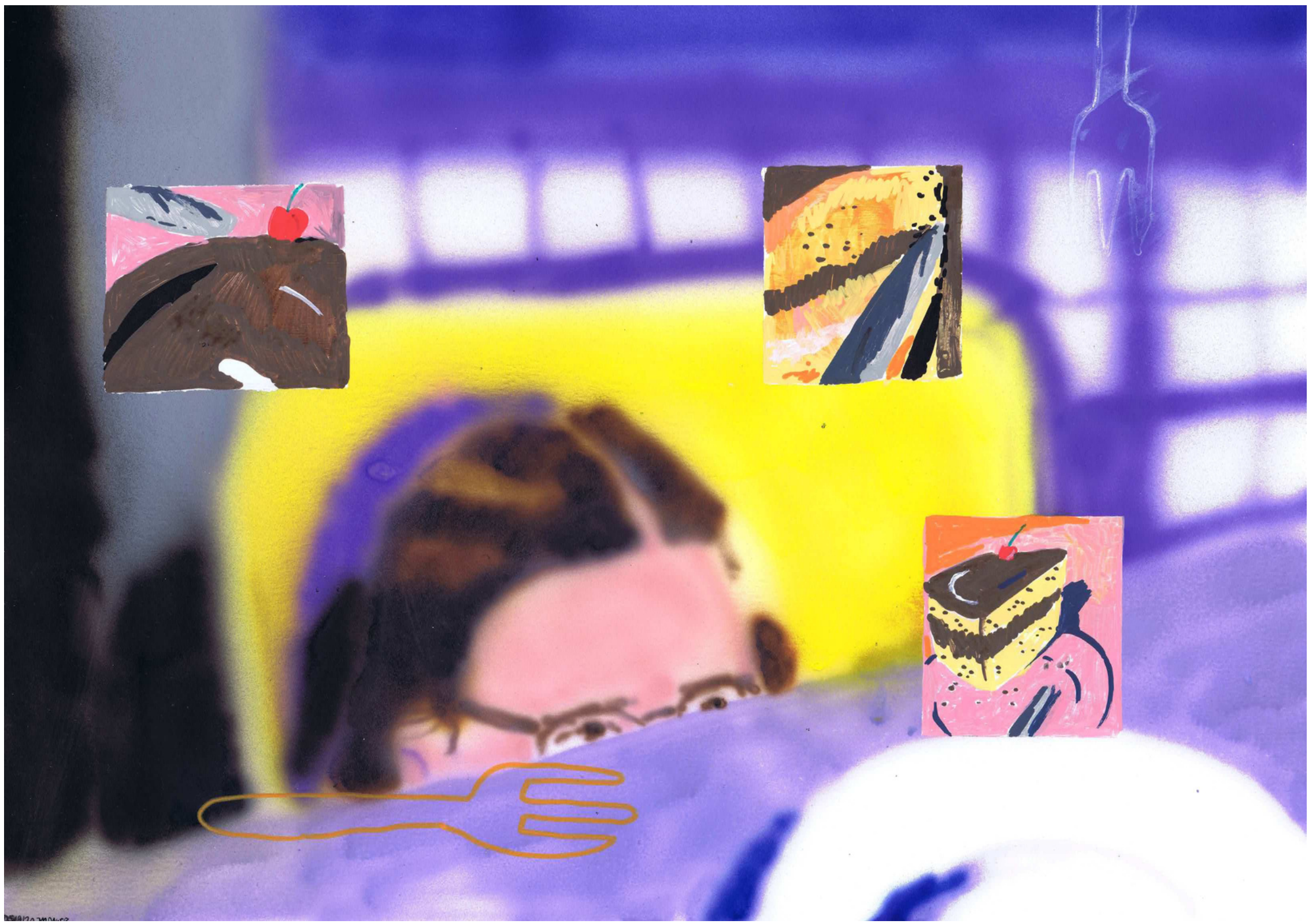
ORTE, GESICHTER
JANNE MARIE DAUER
2020

OUT OF TOWN

after Nora Almeida

BEE LB

I've barely started anywhere when
I remember where I came from. Exit 123
leading to the trailer park, where I used
to sit with a girl I knew enough not to call friend. She'd point
at the TV when her dad's commercial played, oversized
suit, bald head shining, short stature, big voice convincing
no one to buy a used car, and the tiniest hint of her shadow in the store. Down
the road, the corner station we snuck 4lokos from, the house I hid
from my foster parents in. That town without me
all cornfields, no body to get lost in
them. Not even my town, just the one fed into my middle,
then high school. My town two towns
over, and that, without me, is the sound of manufactured nostalgia, twang from ten years ago
playing tinny over the store's speakers. Never stepped foot inside any of the six years
I'd lived there, split in two. Came back for a cure, closest to me
was a four hour drive and an endless splay
of memories away. My mother's wide turns getting us pulled over at twelve noon
with a polite, *Have you been drinking, ma'am?* And her hushing me
before I could bite down my sarcasm. It led
nowhere. Made a sharp, clean turn, and found our way back to
the highway, my arm throbbing beneath the bandaid. The billboard for the dealership never fails
to make me wonder what happened to the kid the girl had at 14. To feel okay
in this situation, I recommend switching the drive down from 75 to Dixie, but I'm no map.
The massive peaked shrine to Jesus, *Are you on the right road?* Yes,
a billboard has felt like home.





