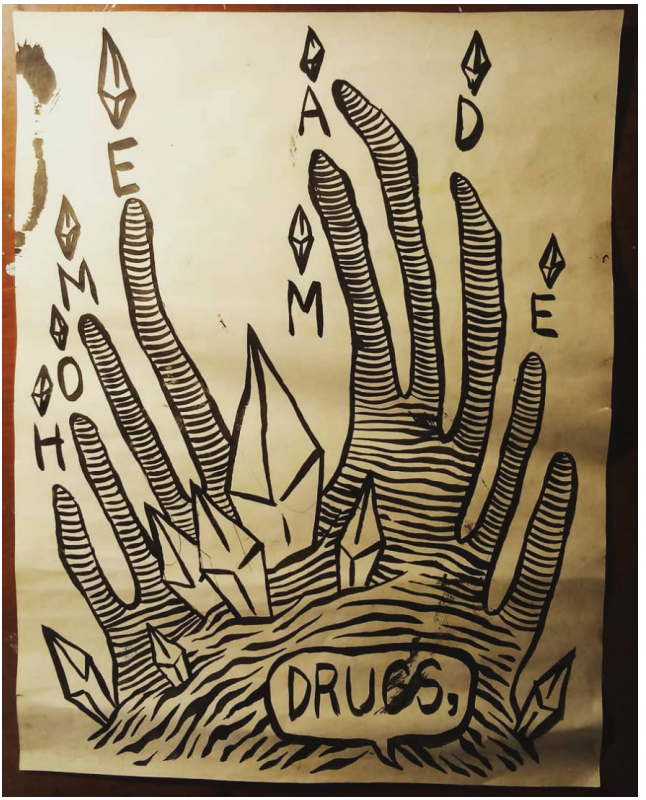
In the Year of Our Lord 2020





Homemade Drugs
Rob Rosin

Acknowledgements
This zine was compiled by Benjamin Champagne (benchampagnetemple@gmail.com) and composed by Thor Rasmussen (thor@thorthought.com). Hit us up if you love it or hate it. 2020, the year the Tesla Cyber Truck gained consciousness and began to write poems and draw. Big ups to Elon Musk, Theory of Singularity and Instagram. Oh and these folks from all over the place: Erin Case (Milwaukee), Matt Grimmer (Bay City), Ernest Hemmings (Las Vegas), Katy Haas (Bay City), Grace Carras (Midland), Robbie Pieschke (Flint), Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs (Des Moines), Rob Rosin (Cleveland), Sarah Koliboski (Saginaw), Josh Sheller (Grand Rapids), CBxTN (Outer Space), Kellie Rankey (Saginaw)
Front Cover: "Privilege" by Erin Case
Back Cover: Matt Grimmer



Matt Grimmer

The Only Way to Break Up in 2020

Benjamin Champagne

I'm leaving you

Flat mouth emoji

We can still be friends. Maybe after we take some time for ourselves

Man and Woman emoji

I think you're great, you're just not the right fit for me.
I think our trip to the desert was a great metaphor for us.
You kept complaining it was too hot.

Fire, Cactus Emoji

But for me, for me it was perfect.
All this life is overwhelming. I like it more barren. I need more space.
I like it when the animals hide
And come out at night.

Gif of the eel in a cave

But really I think you're great

Gif of that kid in the 90s giving a thumbs up

Someone is going to be really happy with you and I'll be happy for them
I think I'm changing as a person.
It's not personal.
I hope you find someone the way I found the God

Damn Autocorrect!

The way I found the dog.
The dog that we shared. I found it. So I'm keeping it. It's only fair.
And she likes me more.
But I really think you'll find a dog that likes you more.

Link to a dog shelter

And maybe, no, probably, someone who can love you more than I can.

Because I have found a way out. Through a deep aum.
A hole opened in the desert sky and I was pulled through by a coyote.
It was a giant trip and I heard the frequency, the hertz, the one note behind every note
And now that I've learned to play it, there is no requirement for romantic love

There is only the argument from cosmology bearing out in our bones
Our bones which are just the universe's tuning forks
And I cannot give this to you, I tried giving up my sleep for you
The only way for your true nature to ring out
Is to be crushed under the weight of heartache.
Then will you sing.
Then you will know which key you are on the piano of dust.
So do not pity yourself and do not be angry at me
Because it is all just part of the song
Jazz being the only earthly thing comparable to this
Until heartbreak, your bones are the unstruck bell.
The bell of time which contains all sound

Spiral Emoji



Sketch 4
Marcia Henne

On the Word 'Got'

Benjamin Champagne

My old english professor doesn't like the word 'Got'. He thinks it's lazy and guttural. Got. "I got some eggs." He claims there is always a better verb around the corner. "I bought some eggs." Heck, "I came home with some eggs." How about instead of 'I got some eggs', "I stayed home for an entire month concentrating, until I laid some eggs." That seems like a far better replacement for the word 'got'. My english professor is lazy. He wants to change the word got, for a better verb, when the entire sentence is in need of help!

