



ALL THE  
FUNERALS  
FOR MY  
PAST  
SELVES



What would be the easiest way  
to explain a disappearance?

# I NEED GRIEF

TO I write and write, and think about how no language can contain the whole self.

I write and write, as some plea to hold time and understand what even is unfolding around me.

FUNCTION I write and write, because I love everybody and I want them to know – even if I may not have the words to do so in-person.

One thing I've never been more sure of is that words are no less true than a voice. This is the only way I know. This is the only way I have ever known.

November 13

got a tattoo i've been  
waiting years to get...  
contemplating what it  
means to have a near-  
permanent fixture of  
something that makes me  
*me* on myself

is ink some performance  
for oneself or for others?  
is it necessary for parts of  
ourselves to be slowly  
peeled apart, unraveled. i  
could talk about car seat  
headrest for ages and  
what this stupid fucking  
dog means to me and my  
understanding of self and  
sexuality and obsessing  
over someone for their art  
and thinking that is love.  
but also how alienated i  
feel waiting hours in the  
cold in line for their show  
but like yeah

as silly as it is - it is part of  
me that i want to be known

anyway i'll stay  
unfuckable

1  
2  
3

WRITING  
ABOUT  
THE END  
OF THE  
WORLD  
AT  
SIXTEEN

What would be the easiest way to explain a disappearance?

Not this way.

I'm physically here, present, so desperately signaling to others what I do, believe in, and want – all in belief that all manifestation must come from the external.

I recently re-read this shitty thing I wrote at 19 and sobbed.

2020-02-19

There is truly no reason not to do it

Ever since I first started serious ideations a few years back, I've drifted in and out of phases of intense, mind-altering phases of sadness (such that I was so sick and selfish that I can't stomach the mindspace I had), and more 'stagnant' periods of normalcy and calm where my sadness is a bit more null.

Throughout these years, I've read hundreds, if not thousands of pieces on the act. I may not know fully, but I have an idea: of the moments of clarity and cognizance moments or seconds before the act that might be life-altering for some; of essays about life and regret and sometimes, intent to die of lovely people who have lied and their counterparts; of notes that we have to blanket in metaphor, or others that look more like justifications and sets of instructions from the departed; of strange stories like the Egg that weave religion and pride into some sort of attempt to share that to feel empathy for people and not be a piece of shit that you must think everyone is some form of yourself; to falling in love with music, film, and literature that I might see myself in—or maybe not at all—making me more aware of the nuances of life and the lessons that we've learned of human

history. Or of psychology or the nulled feelings that the people who clean up after us must feel, to the profiteers off human suffering to the humans forced to stomach through thousands of these images day to day.

When any of these stories or literature point to the act of suicide, there really aren't any revelations. All the reasons to do so are in the same in some sense (how different can our suffering really be when we're all here?), and all the reasons to not are, too. The arguments and words for the latter are particularly terrible sometimes, whether they're infused with religion or not. Offer me numbers and hotlines or points of reflection to times when I was theoretically more happy or loved that may have happened or may still come. Happiness, like everything, is a theory.

"I AM  
LIVING IN  
ONE OF THE  
MOST  
EXCITING  
YET  
FEARFUL  
TIMES..."

I'm still ridiculously young, but I'm coming to understand that in the end of all things: there is no truly no reason to not do it. These are more naive thoughts: but everyone around me would have seen it coming anyway. Like in hundreds of these narratives, I also used to find it interesting to imagine what life would be like after I died, the aftereffects of it all, and I used to find pleasure in the thought that people would miss me and missed the chance to appreciate me—or in most other times, was heartbroken by the (maybe) visceral sadness for a while, but the later healing and perhaps even understanding that would come. Now, I'm not really interested in the afterdeath scenario. I know what is likely to happen, just as I know what's likely to happen if I continue on living: that the things that happen to us come in waves, that the world is truly unjust and what we make of it, that I am living in one of the most exciting yet fearful times and am endlessly grateful for at least being born on the side of privilege.

But in the end, there's no reason to not do it. This is not because I don't understand how the people around me feel, this is not because I don't feel particularly loved now or don't believe that I could find a support system in life if I needed one.

