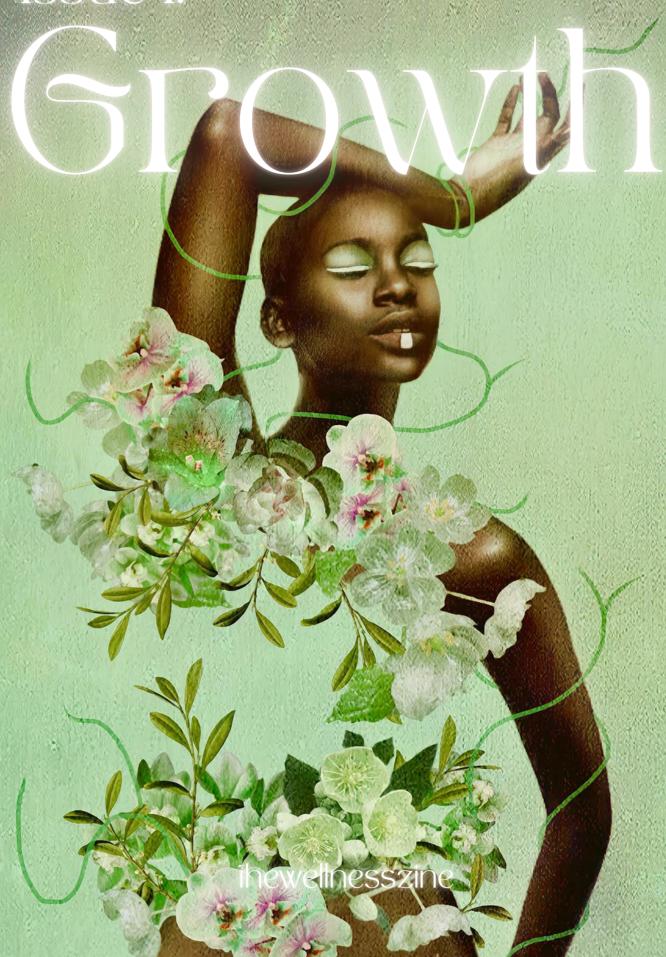
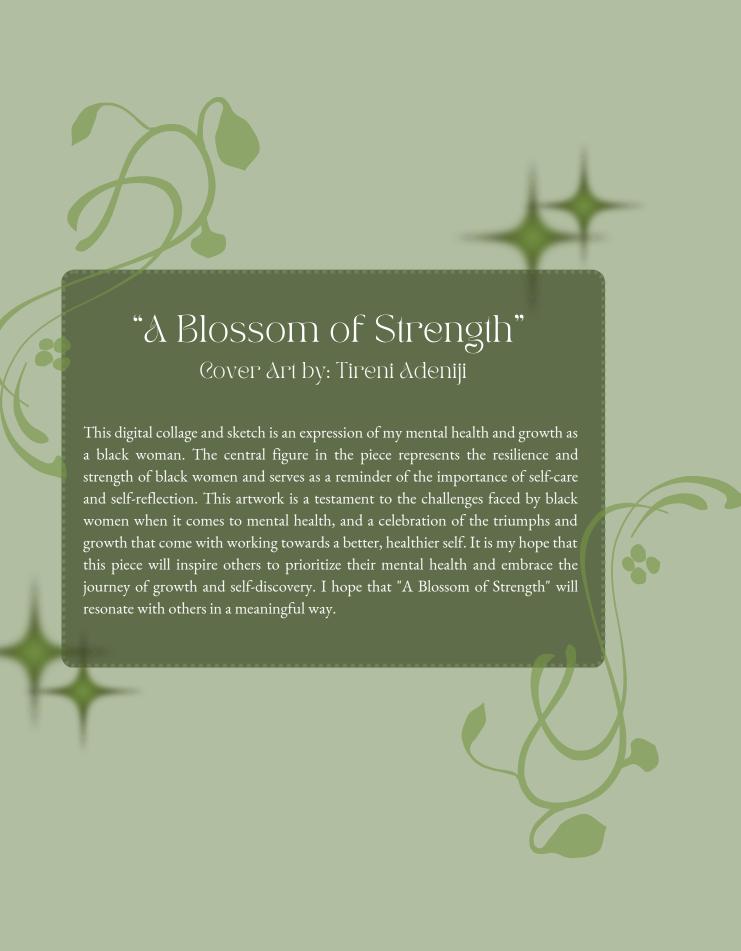
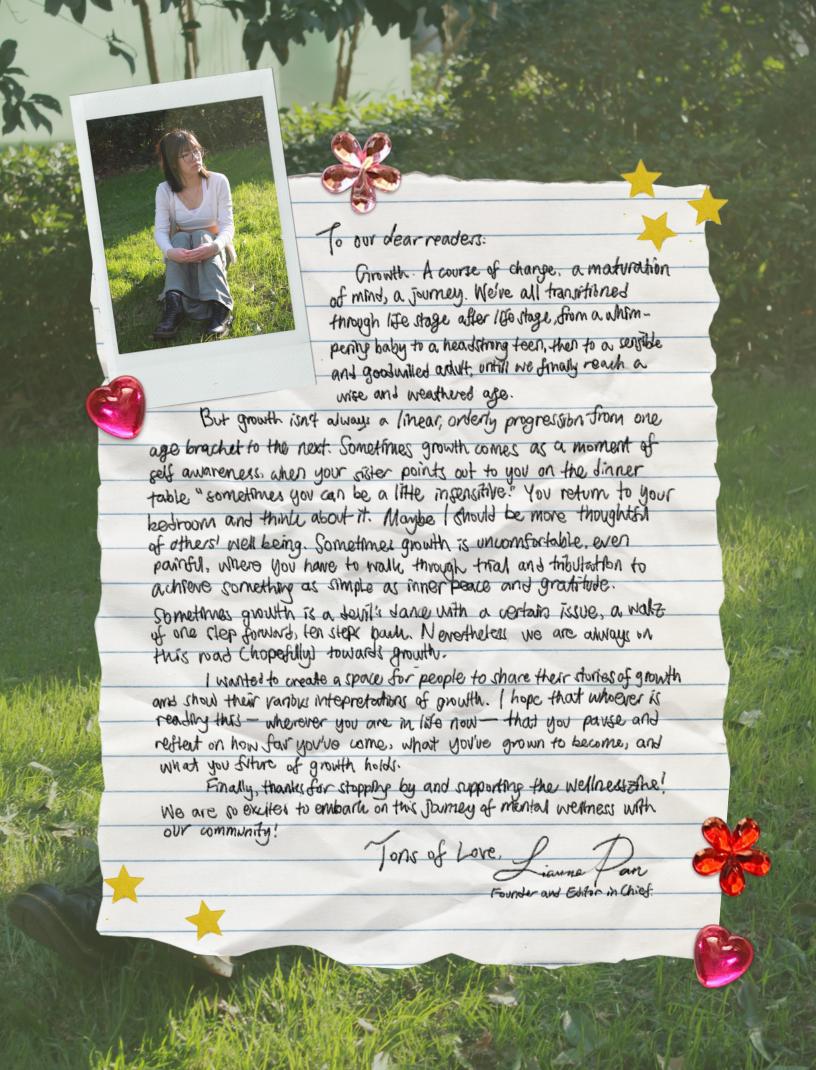
issue 1:







Participating in the creation of the wellnesselve was a valuable and empowering learning experience for me. And it was heartwarming to witness the vast contributions and support from people around the world &

— Clelia de Ferrieres (Editor!)



I love now growth can be interpreted in so many ways from so many different perspectives. A biry thank you to everyone who contributed in making this happen, and I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I did!

(layout!)

Hello! Before you start reading and wish gawking 17 just wish 17 say a big

THANK YOU !!! to anyone who submitted and helped this zine become trac!! become trac!!





### CONTRIBUTORS

Andra Smileanschi Angelina Hund Antoniya Boyanova Arianna Louie Bedfordtowers Chelsea Lee David Yang Dio Dunbar Dusta Wright Dylan James Elizabeth Gade Ella Pan Fianna DePater Gergana Diakova Indigo Palmer Jaylene Cabrera Joana Dionisio Joe Szalinski Julianna Austin Julie Kinninmont Kanishka Kataria

Kean O'Brien Kyle Vadher Liz Walker Lucy Daley M. Mann Maalik Rahim Mallory Kimmel Maria Hill Marta Leszek Natalie D.C. Pamela Loperena Priyanka Dhingra Remi Germaine Sam Waheed Saptarshi Bhowmick Sara Wang Sophie Hardisty Shruti Sareen Taliah Stephenson Tireni Adeniji Willy Magoogly



Tireni Adeniji (Our cover art artist!!)

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# Music playlist Grow U











## emotions of growth



Any kind of growth always comes with a wave of emotions. Some are good and helpful others a bit destructive. All of the emotions are important to feel even if there's some we'd rather not.

The Dog

Poetry By: Kanishka Photography By: Lianna Pan

holding the raggedy doll in my hand, in those days, I had replaced my doll with something cooler in the band, like a phone or a lip gloss, been allergic to kisses and stood tall. i sat alone in my rocking chair, eventually, mom was right. eventually, i miss those years, in the simple things, that delight, when i felt sad. candles didn't stop adding up, the stairs i took, took me apart like an escalator, without my realization, i've grown up so fast.

the roller coaster of life has put me in such a situation, where lives are many but hearts few, cries are heard but consolation never, nights changed from partying to making my pillow, a tear bin. soon, the memories of my past washed ashore, when they went adrift. boxed in the frames, the photos too, now have lost their inflict.

several nights spent, in the hands of many they wrapped themselves around me like a warm embrace and weave the fables of the fairies, all ceased in the span of blinking an eye. fame on rise, the dates kept me away, with time, people have already invented their lives and i still am myself - discovering, breaths are a synonym for melancholy. creating plans and moments to treasure, then, complaining together and forever, the repeat in my thoughts, this was easier before the circle of overwhelming continued.

i hope they appreciate my efforts, remember what they told me in secret, hope it hasn't been so harsh, hope the smiles still look for you, hope the sun still bows in your front, hope your family still stays with you, hope you know the way to deal, for i have lost and need a desperate feel. the doll whispered to me, more in fear, "they still miss you." holding back tears, i tore the doll apart, the splendid voice torments me, neither i nor they confide in, the sadness in the lone nights. the feel just dampens, i am caved in, lone in the crowd, not dead still alive, being strong as mountain looks as brittle as the glass, hope it may break soon. soon, they shall look up to me, there once lived her with her doll.





Photography by: Liz Walker
"Lark of my Heart." This is a 35mm photograph taken at St. Mary's Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN on Dubble Film's Jelly Roll film. The title is also a song by Eliza Rickman, off of her "Footnotes for Spring" album. To me, this photo conveys optimism against all odds - it shows the possibility of hope.

