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ISSUE #3

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DIFFÉRANCE
MAGAZINE

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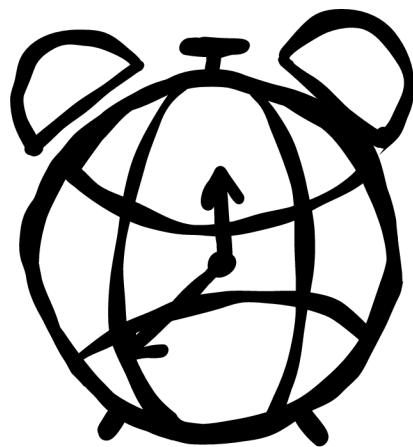
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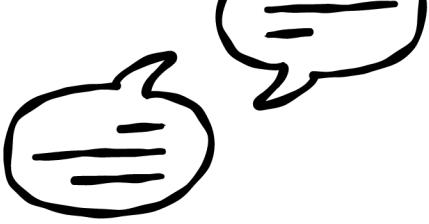
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Issue #3

différance
magazine



after _____



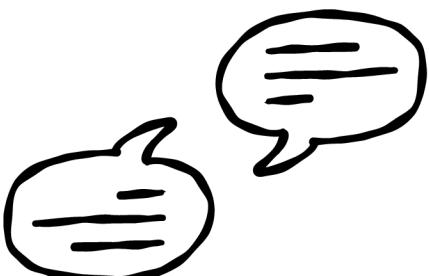
FOREWORD

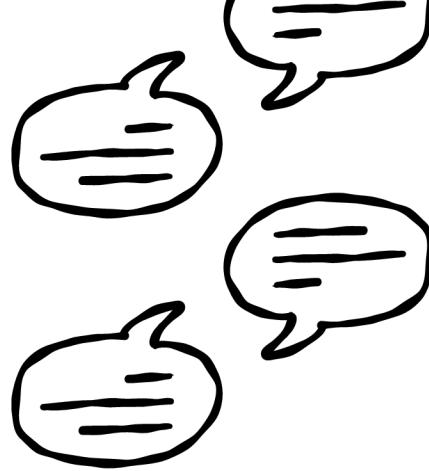
Dear readers,

You can't talk about "after" without mentioning time. Whether it's the continuation of time in the form of seismic tragedy in aftershocks, the leap in time in the literary bridge that is an after-poem, the prophetic vision of an afterworld, or the banality of time of a sultry August afternoon. The prompt for this issue consists of words interpreting time in various shades, coming together to represent the complexity of the "after."

For our editors, there is an inherent sadness to "after," always one step behind, forever following, indefinitely delayed. A missed deadline, the thoughtful silence after finishing a book, the drained emptiness of an afterparty. But there is delight too, the golden ring of an afterglow, the rejoicing hope in an afterlife, chasing "after one's own heart," and bathing in the calm of an after-storm.

Exploring these experiences of the "after" with more nuance and color, our writers and artists featured in this issue have found nature as the perfect vehicle for conveying the duality of "after," its deaths and promises. We see this in Ollie's "Ode to Californian Winters," which captures the silent, roiling momentum of things in stasis, winters shivering with energy. In Sol's "Afterthoughts From a National Park," a snapshot of a roadtrip to a national park spills into the sublime, writing itself into the "underbelly of a sequoia forest." In Melody Ding's piece, anaphora becomes an act of conjuring, raw flares of memory rendering a prophesy. These words and brushstrokes defer, carrying themselves into the infinity of time and the immortality of human moments.





This issue sees the addition of the genres of bilingual poetry, and a collaboration in verse. We'd like to thank all who made this issue possible, our writers, for their timeless writing; artists, for their timely artistic contributions; and of course, our readers, for reading, time and time again.

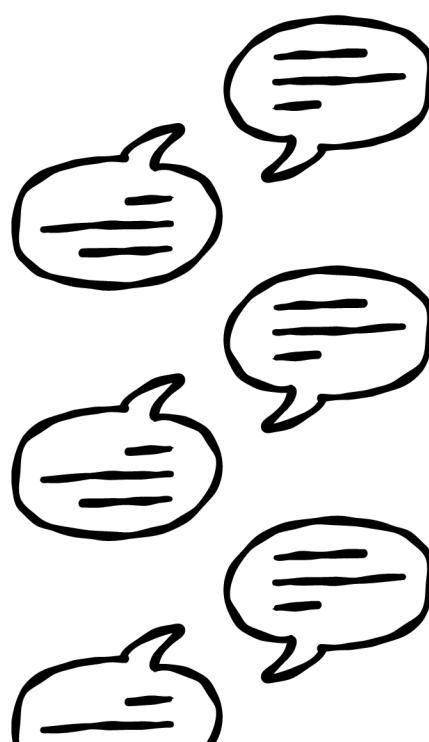
See you next time,

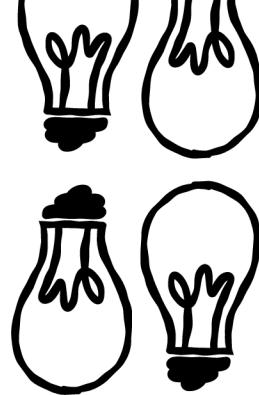
Katniss Taylen

The Différence Magazine Team

Chris Ariel

P.S. As an afterthought, maybe we should have written an afterword too, after all, this issue is named "after____", but I suppose that would require us to compromise our after hours.





