

HEART #1 LOCKET



author's note



dear readers,
my name is linn and i like to do art
of all sorts. i try to transform a piece
of myself into art every day, and i
long to connect with people over
it. i have put together this little
magazine to showcase some things
i've worked on lately, and to share
with people and perhaps even
inspire with what i've made.
i do this because i love it
but of course, i have bills to pay.
if you feel like supporting me,
that is surely possible.
however, please note that
this is completely optional.
this magazine is free to read
and enjoy. your donation is
entirely up to you!

in any case,
thank you
and enjoy.



about the magazine

as you might have noticed, this is notably deemed the first issue of heart locket magazine. but who says there can't be a second? or a third? i am interested in creating more magazines with work from lots of different sources. this could mean, you! i love looking at people's personal art, whether it be writing, photography, drawing, anything. if you have ever considered wanting to show your work to others, i would be honored to feature it. while this issue is solely my own work i would love to put out a collection of work from artists all over. whatever medium, done with whatever level of experience. if this sounds like something you're interested in, contact me with the email listed below or browse the website. we could make something awesome together.

LOVE,
♡ LINN

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weathering

this city is a maze and
the streets are full of secrets.
whispers sing and chatter flutters
when we get lost in it.
we are two souls
but we speak with one mouth.
laugh because of strangers who say
stuff we would never say out loud.
i memorize the sound
of your joy and wheezing.
those times you are so filled
to the brink with it
that it gets you weeping.
i like how you look at me with fresh eyes,
your colors shaded with perspective.
how when you regard,
you never look too long
because you know how it makes me sick.
how you see my tears and
mistake them for drops of sweat.
saying that with hard work,
that's what you get.
but i'm crying without the flair,
no blood either,
not even under my fingernails.
you don't care
and you never will
and somehow it makes me feel like
i will prevail.

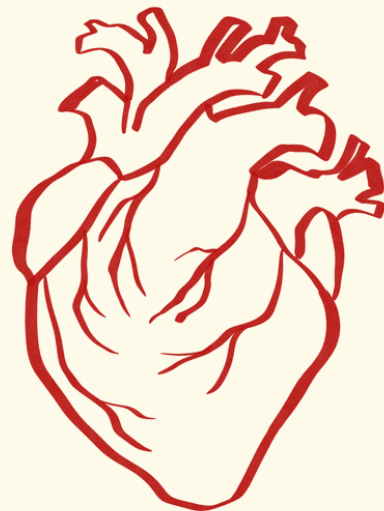
messy hair

a comic depicting misunderstandings.



surgical

love has never been enough but you still hope it eventually will be.
because through the threads of it all, love is evergreen golden.
it puts stitches in the most rough patches of stubborn skin
and it heals the rotten poor bastards with eager limbs
who drink until they can't think of anything else
but the hand they cannot ever hold anymore.
love colors faces and dresses and paints nails
it cradles scared skinny sick children close
in place of the ghosts of their parents
who sit in the ground or in the bar.
love is the last time a girl decides
to see the blood beneath her skin
in the hopes of sneaking a peek
at her hollow, shallow bones.
but it's not enough for you.
you suck it all up, that love,
but you're just a whisper
and can't see a crowd
when there's a mirror
and you cut and cut
until you reach
your fossilized
heart.



out the window

a photograph taken in a small greek home facing the sea.



how can i explain

that most of my life
was spent held down
tightly
while someone
dugged around
in my chest
and
(slowly but surely)
ripped out
my heart

that ever since
that person
is gone
and now i'm grown
i have to carry it
(my heart)
with me
everywhere i go
that it doesn't just
go back
in the ribcage
where it belongs
that it doesn't fit
not anymore
and it won't
resume beating
its regular tune
ever again

that whenever
i enter a room
someone informs me
that i'm dripping
all over the floor
making a trail
and
leaving bloodstains

star in her room

an illustration of a passionate guitar player.



there was a burning

There was a general sense of unease that night, and he did not know why. Jeff, or Jeffrey to his girlfriend, Jeffster to his college best friend who wished he was still in college, Jeffy Bear to his mother, and crafty son of a bitch to all the people that weren't in his life anymore, was invited to dinner. This was not new. Dinners happened.

