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This work exists in opposition to capitalism and is intended to create a temporary space in which joy and brevity can be felt and shared. In a time when pleasure is hard to come by and violence is unceasing, there is merit in jubilation— in having fun as both a reprieve and a form of resistance. Our lives are so precarious. There is so much that can go wrong with little to no premeditation. But also, how wild (and relieving) that jubilation can sneak in as well with equally little precedent.

This work is heavily influenced by all the time I have spent doing other work: asking people what they would like for breakfast, walking up and down stairs with steaks, putting the top cookie on at an ice cream sandwich factory, roofing, tiling, pouring concrete, insulating attics, digging holes, and designing lesson plans for underfunded afterschool arts programs.

HURRY BACK

by

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CHAPTER I: STEELERS ALWAYS WIN AND STUFFED CABBAGE IS ALWAYS ON SPECIAL

If you drive towards Pittsburgh from the southern secondary highways you enter through Clairton; a busted up and dirty town with the largest coke works still active in the United States. Teal, three foot diameter pipes feed out from behind chain link fence and parallel the road which curves repeatedly around blind corners and harsh right angles–no shoulder–slag trucks speeding with loads uncovered and everyone on your tail because they drive it everyday and know that the yellow lights change quick. Clairton leads into Braddock and the pipes on the side of the road feed into the yard of the first and last steel mill in the Mon Valley[1]. Smoke streams out of rusted stacks and a huge open flame off-gasses from the roof on the newer part of the mill creating a loud, constant drone that whips wildly in the wind. Long lazy barges push coal west up the river and periodically crash into bridge abutments, spilling their loads and causing a stir on Nextdoor.

Where I am coming from is old houses with loud radiators and dried flowers hanging on nails wedged tightly into cracked plaster, dog hair in every corner, and mysterious looking ferments sitting with stained labels on shelves that tip slightly forward. Overgrown garden beds, too many roommates, house shows and bike grease, leaky roofs and bad tattoos and everyone is sleeping with everyone, all the time. It is messy and sloppy and we all are puppy dogs just old enough to ignore our mothers. I was chronically well behaved as a child and teen, but at some point in my early twenties, I sought out as many mistakes as possible, making up for lost time with reckless abandon.[2]

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[1] Right before I moved to Pennsylvania I worked as a lowly afternoon barista at a coffee shop in a quiet neighborhood near downtown Seattle. No one would come in for long stretches of time and I would read standing up, leaning against the pastry case and playing the same albums over and over. I made so little money there but had a few kind regulars; one would recommend what book I should read next based on what I was currently reading, and one, a locally famous jazz DJ, when he heard I was moving to Pittsburgh, quizzed me on how to say *Monongahela*—we would practice every day until the word rolled smoothly off our tongues.

[2] *Mistake* is not really the most accurate word because it implies regret, but I was trying to figure out what I liked and disliked, and pursued every opportunity I could find to do so very enthusiastically.

I moved to Pennsylvania because I had gotten into a residency program that was housed in a huge, derelict, beautiful, unsubdivided former apartment building. It was started by an ambitious punk writer and funded partially through the Heinz foundation[3]. It was me and four other dudes, although for a few months one summer there were eight of us, plus three dogs and a litter of husky/pit bull puppies. We didn't have heat and the kitchen stove was just a burner on a propane tank.[4] There was a swing hanging from the rafters in the kitchen, a flat and leaky roof with an unbelievable view, and very sweet neighbor kids that would periodically pound on the door for our bike pump. When the dogs would knock the trash can over, we would all joke that it was our self-righteous vegan roommate "breaking edge".[5] My room was barely wide enough for a twin bed and used to only be accessible by crawling up army webbing. Even when the stairs were put in, the rise and run was so off that people were constantly tripping up or down them. I don't remember if we ever put in an actual handrail.

The relationships I made while living at the residency house in Pittsburgh were as intoxicating and potent as those that defined my early days in Portland.[6] Even when there were tense house meetings about who had let all the dishes freeze to the bottom of the sink, or which dog had infested all four floors with fleas, or when someone would stop sleeping with somebody and start sleeping with somebody else, it felt magical to live in a place that could be so many things at once due to its derelict nature and expansive floor plan: a venue, meeting space, studio, wood shop, letterpress, distro, vegan brunch location, tattoo parlor, theater, etc. That house was messy and beautiful, dysfunctional and innovative, a strong yet crumbling castle.

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[3] Shout out to writer and illustrator Dan McCloskey, the Cyberpunk Apocalypse, and 1200 Boyle Street, RIP to all the feelings and all the fun.

[4] It sucked so hard when the propane was out and no one had said anything, perhaps a common punk house faux pas?

[5] For everyone lucky enough to be confused by this reference and unfamiliar with straight edge culture, there used to be a very troll-y website where people would post pictures of other punks caught "breaking edge" (drinking, eating meat, smoking, etc). I don't know if it's just a Pittsburgh thing but there were whole enclaves of straight edge vegans there. While I lived at Cyberpunk though, there was only one, thank g.

[6] I moved to Portland for college directly after high school and fell in love so hard with the freedom and autonomy being a stranger a bigger city provided. I also met a lot of people really quickly due to how frequently I changed jobs/boyfriends/houses and having a fake ID.

Emboldened by watching the founder of the residency program do so much work on the house by himself and the optimistic early days of being new to town,[7] and also because it seemed like the only time I would ever be able to do so: six months after I arrived in Pittsburgh, I bought a house for seven hundred dollars. The house was in Braddock, a town forty minutes away from where I was currently living in the city, and had been languishing unfinished for years due to the dissolution of an idealistic vegan, hardcore, straight edge collective[8] who had bought it for a dollar from the old post mistress and planned to use it to record bands and host shows.[9] I paid them in one hundred dollar increments every month until I was settled up. I had gone to Pennsylvania thinking that I would be there for a month but ended up staying nearly eight years.

When I bought my house and we signed the paperwork, one guy joked: *I'd give you keys, but there's no door*. Because I had spent the majority of my time at the residency living like a puppy dog, I found myself needing to move suddenly when my landlord and I broke up for good. I moved into my house in early October, after installing one door and most of the windows, but very little else. The house was completely gutted and condemned: the walls were down to studs and there was no insulation, electric, or plumbing, and there were four foot by three foot holes on either side of the stairwell through the floor and ceiling of all three levels where the punks before me had taken out two load bearing chimneys.[10] I ran an extension cord upstairs from the outlet on the electric panel in the basement which allowed me to charge my phone, turn on a lamp, use a hot plate, plug in a power tool, or have an electric blanket, but not do more than two or three of them at any one time. I would pee in a jar and had a composting

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[7] No matter how good I have it wherever I am living and whatever I am doing, if a friend is moving away, I get intense pangs of jealousy. Novelty! I am trying to chill out but I love a fresh start. I hope to age out of this feeling/habit/cycle someday soon.