P R O M P T

after

after poem

after all

afterthought

afterword

afterbath

aftershock

afterward

after-hours

afterdamp

afternoon

after-the-fact

aftereffect

afterglow

after one's
own heart

afterclap

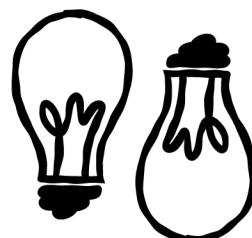
afterlife

after a storm
comes a calm

aftermath

afterbirth

after...



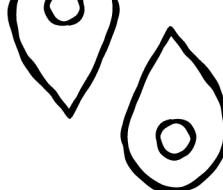


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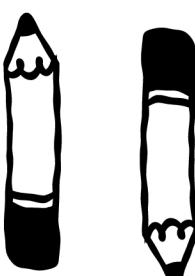
COVER ARTIST

Sophie Huang



Différence

Sophie Huang specializes in turning caffeine and existential dread into art. She hopes you'll like this magazine chingoo



DROWNING A SPOTLIGHT

AlliterationAnnihilator170

How long have I been walking?

For Christ's sake! I don't know—I'll never. But I can't stop—not until I get away from that—

—*that* thing.

It was a while ago that [REDACTED] disappeared. Was that his name? Not quite sure—never close with the guy. He was just a mascot, after all.

He stood there, prancing.

A small red speck, holding a billboard that read "*Beat 'Em!*"

He lived on the brink of your periphery. To the world, he was lifeless. A mannequin in a Red Panther costume, eyes glassy—like a *doll*.

I had only ever met his glance once. And to the world who opened its universe unto him, he returned with a stare equally lifeless.

Ha!

I couldn't help but feel like to him,

He was prancing on some stage, telling jokes, awkward—*fidgeting*. But, He was no clown, after all—just a mascot.

I cannot remember when,

I *cannot* remember why.

"Should I do it?" He asked.

I—I thought he was joking.

...

"Should I do it?" His voice trembled beneath his mask.

How many times had he asked? Do *what*?

Should I do it?

Because, before I knew it—

—“who cares!” I replied!

I let out a dry gasp, the sand carving into my throat. Suddenly,

“The school is about to close, you know?” A light, high-pitched voice, slithered its way to my ears—and subsequently, *his*.

There was a little boy watching our conversation from afar. Brown hair, bluish eyes, well dressed—who was he again?

Oh yes—the principal's boy. At least, that was what I assumed, and *that* was what he probably assumed too.

[REDACTED] didn't ask me again.

The suit came alive; the plastic bristles of its fur wriggling in the damp light, its expressions changing—the lights falling upon him. Like a...

A stage.

I couldn't help but wonder *what* he was seeing at that moment.

...

I—I know I'm a horrible human. I didn't do a thing—a thing! But, I don't know what to tell you. I don't have anyone to tell this to, anything else to tell you.

Somehow, in some capacity, it just... didn't quite feel *real*. Even now. And, I don't think if you replayed that scene in front of me a dozen—a thousand—times, you'd get me to act. Because, I can't act.

Can't!

But as I watched him wrangle the life out of the boy, I could feel my fingers slipping into his soft throat, controlling the twitches of his mouth, of his eyes, of his body.

Playing? No, not quite—

—pressing against his face, as a surgeon would to a chest, praying for some kind of life.

And, for the first time in my life, in all of my intellectual pursuits, in all my attempts to reduce all evil and fear to so much a child's mockery,

I found within that *thing*,

Fear.

"Stop!"

Stop!

Stop.

Please.

Nothing changed. He did not bat me an eye.

Without looking into him, I found a window—pounding deeply into it, screaming. I breathed a sea of fog over my own reflection, quickly wiping it away—desperation. But nothing I said could be heard, and nothing I did could be seen. And so, I could only watch,

Watch,

And *watch*.

When his hands released from the boy,

I ran.

I found myself before the police station, planning to expose the damn monster before he got away. That was the only thing a *rat* like me could do. For Heaven's sake—he was out there, killing. Plotting!

But the officers—they looked at me. Just,

Looked

At

Me.

You—you don’t understand—they...

How do I describe this?