Besides that, how great that the word is guttural?! In this world full of memes and microwaves, fast food, instant satisfaction, Donald Trump, corn syrup, internet, shouldn't we have a word that functions with great utility and only requires a mere grunt? Have. That word is for fops and dandies. I GOT some things. And make sure they are things. No need for descriptors. There is no time for that. We are in a hurry. Don't pull over to explain to me the specifics about the things you have. You got some things. I got some things. Lets keep it moving.

My old english professor gave me a passing grade. He was actually quite fond of me, but we argued a lot. He didn't like the phrase 'a lot'! Wanted me to say 'frequently', or describe an argument in detail. He didn't seem to like anything I did that streamlined language. He was always asking me to 'be specific', 'paint a picture', 'set the scene'. I had to argue with him about elegance.

The english language is like a math problem. What are we doing in most maths? We are trying to find the most elegant expression. 4 (4x) + (2x) = 72 I had to google that. But the answer is 4... or something like that. The point is, that's too complicated! Nobody wants to solve for X! And the same goes for reading and writing. So you can keep your 50 dollar words, Mr. Professor, I got some things to talk about and I'm not going to let a lot of this nonsense slow me down. I'm trying to simplify and reduce language. Express myself while saving energy and sparing people from sweating it out.

I cannot wait until they make little devices so we can hear each other's thoughts. Or see them rather! Now, yes I am a writer, but only as a tool for expression and communication. If you could see my thoughts. My thoughts are the gots of thoughts! Beautifully simple. Thoughts that come from the most primitive and base section of the brain. Ideas so starved of complexity that they cannot even be written. I'll try right now: "Balloon animal, dirt apple, wal-mart, chow!!" It's too much. That's not the picture I had in my brain.

I will be the first poet to transmit my poems into your brain. Like a Kurt Vonnegut novel. My poems will be guttural. They will be written by apps on phones. Autopoem. Without me paying any attention. My poems will be prolific. And will go something along these lines.

Got a lot
Got a lot of things.
Some things
Are better than other things.
I feel good.

But some things,
feel baaaaad.
You got a lot of feels?
Things make it better.
But watch out!
Some things make it baaaaddd.

I'm working my way towards that. I'll be history's first true poet for the people. A fast food poet. McPoetry. "Yes, watch out! Some things do make it bad." Back in college, when my professor proposed that we watch our limp words, poor verbs, trite adjectives, I took it a step further. I thought, better watch out for limp plots, unimaginative characters, a boring life! So I turned over every phrase in every single sentence, paragraph and paper. If I was trying to say: "The capitalist plan to create more wealth for individual corporations, leads to the outsourcing of jobs to countries with cheaper labor and thus globalization and the spread of industrial capitalism," I would say it more like this:
"The half life of industry is seen in the moves of corporations around the world. They leave a trail of industry and technology in every country they set up shop in. McDonald's is available all over the planet. Coca-Cola has advertised to every single person on Earth. Their only move for expansion, is to gain Pepsi's share of the market. Third World countries will eventually be replaced with capitalist economies as the Money Grubbing Overlords move from one place to another, trying to find cheap labor. This isn't as horrendous as it seems, because for every building built haphazardly and with no attention to slavery type conditions, there is also increased access to education, the internet, technology as a whole and those things which we deem to make for a quality life, here in America. I make no argument for laissez-faire economics. Or that the trade of technology, for unsafe work conditions, is a good or ethical one, but I merely point out the fact that it is happening. The trend is that we will, on a long enough time line, share some semblance of capitalism, in every corner of the earth. And that the half-life of each industrial power will grow shorter and shorter as technology advances. Automation will replace the jobs that humans don't want to do and maybe we'll resemble something like Pixar's dystopian film Wall-E. But perhaps the future will be more utopian and we will all receive bio-tech implants in our brains, that allow us to communicate without words and update into Euphoria and Enlightenment. The Enlighment Update 9.01.2 is the one that will take all of mankind into Nirvana." But I'm working towards using language in a smoother fashion yet:
"McRib guys gotta make more money. America got too many laws for da McRibs. Make a McRib on the moon! No laws there."
The point is, the most elegant expression is the one that reduces the complexity. That does the work. Twitter is the philosophy of the common man. Can you do more, with less?
Have Milk?
Heck NO!!
Got Milk.

