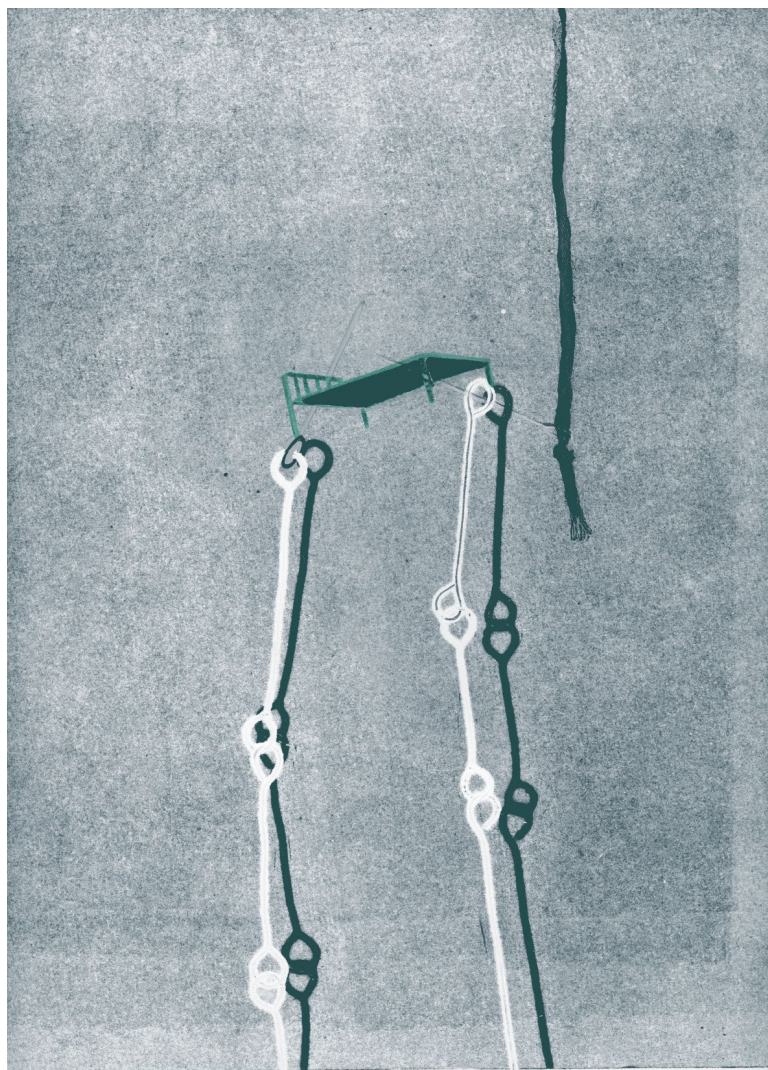


everything matters
vol 2.



Belongings

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wwmairs

type is set in FT88

School, Greybeard 18pt,

and Univers Next Pro

printed in Portland,

OR on a Risograph

MZ790u in Midnight,

Seafoam, Scarlet, Melon,

& Aqua. paper is 60lb

lettermark opaque text

and 67lfspringhill digital

vellum bristol cover.

printed in an edition of

200

© contributors and

everything matters press

2025

everythingmatters.press

ISBN: 978-1-965177-03-7

contents

1	Wobbly Bed Zichun Zhao
5	Editor's note Yo
10	In Defense of Snooping Izy Carney
11	I Keep Everything & Everything Interests Me Ronnie Winfield
12	I Keep a Sunrise in My Purse Maria Giesbrecht
13	Éloge du Chiac Disco Madeleine Léger
20	Anniversary Zoë Fenn
21	Xiao Guo Soft
22	Multimedia mulching Emma Caviness
25	What's in My Pocket MK Sullivan
27	Precious Anecdotes from Wehmpest Christoph Freimundt
32	"If not cities, what would eros build?" Matthew DeLuca

33	awesome quote shifty gnome
34	Companion Rebecca Uhlman
35	Self Acceptance Tay Padgett
36	on a hot winter's day Isabella C Pozo
37	Holy Grail Nell Kerr
38	Day & Night Vivienne Timchenko
52	Icicle Zichun Zhao

editor's note:

Belongings, Belongings

Yo

Monomundial life, for most of us, is now little more than a romantic object of the past. World-travelers, supernomads, children of the borderlands, the lot of us!—And that includes you, too, living geographically in one place.