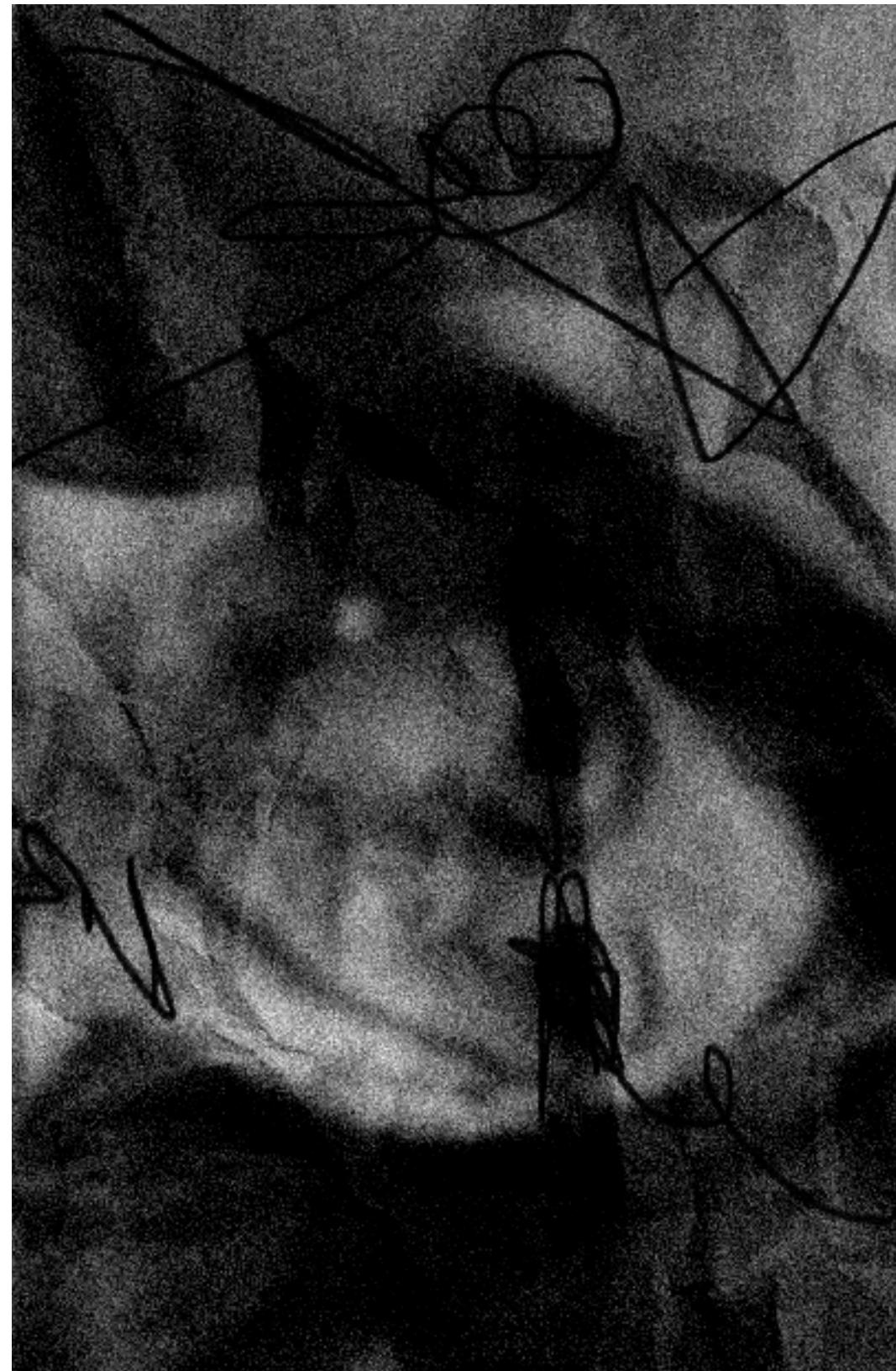
And I've talked to so many people. And I've been open about this and so, so ridiculously empty beyond anything. I am not beyond salvation: I do not see a need to be saved, rescued, or talked out of it. This is just a constant feeling that lingers whether it's the best day of my life so far (you know, when things are suddenly so good they don't feel real, or when you're just happy and satisfied with what's been going on?) or when something not-so-good happens. And I know it's not entirely rational, and so are the words of the people trying to save or trying to justify their deaths from beyond - but is anything, at all?

Most people talk about bliss before the act. A sudden shift in mood. Or the anger and the loss of complacency. Whatever I feel tonight is irrelevant. What matters is how I act.

end

A few weeks ago I blinked and three days passed right before my eyes. I remember only fragments of what I've done, opened my phone to see that I responded to absolutely nothing and have just been in a weird, catatonic state of automation. I walk alone to State House and back with self-inflicted cigarette burns to force myself to remember the night. I have never felt so desperate to connect to the world (i.e. last year of college feelings!) and the people around me, but I feel like I've been in this dream state where I'm watching myself as a spectator with little to no control.

I see this hazy blur of man, scream at them, and no matter how loud or chaotic or desperate I get, they do not listen. I'm stuck outside my body. I gasp and the body doesn't.



Everything was going so well.