please RSVP to the facebook invitation for my latest existential crisis

Katy Haas

on Tuesday i write love poems in front of your house with sidewalk chalk.
on Wednesday it rains.
on Thursday i update all my social media to say i've died in a mysterious accident and click 'like' on all the condolences. i collect thoughts and prayers and arrange them pretty on my bookshelves. i shove them into my mouth when i get the munchies around midnight and wash them down with almond milk.
i sleep all day Friday so no one sees me sipping coffee in public and accuses me of faking my death for attention even though i might like that kind of negative attention.
speaking of negative attention: i text my parents on Saturday to say sorry for refusing to get senior photos taken over ten years ago and also for having the emptiest womb in the world and not actually feeling sorry for it.
on Sunday i sit in the back pew at my funeral where i boo and heckle all the eulogies that don't mention my impeccable sense of humor.
on Monday i update my relationship status on facebook to say 'it's complicated.' my relationship with everything is complicated but i myself am less complicated than i'd like to make people believe.
anyway, did you read my poems before the rain washed them away? it's weird - i didn't see you at my funeral even though i sent you a personal invitation. but whatever. i never run out of ways to say i like your hair,

hey Siri, are you single?

Katy Haas

hey Siri, how can i tell a man likes me if he doesn't send me memes or youtube videos i only watch one minute of before replying, 'hahaha niiiice,' or if he doesn't watch my story or heart instagram photos of me in lacy bras i only buy to take instagram photos in?
hey Siri, how do i tell someone i like them without texting VSCO edited pictures of my ass in impractical underwear and does it even matter – i mean, tumblr's already seen them.
hey Siri, is it possible to netflix and chill with only the log-in info and none of the chill?
hey Siri, how can i tell if someone is thinking about me and are you thinking about me even when we go days without speaking? and have you seen this meme? and have you watched my story yet today?

predictions & estimations
Katy Haas

i've never been good at predicting the future.
i don't even know what i'm doing this Friday or if i'll still love you tomorrow.
i can only dream of the past: of when we were still tethered together by wires and i hadn't yet tired of the way time passes without my permission.
even Google doesn't know what to tell me when i ask the date of my last lost baby tooth, or how many years we have left on earth, or how many months until you and i wander in opposite directions.
sometimes i stare into my tea leaves and make guesses but time always turns me into a liar.



Sketch 3
Marcia Henne

Social networking websites vs.
Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs

the price points of the hypothalamus.
A good set of choppers
can overcome

fifty percent of your daily needs.
High fiber cereal
is just the beginning.

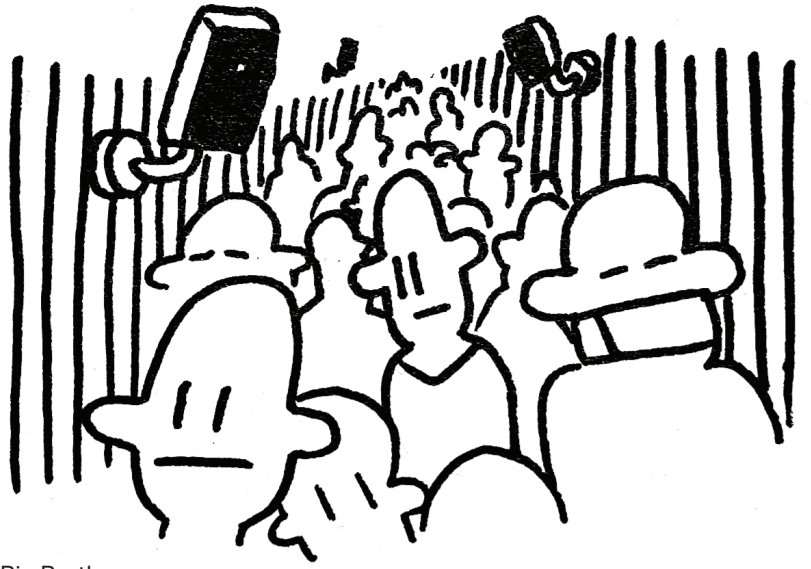
We have methods
and red strings, we have places
for people.

A pair of foots rush this world.
An ears listen
for the disappointing rain.

Timeline
Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs

Fifteen minutes and a cigarette
don't mean a thing. A thing I dreamed
don't mean. A comic book about a childhood
episode, nude demands in the classroom,
don't. An underwater dormitory.
O psychosocial clubhouse, O metaphysical
garage, O reparations.

Something tells me this won't
be the last Russian dollhouse of the night.
Such tiny personalities are inexhaustible.
With tiny forks and knives in imitation
of the feast, the menus in miraculous detail. Such
generous portions. Such accurate
hunger, how convincing.