[8] Again, maybe this is just a PGH-specific phenomenon.

[9] A fun fact: The vegans I bought my house from were living in a house bought by filmmaker, photographer, and punk legend Bill Daniel. I wondered with some frequency about what it meant that even BIll Daniel had trouble staying in Braddock.

[10] If anyone ever asks, the answer is always: yes, chimneys are important.

toilet.[11] I showered at my job, filled gallon jugs of water at the closest coffee shop (a fifteen-minute drive away) and would do my dishes at a rotation of very generous friends' houses.

As fall dissolved into winter, I would check the temperature daily, rejoicing when it would inch up closer towards freezing. Once, I bought a pint of ice cream and left it on the counter as a joke; throwing it away days later, totally uneaten, and still frozen solid. A friend who lived with me for a few months got frostbite on his cheek after coming home drunk and falling asleep without any blankets covering his face.[12] The mayor gave me a woodstove for free and when I asked why, he said: *the last thing this town needs is someone like you freezing to death in a condemned building*. It was a kind gesture, but I couldn't afford the triple wall pipe needed to hook it up until nearly three years later, so mostly just used it as a shelf. I think everyone I knew was more worried about me than I was about myself. Living there was cold and challenging, but I loved my house, and owning it made me feel safe and secure in a way that I never had felt before.

Like a lot of places with big histories, Braddock is a place rife with contradicting realities. Braddock used to be one of the largest cities in Pennsylvania, but now, with a population just under two thousand people, it doesn't even have a grocery store or many bus routes. People like to come to Braddock to take photos of buildings being taken over by porcelain vine and the endless, rolling plumes of smoke that stream out from the mill's multiple stacks.[13] It is frequently used as a movie set[14] and a playground for people with grand, misguided, ambitions.

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[11] A bucket.

[12] He's doing much better now. Immediately after leaving my house in the winter, he went to work at a sketchy cheese farm in the SW and got horribly sunburned on his frostbite, but now you would never know.

[13] Braddock native and MacArthur award winning photographer LaToya Ruby Frazier has made a lot of work in response to those that seek out Braddock's most depopulated and degraded edges, and has many poignant critiques of the very specific recruitment efforts that former mayor John Fetterman employed and purported in the interest of revitalization.

[14] Movies like *The Road* and *Out of the Furnace.* Much like Detroit and other de-populated cities, Braddock offers cheap real estate that makes many people view it as a test site for innovative social initiatives. Most of these projects fail to actually cause real beneficial change or provide what struggling towns really need to regain their footing. Funding jobs, access to public transportation, easily accessible food resources, and safe and affordable housing isn't sexy. It is very jarring to drive down Yost Blvd; a steep, curvy two-way street with no shoulder and no sidewalk that leads from Braddock to Forest Hills (and the closest Giant Eagle) and have to have to swerve to avoid children running errands and mothers whose strollers are laden with plastic bags, to

Abandoned houses sit empty in long rows, with porches collapsed and front doors marked with neon orange x's. Often, there is still food in the cupboards of these houses; ancient rolled oats in matching Tupperware containers covered with thick layers of mill soot and plaster dust from caved-in lathe ceilings, photographs strewn on the floor, broken bottles, kids clothes and fucked up couches and cracked radiators. Vines creep in window screens and carports slump, slag dust fills the drainage grates of long abandoned school courtyards which then fill with water which then fill with strange looking, semi-aquatic marsh plants. A few houses are totally full of tires; floor to ceiling, all three stories. When I first moved to Braddock, I encountered bowling balls everywhere: propped on rock piles and full of hornets' nests, rolling down deserted streets late at night, and heaved out of the earth in the abandoned lot next door as the ground thawed in the spring. So much has been left behind in Braddock, but so much still remains. My intention in referencing the aesthetics of my former neighborhood in the installation *Hurry Back* is not to highlight the ways in which the steel industry, social services, and municipal planning have failed Braddock, but rather, to honor the idiosyncrasies, inside jokes, beautiful peculiarities, and tenacity of the projects and people who have managed to remain[15] in a place made largely inhospitable by economic collapse.

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then turn onto Braddock Ave. and see rich philanthropists renovating old department stores in order to make them mixed-use artist lofts with rooftop gardens.

[15]A lot of initiatives have come to Braddock but only a few have maintained consistency. The ceramic and screen printing facilities at the library are incredible, Braddock Youth Project offers year round afterschool programming but also provides paid jobs to teens in the summer, Braddock Farms (which is managed by a local non-profit, Grow Pittsburgh) runs a farm stand and job training program, and the Free Store funnels large scale donations of everything from food to diapers weekly, with larger annual events throughout the year. A lot of projects never take off though or do not last long, which has worked over time to create an understandable hesitance from locals towards newcomers.

CHAPTER II: HURRY BACK

The work in this exhibition is made from paper mache, cool trash, Styrofoam, thermal adhesive, duct tape, Harris Teeter shopping bags, spray foam, and found objects. It is directly influenced by what materials I could get for cheap or free: an old canoe, four truckloads of cardboard from a bike shop, cast-off kayaks, scrap wood, lead type, oops paint, free pile furniture, aluminum cans, and fabric: lots and lots of it–old drapes and couch cushions and faux-satin catering tablecloths that have been turned into fake plants, elaborate coats, and loosely representational birds.

Entering the installation at Greensboro Project Space positions the viewer in an unexpected, faux exterior. Rubber mulch mounds around bunches of daffodils made from egg cartons and a wide assortment of scrap metal nestles around an aluminum canoe painted to resemble a loon: moped top tanks, radiator fins, a poorly rendered casting from a scratch mold, and wire milk crates stand in for reeds, river rock, and driftwood. A kayak dressed like a corn cob parallels the loon, emerging from a red and white checkered quilt assembled from shop rags. The entire length of one wall is covered floor to ceiling by cardboard slats that have been cut, painted, and assembled at an angle that mimics wood siding, while another wall displays four carnivalesque formal portraits of people wearing the outlandish coats that are pinned up and spot lit from opposing sides of the gallery. A series of strangely shaped planters house thick fabric fronds that grow out of scraps of leather and more rubber mulch, and there are several iterations of inedible, larger than life foods; a diptych of cakes decorated with prognostications of the afterlife, a half dozen hard boiled eggs, and two fried eggs with velvet yolks and embroidered, silken, brocade whites. A segment of telephone pole leans precariously in one corner and is plastered with silk screened and letter pressed flyers. Fragments of obscure allusions are spelled out by foot high letter buntings that droop and crisscross in arcs from the ceiling, relaying messages that intercept each other mid-sentence and change meaning.