To be a subject is to exist-in-a-world. This goes some way towards making sense of this schizophrenia, this disorder of personalities that informs my life. I haven't a clue what the scientific credentials of the concept of a multiverse are, but I know that, existentially, the word clocks the precise conditions of my life. A subject inhabiting a multiverse is by necessity as multiple in their subjectivity as the worlds they traverse.

For creatures of our flesh, belongings are matters of ambivalence, perhaps irredeemably so. Being by nature not just plural but indeterminate and ambiguous, vulnerable and contested, our

Editor's note

belongings hover between being either multiple and excessive, or ghostly and poor. After all, this is our lot: to traverse cultures, cut borders, and exist-between-worlds, as we swim and bob among the intermingling waves of the virtual and the real.

Has home become for us the four seas? Or has home been erased entirely from view? Time again I wonder whether this fractal proliferation of worlds whose flip side is an anarchic pluralization of the soul is a gift or a curse.

Heidegger says that a world just is a totality of equipment—so the pun was, indeed, always intended for us. Our belongings not only bespeak our belongings; they are the durable furnishings, the infrastructures and structures of our worlds. For this reason, accounting for our belongings is, as Good Thoreau teaches in the first chapter of his Good Book, just another way of accounting for our selves and our worlds. (Here lies a fine forgotten sense of “economy”—*oikonomia*—as the art and science of housekeeping, which, incidentally, typically requires the keeping of a book.)

I read *Walden* this summer while bogged down in a depressive air-conditioned hole, and like all Good Books, it arrived like a bolt in the blue, just in the nick of my time. There is no ground for dissent; Thoreau is right. The problem of our belongings is, in one sense, simple. Our problem

is excess, an embarrassment of riches, and the solution is just to subtract. "Some things," replies Henry David to a skeptic of his diet of bread, berries, and legumes, "are really necessities of life in some circles, the most helpless and diseased, which in others are luxuries merely, and in others still are entirely unknown." Recent studies have found that the majority of the population today consumes an unholy excess of shit, and that coprophagy has become a leading cause of the myriad bloating disorders afflicting our souls. Having forgotten how to determine what really matters and how, greedily we devour trash, while we leave the Divine Vegetable strewn like some sturdy strumpet on the streets.

Throw it away, Yo, throw it away! Abandon your false belongings—they are making you stupider and worse! Drink the morning dew and ferret some berries should you need fuel for your flesh! Make a hut of the heavens, and fashion a tunic of the clouds! Haven't you already all that you need and more? A true belonging is one that nourishes the soul; so let it carry as much meaning and importance for you as your hands and your friends; let it be the mysterious, totemic thing that it is which possesses the magical power to enroot you back home.

Editor's note

To belong is not just to be tolerated and (begrudgingly, apathetically, self-interestedly) permitted to be. To belong is, as written, to be longed for and therefore lovingly cared for, too. This, I reckon, is why the contributions to this volume have left us, the editors of Everything Matters Press, lastingly, with such big grateful smiles. For it is just such a collection of true belongings—each a singular glittering polar star holding open a whole plurality of worlds amidst these violently border-patrolled times—that our contributors have gifted us with this time.

Lo! Behold our belongings, our multiverse, our stuff and our souls! How fun, how fun! Show and Tell has always been my favorite day of the week.¹

1 My academic habits forbid me, for better or for worse, to leave my debts (an important and complicated species of belongings themselves) unaccounted. So let it be known: the notion of “world-traveling” carries a nod to Maria Lugones, while “being-in-between-worlds” comes from Marianna Ortega, though it is Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands* that for me injected these concepts with enough intuition to make them feel alive—and these three texts came to me, as a part of a syllabus, designed by my teacher Kate Withy. “Being-in-the-world” must of course be credited to Heidegger, though I have personally learned more about the concept from Merleau-Ponty than I did from Heidegger himself. The read of Thoreau’s “Economy” is credited entirely to my boy Stanley Cavell; the word “supernomad” comes to me in misremembered form from Walter Kauffman’s translation of Nietzsche’s thoughts; and top of mind, always, while writing these notes, were the examples of Zhuangzi and Thoreau—as when the latter writes, “Not till we are lost, in other words not till