He sipped from his wine. Missy was sitting across from him with her arms squeezed together uncomfortably. This wasn't what tipped him off, because Missy always looked to be in a state of mild discomfort. Her red locks cascaded over a jewel tone blouse with weird buttons, in the shapes of hearts. Jeff didn't like that. Buttons should not be shaped weirdly. Fiddling with the menu, he cleared his throat. "What should we get?" Missy studied the menu like the two of them hadn't been to this exact restaurant about a million times before.

"What should we get?" he said again.

"Jeffrey, I'm looking," she pointed out.

He tried to be patient. He finished his glass and poured himself more Chianti. He slid his shoe-encased foot up her leg and she shrugged him off. That was new. "What the hell is going on?" Jeff spat. He dropped the menu and stared at Missy's nervous face. She shot a look at the entrance, at the door, and he was reminded of his mother.

He was about twelve when his parents split. His mom sat him down in their porcelain living room, with books and greeting cards and embroidered pillows and more things. He took his favorite spot on the couch. It was the corner where there was cushion on either side of him. It was comfortable. She went on the ottoman. She smiled tightly. "Jeffy Bear," she said, with weight.

"What is it mama?" he inquired. He sat on his hands because they were shaking real silly. There was the same sense of unease that he

felt with Missy. Maybe it was the first time he ever felt it, but then that couldn't have been true because there were instances in his life when his father was screaming through the floorboards and his mother was weeping through the walls. So maybe it was just the first time he acknowledged it.

“What is it?” he asked again, and his mother glanced over to the door. Then there was an escalation. His dad came in and broke the news without even a nerve in his face twitching. That was so strange. Jeff thought that was so very strange. And suddenly his favorite spot on the couch felt like stone, hard and painful, and the bones in his body had been pulled out, and he was a limp, spooked kid with an empty heart. And his mom was crying, worst of all.

But he was at the restaurant, and not at home, even if it did feel like it. He took a big sip of his wine again. Maybe he could order some whiskey soon. Missy obsessively combed her hair with her fingers and he watched her do it until suddenly, all of it wasn't so much a mystery anymore.

John Columbus, who called himself Skippy, appeared. He was sporting a snapback and a Simpsons t-shirt even though he was nearing 40. He swaggered into the restaurant like he was invited. Jeff sat up.

“Skippy,” he said with feigned casualty, “you can't be here, you crazy asshole! You're banned, remember?”

“Unbanned last year, buddy. I think they missed me around here.” He winked at the passing-by waitress, “Isn't that right sweetheart?” But she didn't hear him.

Following Skippy was Jeff's mother.

“What in the fresh fuck is my mom doing here,” Jeff said to Missy under his breath, and she shrugged and kept looking at the menu like the Chef's Special was an eight-hundred-page long manuscript.

His mother walked with her hands clasped in a saint-like way. A white, knit poncho was draped over her shoulders, emphasizing the whole holy aspect of it all. “Aren't you happy to see me Jeffy Bear?” she said.

He got up for a hug but his mom either did not notice or did not wish to reciprocate so he sat back down.

“I am happy,” he said, “of course, I’m happy. But I’m— I’m confused. Why are you guys here?” Silence. It was uncomfortable.

“Last time I checked my birthday was 65 days ago so if this is a surprise party, you guys are a little late,” Jeff chuckled and rubbed his neck.

“Oh Jeffy Bear,” his mom smiled.

She was old now, with gray locks of hair intertwining with the black. She had wrinkles. The fact that she was old meant he was old too, he realized. He was old. There was no way to deny an objective truth like that. The waitress probably thought it when she wrote up their wine. The hostess probably thought it when she guided them to their table. Missy probably thought it, when she took off his clothes and saw his saggy torso that once used to be chiseled.

“Jeffster,” Skippy sighed, and he propped his feet up on the table, right near Missy’s sparkling water. That kind of display of casual rambunctiousness must have been why he was banned from the restaurant in the first place. “Look, this is all in good faith. We are worried about you man.”

“What?” Jeff looked at Missy, but she was vacant, looking away. They had been together for 4 years and 143 days at this point, and that was quite a feat in his life. But she was falling away. He knew that too, but he had been ignoring it for some time.

Sometimes he thought that might be his most specialized skill— ignoring things, and lingering in that bliss. The world was always pouring over him and he was an iron strainer. Only the good bits stuck. The rest went down the drain.