Walking through the doorway that is framed completely by the cardboard siding, the viewer enters a space lit with a single strand of Christmas lights, a red bulbed pendant, and a slowly turning disco ball. Velvet drapes hang over walls painted black and covered with extraneously pointed faux-brick, and crushed aluminum cans are festooned across the ceiling, reflecting the light with their tangled, sagging arches. A rounded, wooden banquet lines one side of the room and follows the angles of the wall, working to funnel the viewer towards a bar made from marble contact paper and untreated wood. Drinks are served in mismatched vintage glassware, and tchotchkes and candles crowd either end of the bar. The menu is intentionally limited and lists a selection of food and drink that leans heavily on pickled fish and smoked liquor. The music that is playing from an old boombox on the floor sounds like it may have been recorded in a garage, or in the south— or maybe both.

Each of the two rooms in the installation are intended to be delightfully peculiar yet reassuringly familiar. Through referencing common, identifiable social spaces, I hope to provide the viewer with the tools needed to easily interact with the work. At certain times throughout the duration of the exhibition, the second room of the installation is intended to function just like a bar would in the real world. You can sit and drink a beer, you can look at your phone, you can bring a date with you, or you could try to meet a date there. There are elements of service built into how the space functions that aim to help the viewer engage with the work intuitively: there are lots of places to sit, there are things to read, and the sculptural works are intended to invite interaction through their manipulation of scale and subject matter. All the beers have been covered with tinfoil and paper mache to look like bowling pins (which makes them more fun to drink out of) and the food selection is sparse, but simultaneously decadent and unassuming.

These installations, and the objects that populate them, easily give away their secrets. There are rips and holes in the siding that reveal very clearly that it is made out of broken down boxes, staples, and hot glue. The large swan planter that holds a clearly fake silken plant is identifiable, but not built with any sort of attention to realistic avian proportions. The yolk of the

hard boiled eggs is made out of the kind of satin-bound polyester blanket that stays continuously stocked at nearly all thrift stores, and upon closer inspection, the fake bricks look like a terracotta version of a late-80's suburban home's popcorn ceiling. By choosing to create this uncanny world with largely discarded materials, my hope is not to fool viewers into thinking that they have entered a seamless, full-budget movie set, but rather, show how much can be done with trash when you try. The sculptural pieces are three-dimensional representations of instances and objects that are referred to in the zine and the word buntings. While making these works, I found great pleasure in collecting and seeking out low-budget resources, and tried to let the innate characteristics of each material dictate it's final form. I wanted to use these readily available discarded materials to make extraordinary versions of familiar things, and often employed dramatic scale shifts to increase the approachability of them as objects .

CHAPTER III: ADDITIONAL THINGS WORTH MENTIONING

In July, I started a surprise based print club called the Irregular Once-A-Month. It is free to subscribe and purposely vague. Each month, I send out a multi-layered hand printed poster. I started it by signing up about sixty-five people[16] that I know intimately but mentioned it to no one except for Helen[17]. The fun of this project for me is that each month I get to design a wacky print of my own imagination that reflects whatever I am thinking the most about at the time, and send it to a group of people that is at once familiar and unknown: simultaneously intimate and anonymous[18], which is my favorite and most comfortable space to exist in. My hope is (and it's started already-I'm now up to 119 subscribers) that the people I know will sign up people I do not know, and that they will be even more surprised each and every month by receiving a mystery print postmarked from west-central North Carolina. Obviously, a lot of my friends figured out pretty quickly that I was responsible for sending them brightly colored envelopes, but some are still unaware, or maybe, some are getting lost in transit- both of these are okay outcomes to me.

I have designed most of the prints to be large- about half of them so far have been 11x17- which I hope will add to their further dissemination. The idea is that at some point, it gets to be too much for people, and they have to choose what to do with the prints they've received. Maybe they just get thrown away, but hopefully they get passed on to someone else. Maybe, once you have stared at a nearly invisible, glow in the dark legal sized print of moon references from the Ken Kesey novel, *Sometimes a Great Notion*, for a few months, you will be ready to

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[16] I didn't think much about how I started out with sixty five friends, but recently it has come to my attention that a lot of people don't have addresses for almost all the people that they love, so I guess that is worth mentioning- that most of the people in the initial pool of subscribers were people that I care about deeply and that I have a history of correspondence with.

[17] It is safe to assume that anything that I say I mention to no one, I still mention to Helen.

[18] Probably coming from the same instinct that makes me wave to strangers who I'd like to get to know better, I also signed up a handful of "celebrities", art crushes, and people I respect who have some sort of easily findable publicly listed address. Artists like Alec Soth, Stephen Powers, and Nicole Lavelle; folk legend Michael Hurley; but also my favorite record store in the entire world, and a design firm in Atlanta that does really top notch restaurant re-design and brand identity.

stare at something else, so you send that print to your friend in New Orleans that you haven't seen in a couple years but still texts you periodically: *LOOK AT THE MOON!! RIGHT! NOW!*

In addition to being vague on purpose, this project is generous on purpose. I love getting mail because it tells you someone thought of you at some time in the recent past, but does not require you to respond or reciprocate in the moment.[19] With a letter, especially a letter sent in a global pandemic, there is no such expectation. A letter can get somewhere whenever it pleases. Maybe it went to your neighbor first, maybe it got stuck in between a discount mailer and you left it until you saw some bills pile up. Sending sentiments in a letter is a good way to practice a secure attachment style. The letter doesn't need acknowledgement.[20]

A letter, much like a mixtape, has been surpassed as a form of efficient communication, but it remains unparalleled as a way to express sentiments and romance.[21] How many people can you think of and picture their handwriting? How many times does the mail-person bring you nothing except requests for payment for things you probably pay too much for already? Even if you order yourself a treat off the internet (a vintage sweater, a hand carved spatula, fancy hot sauce) there is no surprise or anticipation involved with its delivery. There are notifications that tell you when you spent the money and when the seller received your order, alerts that your order is being processed and approaching the loading dock. There are live views where you can track the delivery truck as its diesel engine rumbles closer and closer. I guess what I would like to see more of, in life, and in commerce, is the prioritization of methods that allow for more mystery—more delayed gratification and more pleasure in the form itself.[22] As I am writing out

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[19] With a text, even a nice text, everyone knows you saw the text, and it's poor form to not respond or acknowledge that you saw it. Sometimes, even when a text makes you smile, it is inconvenient to respond, or you don't' have the capacity to go back and forth a bunch of times, or, you check it and feel loved, but then go back to work and forget about it, and then time goes on, and then you feel bad, and then have to address the reason for the delay in response, and the whole thing has become a thing.