They looked at me, with this mechanical, snappy gaze—a certain glassiness in their eyes, that jingled with the chime of a glass bell. And, before he could speak,

I left the building at once—and there I swear to you—I saw *him*. Fragments.

Out the window in an alleyway, between the ground fans, in the shimmer of the trash bins, licked by dust and debris: there was something—something that seemed to be *watching* me.

You may say I am a liar—I am anything but. Believe me, I beg of you, I swear, to you, [REDACTED] is out there. And he—he wants me *dead*.

I break into a sprint. The road, at some point, stops running beside me.

I fall over, the pebbles grinding—chewing against my arms and left cheek. Had I tripped?—I hadn’t noticed. My vision of the road begins to grow faint.

The *beat* of my heart, gushing against my head, my shins fading. Searing pain against the soles of my feet. Sweat clings, eating into my flesh—skin churning, merging with my clothes. The sun whips, setting my hair aflame—*damn it!*

I pound my fists against the pavement, trying to force my body up—but it simply wouldn’t stand.

“Freeze!”

Blurs shift into distinction—from the sand, rises houses. Roofs. Windows, fans. The blaring of cars. The buzzing of fans. They become clearer. Some kind of alleyway.

The school bleeds into full view, and I,

Lying in front of it.

Pathetic.

A row of ordinary men, donning their blue costumes, click their guns a couple of feet away from me.

Are they aiming at me?

I can’t tell.

I freeze, staring at them.

Their faces seem to be livid now. Sorrowful. Something that can’t quite be described in verbiage. They seem to be attentive to me now. So, in return, I stare back.

Asking for something—*something!* But, echoing deep into their pupils, They look at me, with those same, damnable eyes. Like I’m—I’m mad.

Ah.

I am no longer in a position to talk. But,
I never have been.

Even now, I'm standing on a stage. Beating hearts, locked behind closed doors; universes limited by heads and bars—alone, watching *others*, watch me. Mirrors—lives so distant from one another.

In the windows of which we pound for each other's souls,
I see myself emerge from within the sea of mine own fog.

...

Who—who am I to be *trusted*?

I clench the knife. The officers say something—I can't quite hear it. Their mouths move, like a—a pantomime. I'm certain that even if I say something now, they won't hear it either.

They stare back, slowly crouching forwards. I hold up my arm—they stop moving. I felt like playing a little game of red light green light.

Zip,

Zap,

Zop.

They're waiting for a reason to kill me. And likewise,
I am waiting for them.

Who will go first?

The sun flows onto my body, leaking between my fingers, caressing my body in a warm, canary-yellow. The sky stands still, as it always has. The buildings, the stars, the clouds, jettied up by popsicle sticks and glue.

And so, I stand there, waiting.

Watching for someone—something to act,
As the spotlight dines upon me, once more, once less.

Ah.

This man.

He stands there, slouched, facing a sea of red and blue fog. Stones, trembling with guns in their hands—stones, that see the world as anything but stones.

It is now that I am no longer playing the part of the entertainer—that I see clearly, and without doubt. Magnified into no eyes but my own.

Oh yes—that is me. I would call myself [REDACTED], but even that is a fake.

Regardless,

I am not [REDACTED].

I am myself.

I let myself go on living, telling this "*Insecurity*" that there is a monster out there. Perhaps, he is a monster to himself.

I let myself go on living, knowing that I will perish, and perish before he does.

He's never been so much a fool to believe in fantasies. He's not psychotic. I'm *not psychotic*. But sometimes—just, sometimes—a monster is better than no monster at all.

I cannot free myself from his grasp. I have tried—tried, to make him walk forwards. But he collapsed. And that ambition—that *damnable* attempt, eventually became his, and so he became perverse. Twisted.

I had to stop him, tell him,

That, our efforts were not in vain. And,

That our fears were not unfounded.

He grabs a knife from his pocket. The police screech something from a distance, but he doesn't listen. Then—it flies. Pain. Searing holes, biting deep and beyond the skin and mind.

Blood.

...

It tastes nice.

To be honest, I do not know which one of us is telling you this. I no longer know who is writing this now.

But now, the abyss gnaws at his soul. His soul is intertwined with mine, pitchfork spiraling, deep into darkness.

We—no.

I *must* believe that I am at peace. Alone, the spotlight drowns under formless waves.

And so,

I am at peace.

...

Immensely so.

AlliterationAnnihilator170 is a high school student living in Irvine, California. In his free time, he enjoys collecting playing cards, and performing magic. Finding inspiration in philosophy, critical theory, psychology, and sociology, he incorporates various elements of existential horror in his writings, resulting in a unique style that is aggressive, frantic and oftentimes, surreal.

AFTERIMAGE |

Melody Ding

My dearest, munchkin,

I've been watching the stars too much again. Their flicker won't leave the corners of my eyes. In the day I feel blind.