“Can you guys please tell me why you’re here,” Jeff asked. It was ridiculously close to a plea, and he disliked that so greatly that it made him feel like throwing up. Eating dinner was definitely not on the table anymore.

“Jeffrey,” Missy said. “Jeffrey,” like that explained it all.

He slammed his fists down. “What?!”

“You’re an alcoholic!” she screamed.

The restaurant was a little bit quieter than before, but in a subtle way. It wasn’t like a vacuum, and all the sound faded. It wasn’t like a movie, but it wasn’t unlike it either. Frankly, they were just a regular old disturbance to all the poor diners around them.

“Okay,” Skippy said, “that’s a little forward. But Jeffster, buddy, you are an honest to God dipsomaniac.”

Jeff wanted to punch him and tell him to move out of his parents’ basement. He sipped the last remnants of his wine.

“You guys are sick,” he said.

“That’s out of line,” his mom told him off, while eating a breadstick.

Jeff took a second to think. Alcoholics were dirty and sweat-stained, and they didn’t have beautiful girlfriends. He wasn’t like that. He drank one measly bottle of wine a day and occasionally he let something stronger slip down his throat and burn him from the inside. Simply because it felt good, and why should he deny himself such pleasures?

“Can we get some chicken wings over here?” Skippy said.

“Sir, please take your feet off the table,” the waitress lamented.

Jeff got up in an instant. His chair fell back and clattered on the gray tiled floor. “I can’t believe you guys set up an intervention for me,” he said through gritted teeth. Then he bolted for the entrance. Or the exit, in this case. “Take it as a compliment!” Skippy called after him.

But that was not enough to keep Jeff.

The streets were so wet. That felt appropriate. He stomped down them, making splatters, feeling the rain soak the fabric of his nice pant legs. The sky was like a black hole. The town was rowdy, but only behind walls.

There was no one out. Just him, him and the darkness.

How dare they, he thought. “They’re fucking parasites,” he mumbled to no one in particular, and he walked so fast that his knees felt like they needed to be oiled. He wanted to go home, but he shared his apartment with Missy. His childhood home was not an option either.

Jeff took on the road with heavy strides until he ended up at a familiar door. Or maybe it used to be familiar. It was there, anyways, and he took the energy to knock.

“You crafty son of a bitch,” Delphine said upon opening.

“Hey,” Jeff said, leaning against the door in a half-hearted effort to seduce her so she would let him in.

Then he was in her living room, suddenly. It was less hard to get there than he had thought it would be. He sat on a red chair and draped his arms over the maple wooden kitchen table. There were candles burning.

“What is this?” Delphine asked. She looked the same, with dark waterfall curls and a purple scoop-neck top and painful cheekbones.

“I didn’t know where else to go.”

Wasn’t that always the thing people said? Jeff watched her expression change and change and change into different variants of annoyed.

“Remember what you said to me, when we last spoke?” she hummed eventually.

He did. He tried to sift it. That never quite worked out as well as he wanted it to.

“Yes,” he simply said, because he wouldn’t have to repeat it if they both remembered.

“Look—” she told him, “I don’t like this. You, crawling back to me. I never thought I’d see you again. I think we both agreed on the same thing.”

“Yes,” he nodded. That was years ago, or so he thought. Booze made his head wacky. Delphine was a precarious person in his life because she was too good for him from the start. She had morals, and passion, and beliefs and such. She went to Third World countries to help build schools and didn’t tell anyone about it, like most people did. She gave homeless people money and made food for soup kitchens and she read philosophy books in her free time and she kept plants around even when they were dying. That was beyond Jeff. He thought about kicking people in the nose when they cut him in line, or even sometimes when they were just breathing

loudly. He hated those animal abuse commercials on television during breaks from his favorite reality shows because they made him feel bad, and that was an inconvenience to him. Never mind the poor animals. He always ignored people on the street when they distributed flyers about climate change and whatnot, pushing their grabby hands away. He had once parked in a handicap spot.

“Okay,” she said, “But you’re here now. So talk.” He was debating if he should talk. Back when he was with Delphine, in the sense that they were in romantic cahoots, when she said “Talk!”, he usually did. But he wasn’t with Delphine anymore, not in anything but the literal sense.