[20] Although, as evident by the screenshots, I love when people tell me they got their prints and what they think of them.

[21] Romance in the philosophical way, not only the sexy way.

[22] Now that the mailing list for the IRL Once-A-Month is close to one hundred, printing and mailing takes a couple hours of labor over four or five days. I can get it all done in two long days though, but I like to spread it out because I enjoy the work immensely. Each screenprint has at least three colors, which takes a few hours to design and probably six hours to print. I address each envelope by hand, and like to consider who is getting which print, as there have been color variations in most designs so far. I

everyone's address, I get to think about how much I care about each of my friends, or if they are strangers, I get to imagine who they are and what they are like based on their names and locations. And much like the time before cell phones in which you would have to physically dial someone's phone number, I am slowly beginning to memorize my friends addresses. There is comfort in that somehow, like if I ever need to, I could find them through my own recollection.

This past summer I also began to make mostly-waterproof costumes for kayaks and canoes. To be clear: although I am trying my best, I do not think that I am making heirloom quality watercrafts. The boats are not white water rated, and I have read almost nothing about how to fix boats traditionally or how to build a boat new. My world of boat building is more akin to the people who float down the Mississippi on barges made of trash and reclaimed materials.[23] My method of sculpting comes from trial and error, gut instinct, and an understanding of how the materials that I am using inappropriately typically function when used for their intended purpose. I know how to fix something in a way that works but is maybe not considered "best practices" but if something really happens, I know how to swim. Maybe that is the thing about this project— I am not very prepared or fully qualified, but I like to swim.

These boats were made in the hot hot Carolina sun, while listening to Range Rats on repeat[24] and drinking tall cans of cheap domestic beer and watered down mezcal. The paint on these boats dried too quickly and was applied while also grilling hot dogs, talking to far away friends on a phone with a busted screen,[25] and drug around one handed, adding scratches and patina before they even set sail on their maiden voyage, due to being unused to having

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designed a custom return label stamp and another stamp that says, "SOMEONE SPECIAL SIGNED YOU UP!" with information about how to unsubscribe if necessary, but I am licking, and applying stamps to all the envelopes individually.

[23] Like the *Swimming Cities of Serenissima* project by SWOON.

[24] Range Rats only released one album. Is a side project of Dead Moon's Fred and Toody Cole, which evolved after Fred's band Western Front broke up.

[25] It's been a hard year and the thing I miss the most about pre-pandemic life is brevity, is companionship, is same fork steak salad sharing while bumping down gravel roads to secret swim spots, or how it feels to stir pasta in a hot kitchen while your best friend sits on the floor and the record blasting from the room next door barely makes it through the noise of the fans propped in each window and old hot dogs panting with full tongues out. Spending time with people who delight you–literally what could be better?

someone around to help[26]. The boats have been really fun to make and really enjoyable to paddle- but they have not yet lived to their full potential. My hope is that I can actualize them further after school, and that other people I know can have access to them when they need a strange floating fake food or slightly misshapen animal.[27]

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[26] A friend once told me that true self-care is letting others care for you. Some people have no problem with this concept– I find it horrifying. The amount of radiators I have moved by myself or times I have walked home for hours because I didn't want to call anyone for a ride. You know what though? Sometimes it is nice to ask people for help because it provides an invitation for them to do the same for you. And if you go back and forth a few times like that, it starts to feel less scary to rely on someone, even in small ways.

[27] Sort of like the puppet lending system that is stored in the Braddock Library, in which you can check out large wearable costumes made by Cheryl Cappezutti.

CHAPTER IV: PLEASURE, DEATH AND A TREATISE ON THE AFTERLIFE

The zine *The Right to Disappear*, is made up of three separate sections that all seek to address the problems and questions that death presents. The first section, *A Treatise on the Afterlife,* is a long list of imaginings of what might happen after we die, if something indeed happens. I am not spiritual enough nor scientific enough to make a claim as to what dying leads to, nor do I intend to debate what does or doesn't happen.[28] These imaginings were prompted by recently losing a friend and wondering where she is now, and then remembering that when my brother and I were little, he thought that wherever you spent the most time in your waking life is where you would be destined to return to if you wanted to become a ghost.[29] I think that due to capitalism, this is a very bleak thought[30] so I reframed his hypothesis: what if, when you die, you get to revisit a singular favorite memory and experience it ad nauseam until you are ready to truly pass on? Some of the most vivid, pleasurable memories I have are so banal (maybe embarrassingly so, but I am a taurus so it shouldn't be a surprise)[31] but when thinking about the opportunity to become a ghost, those are the memories I would hope to return to. Most of the treatise' options have come from my own experiences, with adaptations, but some are situations I have completely imagined for very specific people; my father who loves driving trucks, my dog, a mismatched lover who non-stop smoked Marlboro reds, and a friend from long ago with whom

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[28] I think even if I was more spiritual or smarter, there is no way to know what awaits.

[29] We also believed that you had the alternative option of becoming a pirate. In our minds, they existed in the same temporal sphere.

[30] If I were to die currently based on my brother's original thinking, I would be forced to return as a ghost food-running steaks at Ace Hotel Pittsburgh, destined to forever carry large oval trays of expensive new american cuisine on my right shoulder while stomping up three flights of stairs in stained, foul smelling clogs, repeating seat positions and table numbers in my head while the skin of my left hand burns off from holding a ramekin of mac and cheese.

[31] Taurus' are known for being very stubborn, indulgent, and boring, but we don't care and we're not: we are just choosy with who we want to have fun with and prioritize pleasure. We do have trouble with preventative communication however.