THE CONVERSATION
JANNE MARIE DAUER
2020

I Feel Guilty About How Happy I Am That My Husband Got a Vasectomy

BETHANY JARMUL

Because four years and two babies ago, we drew bucket after bucket up from our fertility well but found only cysts in my cistern—my bucket bleeding, broken.

Because a part of me will always be begging God to fix me—even though I'm not (physically) broken anymore. Even though my husband volunteered to get broken instead.



CASINHA
HENRIQUE COSER MOREIRA
2021



CASINMHAS MIL
HENRIQUE COSER MOREIRA
2021

i must fucking hate you

KATIE SVEDMAN

sometimes when i'm alone in the middle of the night crying about the most recent boy who has done me dirty, i think that i must actually fucking hate you. i think about sunny days on the green of your women's only campus and the strange pleasure you must've felt watching an ant crawl in between your toes and bite down on that paper thin skin, that little bit of pain putting off fireworks in your brain. i think about you getting pulled over, so high you thought you were playing an arcade game, in a town that isn't your own, just to blame it on your kid sister who hasn't even tasted her first sip of champagne. i imagine the sinking sensation you must've felt in the pit of your gut after your first semester of college, when you started to realize your alien heart might never find a home. i imagine where you bought your first batch, like from the kid in the room at the end of the hall who brought weed to every dorm party, or the twenty-five-year-old from your hometown who still hangs with the high schoolers, or from the first boy who made you believe you're special and that this might be fun. i think about you untying the lace of your Van you found last year under the Christmas tree, and you moving it up your forearm, tied like the arms of a toddler around their mother's thigh on the first day of Pre-K. i think about the spoon you might've used, with an ornate handle from your mom's Easter-only set, or nabbed from the dining hall with crusted soup and pieces of lint still stuck to it from the pocket of your bomber jacket. i imagine the way that holding it must've felt, like an unwieldy teenage soldier holding a rifle, feeling big and tall, not yet knowing he'll end up shot in the mud crying for his mom. i imagine the lighter you used, some Bic with a phrase like "let's chill" on it, but did they even have those in the 80s? i imagine that you must've remembered everything you've learned about metamorphosis rocks as you watched the acid cook, reminding yourself that it's pressure that makes a thing beautiful. i think about the needle, perhaps bought off your pre-med friend, and the tiniest pockmark left where it pierced the skin just below your elbow, a welcome intruder, like a vampire you have to invite in. i think about how that must've felt. like when your cat is kneading their love into your thigh, and they accidentally catch you with a claw. or like your first driving lesson when your dad pulls over on a rural county road and lets you get behind the wheel of the company car, and he reaches over and pats your knee. or like the daughter you don't even know yet, and the electricity it sends up your spine when she grasps onto your pinky finger because she needs to know that you're there. but this is all a guessing game i play alone at night, when my bones feel hollow and my skin paper-thin. because, if i'm being honest, all i will ever know for certain is the way you looked in a hospital bed, with so-called fairy kisses down your arm and my little hands pressing into yours, begging you to choose me, if just for that once.



OUTLINE [FOR B.K-O.]
LIESL PFEFFER
2020



OUTLINE [FOR M.H.]
LIESL PFEFFER
2020

Strophy Life

JESSE MALMED

The opining ceremony at the Oulympics,
where we win (wind winding,
clock't miming) the hands arms
trying to find Christian Marclay on TikTok
he drives an IROC and doesn't care how I am

*Just because the burbling birds are beautiful
brooks doesn't mean I'm ready to die*

you go to the city, hey man, do you want to be in my poem
here pose just like that yeah yeah do something funny with your
hands maybe or like betray a certain wizened worry with your
eyes yeah yeah the camera loves you yeah yeah labor yeah

full empt-osophy bring your eyes to bear what's worry
first second third second second first third second second
Anything can become a rhythm once you repeat it Strophy Life
The



OUTLINE [FOR G.A.]
LIESL PFEFFER
2020

CONTRIBUTORS

JANNE MARIE DAUER
INDIANA HOOVER
BETHANY JARMUL
BEE LB

JESSE MALMED
HENRIQUE COSER MOREIRA
LIESL PFEFFER
KATIE SVEDMAN

THE RACKET

PATREON

WWW.PATREON.COM/
THERACKETREADINGSERIES

WEBSITE

WWW.THERACKETSF.COM

NEWSLETTER

WWW.THERACKETSF.COM/
NEWSLETTER

INSTAGRAM

@THERACKETREADINGSERIES

SUBMIT YOUR WORK:

<https://theracketsf.com/submissions>

TOODLES.