“Do you think I’m an alcoholic?” he blurted out. The words just tumbled right out of his mouth, between his teeth. So much for pearly gates, he thought. He had probably misunderstood that expression.

Delphine had one of those faces. It read easily. If she thought you were an alcoholic, then that would drip from the lines of her eyes and the crunch of her nose and the sway of her head. “You’re not not an alcoholic,” she said in fact. “But I thought you were okay with that.”

“Apparently it’s not up to me to be okay with it.”

“What happened?”

“I was...” he paused for dramatic effect. “I was intervened upon.”

She halted, and Jeff stared at the walls like there would be scrolls upon scrolls of answers written on them. Instead, it was just baby pictures, of a child that looked as angelic as her adult counterpart turned out to be.

“By your mother?” Delphine perked up.

“Yes. And by Skippy—”

“John Columbus.”

“—by John Columbus and by Missy.”

She walked to the kitchen and came back with two glasses of wine, which seemed inappropriate. Jeff grabbed for his, lifted it to his mouth and downed it in one go. She cocked an eyebrow at his course of action.

“Missy?” she asked then, because apparently she cared.

He clarified, “My girlfriend.”

“Right,” she nodded. Her hands tapped a steadfast rhythm on the table, one that he remembered. She had tapped it so many times when they were still in each other’s orbit. She spoke again. “And then you came here.”

“I didn’t plan on it. I just ended up here.”

“Isn’t that always how it happens?”

He let the words contaminate the air for a second, because he just didn’t know. If Jeff knew how things always happened, then none of this would matter so much. He wished for a plan sometimes. He wished he was religious, and that God was there, judging him for all the times he didn’t pray, and he should have. He wished that humans were instilled with a reason to exist, with ingrained purpose. He thought he would be happier if he were less free. “Are you upset about the intervention?” Delphine asked with her lips ghosting against the edge of the glass.

Jeff ruminated. “I don’t think they’re doing it because they actually care. They could have said something before, but none of them ever just tell me things. It always has to be this whole mysterious guessing game until it blows up. I’m so sick of that.”

“If they don’t actually care, then why are they doing it?”

Because Missy didn’t like sex anymore, and she never liked Jeff as a person in the first place. Because his mother felt like the divorce made him a worse person, and she had some lingering guilt over it. Because Skippy just wanted to be involved. There were so many reasons and narratives and all of them seemed accurate.

“Because they feel like they have to,” Jeff said instead. “Or because they want to. Maybe it makes them feel powerful.”

“There’s that peculiar speculating of yours. Do you think you’ll ever get rid of that?”

“No.”

The room felt smaller by the minute, like rooms often tended to for Jeff. There wasn’t a single person in this whole wide world that made him feel comfortable. Not a soul that made him feel like time was ticking, like he

was savoring it. There was no one. Not even Delphine, one of the prettier ghosts of his past, whose return he might have secretly relied on to make him whole finally.

“Do you think that’s just what love is?” he spoke into the rigid air. He wanted to cough his lungs out. He wanted to beg for forgiveness from whoever set up these vicious cycles for him. “Do you think love is just getting rid of every single bit you don’t like until you’ve molded someone exactly the way you want them to be? Am I just supposed to accept being the subject of intervention?”

Delphine blinked. “I think people want you to be okay.”

“Maybe I can’t be,” Jeff said instantly. “Does that mean I shouldn’t be accepted by them? I’m so over that pressure.”

A long pause occurred in which their whole past rewound between them, in flashes of broken film, and Jeff saw the fragments of what could have their future together in her eyes. If only things hadn’t gone cold, like they always did.

“I don’t have the answers for you. I didn’t then, and I don’t now,” said Delphine without a sense of remorse. She took the wine glasses into the kitchen, to the sink to rinse them out. The red wine washed away with the water. Jeff didn’t see it, but he could hear it.

He went home afterward. Missy was there.

“We have been together for five years,” she said, as a conversation opener. She stood in the middle of the room with her hands up, as if she was about to physically defend herself. The blouse was gone, and so were her skirt and pantyhose and high-heeled boots. She was in a nightgown like the ones vintage women wore. She always looked beautiful, and it hurt Jeff to think how much that didn’t matter to him at all.