I've fallen out of touch. It's comforting, I think, to focus on very small, very specific experiences of pleasure.[32]

Recently while walking on the old rail line that follows South Buffalo Creek, I came to a place where hundreds of crows were circling and landing and taking off and re-settling and calling and two-stepping with one another on tangled branches in the late afternoon. I tipped my head back so far that it felt like exercise. The air had chilled suddenly, in the way that often happens right before sunset, and Punk[33] and I stood transfixed. When Jude still lived in upper Lawrenceville, we would sit on her patio using a rickety set of table and chairs that required a very particular placement to stay level, and drink too much coffee, or stale wine, and eat brownies made from black beans, or no-knead sourdough, or blue corn pancakes with organic local maple syrup. Her ancient beagle, Charley, would putter around us and slowly inhale long raspy breaths to get barks ready for anyone cutting through the alley to avoid the traffic on Butler Street. There was a lumber yard directly across the alley that loomed over the block, but from Jude's patio, it was barely visible. She had trained hops to grow all the way up to the gutters on carefully knotted lines, had encouraged the ivy to take over the chain link fence, and dutifully planted cover crops in her container garden, [34] saving enough tulsi and holy basil every year to last her through the winter. We spent so much time on that patio. In the fall, whenever the geese flew over, she would gasp and freeze, enthralled; tipping her head all the way back until the mass of birds cutting through the plain sky was the only thing in her whole field of vision. Jude loved birds. Who doesn't love birds, I guess, but Jude really loved birds. She

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[32] Listing small instances of pleasure led to the print for the third month of the print club, and came out of trying to improve my PMA. (PMA stands for 'positive mental attitue' and comes from the hardcore scene; Bad Brains had a song called "Attitude" that, according to John Barry of the Baltimore City Paper, was born from the lead singer skimming through a self-help book called Think and Grow Rich, and being very moved by the idea that your mental state has the power to change your life) Near the end of her life, Nora Ephron also wrote two poems which detailed things she would miss, and things she would not miss. There is deep comfort to be had I think, in enumerating that which gives you joy.

[33] Punk is my very good bad dog whom I got when we were both just puppies.

[34] Planting cover crops in a container garden that is made up of recycled pickle buckets perfectly encapsulates the kind of care Jude put into the things she loved. If you are a farmer you know this is a highly irregular practice for a small home garden.

delighted in their company and readily gave them all the attention they asked for, trying in conscious, small ways to match the habits and rhythm of her life to noticing that of theirs.[35]

The crows by South Buffalo Creek made me think of Jude, and thinking of Jude made me stop and really watch their movement. It made me remember other notable bird swarms: the aggressive seagulls at Ivars[36] who would catch french fries mid-air; the swifts that would circle and circle and circle, rotating faithfully until their entire flock had safely roosted in the chimney of the old Catholic school down the hill from my house in Braddock, the magpies who would judgmentally cock their heads at you from the telephone poles that lined the abandoned main drag of a Montana copper town[37], and (a cousin of the bird) the bats[38] which flew with a halting grace over the fields of black raspberries and walking onions, dramatically dipping through the power lines and mill cables that lined the southern edge of Braddock Farms[39].

Another section of *The Right to Disappear* is a transcription of a conversation I had with Pittsburgh famous Tarot readers and spiritualists Ruth and Charque Newell. I wanted to interview them because the types of questions I have about death can't be answered by science or religion.[40] I want to know about ghosts and hunches, deja vu and gut reactions. I want to know why some people die so tragically, while others seem to live forever despite being pieces of shit. I want to know how much credence to give these other worldly feelings, and what some

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[35] When Jude moved into her tiny house on the punk block in Garfield, it wasn't in a geese path, but every evening through the transom window next to her bed, you could watch the huge murder of crows that would erupt from the hollow beneath the Bloomfield Bridge and undulate wildly, the same birds you can also watch from the tippy top of Polish Hill and the Lower Hill.

[36] Ivars is a seattle-famous fish and chips chain. Before the man who started Ivars, started Ivars, he tried to run an independent zoo.

[37] Butte MT used to be known as the "richest hill on earth" and at one time, was responsible for supplying over 25% of the entire world's copper. You could just address letters to "Butte America". I have spent a fair amount of time in Butte and feel deeply at ease amongst the peculiar specifics of life there in the same way that I do in navigating life in Braddock.

[38] Bats are maybe not scientifically related to birds, but they seem like metaphorical cousins to me. The first time I encountered a bat inside I literally shrieked, "it's going to get stuck in my hair!" Even though I always thought that was a joke when it happened in movies. I ended up just opening the windows and hoping for the best.

[39] Braddock Farms is a small scale organic farm a block away from my old house which my ex-husband ran for 9 years. It is the farm that is referenced in one of the *Treatises on the Afterlife* as well.

[40] I'm honestly not interested in talking with someone who doesn't believe in ghosts, dreams, or who doesnt feel wowed by bird flocks about what happens after we die. Sometimes those we've lost feel so close. What a pain it is to feel, but also, what a gift to remember in a physical way. I am disinterested in trying to prove the significance of these feelings. I do not know what kind of world you live in if you've never gotten deja vu or thought you saw something strange.

alternative options are for what happens once we leave our bodies behind. I'm inclined to think there aren't many, but sometimes certain experiences seem to suggest otherwise.

Those birds moved me in a way that made me gasp and freeze; made me throw my head back so far that all I could see was crows flying in and out of the huge, plain sky. When my grandmother died, my aunt kept getting a repeated voicemail from her old, disconnected number, multiple recordings of the same short message that would appear without the phone ever ringing, and say: "Cindy, I'm okay, everything is fine, I'll talk to you later". Another friend of mine that died by suicide a few years ago showed up recently in the dream of a dear friend who shares the same birthday as him. He tried to put the moves on her, and she told him, "I can't! I'm about to get married! And besides, I know you're getting plenty of action in heaven!"[41] She said that our friend agreed wryly and they both had a good laugh, and that she then woke up with tears in her eyes.[42]

For all the shit and sadness and trouble that passes through each year, I feel so glad to have gotten another one- I feel so deeply grateful for the luck of the draw chemical and happenstantial venn diagram that has intervened to keep me alive this long. Mental health is so precarious. It can be so easy to peer too far off the ledge for too long. What do we do, as the still-living, with grief born from friends lost too soon? It seems to me that the conglomeration of time and experiences shared with those who we choose to exist with is what makes our lives meaningful. Losing someone you care about causes everything remaining to fall out of alignment: it severs the well trodden path of enjoyable habits, inside jokes, and deeply developed reciprocal care that you have grown accustomed to. Loss forces us to reestablish

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[41] Noah is definitely getting plenty of action in heaven. There's no way you lose your game once you depart earthside.

[42] Every year on their birthday, we talk and think about how surreal it is, still, and what a loss it is, still, that we have had one more year on this earth and Noah hasn't. Especially because (and isn't this the way it always is?) Noah fit so much fucking life into his life. It sounds so hoaky, or overplayed, that whenever someone dies tragically or too young, people recount all the ways they lived more than anyone else when they were around, but it is true. Noah who knew everyone, Noah who never got speeding tickets even though he would drive for miles on the shoulder to skip traffic, Noah who could never sit still, Noah who got in with the 12 o'clock boys, Noah that took jaw-droppingly candid photos, Noah that was up for literally anything, at anytime.

ourselves in relation to what has gone missing, over and over again. It is repetitive and exhausting; a pervasive reminder of the multitude of ways in which someone has impacted our lives, and a crash course in how to proceed without the physical presence of those with whom we have grown deeply accustomed to. This re-learning is slow and painful. I don't think that it gets easier with time, but people do say that it gets more familiar.