we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.” And as when the former says, “今子有大树，患其无用，何不树之于无何有之乡，广莫之野，彷徨乎无为其侧，逍遥乎寝卧其下。”—Or, as Burton Watson renders it: “Now you have this big tree and you’re distressed because it’s useless. Why don’t you plant it in Not-Even-Anything Village, or the field of Broad-and-Boundless, relax and do nothing by its side, or lie down for a free and easy sleep under it?”

in defense of snooping

For my best friend Jess.

Izy Carney

If you leave me alone in your room
I will endeavor to know you better. I will
analyze your accidental piles and the things
on the wall. I'll take stock of new trinkets
postcards and concert tickets. I will slip
into your chair and concentrate on this dog-eared
book or what's out your window and how full
the ash tray is on its sill. I'll read loose paper
notes

and learn if you talk to yourself more gently these
days. I will judge what you touch the least by
the depth of its dust. I'll crawl beneath your bed
to see what messes you keep out of sight and
I'll try to find that thing you haven't told me yet.

I may even peek at the drawer of your bedside
table
and glean the frequency of new lovers. You will
come back with a scavenged snack and the stub
of a joint and believe we were apart. You are
none
the wiser that I perused this intimate gallery
and left loving you more.



Ronnie Winfield

Maria Giesbrecht

*i keep a
sunrise in my
purse*

at all times. Basically, I'm pretty good
at straining the little dry bits
out of the day. I save them for parties
and people named Becky—anyone
who deserves a little bitter. Okay,
I'm not a monster. The moment
I open my bag, the world becomes
yellow.



BOGE



CHIAC DISCO

(Or: That Time I Saw Lisa LeBlanc in DC)

Madeleine Léger

One day late in 2023, I learned that another Acadian would soon be in Washington, DC.

I moved to DC four years ago for grad school. Since then, I've been linguistically lonely. Like most other Acadians, I speak a particular kind of French—a French that most French speakers have trouble understanding (and, in some cases, tolerating). Sometimes, we call it “Chiac.” Sometimes, that doesn't really work. We don't worry too much about *le mot juste*. We just use *le mot qu'y faut*.

This weird, wacky dialect—that shows traces of English, of resistance, of our mistakes and our triumphs—is so precious to me. Only a

Acadian disco

few hundred thousand people speak it, and they're mostly concentrated on the East Coast of what is commonly called Canada. So, for four years, I've been thinking: what are the odds of finding someone else who speaks it in DC (except if "being here" includes calling me on the phone)?

Maybe another Acadian has been nearby all along. If so, they haven't seen the little flag on my keychain, or the sticker pasted to my water bottle. Or maybe they did, but they didn't want to reach out. Maybe they're just hiding somewhere I haven't looked yet.

Sometimes, especially when I'm walking in DC's more posh or touristy neighbourhoods, I hear the sounds of France or Québec. When I'm feeling really desperate, those voices almost sound homeish. But what I speak is so different. I just want it spoken back to me. I'm hungry for its sounds, its rhythms, the way it thumbs its nose at the norm.

All that to say: when I saw that Lisa LeBlanc, who is probably the most famous living Acadian, was going to play at Jammin Java, I was elated. She was coming! To DC (or, technically, to Vienna, VA)! When I announced the news to my folks back home, they couldn't believe it. I bought six tickets and invited some friends to come with me.

On the night of the show, we piled in my roommate's Ford and made our way to the venue. I wore my favourite Lisa LeBlanc t-shirt and, since I have several, I lent another to one of my friends. He wore it proudly. I couldn't help hoping some other fan would spot us, recognize that we were in the know, and offer to be my Acadian-home-away-from-home.

Lisa LeBlanc is a huge deal in Acadie—she fills the biggest concert halls we've got. But that night, the room was mostly empty. Some folks seemed to be there for music, any music. Some seemed to know the stuff from her English album. Most folks didn't seem to have an attachment one way or another and were sitting toward the back, where you could more easily get food and beer.