# Body Swap

Photos By: Taliah Stephenson

Written By: Maria Hill

I woke up wearing a purple suit, five pence pieces for eyes, from a dream of bending over girls in a science classroom over desks stained with the blood of dissected cow lungs.

This jigsaw of organs – pale as the underbelly of a gutted fish – once turned my stomach into barbed wire every time I searched the names on seating plans.



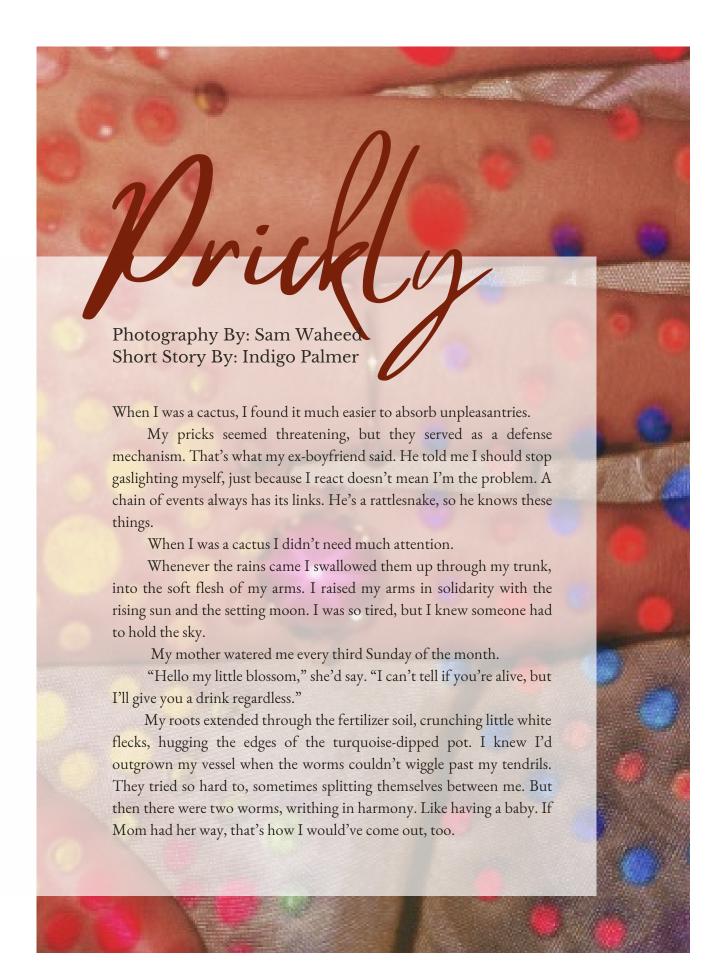
This film of skin – twisted and dry as a ball of blue-tack – once made me turn on the balls of my feet like a tea-cup ride with a child screaming inside.

I used to think that if I swapped my body for yours, I'd drink the ink of your calligraphy pens until I threw up heartless letters of apologies.

I'd take a pencil sharpener to my throat and watch the blood fall into an algebraic sequence upon the graph paper of my text book.

But I don't. Instead, I lift our hand through this darkness cramped with the coatcorpses and push open the wardrobe door.

> I've let go of the monster in my closet. I refuse to let you haunt me anymore.



The first time Mom forgot to water, my skin began to sag. I felt an emptiness within that I can only describe as dehydrating. Every limb ached and every prick went flaccid.

She stopped answering my calls. I clung to the stucco walls of the house, waiting for her to hear me over the chirping crows and humming cicadas. Next time she came around, she repeated the story she always told.

While the cow played the fiddle, the cat jumped over the moon. Cats are sneaky like that, always slinking through fences or riding motorized vacuum cleaners.

Well, the cow didn't notice. She just kept on playing a tune older than the sands of time. She played a melody so staunch it had a stench. It smelt of peonies and chocolate coins. It attracted the birds and the bees, pelicans, and bumbles, respectively.

The bees built hives in the grooves of roof tiles. And they saved flowers. And they made honey out of powder. And they lived until they didn't. And I will, too.

Will you miss me?

One day my boyfriend slithered over and brought me a dormouse as a gift.

"What am I supposed to do with this?"

He just hissed and rattled his tail. So I let it live between my pricks and burrow into my soil. I'd never had a pet before, and I named him Augustus, Rome's first emperor, the revenge of Iulius Caesar.

Et tu, I'd whisper to my mother, Et tu.

But she couldn't hear me over the hiss of the garden hose, her grumbled curse words as it kinked in the middle.

"The package said no kinks," she snapped. "All hoses have kinks. That's just the way."

When I separated from my mother, your grandmother, she gave me a hundred dollars, a mesh produce bag, and the Oracle of Dolphin's phone number. I called the Oracle once, but I couldn't understand a thing she said. Every word was cryptic and punctuated by clicks and whistles.

My mother never warned me that the water was toxic, as she'd warned me of so many other perils, like to stay away from jolly green giants, or to always fill my pocketbook with goldfish, never fighting bettas. She did tell me I'd figure things out.

I drank from the bay and went silly, cut my Sunday best into snowflakes in the middle of June, shot my pocketbook into the rapids. I kept the produce bag, thought I might turn it into a dress. Something sexy, a mating call to alert bachelors to my saccharine singularity. With no cash and nowhere to go, I walked beyond the dock and the buoys, stubbing my toe along the way.