Some Facts, Some Fiction is a segment from within the larger zine that is made up of text and images from multiple, disparate sources. The disclaimer embodied within the title is an apt warning for the content that follows. Scans from outdated textbooks about anomalous weather, questionable energy studies, song lyrics, and found bible notes are strung together tangentially with chunks of my own writing; presenting information that is self-referential and resistant to a linear narrative. It is my hope that this section of the zine will further contextualize the ideas that are present in both the interview with Ruth and Charque, as well as the installation at Greensboro Project Space.

Throughout the entire zine, my own writing is highly fragmented. Some pieces are only a few sentences long, while others take up most of the page. All of the imagery that the writing presents has originated from my lived experience: dreams and overheard conversations, text messages received and sent, regional colloquialisms and gossip and tidbits from other people's intuition. Some reflections have been spliced and adapted to make more sense to a stranger, while others depict events that are unfortunately, totally unedited and true (as per my memory and experience). The title of the zine is taken from a phrase used in a screenshotted Wikipedia article about the disappearance of folk singer Connie Converse. Other screenshots appear throughout the text; the lyrics to a Converse song about a relationship that has ended, and a segment of Megan Thee Stallion's *Thot Shit*. The beliefs of the narrator present opinions and traits that sometimes contradict themselves and double back; ghosts are real, dogs talk through

telekinesis, and hell is represented by a roach in every corner[43] and a pair of itchy pants. The smell of sweat and rooibos tea conjures the memory of a past lover and other relationships are referenced at various stages, but often towards their end. A sense of geographical place is referenced[44] but these stories could take place almost anywhere. Many of the vignettes in *The Right to Disappear* depict a deep familiarity with the cyclic nature of plants, seasons, and land. The knowledge of forsythia, details of tending a farm, chicken care, and picking raspberries are described in tandem with descriptions of imagined road trips, hypothetical job interviews, and dogs gone wild— but are all presented identically stylistically. There is no indication given to the reader about what is completely factual and what isn't. I hope that pairing these various formats of information together creates a sense of ambiguity—an opportunity for disbelief and wonder that invites the reader to repeatedly decide for themselves what they want to believe.

I want to approach death with a calm kindness. It is so scary to think about; unavoidable, unknown, surprising, potentially painful, and confusing. The things and people we leave behind. Death seems so sloppy. Sometimes I think about who will have to go through all my things— who will take care of my dog? What would become of all my cool trash and old photos, the scraps of paper saved for future purposes that might only make sense to me? Will someone have to do my laundry one last time, or would everything get bagged and donated? Would the windex bottle that I bought two years ago and have not used once be taken and equally ignored under a friends' sink? In the glovebox of one of my first cars, bought through an estate auction, there was still a tube of lavender scented hand lotion[45] left behind by the woman who had owned it before. I never used it, and it stayed in the same position under my insurance and registration until the car was totaled and got towed away. So much of my furniture, clothes, and

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[43] Honestly, my version of hell could not even have that bad of a roach problem. It could have only occasional, slow roaches, and it would still be truly agonizing for me to spend eternity there.

[44] Shout out to Harris Teeter and Giant Eagle.

[45] Estee Lauder, trial size tube.

records were most likely made available to me by someone dying in the first place–thrift store finds and piles of junk—it's not that these material things are what I am most worried about losing through death, but considering the materialistic logistics of dying is approachably unsettling.[46] When I try to think about what will happen to me when I die, as a body and as a person, truly very little comes to mind: a great void of the imagination. But thinking about the logistical after care that death requires allows us to feel a sense of control over a situation that is actually completely ungovernable. Will my mom have to touch my vibrator?[47] Who will tell the IRS that I won't be filing taxes anymore? What happens to the food in your fridge? Thinking about the nitty gritty of cleaning up after someone you care about is something I have more familiarity with[48] and it feels like a way to prepare oneself without having to fully address the realization that as soon as you die, all your responsibilities are forced to immediately relinquish their jurisdiction.

The phrase *'the right to disappear'* is not intended to refer specifically to suicide. Rather, it makes me think of the right we all have to change— to cull that which no longer serves us. Expectations, old ambitions, ineffective patterns of being— I think of the right to disappear as a mournful sort of optimism. Sometimes we have to change even when we don't want to—a sort of weary trudging towards that which aligns closer to our current values and ideals.[49] It is surprisingly hard work to disappear.[50] It is frustrating for those who love us as we are, where we

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[46] Carole (my therapist) says we do this for the same reason we like poking bruises or picking at scabs- the tangibility of the pain is important to understanding it– it's like practice pain. We are able to peer over the ledge without actually diving- we can poke only as hard as we need to, to remind us of our aliveness and feel less scared through this controlled pain, while still exploring the idea and eventual reality of the scary thing.

[47] Hopefully if I die in Greensboro Ash Strazzinski can take care of this.

[48] Helping my mother and aunt clean up after the death of my grandmother is still one of the most surreal glimpses I have ever had into someone's life. After my friend Jude's death, there was a slew of emails everyday, about details and loose ends. The bureaucratic management required by death of the living forces you to act even when you might not feel ready to do or decide anything.

[49] Do you quit the job that is a safe bet? Break up with someone who has never ever wronged you even though you can't put your finger on why you feel like you need to? Stop attending gender reveal parties? Go back to eating meat after being an aggressive vegetarian for six years? Run into someone at a bar and legitimately fail to remember why you had avoided them for so long? Start listening to Taylor Swift during open studio hours? Stop going 'home' for Christmas?

[50] The pleasure of passing through a strange town alone can not be underestimated, in my mind.

are. Throughout collecting and generating all the writing for the zine, I am struck, again and again, about how the vast majority of the experiences and situations that remain the clearest and most impressive in my memory are those that lacked any sort of anticipatory precedent.[51] So much of who I am is just an amalgamation of the interests and experiences shared with, or learned from, the people that I have known and loved, even if our time together was finite and fleeting. Cataloging the deep impact that others have had on me inevitably leads me to think about the impact that I must have also had on them. What will someone miss most about me, when I am no longer here? What peculiarities are so specific to myself that I would never be able to identify them on my own, due to the deep familiarity I have with my own thoughts and habits? We are all so entrenched in our individual experiences—all so well versed in our own histories and misgivings—that it is impossible to fully grasp the ways in which those we love, love us back. Even someone who knows you better than anyone else, still does not know you in the way that you know yourself. This slight distance in knowledge allows for a deeper understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. Our friends perceive a more holistic understanding of us than we tend to afford ourselves—providing the sliver of room necessary for the grace, tolerance, and humor that we so often allow others to reflect back onto ourselves as well.