It feels like whenever my life is about to enter some moment of bliss or understanding, I self-sabotage. Every good moment on my life on paper has been underscored with suffering; it's the only way I've known how to live.

The last time I saw my parents as they dropped me off to college, they grabbed my arms on College Street and asked me why I cut myself. That night, a lady and Yale alum helping me write a speech that I would give in front of 40,000 people called on the police in fear that I would kill myself. My suite was half-filled when they came in at 1AM and tried to talk me out of this nothingness. I did not speak to my parents for a semester and finished with all As, then joined them for church when I flew home that Christmas.

All the art I love turned grief into greatness. All the people I know kill parts of themselves in search of something holy. All these giants are turning to something divine because there is no hope in humanity.

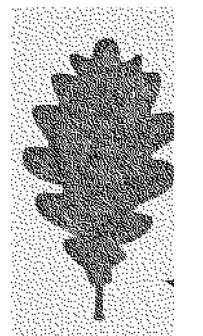
2020-03-13  
So tired

Saved two years of cash to send back home in a bad time. I've been eating one meal or none these days. I'm in school at a foreign country that is kicking us all out of our dorm rooms and I have no idea where I will be. I'm effectively homeless since I can't travel back. I'm fatigued and have just spent the past days crying and crying and wondering what has brought my life to this. I can't afford to eat, I got cut off from my jobs and can't legally find alternatives without violating my visa, I can't hauiqjshsaiajejej

I've never been this tired and so confident that I need to go before everything else just gets worse

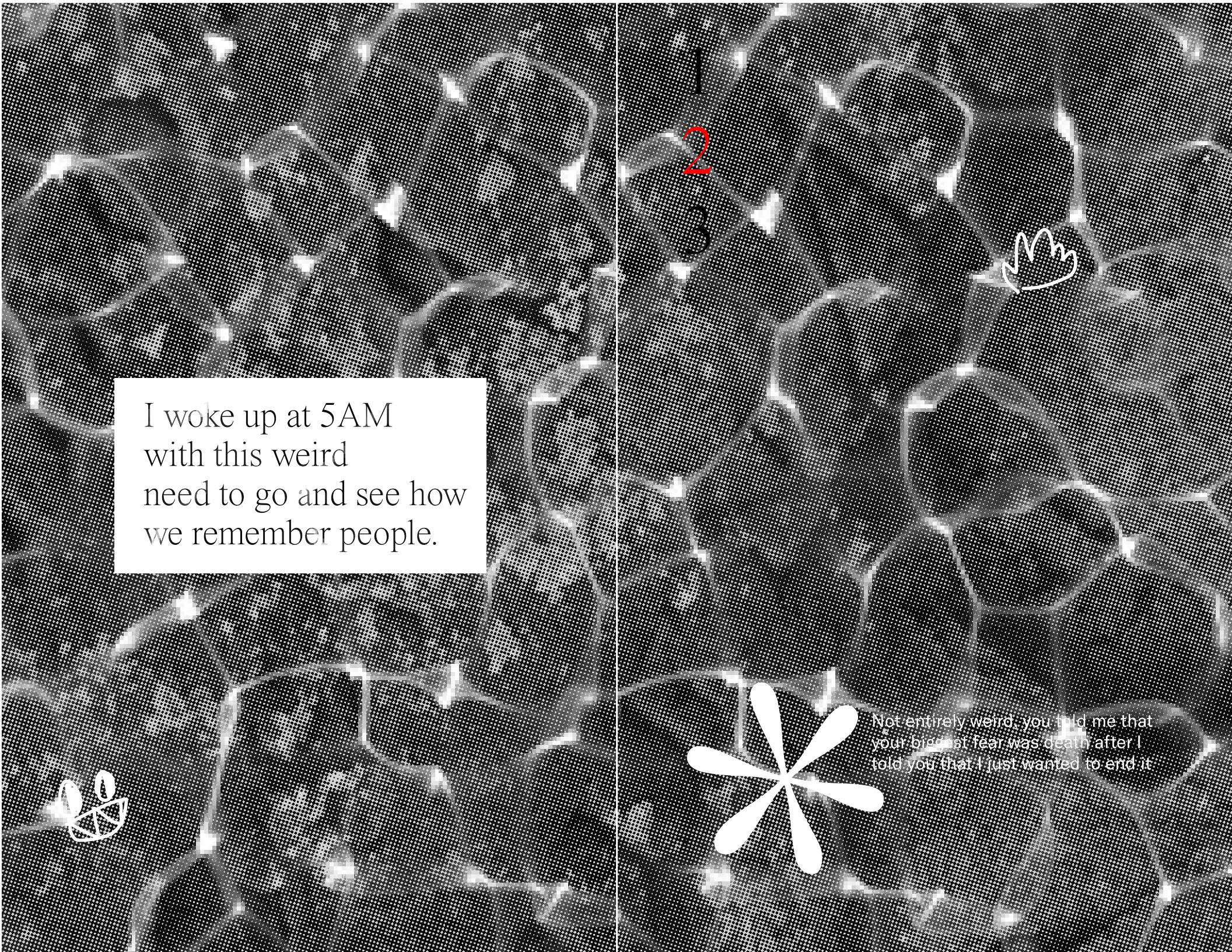
Music has been helping. My listening clock stretches every hour of the day, November playlist looking to hit a thousand songs. I love to drown out the voices and fears in my head. I see no images in my head; processing words instantaneously - so I am especially vexed by pretty lyrics. I get familiar with songs and measure how long my walk has been with ease since I know the duration of each song that has passed. I listen to music and a podcast and the voices in front of me all at once, a continuous stream that silences the worst parts of my head.