An oyster had latched onto my foot. I thought,

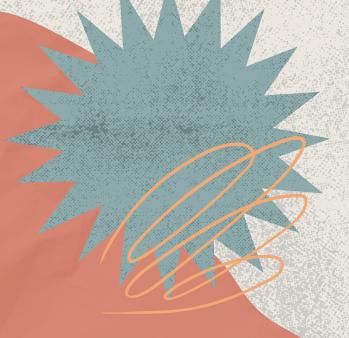
thinking I wasn't home. He had a crooked bobby other. I had nothing but a look of surprise. I don't horns on Burt Reynolds. He never did feel like he could live up to his sexy suave, his macho porn

But my boyfriend's willingness to break and enter Then I felt the crinkled produce bag, launched it Later that night I boiled him alive and enjoyed his insides with melted butter.

to find a payphone, they're hard to locate below the waterline. Besides, I was sure she wouldn't be of her. And I missed her.

I know it's cliché, but when I came back out of





My mother was there waiting on the shore, holding I still miss her.

And look at you. All grown up now and so very

I thought tough meant lonely.

was never a worm.

Maybe I'm a bee, carrying out my sacred duty to Mother Bee and Mother Earth. Pollinating flowers, avoiding careless humans, returning to the hive now and then for a sip of honey.

When I grew kinks she called them mean. She weren't the kind of thing you grew into, the kind of thing that leaves a crease even after you unwind it. Give it up, Mom. I'm changing. I'm not your little

and I'm a symbol of the great westward expansion. buildings. Join me and you might manifest your When the locusts arrived they came one at a time. In those first singular arrivals, Mom picked them up with tweezers, examined them under the sepia sun. She dissected them and called it science, like she was Darwin. Except she didn't ride tortoises, she just kept one named Tina in the backyard and fed it strawberries and cherry tomatoes. Sometimes she tossed the leftover stems into my pot.

By the time the locusts really swarmed, she called it a plague. She locked her doors and reinforced her windows, and left me outside. She said I was an adult now, and had to see for myself the wonders of the world.

"One day, who knows. You might thank me."
She did put a little, pink lightbulb above me.
When the bugs covered the sun I could at least hold on to that.

They demolished the garden, ravished the lantanas, chewed through the above-ground sprinkler system. My boyfriend packed up his things and announced he was leaving for good. He couldn't continue to enable the drama that seemed to follow me wherever I went. As if I ever left my pot.

I caved and let the locusts surround me. It was nearly comforting, their gentle buzz, the tender tickle of their beating wings.

But then night came and the pink zapped. It zapped the bugs and they rained down on me. And it kept zapping because they kept flocking to its delicious, rosy light. I fed on their crunchy bodies and doubled in size, strong and resistant.

After they migrated on, Mom came out to check on me.

She watered me then, and I thanked her for the pink light, told her how it reminded me of her, asked her to tell me the story like she used to. This time it meant as much as water.

I woke up one morning, the third Sunday of the month, Mom pruning the petunias and ferns beside me. I called out to her and she clapped her hands.

"My little Blossom is blossoming."

In the space between I'd produced a red flower, sprouting from my globoid head.

Not a hat but a fascinator, something ornamental, but beautiful all the same. Mom took her shears and sliced it out and flattened it between the Yellow Pages.

What was once a third Sunday ritual became a daily reconnaissance. One by one I shed my pricks. They grew heavy, soggy with the crystal water from Mom's hose. I was over-watered, fattened with her stories, the old ones, new ones, too. Stories about runaway airplanes and crossword tycoons and the time she spent living in an oyster shell in Chesapeake Bay.

It's difficult to understand if you've never been there, but the bay was made of colloidal silver. Tiny flecks of glimmering pipe dreams, all circulating through the water's consciousness. Back then I thought of it as a supplement, something to nourish me during the great schism.



## Murture



This piece explores how gentleness, kindness and human connection - The Human Touch, can be the soil, the support and the energy source that keeps us growing even in times of darkness and tears. It's an expression of hope that the most beautiful flowers bloom when we embrace our human nature.







#### Written by Chelsea Lee

...And slowly, she started to learn to forgive herself for needing time. Time to heal, time to think, create, and be. Living moment to moment, each second different than the next. The forgiving came easier each day.

She could finally understand that she was different, that she felt stuck while everyone else moved forward...only to leave her behind, standing there alone. A fixed point on an ever-changing map.

Ever so slowly, while other people made progress and sped through life, she made new discoveries about herself each day. A garden of small joys and inspirations bloomed and thrived from the top of her head. Roots grew from the bottoms of her feet, grounding her to the present, and the happiness in each day. Yes, there were a few dead twigs, thorns, and branches that needed to be tended to, but she was learning patience and taking quality time to tend to those things. She knew that even the thorniest branches held value, and taught her irreplaceable lessons about life.

With each small step, new insight, epiphanies, and inspiration were found. It was familiar, yes, like coming home. Home to herself. Finally, coming home after a long journey to security, shelter and the safety of the warm yellow light within her.

The soft glow of her innate power, and sense of self-worth started to melt the ice-cold pain of self-doubt, disgust and hate that froze her in place for so long. She started to know that every hardship she went through made her into who she is today. She knew that once she fully found herself again, she was never going to let go.



### The Phoenix

Photography By: Taliah Stephenson Poem By; Julie Kinninmont

The fire had burnt out
All there was left was ash
Grey, dry, dead.
It had been so bright, once
So beautiful
Before the flames came.
And now? Desolate.
Yet
Among the dust
The embers fading
The last of the glow
The grey, dry death
A movement
A shape

The sound of cracking from within.