Big Brother
Matt Glimmer

We should Talk
Robbie Pieschke

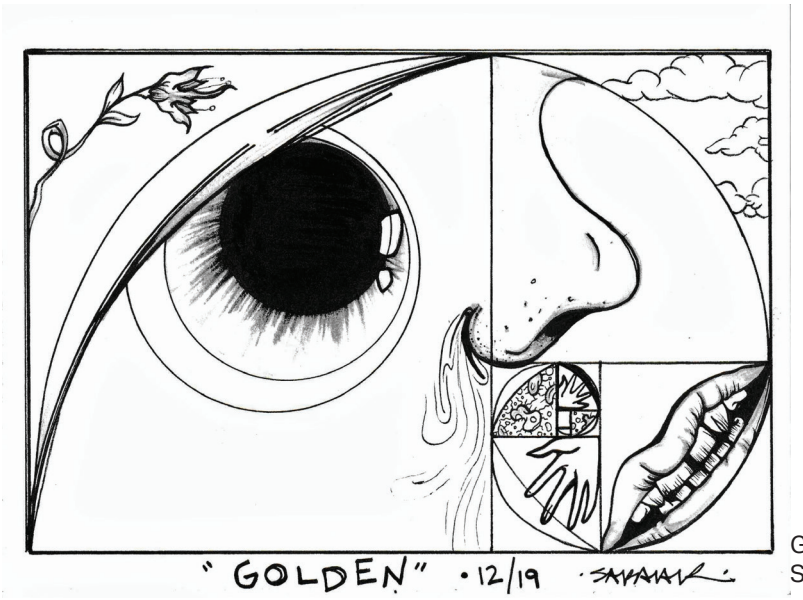
That Dylan's ex girlfriend
left him for his father
after a series of innocuous
Facebook messages turned salacious
was not lost on Simone
who was finally trying to end things
without hard feelings.

Where were you when the debt blew?
Geordie Wilson

Where were you when the debt blew??
On google chrome or yahoo?
Had you got so drunk so tired of winning
that you drank champagne to ease Champ Pain?

They said gimme a Tea and ended with Trump
It spelled disaster but it rhymed with chump
Christians cheered loudest for all that sinning
Armageddon's coming—gonna really be something

The world's blue pebble of stardust gas
was eclipsed by an ego and a big fat ass
perpetual machine it couldn't stop ginning
underfunded arrears
In a hundred years
even crocodiles can't cry crocodile tears



Golden
Sarah Koliboski

It's Fine If This Doesn't Turn Out Okay

Ernest Hemmings

Craig's List took down the "Casual Encounters" section. This was the section that posed as a digital bulletin board for lonely singles who wanted something with fewer strings than a tampon, and the immediacy of a pizza. Casual. But upon a cursory investigation one realized quickly that it was nothing more than a perpetually growing pool of prostitution. The website was littered with ads for sex that had the subtlety of a tank.

PICTURE: A bottle-blonde woman in bikini

TEXT: Direct to your room. 150 Roses. Seven-Oh-Two....

Melvin was accustomed to this transaction and he longed for it.

On the eighty-third day of being single again, Melvin reviewed his bank account balance, checked the level of vodka in his cabinet, and went to Craigslist only to be reminded that what he wanted no longer existed.

The first time he used it he was a nervous wreck, even though he assured the girl he was "fine." Before she arrived he realized that it was possible that she could easily just stab or shoot him, and run off with his money. Melvin had been ripped off before: Sixty dollar baggies of baking soda...Tickets for a concert that already passed...A hotel in the wrong city...(to be fair, there should only be one Detroit)... The first time he wasn't sure of what would happen. The thrill of not knowing what to expect and the level of personal danger rushed his heart out of his chest.

But those days are gone. Craig's List is just a place to look for horrible work or a used bookshelf. Melvin closed his laptop, and considered his options as he poured the last of his vodka into a faded, plastic Mickey Mouse cup. He could watch porn, but he wanted actual interaction. He wanted someone to discuss payment and terms and the thrill of knowing that something could go wrong. He wanted to feel someone on top of him, and it was totally fine if everything didn't turn out "okay." It might not. But that was fine to Melvin.

"What did people do before the internet?" Melvin groaned to himself as he paced his kitchen. He looked at the clock on the microwave.

8:15

He cross referenced the microwave with his cell phone.

8:12

It was too early to sleep, but it was too late to start a courtship and land a first date. Melvin decided that, if anything, he could get a stranger to gyrate in his lap for twenty dollars at a strip club...even on a Tuesday. He threw on pants, found his wallet, and walked out the door.

Melvin's car was a late 90's, piece-o-shit that he purchase after his third wife took off to Denver. It always reeked of gasoline and the air conditioning didn't work, but it was only seven hundred dollars and he wasn't in a position to be picky.

"It's totally fine if this doesn't work out okay," he told the dealer who bad mouthed the vehicle in an attempt to get Melvin to consider a better, more expensive car. "It will do."