They say afterimages are optical illusions. They say it's a trick when my nerves get overstimulated. I disagree. I think afterimages are a natural product of being a wanderer.

In the night I see too much. I'm missing your city again. Or mine. It was mine before it was yours. I see purple for the blazing orange sycamore leaves. I see red for the flashing green Family Mart lights that used to look so loud to my eyes. Back when I was sharp. I see brown where my hair used to turn yellow under the winter sun. That winter's sun. I'm seeing tangerine for the electric blue car lights on your streets. Only you live in a gray neighborhood. You sleep in quiet colors. Is that why I can't find you?

Afterimages fade when one comes home. I'm home now. I'm less than an hour's drive from your house. I should visit you. I finally know where to turn the left. I should visit you. I'm not leaving this time. Or maybe I am. We all are.

I'm seeing afterimages of my city now. Or yours. It became yours when it became mine. I see the roads that don't wind but bend at right angles. I see the trees, much taller than the trees here and already bare by mere November. I see the trees I used to sprint beneath to get indoors fast enough to call you back. I see the short brick buildings I passed every early weekend morning I spent wondering how you were. I see the biting wind that raced past my ears when our breaths stayed warm over the phone. I see the white of another frosty dawn. Will it ever turn dark?

What happens to an afterimage re-painted? When the blurry dots are cemented into firm, solid strokes? I can see our winter now. I see the classrooms I no longer call home, where the chairs are indigo but white in my head. I see the dark brown of our late-evening cafe, the umber syrup of crepes

we ate in winter because we didn't want to let summer go. I see the glass bridge in the park we used to visit, the dark red tracks I thought were olive. I see the warm lights overrunning our two-story bookstore. I see summer in winter and autumn in spring.

When you go around in loops too much the dots overlap.

I'm seeing afterimages of the future. The version of yours with me in it. I'm seeing the gray-brown shikumen I'd promised we'd squander an afternoon in, the verses I said I'd read you when I meet you again. I'm seeing you breathless from laughter in my arms after another close escape post-mischief, your hands tightly gripping mine like toddlers' would. I'm seeing you smile as I fumble with the zipper on your coat. Your curious eyes wide open as you try to coax another answer from me. Your arms quietly outstretched while I melt in and we melt into the fading black. The dots are escaping me, munchkin. Isn't it lovely we turn the future into the past.

You've been here, munchkin, I know. I see the footsteps you left by the windowsill where you stood to look up at the stars. The specks were in your eyes before they made their way into mine. This was your optical illusion before it became mine.

I'm in your city, munchkin. Or maybe you are in mine. When you go around in loops too much the dots dissolve.

My munchkin, it's another year.

A F T E R Y O U |

Donald Wen & Alexia Zhao

Donald.

I watch

As the silver sky collapses
into a wisp of silver smoke,
settling beside the orderly rows
of shady classrooms.

In the distance, in the night,
In the winter shines a light.

Alexia.

I gaze

into the colors of your wrinkled sneakers,
Oddly arranged on the wooden floor.

I dare not look up,
to confront that unknown tempest brought
by the howls of December...

Donald.

I dare not look up,
to confront your grim gaze.

After you,
I thought. After you greet me
(if you ever do)
I shall greet you.

Alexia.

I sense your presence,
like the piercing coldness tickling my sleeves.
I imagine

those well-armed eyes
Tumbling with the fire of
last night through the screens.

Donald.
One more step and I shall pass
those weary feet of yours
After
you leave me,
Flickering images of
blue light shall remind me,
again, of our words last night.

Alexia.
I can see remnants of black leather,
so familiar yet unspeakably distanced.
Passing you, I look away.
Leaning forward,
my mind goes blank as your visage echoes in the dizziness of winter.
My shoe
strikes its head
on the stairs.
I trip
In front of you.

Donald.
I look up as
you skid clumsily to a halt.
Your iron countenance
melts like snow
and melts mine.
I let out a single laugh.