No one else seemed to be desperate for sounds.

A few minutes before start time, I spotted someone wearing an Acadian flag as a cape. I went up to him and asked, "Hey! Do you have Acadian ties?" And then again in what might have been our shared dialect: "Allo! T'es tu Acadien? Tu viens d'où?"

He looked at me blankly, especially when I switched to Chiac. He said that no, he wasn't Acadian at all. He was from New Jersey. But he'd worked at a summer camp in Maine a few years

Chiac disco

ago and picked up the flag as a souvenir. He was wearing the flag because it was “basically merch for this show.” I couldn’t find the words to answer him.

Soon after, the lights dimmed, and Lisa came out. To the building sounds of disco music, she stepped off the stage and danced through the bar, inviting those in the back to inch forward and form something like a crowd. Reluctantly, or perhaps just shyly, people shuffled forward.

But she didn’t need to do much coaxing once she really got going. Back onstage, she was dazzling. I mean, she was utterly phenomenal. She sparkled. My friends were wide-eyed and excited. I was ready to burst out of my skin. Par les p’tits, folks got into it. By the third song, everyone was dancing.

Sometimes, she explained what the Chiac songs were about. She sang a few English songs, too. But most of the time, she just played her music and let her words speak for themselves. She sang expressions that live in my heart, like “pets de soeurs” and “ça pas d’allure” and “au pire, on rira ensemble.” They all reverberated through the speakers and wrapped themselves in and around me. For a few seconds, I felt like I could have been in Shediac, or Bouctouche, or Grande-Digue, or Moncton, or Cap-Pelé.

When the lights eventually came up, folks started cheering for a few more songs. Rhythmically, the crowd shouted “encore”—the French word everyone says when they want another one.

Without thinking, I yelled, “Une autre!” It’s what we yell at home. Used to taking my cues at this show, my friends started yelling it with me, over and over again.

And then something beautiful happened. The stranger next to me looked over and saw we were doing something different. They leaned in and listened. Then, they looked into my eyes, a question in theirs, and practiced repeating it with me: “Une autre? Une autre! Une autre!”

Then their friends caught on and joined in, too. Others followed. Soon, dozens of folks started practicing the sounds on their tongues. “Une autre,” with the elided r, turning a DC crowd into the perfect host for an Acadian star.

She came back onstage to those sounds and sang une autre.

That night, I went to a concert hoping to hear one person speak familiar sounds; instead, a room of people I didn’t know sang my sounds back to me. They held me into them—just because they could, just because it was beautiful, just because they’d been dancing and wanted to keep going.

Selves are so radically vulnerable to others' grasps—we are held and misheld, recognized and misrecognized, *tenuis et entretenus*. But here is a truth: we can be reminded of who we are, even by folks who don't really know us yet, and even by folks wouldn't be able to fully articulate us back to us. We can learn to hear the sounds others need. We can learn to make living, breathing art with them. We can learn to coordinate our voices to make brilliant, boisterous chorales.

DC didn't ever become a home to me. But generous, lovely people with worlds of their own have learned to make new sounds. And their sayings create little pockets where I can belong.

I teach my love to say “ch't'aime,” and he does.

My roommate asks my cat, “*quisqui fait des bons choix?*” (And, when needed, sometimes scolds, “*On fait pas ça!*”)

My friends learn songs and hum the tunes and come to concerts.

Some students and teachers try to pronounce my name.

And so, little homes are carved out for me—by the generous, curious, open spirits of others. May we all try to hold each other like this.

• • •

Et toi, l'acadien(ne) que je n'ai pas encore trouvé(e): J't'e tiens, toi aussi. J'te hâle vers moi. Viens me chercher. Je t'espère. On se fabriquera des carapaces linguistiques qu'on portera ensemble. On mettra en musique les sons qu'il nous faut. On inventera des orthographes pi des projets de poèmes multilingues.