An eggshell

### Sometimes my Blood Equates to Growth

By: Angelina Hund

If you never eat
You'll never grow into who you're supposed to be
You'll never be whole
Your potential will be only a theory
If you don't cut
You'll never bleed out
Cleaning your body and your soul of everything
And you'll never heal
And will never look back on what you overcame

#### Blacksmith

By: Mallory Kimmel

I feel like my father's parenting style is like blacksmithing. If he's not happy with what he sees, it's back to the fire and he tries to reshape me. And I know if he read that it would hurt his feelings because he doesn't see it like that. He sees it as refining me to be the best I can be. It's however unfortunate when the correction and micromanaging feel like a regime and a way of giving me better opportunities than he had. But it makes me more aggressive to try and preserve my authenticity from all the forces to make me malleable.

Though I have learned with time that I can also practice authenticity with greater passivity. I know who I am and I can be me without aggression and without fighting back. Withstanding and being is the greatest testament to self and help preserve our relationship. That is what I call growth.



Seventeen years ago, I fell in passionate, obsessive love with my teacher. I had never before in life known that kindness which she gave to me--she certainly went out of her way to be kind to me. Until it reached a point where she didn't want it anymore. And she asked me to stop. And I, eighteen years old, truly madly deeply in love that I was, could not imagine life was possible without her. I begged, pleaded, apologized... for far too long, not knowing I drew her further and further from me all this time. She got sicker and sicker of me. But I would still end up messaging her, emailing, stuff like that. She took me to a psychology teacher in college but the psychology teacher turned out to be terrible and homophobic. Later, I did go to many good therapists for long years. Anyway, so a couple of years later, my teacher took me to the principal---and several years after that, to the sexual harassment committee, who were actually not at all bad to me, but who did initiate some form of disciplinary action against me as I was accused of stalking her... and now I come to the theme of change.



Following this, I fell into many long years of clinical depression, and if anything helped me from turning suicidal in that dark period that followed, it was Tracy Chapman. I quote from her song 'Change'. "How bad how good does it need to get". I realised that in my eagerness to make things better, I had made them worse and worse. How good did it need to get? Instead of being satisfied with whatever little I had, I acted in a downward spiral. Even today, if I think to myself "how bad does it need to get". However bad it is already, it can always be worse, and it is in my hands, in my power, to not let that situation occur. "What chain reaction, what cause and effect". All these years, my fascination drove her away, and in turn, I felt she hated me. What has all this been but a chain reaction, one thing leading into another. Tracy Chapman does not believe that if you have done wrong, you are a bad person. She sings: "Knowing right, being wrong, would you change?" This was totally my situation. She sings "Are you so upright that you can't be bent?" I realized that upright people too can make mistakes, and sometimes bending and being flexible was a good thing.

I stopped all communication with my teacher, but I did continue writing poems for her and I did also stalk her online on social media. Recently I realised that she felt hurt by this to the extent that she did not want her poem and mine in the same anthology... this has pained me deeply and has caused me to reflect upon the need for further change, even though I have changed a lot from earlier times. But it still isn't enough for her. As Tracy Chapman sings-- how bad does it need to get. "If not for the good, why risk falling?" Even if I can't lose my faith and get her out of my mind and heart, I still need to stop stalking her and be careful about what I write. If it matters to me so much that she thinks well of me, then it is only when I change, that her opinion of me can change. I need to do this for her, and for myself too. My therapist said I was on the autistic spectrum, and said my obsession with my teacher is an aspergers obsession. She also said I look at my teacher like a very small baby looks at its mother, possibly because my parents are divorced, and because I regressed to an infantile age, according to my therapist. It is very easy for lay people to judge me and say---get over her---but a deep and nuanced understanding may show that it is not possible so easily. I don't know if I will be able to find my centre, my grounding, my anchor... without her. However, some change is still needed. A middle path. As my friend said recently- "you have to take a vow every day-- not to hurt her, not to hurt yourself, and to process". As Emily Dickinson writes to Susan Huntington Dickinson, "I do fear sometimes that I must make a hospital for the hopelessly insane, and chain myself up there so I won't injure you."





person. Therefore, we should accept and love ourselves during growth.

### search/wanderings



#### by: Priyanka Dhingra

The human mind's wanderings throughout life's journey as it questions situations, seeks, re-examines and realises new perspectives towards the evolving growth.

Watching hordes of tourists down the spiral 'Bramante staircase' inside the Vatican was somehow metaphorical to this inner search. Going down in circles as one of the many tourists myself with the People of the world.. all races mixed.. but somehow all seeking the same one thing knowingly or unknowingly. Amongst the haze of dimensions mix, we stand and retrospect through our mental Q/A. The haze is what leads and guides to some kind of a spiritual existence which is open for all. It's a corridor or a doorway that knows exactly when to find you. The realisation of this by the mental mind can be inner journey towards tranquility.

## Through the Doors



#### by: Andra Smileanschi

"Through the doors" talks about breaking away from comfort and allowing oneself to evolve and grow. The spark or star is a motif that I often use in my work - cutting through it feels vulnerable and painful to me. Sometimes growth is about moving away from comfort and exploring new horisons. I am currently going through quite a formative part of my identity and I think this is reflected in my art. However, comfort is not something I want to be afraid of either, simple forms and complementary colours work together in supporting the main act of my painting. I see these aspects as a way of staying grounded while exploring new horizons.



#### Graduating Adolescents

by: Saptarshi Bhowmick

I had a breakdown, when I found my body is transforming in a way unascertained for my peers to understand. The volcano in my stomach rumbles in a signified motion; beating like a bleat, it pulsates waltz of Johann Strauss II, condescending on a crescent full moon night.

I watched my membranes shake, echoing a change, I never experienced before: It mutilates my ego, contradicts my feelings and molests the shame I felt for my anxieties.