The car creaked to a stop in the parking lot of "Larry's Villa Girls Girls Girls All Nude." The engine sounded like a dying relative who has gone way beyond the forecasted expiration date in a manner that could only be described as "pure spite." Melvin pulled the car keys out of the ignition, checked his face in the rare view mirror, and popped a zit that was forming on his chin. He dabbed at the bleeding crater with a slightly-used, fast food napkin. Satisfied that the blood had stopped, he checked his wallet to make sure that he had cash. As he was counting the bills, a tap on his window startled him.

"Hey. Are you waiting for someone?" the lady asked. Her hair was five-feet tall and her skirt was three inches long. She leaned her forearms against the door frame with her face close to the glass. Melvin's heart began to race.

"It's fine if this doesn't turn out okay," Melvin thought to himself, and he rolled down the window.

"Hi. You waiting for someone?" she asked again, this time with complete clarity. The crickets' chirps competed against the noise of the traffic in the desert heat. "Were you going inside?"

"Yeah. Yeah, I was going to go inside." Melvin tried to act cool but the closer she got, the more he melted.

"You wanna give me a ride?"

"Where do you live?"

"Not far. Or we can go to your place."

"Yeah." Melvin said. "Um...okay. Yeah."

"You want me to get in?" she smiled. The question unnerved him. Was she asking that because she was actually a cop, and a bunch of other cops were listening in a van, poised to descend upon Melvin's moribund vehicle with a SWAT team in tow? Melvin looked around for the van. "I can come to your place if you want." Melvin didn't see a van.

"Yeah." he said. "You can get in. We'll...I live really close."

The woman crouched into the passenger seat. For a moment there was a struggle with the distance of the seat from the dashboard. She felt around for the handle that would push the seat back and eventually landed on something that sent her into another zip code.

"Jesus!" She exclaimed with a loud laugh. "Well, I guess I can just ride back here. What's your name, baby?"

"Melvin."

"I'm Stacey. Nice to meet you. Mind if I smoke?" she asked, but she was already holding a smoldering cigarette. At this point, Melvin could care less. The car rattled and whined all the while Stacey busily tapped at her cell phone. "Fuck," she blurted out. "Would you mind giving me a lift after we stop at your place? You live around here?"

"Yeah. I'm actually right here." Melvin pulled into the driveway of his home. He had bought the house when his then-wife demanded that they start getting serious about raising a family. The house would be their nest egg. The house would be the material wealth they could hand down to their yet-to-be-conceived child. Looking at it now from the front seat of a decaying car through a cracked windshield, Melvin thought of the house as an ever-growing pile of unsurmountable debt. The engine knocked loudly to a final gasp as he turned the car off. Melvin waited as Stacey clicked away on the screen of her phone.

"Are you a cop?" She asked.

"No. Do I look like a cop?" Melvin questioned. He couldn't think of anything worse.

"You never can tell. I'd been arrested before. I'm walking into the room and the next thing I know I'm getting handcuffed." She didn't bother looking up from her screen. "Since you're giving me a ride I can do it for two-hundred. Is that cool?"

She didn't have any visible sores, her teeth seemed normal, and she wasn't built like a bag of rocks. Two-hundred dollars was an incredible deal.

"Yeah. That sounds great."

Melvin paid in advance. He thought "It's totally fine if this doesn't turn out okay." The worst that would happen is she would leave without having sex. He always paid first. Logically this put everything that could go wrong on the table immediately. If she was a cop, she would arrest him now. If she was a thief, she already got what she wanted. If this was a hidden camera television show, now was the time for the host to reveal the ruse. Stacey counted the money, twenty dollars at a time, and folded the bills into her bag.

"Okay. This is your place?" She asked as she flicked her cigarette into his manicured lawn.

"Yes." Melvin replied, nervously shimmying the key into the lock. With a click, the two stumbled into the dim hallway of his empty home.

From that point onward, Melvin was back in his comfort zone. The initial chit-chat over a cocktail (vodka neat), the walk to the bedroom, and then, of course, the deed.

Stacey showered off while Melvin checked his Twitter feed on the edge of the bed. Normally he would be drawn into the trolling arguments or mild pornography, but he no

longer desired anything. He checked the time.

9:55.

If he went to bed now he would get a full eight hours of sleep. This would be the first time in months that he would achieve such a feat. Stacey emerged from the bathroom, wrapped in a towel and followed by a dense cloud of steam. Melvin liked seeing her get dressed and imagined that they were together in something more than a transactional experience. Stacey fixed her makeup in the mirror.

"Why don't you take my number and if you want to get together again you can just call me?" She said as she added more mascara. Melvin dialed the digits as she called them out. "Seven-Oh-Two..." He stored her name as Stacey That Stacey, and she stored him as Melvin Blue House. "Okay, baby. Let's go. It's not that far."

Stacey was horrible as a navigator. She would say "Oh! Turn here!" or "Right here! Right here!" nanoseconds before a turn had to be made.