I'm trying to develop a more intentional relationship with **how** I listen. It dictates what I think is worthy getting on record, what I must write about. I have a Notes app list of songs that I absolutely **must** dance to on the streets with someone I love in the dead of the night, and my wedding playlist is of course ever-growing. I'm not sure if I'll ever reach these milestones that I've set up for myself, but the mere presence of the dream seems endlessly beautiful, waiting.



Nature has been helping. I bought a tiny field recorder in the summer that I hook up to my iPhone 7+. I go out into the beauty of New Haven at 5AM and 5PM to record the hum of the morning and the pulse of the city. When I record, I'm forced to listen closely to the beat of the world, stop the tugs on my jacket, the sonic heart as the wind envelops me and this tiny jammer. I hear the birdsong. I hear what comes after people. I hear and accept the distance between myself and every other living thing.

And my body becomes mine. And I breathe.  
I hear the sound of it – and I know it's mine.



I woke up at 5AM  
with this weird  
need to go and see how  
we remember people.

2

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M

Not entirely weird, you told me that  
your biggest fear was death after I  
told you that I just wanted to end it

all i did during Harvard-Yale was lose my mind and not step outside until the sun set and i went to a show and gave a talk stoned and i danced in my room to did you see the words and wished i was with someone or anyone at all and i scrolled through my messages and did not answer a single one and i called the suicide hotline until they made me feel worse and i almost wrote another stupid fucking u/narutothemedsobbing reddit post about how i wanted to kill myself and i stood under the light of chapel street and took in the world and i just let out a tiny scream in the midst of the nothingness around me closing me in and suffocating me...

and my heart and head and mind became one with the glorious, divine idea that loneliness is an all-devouring force out of my control - god's gift to accompany me until the end of time. and this will constantly be the most comforting and most devastating thing in the world that will follow me everywhere

2021-11-21  
06.54.57  
grove street

-00:06:00

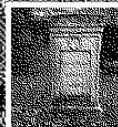
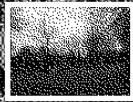
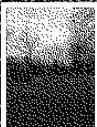
i've walked past grove street cemetery nearly every day of college yet never entered til the day after harvard-yale. the gateway to the graveyard is a straight, forward walk from my apartment - almost as if i was meant to be there sooner. senior fall, unbearably alone in one of new haven's busiest weekends, surrounded by everyone yet not quite anywhere. i watched the sun rise while leaning against a child's gravestone. i lit a candle for a mother who had two-day old flowers next to her side. i watched history before me and started to forget myself

most markers were indecipherable, eroded and lined up against the walls. of the gravestones that remained were the usual quotes about spirituality, domesticity, being, positions held in state and government (a graveyard filled with scholars and slave owners and the forgotten)

- \* sleeping til jesus comes
- \* the just shall live by faith
- \* return unto thy rest, o my soul, for the lord hath dealt bountifully with thee
- \* at rest
- \* for whom she gave her life
- \* his servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads
- \* i am a part of all that i have met
- \* lovely in face and form buoyant and bright in spirit steadfast in truth faithful in obedience and love / for i have redeemed thee i have called thee by thy name thou art mine
- \* through years of illness she retained her brightness of mind, vivacious disposition and loving interest in her friends
- \* united in their interests, they served their generation with fidelity, distinction, and honor
- \* a dear wife and loving mother, one who thought not of herself but lived for others.
- \* thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty they shall behold the land that is very far off
- \* my faith looks up to thee
- \* inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. matthew 25:40
- \* an original and inspiring teacher, a wise and skillful administrator, a generous friend
- \* she hath done him good and not evil all the days of her life
- \* blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see god
- \* give her of the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates
- \* an eminent citizen, a sound statesman, an eloquent advocate
- \* descendant of leader of american revolution
- \* until the daybreak
- \* in god is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength and my refuge is in god
- \* the heart that is constant thou keepest in perfect peace
- \* light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart
- \* the lord is my light and my salvation
- \* there's not a charm of soul or brow of all we knew and loved in thee. but lives in holier beauty now baptized in immortality
- \* quietly her life was spent in charity and righteousness. she hath fulfilled her trust
- \* friends, lovers, colleagues, soulmates
- \* like a flash of lightning a break of the wave he passed from life, to his rest in the grave
- \* thou i walk through the valley of the shadow of death. i will fear no evil: for thou art with me.
- \* what you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others. — pericles