Gradually I frightened myself with the fear of salvation:

'One who don't recognize itself,
will stay refrained from the recognition of God'my mother sustains her dreadful voice
propelling a message for her little girl,
alarming her again and again of the limitations of being a girl.

The day I understand this change I know stars will come to decide that I am mature, as a horoscope predicted my birth long before I relapsed into silence on this earth.

The minerals palpitate with my private organs, counting prime conversations of my parents musing about my future that they have to bear for the rest of their life like millions do.



# Music playlist Sea, Swallow Me













#### Come on Man

#### By: Joe Szalinski

A great benefit to the man's new work-from-home schedule was that he could accompany his dog on neighborhood walks. He had an energetic pup, one that loved being outside despite sun or season. The streets were practically deserted, save for a rogue motorist, and the man grew to believe he deserved to remain unbothered or inconvenienced on every stroll. He felt he deserved it on account of dwelling in a reality customizable to his inclinations.

As time marched forward, and weather became more pleasant, hordes of formerly holed up halfwits descended upon every sidewalk and alleyway in a four-mile radius. Of course, this greatly upset the man, as people who ought to be permanently committed to their households loitered about selfishly. Pets were let outside without a fence, leash, or consideration for it or anyone else.

Armadas of apathetic townies prevented an easy journey by choking avenues with greedily parked vehicles with doors left ajar; being strewn about the asphalt, indolently making room when "excuse me" and "just tryna get through," finally provide the realization that other people need to go down the road.

The man, obviously, grew enraged with people whose existences served only to irritate and inconvenience him. He swore and stormed about, stomping upon the pavement he agonizingly traveled. His dog, worried, decided something needed done on the following jaunt.

As predicted, the man flew in hysterics a day later. Face reddened, vicious posture assumed—the once indifferent townsfolk looked on him like a strange creature. They fled and hid in a panic.

The dog seized the moment and declared, "Dad! Don't despair. It's a matter of perception. Take your mind off the annoyance and fixate it on the fact we're enjoying the outdoors together."

The man agreed with his dog and adopted a better attitude.

## Self care



My piece draws parallels between growth in a natural and spiritual sense; you need to tend to yourself in order to grow just as you would with a garden. Change often requires work and energy, despite the growing pains it's important to indulge and allow yourself to take up space and time, so you can better yourself.



#### Nurse Log

By: Dusta Wright

I did this piece to illustrate the play on words with nurse log as well as my role as a nurse. A nurse log is a fallen, decaying tree upon which other trees are growing. The saplings growing on a nurse log take nutrients from it, feeding upon it long before it has had time to rot and turn into soil. Often it feels like we are giving all our nutrients for others to thrive at the expense of our own growth, but the community and ecosystem that comes from it is particularly beautiful.



In my early 20s I came to understand something curious about the nature of trees – they were fractals. This meant two things, they possessed a property called self-similarity and their dimensionality was not an integer. At first this information felt rather confusing, and it just made trees even more mystical to me, but something about it was making me unable to stop dwelling upon it. I needed a resolution.

And so, my staring contest with trees began once again. However, now I wasn't eager to track their growth, but to capture their essence as fractals. Soon enough I began to notice the details. I focused my sight on a tiny branch on top of a tree and imprinted its shape on my retina. Then my eyes slowly moved down, and I noticed how the mother branch to the tiny one was embedded in the same shape. And so on and so on until I reached the trunk. The tree was repeating itself on different scales. This structure is what allows the shape of a tree to have a "fractured" dimension, such that transcends plane geometry. Moreover, this was complexity in its most simple form, which was so subtly managed by nature that it made it seem almost invisible.

I was lucky enough to be put in a situation where I had to dig deeper on the topic and soon enough, I came to find out that fractals were part of our human nature as well. Many of our internal organs and structures display fractal properties. What was profound about gaining this knowledge was that it helped me seize the crying of some of the smaller parts within me. I was able to explain to the little girl on the grass that growth is a rather imperceptible phenomenon and to convince the older one up the hill that parts of us were indeed very tree-like.

Most of all I once again felt whole. For those smaller parts within were spiralling up to become the me today and this process shall persist until I collapse and then just like the tree in the rot I would turn into a new kind of nature – such of new increasing complexity. So today when I look at the trees, I don't just see lone enduring giants – I see nature's reminder.

The trees dig up through the air, the rivers (which also happen to be fractals) dig up through the ground and we the humans dig up through life, while alveoli dig up through our lungs and veins and arteries dig up through our whole bodies. We are all fractal-like beings who transcend through dimensions and grow in our own imperceptibly complex ways.



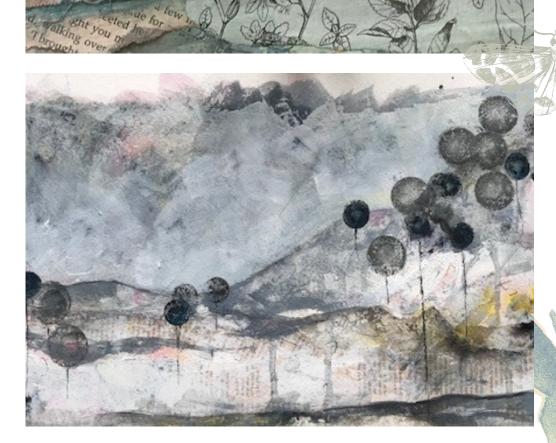
If you could crack me open on any given day

with map, "GP"

ome of these and

hen ascend th







# Peace in Aotearoa

Photos by Maalik Rahim



# And the shape of things disappeared for a while

#### Photography Project by: Joana Dionisio

How man relates to death has been changing over time. If in the Middle Ages human finitude was experienced with familiarity, in the 20th century it became a kind of 'non-event'.