"It's fine." Melvin thought as he cut off three lanes of traffic to send his rickety pile of corroded steel down the wrong way of a one-way side street.

Soon they arrived at their destination. An apartment complex tucked deeply between the parking garages of failed casinos. A group of young men in hooded jackets stood on the street corner throwing angry looks as a homeless couple fought over a grocery cart filled with trash.

"You want me to drop you off...here?" Melvin asked nervously.

"Um...I'm just picking up my kid. He's being baby sat..."

"You have a kid?"

"I just have to pick him up. You can just drop me off here."

"Where do you have to go? Maybe I can just drive you where you have to go." Melvin offered. Stacey's face lit up like a Christmas tree.

"Really?! Well, hang on..." she said as she opened her door. Melvin shut off the car and opened his door. "You can just stay here. I'll be right down." She said.

"I'll come. I mean..." he lowered his voice "it seems a little dangerous." Stacey gave Melvin a "for real?" look.

"I'll be right down."

Melvin waited while trying to look tough. He was glad that his car was undesirable and that he was dressed like a car wreck. He didn't look like someone who would carry a wallet let alone be worthy of a second glance by someone looking for an easy score. Stacey came

out of the shadows of the dilapidated with a small boy in tow. He was in a pajama set that was covered in Batman symbols. He looked tired and aggrataved. He clutched onto a faded blue blanket and shuffled along in sneakers that were halfway on his feet. Stacey made the introduction as she lifted the passenger side seat for the child to climb in:

"Brayden, this is my friend Melvin."

"How do you do?"

The child let out a pugnacious "humph" and turned toward the window.

"He's just tired," Stacey assured.

The three of them drove off to the East Side where the air begins to thicken with the scent of fried chicken and sewage, and the streets are lined with pawn shops and convenience stores. Melvin saw the little boy in his rearview mirror closing his eyes in an attempt to fall asleep. Here he was in a stranger's car and his only concern was getting more rest.

"Turn here."

They pulled up to a two-story house with three front doors. It was one of those homes that they had converted into a townhouse in the late 90s when being a real estate mogul meant buying foreclosed homes and turning the homes into apartments. The front yard was littered with furniture.

"Looks like someone is having a yard sale." Melvin quipped.

"Oh no, no, no, no!" Stacey shouted as she jumped out of the car and ran to the bed frame splayed out near the sidewalk. Brayden stayed in the car. He glanced up at his mother's shouts, rolled his eyes, and nestled his head back into the makeshift blanket pillow. Melvin got out.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"This is all my shit!" Stacey screamed. Tears began to well up in her eyes. "This is all my shit! Fuck!" She ran to the last door in the row, and put her key in the lock. The key wouldn't turn. "The motherfucker! Oh. My. Fucking. God." She stormed back to the car and grabbed her bag. "Come on, honey," she said to the boy, "we have to figure something out."

The boy hit his seat with his fists. "I just want to sleep!" he bemoaned.

"I don't have time for your shit right now! We have to go!" She was all rage and tears. Melvin felt like a pile of shit.

"Look," he said, "maybe...maybe you can just stay with me."

It's fine if this doesn't turn out okay.

The Impression

Grace Carras

You've shaved your legs. Your underwear matches your bra. You've rehearsed and memorized 46 variations on the phrase "Hey, whassup". The midafternoon sun glints off of passing cars as you cruise down Main Street, towards your first-ever Tinder date: Thomas, a 24-year old, 6'2 guy who loves "pizza, music, friends, and travel". You adjust your sunglasses. You've got this. Your best friend back home is expecting a text from you at precisely 14:30 to indicate that you have not been killed—as that apparently tends to happen in this dating realm, you are armed for such an occasion—and will be expecting a status update at 14:50. "Be cool," your friend had told you as you applied your most kissable red lipstick. "Be chill. A good first impression is essential." You are meeting in a coffee shop. This is a reasonable place to meet someone from the internet, yet your hands still shake slightly around the steering wheel as you turn into the parking lot indicated by your GPS. No. No shaking. You are cool and chill. Everything will be fine. There are other cars in the parking lot. You can see through the tinted windows of the shop, and notice people milling about within. Good. Populated areas are good for you.