# EPITAPHS

i recorded these epitaphs because i have a sick, and futile obsession with curating how i die and how people remember me. do you ever have that fantasy too? how would people react if you suddenly disappeared?



IMG\_0111.HEIC    IMG\_0112.HEIC    IMG\_0113.HEIC

IMG\_0114.HEIC

richard ayoade's submarine has a scene like this. oliver tate, precocious and embarrassingly narcissistic in how he takes in the world – unlikeable, burdensome, and like myself in every way. the entire film questions this desire to create fantasy and expectation rather than to live through experiences and what may come from it. my death, a parade at the world's end.

i faced this devouring feeling when staring at the list. i've largely given up on a life where my meaning is contingent on what people say about me - relationships with people. child / sister / partner / lover / soulmate / teacher / mentor / friend / acquaintance / influence. i owe no one admiration or trust. after 21 years i came to know that i must return all the love i bear, hold it dear, feel that everything i send out unto this world will find its way back to me. i need to shed all traditional expectations of return. but then, how much of this love and sense of self is predicated on production and consumption?

maybe im just young & afraid of being unlovable. i haven't been wrong about that since 16.

i poured my soul out on this desperate manifesto to try and articulate what i want to do in life / what i want to be

Untitled — Edited

Helvetica Ne... Regular 13

i think

i was put in this life to create. i was put in this life to magnify what others create around me. what they think. what they shape. what they craft. what they believe in. not to be created for or with necessarily, or represent some new movement. (and how stupid is it to think that every life has the same pull of every other.) the act of human creation necessitates a deeper longing for what our world could be, and the deepest understanding of what it currently is.

i need to lean into this which brings me joy / meaning / which i am actually good at. if i could find traces of my influence on others for the next decades to come then i would have done my job — an invisible hand that has built up some foundation for others to express themselves, their love for one another and this world, and what they resent and long to change most. i want to live through every tiny beam of creation that comes. and my being part of the way people love and have that love come visible (which feels like our eternal challenge...) is all i want.

if i build the tools in which we may love, then i shape how we love too. if i can do this for one person then i would have done it all

and i showed it to a friend who told me that this is what i have been saying for the past two years

this is what i have been believing in for the past two years

this is something i've been living for the past two years

how much of my life's value do i place on production? i've introduced myself by what i do for so long. has turning what i genuinely love into a career messed with my boundaries on making? creation is such a part of me, but most of the language i present it with is based on service.

i make this for you. i need to make things for people. i need to make things for meaning.

if i make things for myself, will i still be loved? if i make things without the desire to just be a constant stepping stone, is that valid / fine? so much of my tech journey has been unlearning the misguided notion that what we produce alone can save people but i feel like i need to save myself



i sometimes fear the creator in me misdirects me to focus on the artifacts i want to leave behind / this futile attempt at curating what would be left of me--that i will never be there to see the brief moments in which anyone at all could be witness to the life i have been living. it's why i have such a curated presence, why i obsessively check how i appear to others with little regard to the actual relationships that i have.

here's my confession

i just want to be known  
i want to be seen for the work i do  
i want to make good work  
i want to be loved whether i make work or not at all. but i want to be seen

i've been reading so many narratives on outsider art lately. the value of art skyrocketing after their artist dies. how the output of your hands becomes all the more precious when you can no longer step in and speak for it. henry darger, daniel johnston, yamashita, james hampton, wolfli, terry davis, kox. i dream of greatness but i wonder if there is a simpler way to live

i want to be seen  
i want to be loved  
i want to be looked at with attention and fondness the way i pay attention to the world  
i want to never worry about what the perfect epitaph would say because i can trust wholly in the people who love me to perfectly know me  
i want to never be the type of person afraid of displaying their whole self and beliefs, the world will cradle me  
i want to love and be loved in abandon, in ruin and i want to make new worlds with this heart and i want to die feeling more alive than ever

1

2

3



every sunday at society we sit around a bright mausoleum with shitty IPAs and tiny water bottles in hand to talk about food, love, meaning

i led session for the first time presenting the question of identity and selfhood with some fun guiding questions below

if you care to share, i would genuinely love to know your thoughts on these. i want a reintroduction. i want to know you.