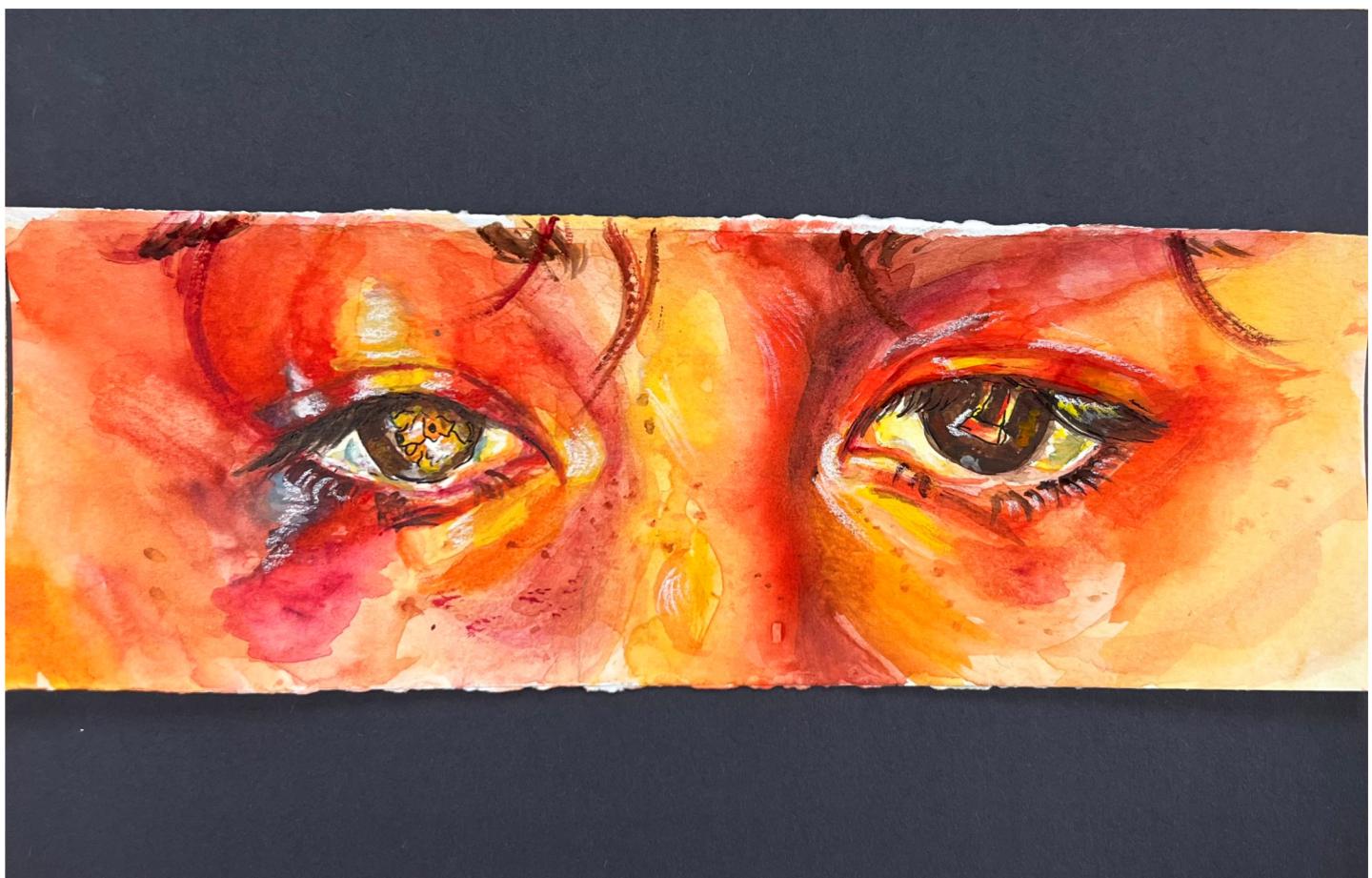
Alexia.

The snow melts,
Along with that melting smile.
Staring into those amber-brown pupils.
In them, my silhouette shall be reflected,
After
we meet again—
In the distance, in the night,
In the winter shines a light.

Donald Wen enjoys reading Eileen Chang or T.S. Eliot, occasionally with some Rachmaninoff playing in his earphones, though it makes him lose focus. He happens to be a history student, so do not freak out if he ever stares at 30 pages of revision notes.

Alexia Zhao enjoys drawing, writing, occasionally engaging in artistic and philosophical conversations, and misspelling Emily Dickinson's name. Do not be scared if she begins bending time thirty minutes before deadlines through her sheer will. It's normal.

AFTERWARDS | Sol



Sol is an artist/writer based in the city of trees and phds. Sol loves better call saul and creating things that include an "everlasting theme captured in fleeting moments."

NONMAMMALIAN UNKNOWNABLES

Yain

Rattlesnake rings the bell
At fifteen past three.
I sit amidst the garden of repeated motifs,
Ennui.

Iguana takes the midnight bus
and gets off at the pineapple fields
the blood dripping down the crowns
writes the reptilian poetry.

These are words far more authentic than any things I have held in my hands,
an encoded elysium that does not belong to
the mammalians.

Crickets and cicadas that are sick of summer
tears the eulogy of viridian night,
they rehearse the wintry days
before sunrise.

Not even cats can understand
how the jellyfish resides under the cocoa tree.
The holy juice
sends the oracle through email:
"Thou may wring thy arms and break thy legs,
yet thou shall not see the world in complex eyes."
We had exhausted the milk and honey;
tonight, goldfish and dragonflies feast upon
the blood of saffrons.