There is a woosh of air as you open the door to "Lattes of Love", accompanied by the rush of generic chatter and— typical?— coffee shop music. Thomas sits in an armchair in the back corner of the room. His pictures online did represent his physicality accurately after all—your friend had warned you about something called catfishing, but Thomas is as you expected; tall and reasonably muscled, with curly brown hair that seems to recede from his forehead despite his relative youth. You wave politely, as people do, and join the queue to order a coffee before sitting with him. This will make you seem chill; you are not rushing to meet him. Coffee is, generally, more important than strangers. He will appreciate this and think you are very cool. He waves back at you with a smile and stands, as if he is coming to join you in line, then scratches his head, twists his mouth a little. He sits back down, trying to pass it off as if he was looking for something under his chair. It's… cute. He will do nicely. Eventually. You order a latte. The name of the shop suggests that lattes are a specialty here. Lattes are cool and chill and not too fancy. A good first impression is essential. Your hands shake slightly around the paper cup, and you fumble with the plastic lid as you attempt to seal it. Your eyes snap wide as the lid slips off the side of the cup and the whole thing wobbles. You have latte foam on your fingers now. You look up and, mercifully, he is not looking at you and did not see you embarrassing yourself. You exhale and think for a moment: despite appearances, the coffee is secondary, and it is a hazard. You cannot afford to make mistakes. He will see you and he will know that you are not chill or cool. You cannot have that. It has to be perfect. You look at the drink for a moment, and it vanishes in a blip, infernal plastic lid and all. You weave through the small crowd gathered at the counter and make your way to Thomas. He sees your empty hands where once there was coffee, and shifts his eyes to meet yours.

"Hey! I, uh—did you grab a drink?"

"I did. They made my order wrong. They are remaking it." Your voice is too high-pitched. You thrust a slightly shaking hand in his direction. Inside, you cringe; you were trained better than this.

"Ah! Gotcha." He smiles. "Let's—er, I'm, well, hi, I'm Thomas, but you, know, Tinder and stuff. You knew that." He huffs once—laughter? You blink at him, observing. His speech is hurried. He, too, is nervous. Good. He will be focusing on his own clumsy conversation

and not your errors. "But, uh, Tom is fine. I shoulda just said that." He barks another quick laugh and shakes your hand twice.
"Jane Doe." You overcompensated. Your voice is too deep, now. It sounds like the humans in those slow-motion videos on the internet, the ones your friend likes. He starts, his face contorting in surprise. You see every detail, as if in slow motion. There are blonde hairs in his dark eyebrows. You feel all of the ridges and notches of his fingerprints, and have memorized them instantly. In the crowd behind you, someone coughs. Populated areas are good for you; you learn more, faster. You cough into your other hand, and try again.
"Sorry, I have the hot." Your pitch is more neutral, now. You cough again. You hope you are convincing.
"I don't… do you mean a fever?" He asks. You press your lips together. The data in your verbal lexicon has been jumbled. An embarrassing, rookie mistake. Another slip-up, and he will decide that you are not cool or chill. He will leave. That would be unacceptable.
"A cold. I meant a cold. I have the cold." You look down and realize you are still holding Thomas's hand. You see your own white knuckles, long fingers grasped tight around Thomas's palm. His fingers are splayed and straining. You look back up at Thomas's face and see he is in pain; his jaw is set, and there are creases by his eyes where creases wouldn't be on a person who was not under stress. You know this from watching people in restaurants. A normal person would not hurt someone with a handshake on the first date. A normal person would not shake someone's hand for this long. You are failing. This is unacceptable. You are not cool. You are not chill. He knows. Thomas opens his mouth to speak. You must act quickly, now. You turn around, and the crowd of people vanishes instantly, the chatter blinking out of existence. The music remains. You recognize the tune of Michael Buble's "Feeling Good". It is not making you feel good.
You turn back to Thomas, who gapes at the sudden loss of people and noise. You know he is questioning the reality of the situation. You let your human façade fall away, and press a claw to his forehead. Your skin is chilled.
"This unit will come with me," you say in your own voice, cool and even. "The Hive Mother requires me to seduce a human male. This unit is seduced." A bright white light envelops Thomas's chest and neck, searing all 17 of your eyes for a moment. A flash of heat, and the light is gone. Thomas's flesh bubbles. He is not in pain. His eyes, so full of nervous energy only moments ago, are empty now.
"This unit is seduced," he repeats dutifully. "This unit will come with you." Thomas is yours now.

You wrap an appendage around the waist of The Thomas and vanish from the empty coffee shop. The Hive Mother will not be happy that you were unable to organically seduce a human male—The Process works best on humans untouched by your biotechnology—but They will have to make do. You didn't do so badly, for your very first field mission. This is all part of learning. You will do better next time, you think to yourself as the nanoparticles of your being race up through the atmosphere, into the vacuum of outer space at light speed. They may be upset with you. But it's just a job. You are chill. You keep your cool.

i have two hearts
one is for me
(they are both for me
i call this selfish)
when i lay in bed on my side
they knock into each other
clack– balls in newton's cradle

i have three hearts
two hold the steering wheel
when i break (a glass dish
spreads over garage concrete
spilled milk, sharp dust)
the third is a head
bent over, onto the wheel

i have four hearts
an ornamental cluster hung
like the stomachs in a cow
one for today's cud,
one for yesterday's cud,
when i chew cud
i swallow in my hearts