[51] I can tell you that it was lovely to eat raw milk cheeses while studying abroad in Switzerland but would also tell you that one specific fall afternoon at a dingy coffee shop in Portland, Oregon, stands out much stronger in my mind, even though it was an experience replicated many, many times.

CHAPTER V: THE END

Ruth and Charque talk about death as a road to rebirth- both physically and metaphorically. In certain ways, that is what all this work is about: reflecting and trying to re-remember, or reimagine, past experiences as a means of figuring out how to move forward. What do we do with grief? How do we learn to live alongside it? How can we arrange and organize our lives in ways that feel buoying and joyful in spite of all the pain that surrounds us?[52] I am my own most reliable companion but even I will abandon myself someday. Is that why death is so scary? Because the one thing that has been most consistent in our lives– our selves– will inevitably let us go? I would like to fill my time prioritizing pleasure and jubilation above all else.[53] This thesis work is a demonstration of that ambition and has been inspired by, and made directly for, those for whom I care deeply about.

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[52] The pain of getting divorced is so different from the pain of finding out about the death of a beloved friend. Is so different than the pain of being hit by a car. Is so different from the pain of reading about violence that you have not had to experience due to sheer luck alone. Yet it all exists at the same time, alongside the need to eat something for breakfast before you leave for work or the way the sun feels as it lights across your face on the first day of spring.

[53] Pursuit of pleasure not as a means of ignoring injustices and failing systems that need attention, action, and energy—and not in a way that prioritizes my own individual needs over those of others'. I think of a pursuit of pleasure as a way of prioritizing my time here towards that which feels vitalizing—a barometer for how to make decisions and seek experiences. You don't get an award at the end for being dutiful, or for putting up with more than someone else was able to, or for not rocking the boat. It is hard to disappoint those to whom we've established patterns and relationships butI think there are always ways to get closer to what feels good, without causing unnecessary harm to those around you, and while still allowing for change and growth.

APPENDIX A: A HIGHLY BIASED, ALPHABETICAL, ANNOTATED LIST OF REFERENCES, INFLUENCES, ASPIRATIONAL PROJECTS, AND INSPIRATIONAL ARTISTS

Alisha B. Wormsley is an interdisciplinary artist and cultural producer. In 2017, Wormsley participated with the Last Billboard Project in Pittsburgh, PA (a project created by artist Jon Rubin, and which the Greensboro City Billboard is partially based after) using the text "There are Black People in the Future". The owners of the building that the billboard is on top of had the text taken down, but the city rallied around Wormsley and the message, and since then, "the billboard has been replicated in Detroit, Charlotte, New York City, Kansas City and Houston, and London. The text, which Wormsley encourages others to use freely, has since been used in protest, critical art theory, essays, song, testimony and collective dreaming." (quoted text courtesy https://alishabwormsley.com)

Allison Baker's soft sculptures depict familiar forms in playful, exaggerated ways, and I find her craftsmanship and material choices very exciting and hugely inspiring, especially the floppy, sparkle cigarettes.

Ash Strazzinski is a multidisciplinary artist currently based in North Carolina. Working with video, text, photography, sculpture, her body, and repurposed ready-made objects, Strazzinski's work investigates gender, notions of play, and self-surveillance. Her organizational skills, ambition with material experimentation, and care towards others are off the charts, and I would not have made it through the MFA program at UNCG without her.

Ashtin Berry is a New Orleans-based activist, educator, and sommelier whose work seeks to make the hospitality industry more intersectional and inclusive.

Bad Brains is a punk band from Washington D.C. They have many, many hits, but their song “Attitude” resonates the deepest with me due to its uptempo references to PMA (positive mental attitude).

Bart Urbanski is a Polish photographer whose series of black and white images, *Solar Recordings Based on Talks with Family Members, Friends, and Scammers*, uses very long exposure times to depict the movement of the sun. The length of the exposure causes the film to solarize, which turns the sun into an ethereal, vaguely extraterrestrial, streak—cleaving across the sky in each frame. The exact time of each exposure is dictated by the duration of specific, previous phone calls, allowing inferences to be made about the nature of the relationship and conversation that each photograph records.

Bill Daniel is a photographer and filmmaker who is perhaps best known for the 2005 experimental documentary, *Who is Bozo Texino?* which investigates the origins of a ubiquitous train tag that looks like a cowboy. Bill Daniel lived in Braddock for a while and the people I bought my house from, bought his house when he left town. I bought a print of Daniel’s during a pop-up art show at the old Babyland space (RIP) that is a black and white image of one of Margret Killgallen’s tags on a train (they were friends), and it has hung above my bed ever since.

Chad Nicholson is an activist and proud resident of East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who has almost no detectable internet presence but grows a mean patch of snap peas, helps communities who are trying to organize to oppose fracking, knows all the best train watching spots on the East Shore, and is forever trying to leverage what power he has to help others.

Clifford Prince King's portraits of friends and lovers depict the kind of deep intimacy and genuine relationship that I am drawn to documenting as well, within my own context.

Dead Moon is a punk band from Portland Oregon formed in 1987, made up of Fred and Toody Cole and Andrew Loomis. Dead Moon's music is jammin, but I also hugely appreciate them as people with a very specific vision and their life-long dedication to actively pursuing their goals. Fred and Toody were married for twenty years before they started Dead Moon. They had kids, built a few ramshackle houses (both in Oregon and the Yukon), started their own record label, and made a very DIY life for themselves with their friends. I heard somewhere that Toody still packs and ships all the merch orders from the website. (Rogers, Nate. "The Fire, Fury and Second Life of Punk Survivor Toody Cole of Dead Moon." Billboard, October 10, 2019. https://www.billboard.com/music/rock/toody-cole-dead-moon-interview-8532587/.)

Foxfire Magazine was a quarterly magazine that came out of a writing project at a high school in Rabun Gap, Georgia in 1966. *Foxfire* featured interviews, oral histories, and practical how-to advice from elders in the area that were collected and photographed by students. Each publication dealt with topics of particular colloquial interest, like "weather signs", "white oak splits", "snake lore", and "slaughtering hogs". *Foxfire* has been re-published as a series of anthologies now, but my ex-husband had almost the entire collection of original edition magazines, purchased for super cheap at a thrift store that didn't realize what they were or what they were worth. The original volumes are half-sheet sized, staple bound, and so so beautiful—often printed monochromatically in a cheery color, always featuring lots of images, and using a weight of paper that you can imagine being able to withstand the wear of frequently flipping through mid-pig process.