- When do you feel truly yourself?
- Do you ever feel like you're simply performing a version of yourself with intent for others to see?
- When are you fine with your entire selfhood laid bare?
- How would you actually introduce yourself?
- Are you comfortable with yourself?
- Do you feel like you know yourself?
- What does 'authenticity' mean to you?
- How are you learning about yourself everyday?
- What even constitutes an identity?
- Do you like where you're heading?
- Can I come along, too?

I can relate my tattoo to this moment. Promise it's not just an excuse to talk more about myself, I will have a point. My manic email was filled with fear about the quantified self. So much of my way of 'presentation' has been trying to desperately, overtly signal who I am.

That is, hopefully girls at Yale can tell that I'm gay. That is, what I can openly wear and do here is something I waited 18 years of my life to do in the Philippines – to just be able to 'present'. (No more Catholic school girl pleated skirt and blouse, hidden underneath a baggy H&M sweater.) Having simple truths on my being feels so immensely liberating, freeing. Perhaps this is all part of how I am uncovering myself.

When I got my tattoo I felt this strange, euphoric feeling. I've been thinking about it for a couple of years now but just plunged to Keys on Kites. 10 year anniversary, 150 dollars in hand. I felt the stillness of my body and stared at my skin for an hour, suddenly so familiar with my smallness, seized to look at something I've ignored for months. When the artist started pricking my skin, he felt my breath cut itself and directed me to take in the air deeply and slowly. He has seen this reaction many times before. I swallow dry air and begin crying. I am making most visible a part of myself that I have spent the past decades repressing.

(I wrote about this earlier in the zine.) Fixed on my right ankle is some ink designed with intent for others to see, material born out of genuine desire and self. I hate the idea of performance; what I perform is me, all my lost and unknown selves are still me. I reject the idea of hiding my truth. I long to be known – selfishly, recklessly, daringly against a world that constricts.

thoughts on self



I was grasping for some clean narratives on myself to use for this essay besides the one about the tattoo (because I need to tell everybody that I got a tattoo yesterday!!)

Some revelation, one particular moment, some cute anecdote that I can repeat to all of you and some dozen other people without ever getting tired of myself and the stories I've lived - but I don't have one. This lifetime of witnessing myself has left me in the body of some unstable, shapeshifting being.

I feel like I suck at telling stories or answering simple 'how has your day been' questions because I don't know how to capture narratives. (My parents and I also had an emotional rift and very utilitarian relationship, so there was never any answering or knowing in the one meal we'd share together a week.)

I can never tell stories because I'm so absorbed in emotion, its byproducts, turning the wheel to process all the feelings that happen thereafter-- and maybe that's part of what a self is.

The processing of this same world in some entirely new formula, perhaps with no clean synthesis-- where there is little between the sacred and mundane. Could I be someone new every day, every second, every moment?

I become real when I acknowledge the parts of myself that are optically inconvenient. I become real when I know my boundaries: (I stole this from ava.substack.com xd)

Chaos is imbued in myself, but all I am is not chaos; See: I think about how much of my false self is because I have obscured parts of my identity to be easier to deal with, easier to please, easier to love. In the act of not putting up barriers and boundaries, I've lost myself. I've spent a few good years wondering how to be digestible and nice, and in the process of ignoring and editing my behavior for person-to-person, I have forgotten what my real self's boundaries are. I forget what I believe in.

I went on a date and I felt like I was nodding and nodding and doing whatever I could to ensure that this man could continue to desire me - to give him what I want. My physical body was consenting to every single thing; he asked what he could touch and checked in after every little thing but I'm not sure if I wanted anything.

I wanted to be needed. I couldn't imagine taking the role of anything else.

Where do I stop? Do I take this risk? What do I really believe in? By making myself more easily 'likable' or 'niche', have I forgotten where the boundaries have once stood?

I'm learning that some of the best growing I have yet to do comes with knowing what I can allow myself to refuse.

Can I know myself without the relationships I have made with others?

I don't believe that I necesasrily need other people to know some of me, but there are parts of myself that have certainly only ever come alive and manifested when around other people. (Not to make one of my core arguments of understanding my own selfhood my personal relativity...)

I still believe when I meet any new person--we create some world: rituals and code uniquely nurtured by us.

I wrote about the fantasy of eulogy I have. If anyone has ever dared to think about the narcissistic image of how the world would be right after you died, maybe you've thought about this too. How will you be remembered?

As a rule of thumb when interacting with people, especially people I've spent much time with, I think about this question and might change how intensely / consistently our interactions ago.