In a society marked by the desire to prolong youth to infinity, the representation of the end of a life cycle is seen as a failure and therefore should be avoided. However, if we cannot set the limits of our own life, how can we connect to it and to ourselves?

This project resulted from the opposition of feelings that arose after my father's death and that forced me to think about the limitations of human existence. It seeks to reflect on how we deal with the loss of someone close to us, and with the perception of our finitude.

Considering that these concepts are materialized using a practice that immortalizes life by its representation, what does it mean for photography to portray the absence of its reference, and what is the role of photography in the experiences of mourning?

Through a narrative between opposing and complementary forces, between what is present and what is absent, reality and fiction, between here and there, there is a broader vision of our sense of being. Perhaps, somewhere between the fluctuation of becoming aware of our own mortality and the desire to be immortal we can find an opportunity to live deeply.

### Birds of a Feather

by Natalie D.C.

// a bullet in a bird's chest // a bomb placed in a dove's nest // feathers & blood & guts & // i'm left to pick up the mess //

i'm slowly growing into my own in this field // i'm no longer alone // i've found a couple of finches // who've agreed to take me under their wings // under no conditions // or obligations // (other than that i respect their wishes & i don't cut myself open every time they brush their feathers against my skin) // i agreed & now i'm whole again // no longer pretending to be unbroken by the cards i was dealt with as a stupid kid // a past left unspoken.

my father caught birds as a child // while my sister & i spent our time trapping butterflies betwixt our pink & purple nets // whose white & yellow & sometimes orange wings we would carefully inspect for any hint of fear in its flutter // any flicker of weakness // (we didn't know this then // we just had all the time in the world & thought that they made pretty enough company) // soundless & harmless unlike the bees // & beetles // & wasps // & flies we ran from as kids // (still do, if i'm being honest) // but why be frank about the flavor of endive when i could make it taste like a better bitter green // spinach or broccoli or snow peas if i so please // halsey told me to never ask for permission // to always beg for forgiveness // so my apologies if this goes against my better interests // instincts instilled in me ever since that moment a little bird told me to call him "sir" // for no reason other than to prove who's boss // (i already knew who it was though) // so it all was just droplets of blood in the snow // salt in an already-infected bullet wound.

OWNER TO THE



#### A Sestina on the Thirtieth Day What I Know of November

by: Julianna Austin

I am accustomed to living in November.

Standing in the shower, turning up the water just enough to scald the skin, lingering until i can stand it no longer.

Sitting at the piano only to of a melody - echoing dully but still tuneless and flat.



stare at the keys, bare some song vaguely familiar, This is the November I know.

The seasons change, as is natural, I know,
But what lingers with me longest is November.
The days when the voice of the wind is familiar,
to the back of my head,
and knocks me by,
leaving the trees bare
pulling the nights longer.

Sometimes, it seems if this lasts any longer it will kill me. It hasn't yet. I know
I have before survived its blistering cold, bare and shivering against the breath of November, teeth chattering, but nonetheless alive. Just enough.
Tough learning curve, but now the season's blows ring familiar.

Perhaps to him as well, I am familiar.

Perhaps, the him-them-it November spirit haunts me longer than others because he cannot seem to cause me pain enough. I ought to rage in animus, but no - I know he is not so vicious. Ambivalent is my November, and his dull indifference is simply mine to bear.



November steals all of my songs. I cannot bear the vibrant notes of one more tune once familiar muffling into sepia. TV static is the sound of November.

I search for some untouched refrain, try to last it longer but the white noise drowns out every melody I know and I fail to fight it. I can't sing loud enough.

My own seasons will – must – turn, soon enough. Soon enough the ground must thaw and my bare,

pale hands will cease to shake like the fragile leaves
it will follow, though. Frigid sighs on my heels, my phantom
walks two steps behind. But I will walk on
longer,
until it finally tires. Thirty lives hath November.

"Enough," I say, facing toward the bracing wind, "enough." I am far too familiar with the ragged, bare bones of the autumn ghost to bear this any longer.

This much I know: my life goes past the last day of November.



## "Reclining Lovers"

by: Dio Dunbar

Once you uncover a strong love for your identity, it becomes easier to share that love with others. This piece, "Reclining Lovers" celebrates the comfort of romance and self-love intertwined, specifically for black queer people. I wanted to portray one of the many beautiful outcomes of self-acceptance: healthily caring for those around you, and being able to exist with an internal source of joy.





# Six Shifts of Nature

Poem By: Pamela Loperena Photography By: Taliah Stephenson

If I split free from false hopes, I will release you; I will bear hug my growth.

If I focus on the here and now, my worries shall dissolve; I can stand still in the middle of a crowd.

If I let my judgment lead as my compass, others won't define me; I will never be anybody's puppet.

If I no longer try to impress, I don't have to play it safe; my life can cut back on the stress.

If I turn selectively social, my circle is bound to be smaller than most; yet there is no fear in being vocal.

If I stay true to myself, accepting this entity I have become, then maybe I can finally heal—excel.

# Heart as Hostage

Poem By: Dylan James
Photography By: Sam Waheed

Praying that the ocean pops up amidst that coffin prairie.

Engine humming, sunlight fading; clouds are wan and figure skating.

Is this what it means to be content?

Another dream to disconnect—

I seek a sense of some relief
and I believe in better ends.