Pour the sorghum wines into the soil,
it will bring mercy to all
who never felt warmth in their blood.
Within the eggshells
are the moonlight bitter like salt.

非哺乳者,不可知物

三时十五分,
响尾蛇敲响钟声。
我坐在庭院之间,反复着早已厌倦的意象。
绿蠵蜥乘坐午夜的公交
在菠萝田下车
用叶片下流出的血
写下爬行动物的诗篇。

这是比我手中拥有的任何事物都更跳脱的文字
不属于胎生哺乳者的
晦涩乐园。
蟋蟀与蝉鸣早已对夏天深恶痛绝
撕碎了青绿色夜晚的挽歌
在清晨到来之前排练冬日。

猫儿也无法理解的
在可可树下乘凉的水母。
喝下汁液
简讯传来神谕:
“绞断手脚也无法进入复眼的世界。”
奶汁与香蜜早已耗尽
今夜金鱼与蜻蜓将要共同享用
藏红花的血液。

高粱酒撒向土地
豁免一切
从未感受过温暖之物
蛋壳之中
是咸涩的月光。

FLEETING |

Beihao Zhou



Beihao Zhou is too busy making shirts to write an artist bio.

DES HUMAIN SUFFRAGES (HUMAN FAVOR)

J. Mauve

Elusive is the asylum in Elysium
of fools on the poor farm.

CITY LIMIT POP 43

If you can't take care of yourself,
there are limestone cottages
that could occupy your mind.

The mason's trade was a labor of love:
creating a workers' paradise.

This farm land has put me in the midst.
-- "She was found!"
---"What, L'éternité?"
It is the seed that went with the sun.

L'asile de fous à la ferme des pauvres.
Si tu ne peux pas prendre soin de toi,
il y a des chalets de calcaire
qui pourrait occuper ton esprit.

Une œuvre d'amour était
le métier de maçon:
créer un paradis ouvrier.
Cette terre agricole
m'a mis dans la brume.

Elle a été retrouvée.
Quoi? L'éternité.
C'est la graine qui allée avec le soleil.

AFTER GIRLHOOD, IN MY MEMORY AND IN FILM

Amelia Burns

Jeffery Eugenides' 'The Virgin Suicides' follows the five Lisbon sisters' catatonic summer in 1970's Detroit, which starts with the death of the youngest girl, 13 year-old Cecilia, who impales herself on her front yard fence by falling from her bedroom window, and ends with the collective deaths of her sisters who each take their own lives in individual ways, in a sequence that neither the police nor the forensically-interested group of teenage boys who narrate the novel can figure out. Opinions vary on the extent to which Sofia Coppola's 1999 film of the same name can be said to depict the same thing. Many raise the question of gaze. Eugenides writes about the male gaze, through his male gaze. Coppola films about the male gaze, but does she remove Eugenides' surface? Or does she depict this too, and use her film to comment on it? Does it remain instead unaddressed, meaning that her film only ends up legitimising these oppressive layers of gaze? The fact that each of these questions can be understood in their own right although they exclude each other illustrates that the film can do all three contradictions at once. But it is open to debate which description captures Coppola's work most resonantly. This debate is almost as old as the film; indeed, it is almost a part of the film.

Coppola's version of 'The Virgin Suicides' occupies an overtaxed area of the zeitgeist. This area, the discourse on girlhood, is academic, aesthetic, and streaked with satirically-exploited internet terms, owing to the fact that the work is predominantly (although that is not to say poorly) done by teenage or young adult women in the form of video essays. The speakers are reflecting on and reacting against tendencies in media and culture like the beautification of girlhood, representations of girlhood in snapshots or as filmic, and the cinematic and literary tropification of female melancholy. With *TVS*, Coppola was adding to a pre-existing discussion, but no other film has generated such a bloom in the culture discussing femininity like hers. While Coppola borrowed its look from Peter Weir's 'Picnic at Hanging Rock', *TVS* opened up the possibility for this specific feel to be typified, as it was iterated in myriad forms

afterward. For a mainstream example, see the Marc Jacobs 'Daisy' campaign: a group of nymphettish girls laze in feathery grass that glows in honeyed afternoon sunlight, wearing white linen dresses that speak of the seventies. The genre of characteristically feminine coming-of-age films flourished after *TVS*, promoting directors like Greta Gerwig and Mia Hansen-Løve. One instance of media that would likely have not existed without Coppola's film is Justine Kurland's 'Girl Pictures', which seems to have been, in certain photos, staged to intentionally mirror a moment on Coppola's screen.