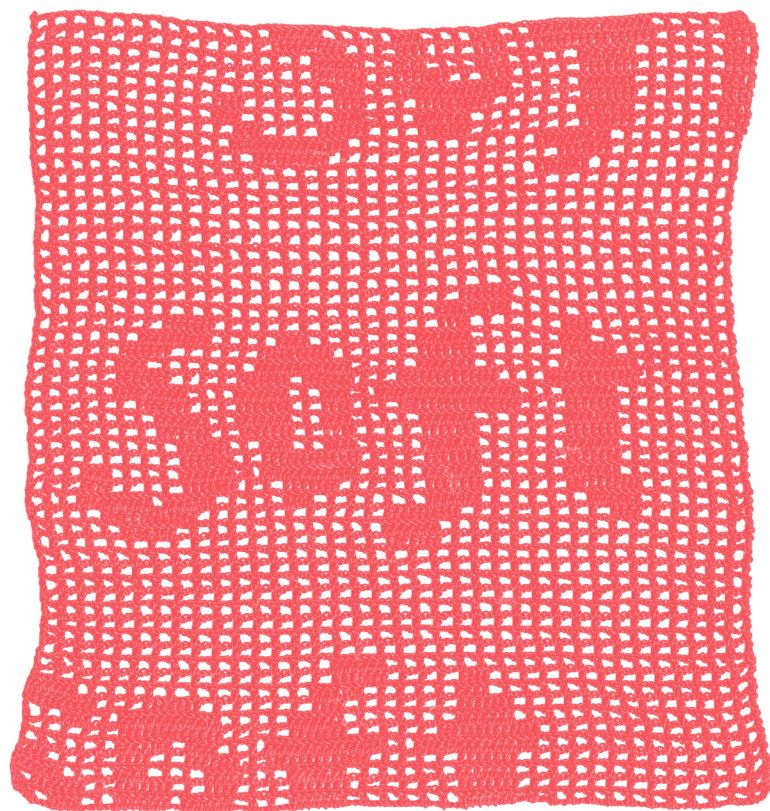
Et à tous ceux que j'connais pas encore, à tous ceux que j'reconnais pas, que j'reconnais mal: j'garderai mes yeux ouverts. I'll keep listening for you. Tiens bon, toi aussi. J'ouvre grand mes bras. Ouvre les tiens. C'est tout c'qu'on a d'besoin.¹

1 The title is a reference to Gérald LeBlanc's volume, *Éloge du chiac*, and to Lisa LeBlanc's latest album, *Chiac Disco*. I also borrow Gérald LeBlanc's images in the fifth and second last paragraphs. I take the notion of "living, breathing art" from Dalie Giroux. I borrow the language of "holding" from Hilde Lindemann, a philosopher whose work is well worth reading.

anniversary

Zoë Fenn

two graphite dots folded into a wormhole
me before and me after
a year collapsed
are you swimming
in early safety and satisfaction?
how physical is this missing
i carry you
a concept in my pocket
us then and us now



multimedia mulching:

Friendships as two pieces of art and a swing

Emma Caviness

Good morning. I am here to talk about friends. I am navigating a big hearted heartache at the loss of some friendships and I am living in the inbetween the next sense of fullness and the previous sense of fullness. Someone put it this way: look for friends who love themselves how you want to love yourself, and trust yourself to fall a little bit in love with them. My heart aches for them now.

One friendship looks like one color but is woven by many strands of blues and oranges, and raspberry and warm browns and yellow, black and white. It's dense and thick. Something happened with a few of the red strands, too much tension perhaps? A couple knots? This has made the piece complete, for now. I can hold it gently in my hands. It's warm. Oh, I see. The red strands have been snipped. No one's fault. It has to do with fine print. It's almost overlookable. But it's connected to the

heart. It feels that for now, the piece is finished. It's hard to look at and to not be growing. Growing this friendship has been at the center of my life in varying capacities for many years now. As I look at the fabric I notice gaps that occur in the round in fierce black and yellow. They add dimension and depth. Will this time create a gap in the piece, or is the piece finished? I look at my hands. I see the scar tissue from the threads passing through my hands. This weaving process has dried my hands out, left some marks. I'm not afraid of hard work, strength building. Vital callous. And I don't want to open up some of these wounds again, yet.

Making art can feel like this. It's an act of friendship. Nothing is forever. It's lonely knowing that. When you are in transit between projects, you are living in the ephemera. Silence is the closest thing; the beautiful part of this music is its nothingforeverness.