It's not dark enough yet to look up at the stars.

And maybe you're right,
there could be something wrong in my heart
because I swear that all of life left me

the moment it swept me under the rug.

I.

II.
""Are you alright?"

Like a drug to bloom we all get used.
Crushed and graced and molded through.
Smoked and fucked to smithereens;
your warmth, I swear it's killing me.

There's something about honesty, it's the vulnerability I reckon.

Gunpoint apparatus.

Live to love in dying seconds.







By-Ananna Louie

# The Clothing Go

#### By Elizabeth Clade

Skin taunt like over ripe fruit velveteen under your mouth the way it eventually

yields and splits
wetly
against the guillotine
of your teeth

I yield to your sharp edges I yield I yield

there is an opening in the cosmic imprint of time and I fall through

burrow beneath the layers of gristle and flesh the tendons strung tight as your mania the muffled drum of womb and pumping blood

the silence between us threatens to untether me

I'm left grasping for roots that never took

just your warmed flesh and thick fingers fishbook pressed against slippery pubic bone pinned and gasping

I let go





Coming from a non-artist, creating artwork is non-essential. My mom said that "People Don't Need Art". I can argue that I don't do what I've been doing for other people. Years of dealing with growing pains of suppressing myself to fit everyone else, people pleasing until you lose your own identity, I've learned that I Need Art. Creating distinguishes my thoughts as my own, no one can paint like me, no one sees abstraction the way I do, only I can manipulate my thoughts to create my original work. Art, as unnecessary as it is to some, is my livelihood.



A circulating routine of going to bed with new ideas to waking up ready to create again. These works are made under the influence of depression, anxiety, mania and acceptance. Emotions drive my relinquished anguish to be non-conforming of what people need and address what I need to release from family, financial and societal pressures.



by: Kean O'brien

# CHRONICPE

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CH. BY

Chronic Perspective focuses on the tension and trauma that I hold in my queer, trans, chronically sick, white, disabled body. This work uses photographic imagery from an iPhone that I then turn into paint-by-number canvases. These photographic paintings speak to form, medium, and constitution and unintentionally begin to explore a history in which cisgender ableist subjectivity has dominated. I push up against traditional painting techniques and hold space for these to be seen beyond the trajectory of painting but rather of that of image making.



Through taking these photographs, which due to the nature of being hospitalized and experiencing trauma, I do not remember taking, I offer a new self-narrative as I meticulously paint each image. My body becomes the subject of my own narrative, somehow objectifying my own body and point of view. My genderless body and perspective in each of these images show the disconnected nature of being hospitalized and concepts of time, loss, erasure of self, and the vulnerability that a body has within this positionality.

There is repetitiveness in recreating these images into paintings that offer a deep reflection and metaphor for how trauma affects the mind and body. Similar to the therapeutic technique of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), which is a therapy modality I have been practicing for years to deal with my CPTSD, my mind begins to remember as I paint, which begins to trace me through my own history and experiences in the hospital.

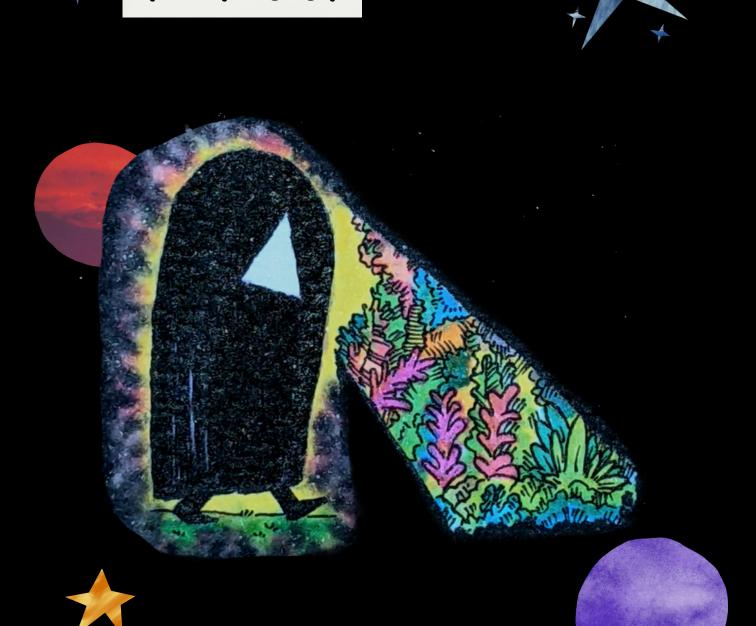
Historically paint-by-numbers is seen as craft, and not fine art. I am using this form as means to an end and a way to challenge expected artistic ideals. These paintings become a voice for me to claim agency in my own historical experiences, regardless of my ability to remember the moments they occurred.

# RSPECIO



## Gratitude

by willy magoogly





## The Journey of Growth

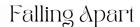
By Kyle Vadher



The series conceptually explores the nature of growth through lived experience, essentially highlighting the essence of breaking down and falling apart; to reach a certain level of self-realisation and self-fulfillment.



The 'Journey of Growth' can feel scary and turbulent at times, but it can also be full of light and liberation.



Life may develop with a certain level of pain and misfortune, but through mistakes, we learn to grow more fruitfully. Life's curveballs may seemingly deter us off course but ultimately lead to a life of new beginnings.



By opening ourselves up to making mistakes and learning from them, we enable ourselves to grow thoughtfully and thoroughly. More often than not, it can be the hardest of times that propels us to our most profound triumphs. Breakthrough.

Breakthrough





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