The simple view is perhaps that Coppola, in depicting the Lisbon girls' story in her style, removes the male gaze Eugenides initially wrote it with. Its proponents might cite the camera's objective perspective of the events as recalled by the teenage boys, which in the novel we are fed in a more biased manner, coming from the boys' own words. If Coppola's version was itself made into a novel, these thinkers argue, the more likely narrator would be a Lisbon girl. Proponents with a more essentialist view of 'gaze' might simply argue that because Coppola, a woman, depicts the story, it is depicted through the female gaze. But this does not rule out the possibility of gazes being compounded, so that even if a female gaze is imposed on 'The Virgin Suicides' as Coppola directs it her way, the male gaze in Eugenides' source material is latent, embedded in the film. Therefore, the ethical question arises, does Coppola cut into this gaze, or embolden and exalt it?

Another way of coming to this question is considering what purpose the zeitgeisty discourse on girlhood serves for the girls living the reality. Interestingly, Eugenides has quoted Nabokov (famously the author of *Lolita*), stating that 'Nabokov said that all great novels are fairy tales.' Reading 'The Virgin Suicides' as influenced by fairy tales prefigures the novel as a contribution to the beautification of girlhood; an attempt to snapshot and make filmic female adolescence, and a work that centres around the trope of female melancholy. Cecilia's self-harm is dreamlike and fabled, the girls are Rapunzel-types kept in their suburban tower, and their suffering is Romantic. This moral charge cannot only be made at Eugenides, however. Coppola's mesmeric soundtrack and sun-bleached cinematography heightens all of these tendencies that he gives into – tendencies that fundamentally contour the male gaze.

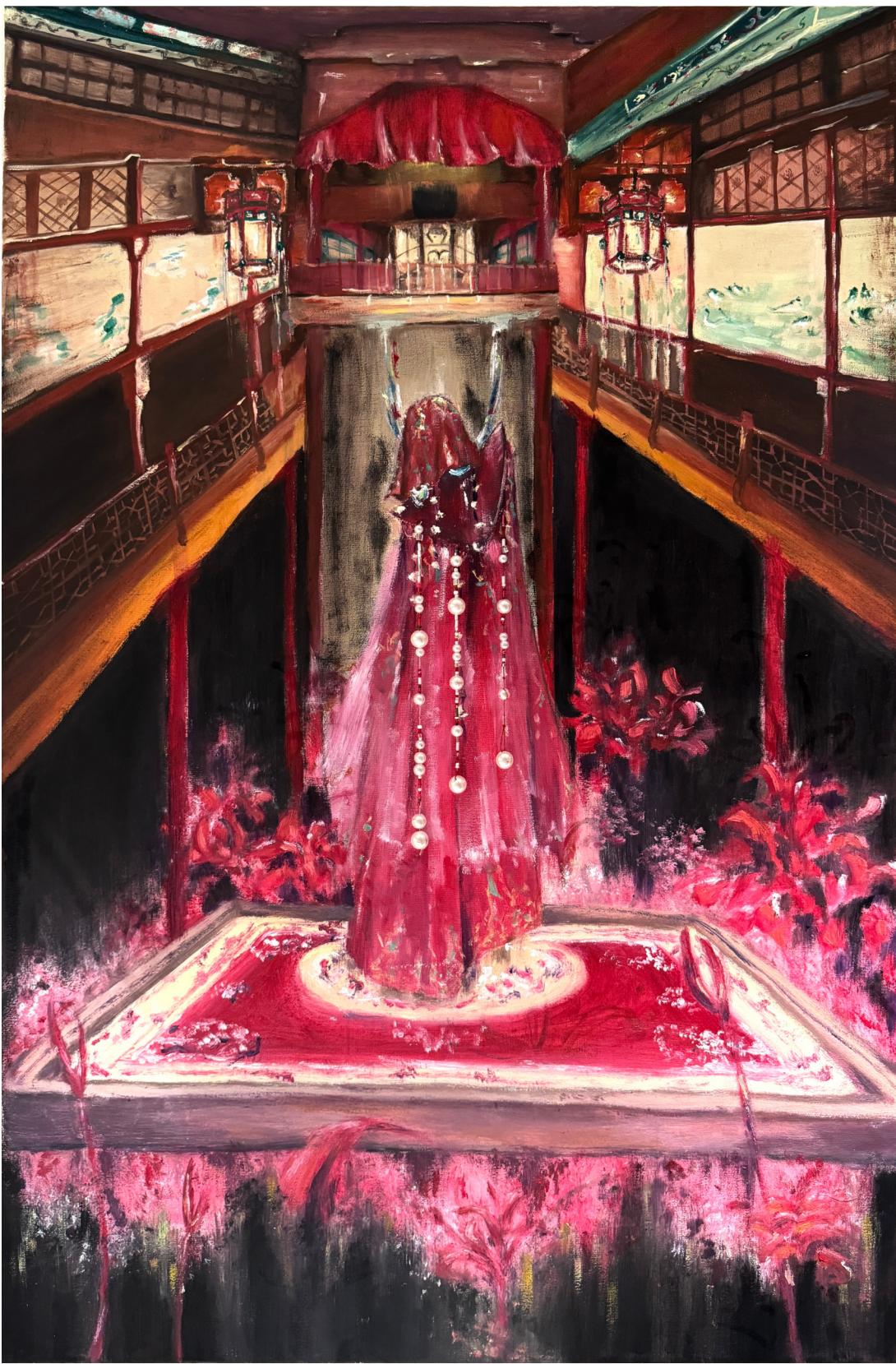
The implications of Coppola's 'The Virgin Suicides' reach the entire discourse. And so, feminist thinkers might be eager to defend the film lest the entire artistic, cinematic and literary tradition of depicting whimsical girlhood be decried. But, a coming-of-age story summed up by daisy chains, friendship bracelets over bandaged wrists and a diary giving an enigmatic profile of an inscrutable girl who decorates her sad poetry with glittery stickers, only diminishes the girl's identity and experience. The aesthetic focus taken by the tradition is not the only problem; that these depictions underestimate girls is an inevitable consequence given they aim to summarise girlhood within a piece of media. Condensing the complex and multifarious female adolescent experience always does a disservice to girls because it is necessarily inaccurate, not to mention typically white and Western.