## HOW WILL YOU REMEMBER ME?

***How will you remember me?*** -- acting in urgency to nudge it towards the answer I desire.

Also: We are all obviously different selves to different people; I do not open up here the same way I do to my sectionmate, I also significantly traumadump more on my professors than I would ever do any other human being. Am I ever my real self in front of just any one person? I rather think I'm just choosing different fronts to show. Is one self truer than the other?

I don't think I alone can witness every instance of myself, or that a self can be condensed into one front.

4

Case: Resumes don't need your life story because they have a very specific professional purpose, but the Common Application was terrible because you had to communicate the nuances of your hopes and dreams right next to grades and you don't know for which reason you were insufficient.

I also want to believe that every self is no less truer than the other. How can you even capture the truth of self? There is no one logical proof.

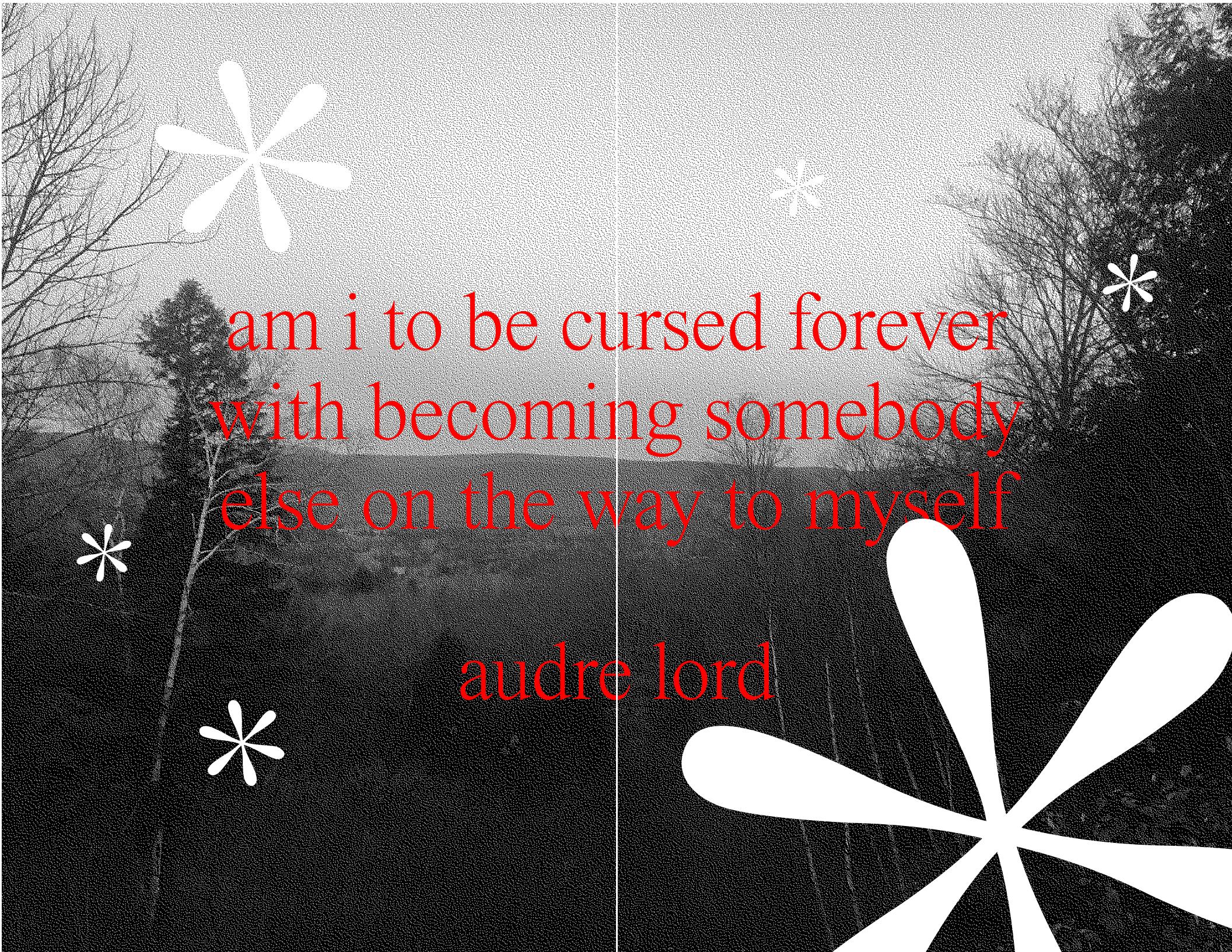
Can I know myself without the relationships I have made with others? Yes. But I would be missing all the new selves that I could be.