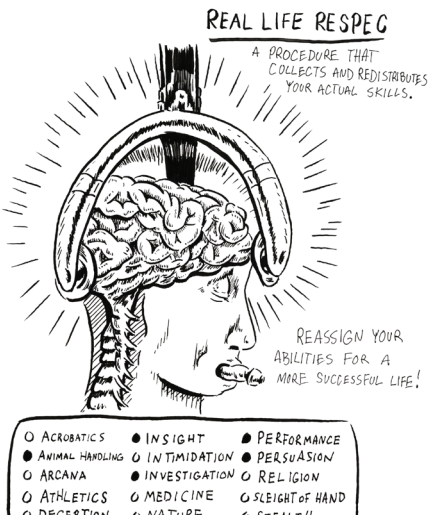
i have a heart
when i listen close
i feel it there the weight
is a sound like air
wheezing through a vent
exhale, exhale

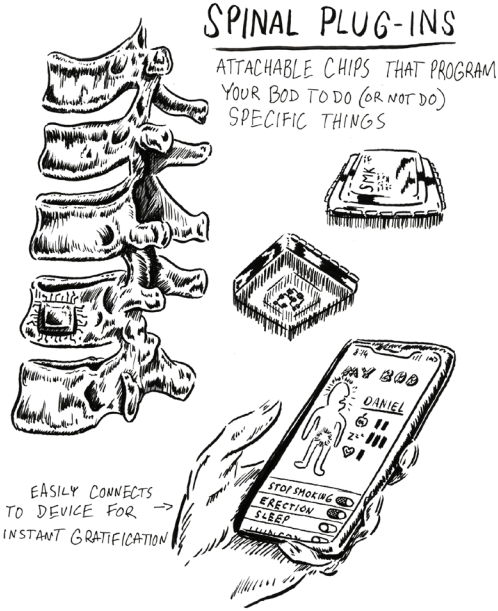
regarding love and art id be friends with sparrows and the boy who's
tay young and chipper and id lock it with a zipper if i only had a heart
shoots the arrows if i only had a heart picture me a balcony above a v
only had a heart id be tender id be gentle and awful sentimental
oice sings low wherefore art thou romeo i hear a beat how sweet just
torn apart just because im presumin' that i could be kinda human if
to register emotion jealousy devotion and really feel the part i could s
hen a man's an empty kettle he should be on his mettle and yet im

SAY IT SAY IT FEEL IT FEEL IT

Mutant Mantra
Kellie Rankey







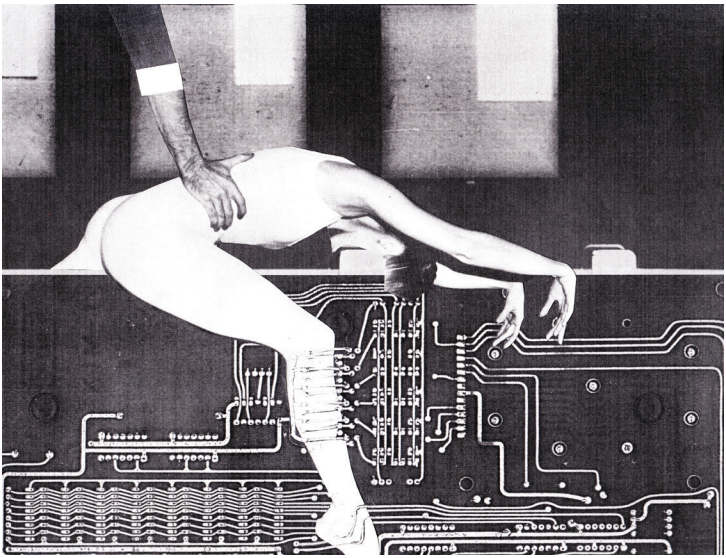
Inventions I hope to see in the future
Josh Sheller

_____ dimensional _____ television will be so commonplace and so
ordinal number noun
simplified that a small device will _____ pictures on the _____ -room wall
verb verb, gerund
so _____ they will seem to be _____. The room will automatically be
adjective adjective
filled with the aroma of the _____ being shown on the screen.
noun

_____-less transmission of electric power, long a dream of the engineer, will have
noun
come into being. There will be no more power lines to break in storms. A simple small
antenna on the roof will pick up the current for _____ a house.
verb, gerund

The telephone will be transformed from wire to _____and will be equipped with
noun
the _____ of television. Who's on the other end of the line will _____ be a
abstract noun adverb
mystery. Every pedestrian will have his own walking telephone – an apparatus by a
combination of the _____ and _____. Electronic appendectomies will be
type of radiation noun
performed with an _____-_____ _____.
prefix noun made-up technology

Television of the Future
CBXTN



Flux
Erin Case


MPG