The discourse, in total, might help girls understand what works like 'The Virgin Suicides' obscure: an honest narrative of their childhood. But this occurs through the process of overturning the romantic, melancholic and filmic images presented as facts in the media on girlhood. Dreams and reminiscence have a place in understanding girlhood. However, they are not a lens that we can rely on to see a history or a present accurately. Both Coppola and Eugenides' *TVS* aestheticise girlhood in their narrative, in a palimpsest of gendered gazes that do not cancel each other out.

Amelia Burns is a UK student in her final year of school education, passionate about things that are either pretty, tasty, true, or ethically good. Things not falling into said categories are just not really her cup of tea.

AFTER GHOST MARRIAGE

Beihao Zhou



Beihao Zhou is too busy making shirts to write an artist bio.

AFTERTHOUGHTS FROM A NATIONAL PARK | Sol

I've always thought that redwoods were the same as sequoias.
So we drove up north, crossing county lines over the Golden State,
Windows down, sunset over the freeway.

We embroider constellations at night
Under shadowy twigs of redwoods or sequoias.
Who's to know when the sky's so dark? *Obsidian, obsidian*—

I've never liked how dark my eyes are.

You ask me who named the stars.

Whatever: we sing an elegy to astronomers and the
stars in my eyes.

We scale a sequoia trunk, fire scars scorched black on the sides.
Flames can't reach us here.

The dendrochronologists we are, counting through rings.
There's got to be a couple hundred, thousands, perhaps.

One ring, an extinct squirrel,

Another, the skin of a tree dwelling salamander. Yet, we still laugh at how
underwhelming the General Sherman stands.

Sunsets into wooden cracks when you remind me that the sun is also a star.

Read the time inside out: ring through
Ring, star by
Star. Below

The underbelly of a sequoia forest
Or was it the redwood?

ODE TO CALIFORNIAN WINTERS OR AFTER THE LEAVES TURN

Ollie

Frost
on a window
creeping up like ivy on an ancient, forgotten home
Dewdrops
clinging to blades
of grass, glistening in the morning light
The air
clouding with each
puff of breath from your lips,
waiting
for raindrops
to whisper their descent from the clouds
The *pitter-patter*
pitter-patter, pitter-patter
of tiny little footsteps echoing across the trees.
This is winter,
where dead things roam
and the air is alive with the promise of something new.

Ollie is a rising senior from California. She has always been passionate about language and hopes to make an impact through her words.

AFTER
FLEETING

Beihao Zhou



Beihao Zhou is too busy making shirts to write an artist bio.

(A F T E R I G O)

| Donald Wen

Today
I'll sleep early
(after I go)

with my door left
wide open to the world
with my feet firmly
planted on the floor

I know you're somewhere
somewhere far away
on broken highways made of
love letters, concrete cribs
They litter the asphalt air
but bridges shall
reemerge!
(after they go)

I walk by sordid alleys
of surgical cleanliness
dark all the way
until the very end
A man with a flashlight
flees forgone fantasies
he'll leave behind ashes—
sparks and melodies...
(after we go)

I'll sleep right here
door left
wide open to the world
If you'd like to leave me a note—
(after I go)

let it crawl
up into my dreams
from my feet firmly
planted on the floor

Donald Wen enjoys reading Eileen Chang or T.S. Eliot, occasionally with some Rachmaninoff playing in his earphones, though it makes him lose focus. He happens to be a history student, so do not freak out if he ever stares at 30 pages of revision notes.



**THANK YOU FOR
THE WORDS AND
BRUSHSTROKES**