5

As an individual, I sometimes just feel like I'm existing and being on a constant precipice, a liminal space. I desire one thing and attain it and am nothing again; I long to know myself. One of the only clear reflections I've had from this repetitive, assaulting line of thought on such an impossible question is this: longing to know myself is the journey and the best possible conclusion. There is no final analysis, there is no cleanliness to my being.

I want to hear myself and let myself be, pay incredibly close attention to the millions of images that exist of me, and if there is one thing in this world that I can allow myself to never finish, it would be knowing me. I refuse to know my end.

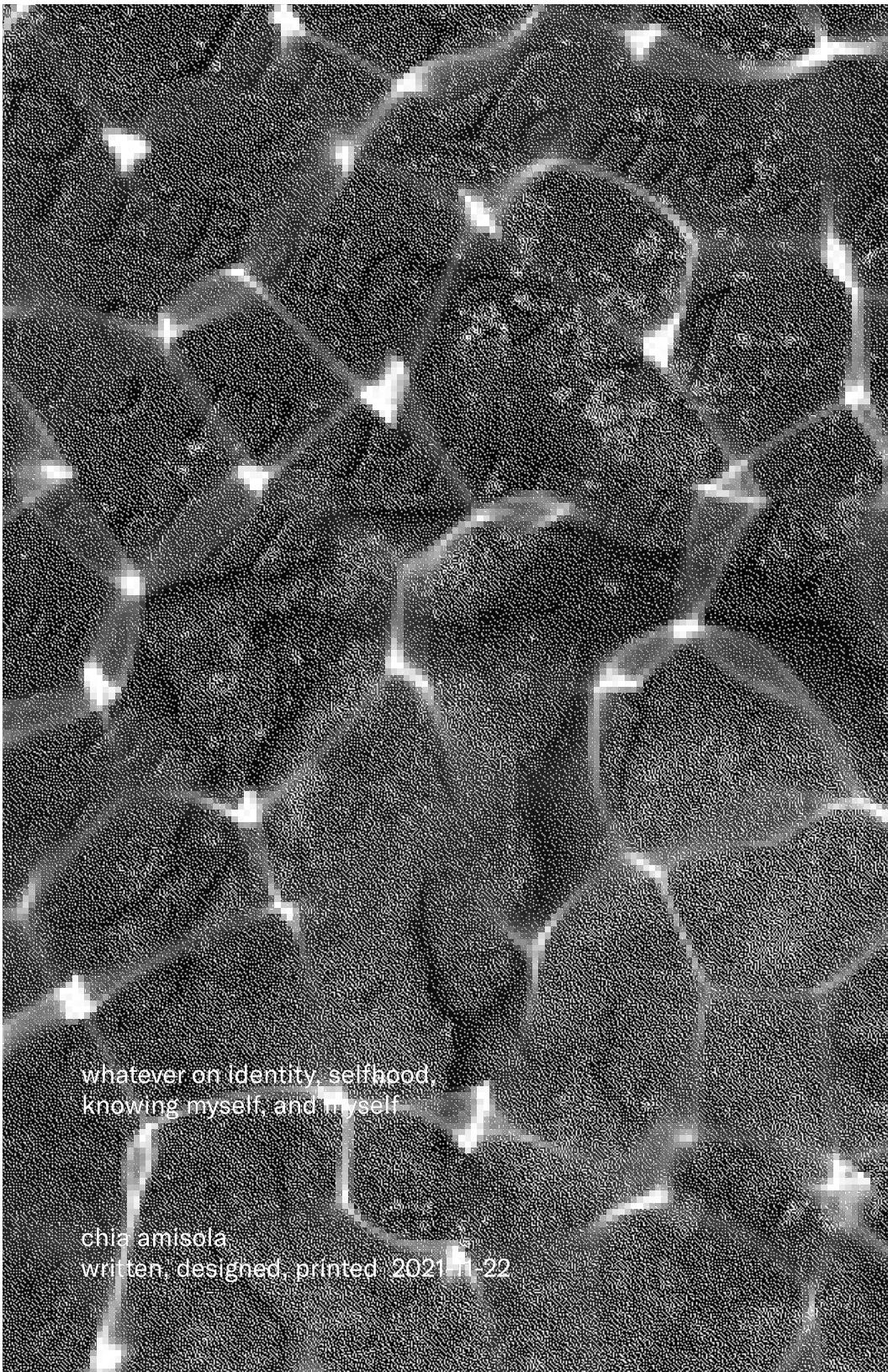
A lot of these thoughts contradict, conflict. Maybe that's also the goal.  
Yet, still, isn't it a miracle we've ended up as ourselves?



am i to be cursed forever  
with becoming somebody  
else on the way to myself

audre lord





whatever on identity, selfhood,  
knowing myself, and myself

chia amisola  
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