Helen Jones is a photographer whose work explores the tangible effects of time and the resonance of memory. Combining scans of archival documents and family photographs with images that she has taken contemporarily, her work investigates the effects that time has on people and objects. Her forthcoming book, *To Light and then Return* comes out summer of 2022. She also runs a publishing company, Pine Island Press.

Jeff Cheung is an artist, musician, and skateboarder whose paintings and drawings of smiling, canoodling, nude bodies celebrate queer love. Often large scale, Cheung's carefully rhythmic mark making techniques render the body hair, simplified features, and elongated forms of his figures decisively—often overlapping and obscuring where one person ends and another begins—to create joyful conglomerations of limbs and bodies reforming through active embrace.

Jeffery Gibson is a multi-disciplinary artist who uses painting, sculpture, and performance to explore the places and directions where his various identities intersect. His masterful use of, and inventive manipulation of, materials is hugely inspiring to me.

Jenny Fine makes large scale, fancifully realistic installation work using construction materials, photography, and elaborate costuming. Her installation summer of 2021 at SECCA was so so so so fun and I could have looked at the spray foam barnacles for days.

John Keen is a poet, novelist, and Macarthur fellow whose work I was recently introduced to through his 2021 book, *Punks*, which details romantic encounters, long nights, and tributes to loss in such beautifully rendered language reading it will make you stay in the bath for hours past when you originally had planned to emerge.

Lenka Clayton is a Pittsburgh-based, British born, artist who makes so much work that is simultaneously simple and profound, always rendered gracefully, and resonates with me deeply. Specifically, her typewriter drawings, the record that splices and re-alphabetizes every word from George Bush's 2002 axis of evil speech, and the quilt she recently made for the lighthouse keepers gently curved twin bed as part of the project, *Light House Dark House.*

Maggie Nelson's 2009 book *Bluets*, which enumerates the multiple ways that the color blue has featured, directed, and influenced her life.

Marge Piercy is a poet who I was recently introduced to through the small world, life giving magic that sometimes happens when you meet new people. Specifically, her book, *Circles on the Water*— which excerpts of were read to me and Ash Strazzinski by Ash's dear friend Lex on Easter morning on a too-small couch in Redhook, while she and I had made a surprise visit to see another friend who had a long lay-over before returning to Scotland, but! That was originally introduced to Lex through her childhood best friend who I knew before I ever met Ash from where I worked the first two years I lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Connection! Piercy's poetry talks about (to quote the back of the book) "old working-class" women, "zucchini and lettuce", and "our anger, our lust, our losses".

Margret Kilgallen was a Bay Area artist who used graffiti, installations, and hand lettering to depict figures and city-scenes on any surface possible— book end papers, trains, scrap wood, parking garage walls, etc. Her warm color palette and insistence on the importance of maintaining the evidence of her hand in the work resonates deeply with me. She died from cancer roughly three weeks after her daughter was born.

Marilyn Robinson is an novelist and essayist who has written many beautiful books using deceptively straightforward language that you do not realize is moving you gutteraly and changing the way your brain is working until it's all over. *Housekeeping* is my ultimate favorite. I have a copy that I will loan to no one in which I have underlined almost entire pages.

Michael Hurley is a legendary folk singer based in Astoria, Oregon. At eighty one years old, he still plays regularly— large music festivals all over the US, for free on Fridays at the Laurelthirst Tavern in Portland (pre-covid, hopefully again soon), as well as on co-op lawns, coffee shops, and in unassuming venues with much lesser known headliners. He has roughly a million renditions of songs about tea and werewolves, designs his own album art, and sang a song about being a junebug that closed out a set I saw 2019 that haunts my memory with its alluring, riddle-like, seductive perfection.

Mississippi Records is a record company based in Portland, Oregon, that produces re-issues of hard to find tunes and collections, often packaged as totally perfect mix-tapes and LP's. For a long time, they didn't sell anything online, and honestly they seem sort of salty about having to start doing so because of the pandemic, but seem to have run their business in a way that prioritizes their values above profit. You can spend hours and hours and all of the money you've ever made or will make in one beautiful, wood floored room with gentle afternoon light streaming off Albina street with the brunch smells of Sweedeedee wafting in from next door.

Nicole Lavelle is a Bay Area artist and graphic designer whose work uses language, handwriting, collections, and found imagery to investigate and deeply get to know places and people.

Nik Forsberg is a chef, scorpio, and farmer, who makes the best food I have ever eaten, regularly, with very little fanfare; charred and oil-packed shisito peppers spread over dense sourdough with butter, thick fish stew when it is snowing still in March and your steps haven't gotten a chance to dry off and unfreeze since october, slow cooked rabbit wrapped in steamed radicchio leaves and tied with chives, perfectly shucked oysters on a rocky coast with each shell thrown back into the ocean, mussels with a broth that you could sell by the cupful. Just know if you go to legendary Pittsburgh restaurant Cheng Du Gourmet with him he's going to order the whole fish and eat both eyes himself.

Ruth and Charque Newell are Pittsburgh based tarot card readers, metaphysical spirituality teachers, and advisors who have been practicing together for twenty seven years.

Scott Hocking is a multimedia artist based in Detroit. He makes large scale installations using found objects, creating surreal mythologies and replicating the feeling of reward and wonder that trespassing in depopulated industrial zones can often produce.

Shikeith is a Pittsburgh based photographer, sculptor, and filmmaker, whose work "investigates the experiences of black men within and around concepts of psychic space" *(quoted text courtesy artists bio, via their website, shikeith.com)* Shikeith's work is so so so beautiful—depicting a spirituality and intimacy across each and every I medium that he chooses to employ.

Sister Corita Kent was an artist, nun, and educator, known for her vibrant, text based screen prints and graphic design. I love her! What more is there to say!

The City Museum is a wild place in St. Louis. If you have the chance to go, go.

The Swimming Cities Project is a collective project initiated by the artist SWOON, in which highly intricate, ornate, and functional boats and rafts, designed and built by various artists, are sailed to and from different places. The Swimming Cities of Serenissima floated three boats to the Venice Biennale in 2009, and The Swimming Cities of Switchback Sea (2008) took place on the Hudson River, and the Miss Rockaway Armada (2006/2007) sailed down the Mississippi. Photographer Tod Seelie has taken insanely alluring documentation of some of these voyages.