I have another friendship that feels like a swing. I am a kid in a swing and the branch is high above. The tree is in the ground and I am the swing. Me and the branch go way back. We're separated only by time. Made of the same things. Wood seat, plant rope, live oak. The swing tugs. The branch holds.

Another friendship is of pinks and yellows and peaches, orange and some purple. This one is

Multimedia mulching

tightly woven. Some stitches dropped along the way. Then a stretch of strands pulled taught and long. They end up, like guitar strands, separate and combed out. The ends held in wax. My heart aches to melt the wax and braid those strands together, even and slow. I have no control of the heat, so the wax may or may not melt. Sometimes I want to cut through the wax and scream. This is a great reason to not cut through the wax. I can play the strings of this friendship though, and there is a murder mystery soundtrack and laughter that echo out when they are plucked.

Now I'm thinking about flowers. Could I plant flowers to weave in and out of these strings? Can the thick woven piece feed, hold, give air to, support some new buds? Is the grass going to grow long and tickle the bottom of the swing in the tree's shade? It's March, the air is not cold, and the spring is pushing up daffodil greens already. A lot of friends offer themselves back up to you in the form of buds. Ideal scenario: I can't make these buds. They are of their own volition. They aren't always there but they are totally reliable. I don't have to worry about them going away because they will. And I don't have to worry about them coming back because they will.

what's in my pocket

MK Sullivan

What's in my pockets?
Why do you wanna know?
It's not much I promise
just a few loose stones
for good luck!
A penny I picked up
about a block ago
also for good luck
or maybe it's good fortune
what's the difference again?
I've also got a mechanical pencil
not sure why that's there
seems fancier than my usual activities
my lipgloss
that's for later, my darling
and, finally,
ok, promise you won't get mad

What's in my pocket

I did take the pint glass
from the pub we went to earlier
I liked the design and thought
it would look way better in
our cabinet
don't you agree?

precious anecdotes from Wehmpest

Christoph Freimundt

Dear Editor,

I grew up in a seaside town called Wehmpest, a place somewhere between where train lines vanish and where postal routes are only charted by memory. It's a real place to be sure. People from neighboring provinces pass through it all the time without knowing it.

I, on the other hand, haven't been back since I was a child, but my memory of home remains quite vivid and colorful. They tell me it's changed a lot.

Wehmpest

In Wehmpest, time folds in on itself. The few who have attempted study of our local history, lament the fragmentation and incoherence of it. This is to be expected in a place that has experienced not only innumerable repression but also many nameless tragedies. Our small anecdotes of dubious origins take on the tasks that history and politics fail to accomplish.

I am submitting these translated, precious anecdotes to honor the emotional residue of our unofficial narratives. I hope that your readers may come to esteem these vernacular truths that guided me in my younger, more reckless years of pilgrimage.

Sincerely,
Christoph Freimundt

The steeple had a cracked bell that hadn't rung in years —
until a bird flew into it at sunrise.

Our grandparents said it sounded like forgiveness.

A botanist spent a lifetime cataloging plants no one had ever seen bloom. In her will, she left instructions:

"Do not water them until I'm gone."

Christoph Freimundt

A dusty typewriter in an attic above mainstreet had one unfinished sentence stuck in its keys:

“He knew the difference between silence and—”

It had been there since 1928.

An astronomer discovered a nameless star and dedicated it to a woman he had never met.

He died before he could tell anyone.

The observatory log simply reads:

“For the daughter we always wanted.”

A clockmaker spent fifty years building a perfect timepiece, only to smash it the moment it struck midnight.

“It was never meant to control time,” he thought, “just to listen to it.”

Two strangers met on a rainy day and shared an umbrella for three blocks. They never saw each other again.

Both carried a second umbrella for the rest of their lives.

Before retiring, the old lighthouse keeper mailed 1,400 handwritten letters to ships that had passed.

Remember

Each read:

"I saw you. I hope the sea was kind."

At the train platform, a violinist played the same melody every day at 7:00 a.m. One morning he stopped.

A hundred people missed their trains.

A painter used every color but one: a small jar of blue he kept sealed for decades. At the end of his life, he opened it, painted a single stroke, and said: "That was the sky I remembered."

A child insisted the moon told him its real name every night.

He whispered it once to his mother before falling asleep.

She forgot it instantly—and cried.

A war photographer shot an entire roll of film without removing the lens cap. When asked why, he said:

"Just how I remember it."

In a silent monastery just ten minutes from town, all the clocks run ten minutes slow. There lives only one monk, who couldn't be bothered.

He says:

“There’s no instant karma.”

A worn paperback in the used bookstore
has no last page.

No one remembers where it came from.

But every reader swears they know exactly
how it ends — and none of them agree.

Every Thursday, a girl would place books
on the library desk, say “thank you,” and leave.

They were never from the collection.

One day she returned a book with your
name written inside.

"if not cities,
what would
eros build?"

Matthew DeLuca

If not cities, what would
Eros build?
Perhaps what he already builds
quite often,
like a dark galaxy of water
cupped in the hand,
a shared draught of love,
that even now is without dominance
in its expanding empire,
knit of satisfaction and ease,
past the empyrean of the known
and like a curious summer rain
enjoys these local moments
without ambition or coincidence.

3Rifty Gnome



awesome quote lolol
lolol

Companion

companion

Rebecca Uhlman

i am many beautifully
articulable things.

i am small; i fit
in the scooping basket of your arms
when i allow the interruption,
which is almost always.

i speak in perfect, bright chirps,
some that sound more like words than others,
but my language is my own secret
that i keep very well.

i am patchy in color
like an exhaustion of sky. my black & white
fur reminds you of the way light plays
in canopies of leaves, or the patterns

inside marbled rye.
i love the waterfalls of sunlight
that yellow the floorboards
& i love your lap.

i am, really, very simple.
sit down, & i will run to you.



Tay Padgett

Isabella C Pozo

on a hot
winter's
day

you pocket a wilted string
of saliva. Shared mouths

planted on heat. Ancient and new.
We can find sex in the thrift store

sales bin. And it would still cost
our fortunes. Times a pocket or two.

Nell Kerr

holy grail



დავით

ქა

ა

ჩვენი

Vivienne Timchenko

The photographs in this series, Day & Night, were taken on a trip to Tbilisi, Georgia. The contrasts and inversions represent my internal struggles on that trip, it being the first time I was able to read the language of my father, and the first time visiting Georgia without my family. This collection is a study in variance. Day becomes night, black becomes white, youth becomes age, and the ruth of winter becomes the summer sage.

P.S. Day & Night is accompanied by music:





Deda

The mother of Georgia stands watch over Tbilisi. Wine cup in one hand to welcome guests, and a sword in the other to banish enemies. Her smile reminds me of Mona Lisa's... she is observant. Happy? Angry?

Song twin: Píramde by Tamada



Don't Look Up

The title is misleading. In Tbilisi you should always look up, to catch someone on a balcony, or perhaps to see a beautiful intersection of lines.

Song twin: Panari by Melqo

Day & night



Andza

Andza is the nickname for the Tbilisi TV tower. It is a symbol of the city itself for me, night or day, it is always visible. Both a real and metaphorical guiding light, broadcasting information and light at the same time. Bizarrely large at any vantage point in the city, unless you are standing right underneath. It transforms into a scalable triangle of red and white then.

Song twin: ჯვარი მწვერალს by ნინო
მეშაბნეცხი, TVLCHRL



Babua

Babua, or the grandpa. There are two older men in the photo, but as I watched them interact, there was a clear elder amongst the two. Immersed in intimate conversation, they never noticed me. And I'm happy they didn't.

Song twin: Sulis Vardo by Niaz Disamidze,

33A

Day & night



Who Needs War?

A response to one of the many pieces of anti-war graffiti in Tbilisi. It evokes an easy answer, while being a rhetorical question that's difficult to respond, in turn, to. I don't need the war... who needs war? Governments? Dictators? Corporations? The people? Will we ever know who needs the war? Is war a necessity?

Song twin: *Unqʷəʷə ɣɣəʷə* by izmir

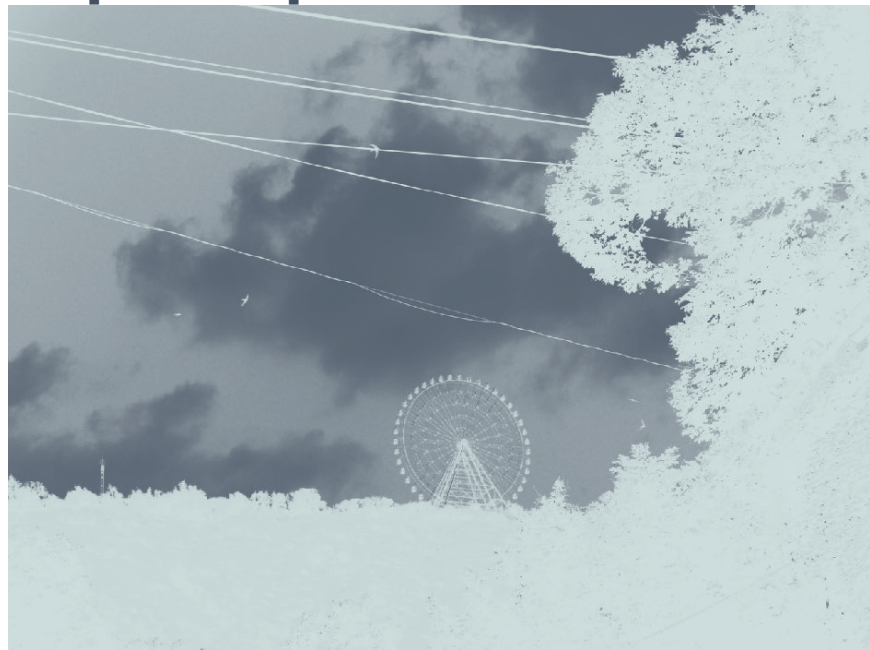


Bebia

Bebia, or the grandmother. She holds flowers in her hands, in the exact same stance one would hold two pistols. Flowers for freedom? Or firearms? I would like to think that just like Kartlis Deda, the grandmother offers you flowers if you come with kindness, as a guest to her house. The glare in her eyes suggests that should you come to her house as an enemy, you'll be met with metal, not petals.

Song twin: Tavisufleba by Quemmekh

Day & night



Mtatsminda

Standing on the tallest mountain overlooking the city, the ferris wheel is a permanent fixture, to me. It was the first ferris wheel I had ever seen, a spider's web of steel and glass. I took this photo while hiking Mtatsminda, stopping at a fork in the road. We took the path on the right leading us to the ferris wheel. The left path would have probably led us there too, but who's to say?

Song twin: A Lake of Ice (Sarajishvili) by
Nine Nutsbidze, Giorgi Gigashvili, Janngo



Garden

There is something peaceful about a garden devoid of it's usual inhabitants. The silence eagerly waits for people to return from work and school in the evening. To bring wine and food, to sing and dance under the white and red Sakartvelo flag.

Song twin: Sakartveloa by Mgzavrebi

Day & night



Night & Day

There are many stray cats and dogs in Tbilisi, yet almost all of them are skittish, tranquil, sleeping. This cat and I had a curious time, playing with each other, nearing closer and closer. Only when I took my camera out to photograph her, she pranced away. Was this photo taken in the early morning light or the dusk of a summer eve? I will adopt the mischievous and misleading nature of the cat, and leave the interpretation up to the viewer.

Song twin: Run by Killages



You Looked Up

Once you start looking up in Tbilisi, it's hard to wrestle your eyes back down to the ground. I find myself entranced by the street lights and power lines cross cutting brutalist or Moorish balconies.

Song twin: Namasa by Erekle Deisadze, Nimitta

Day & night



Construction or Destruction

I came across this window in shambles, and once again, found myself hypnotized by the lines and textures, wooden beams, carved brick, layered fabric. A man appeared in the window, wearing a bright yellow safety helmet. It was unclear in this moment if the building was being renovated or dismantled. Can anything be fully destroyed or preserved? Humanity's ego suggests that we have the ultimate say, that our actions lead to concrete consequences. Yet, night will still turn to day. With or without us. The sun always rises.

Song twin: LOBIO'91 by Qaji Todia

everything matters
vol. 2
belongings

nice to see you <3

matters

51

everything matters