“No,” he said, “Not yet.” He sat down on the couch with great effort. He reached for the bottle of Macallan that was on the coffee table. More like whiskey table, his brain helpfully provided.

“I love you,” Missy pleaded. She kneeled on the floor. Her dress moved like an ocean. He wanted to hold her but his hand was around the bottle

and that felt just a little more desirable.

“Jeffrey, I love you. I love you,” she said over and over and over again.

“You don’t love me,” he murmured. She stood up quickly.

“My god, you pitiful paranoid jerk. How can you say that?” she gasped. Then again for emphasis— “How could you say that?”

He was done. He didn’t want life without a chaser. He didn’t want to be chastised. He figured being alone was preferable.

“Go, get, I’m cutting you loose,” he said with the dismissive wave of a hand, “Since I’m such a nuisance to you.”

He didn’t look at Missy but he knew that she would be tightening her eyes, expelling air, straightening her shoulders. “You crafty son of a bitch, I’m going to my sister’s house,” she spat, her voice thick with tears.

“Bye Missy,” he said.

Then his house was just that again— a house, and a not a home. Homes were for two. Homes were for idyllic Sundays, with pancakes and ruined bedsheets and the good kind of bite marks. Homes were for love.

He drank until he couldn’t stand and then he went for the phone book. He didn’t rip it up or throw it across the room. He roamed it with fiery gusto. Consequently, he dialed. “Dad,” he said, when he was picked up.

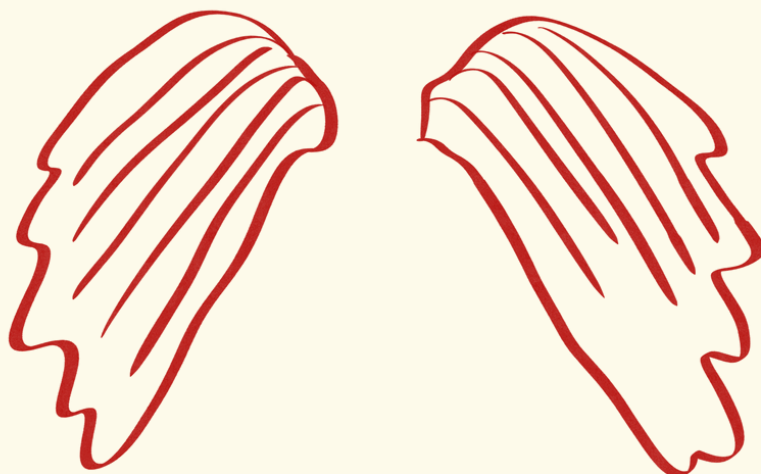
The space in between, the void in which no words were said, felt so unbearably long. Jeff heard breathing, and even that tiny sign of life made him feel like he could beg for more. He wanted so badly to just be acknowledged that even the waste of his father’s lungs would do. That carbon dioxide felt like fuel to him.

“Jeff,” his dad said, at long last.

And that was enough. Weirdly that was enough. Jeff fell over as if paralyzed, and he clutched the bottle of liquor close to his chest like it was a relic. “Dad,” he whimpered like a desperate fool. He wanted to ask a million things, to spew up a million insults. He hadn’t talked to his dad since he left. But instead he lay there, feeling known for once. He let time pass by in a quiet lull full of unspoken threads of conversation, until the line went dead.

sleep girls

an illustration of two peaceful girls sleeping.



being alone

I've sat between gentle leaves and
begged for the shadows to come alive.
Please! For once, just cradle me.
If it's the touch of death
then it is touch nonetheless.
I've ached for a killer with bloody palms
or for a ghost to pick me to haunt.
I've longed for a grave with my name
so they could sit in the pain and wish
that I was still there to see them weep.

Loneliness is a shell
and I don't care
(not anymore)
if someone picks it up
and hears the sea
or puts it down
to crush with their feet.
Now all of it just
feels the same to me.
A quiet brush of hair
or a slap in the face
and words of hate
and an embrace
or a silent stare.

What a life! I will say
multiple times a day
when I standstill or play.
when I sway or stagger.
Children, they wave
and so I've waved at
friends who are strangers
like we were familiar.
Where can I stay?
This world was made
to sit under the rays and
let them stab like a dagger.
I'd rather be crazed
not restrained, not tamed
I would rather sit in pain
if it comes, let it be there.

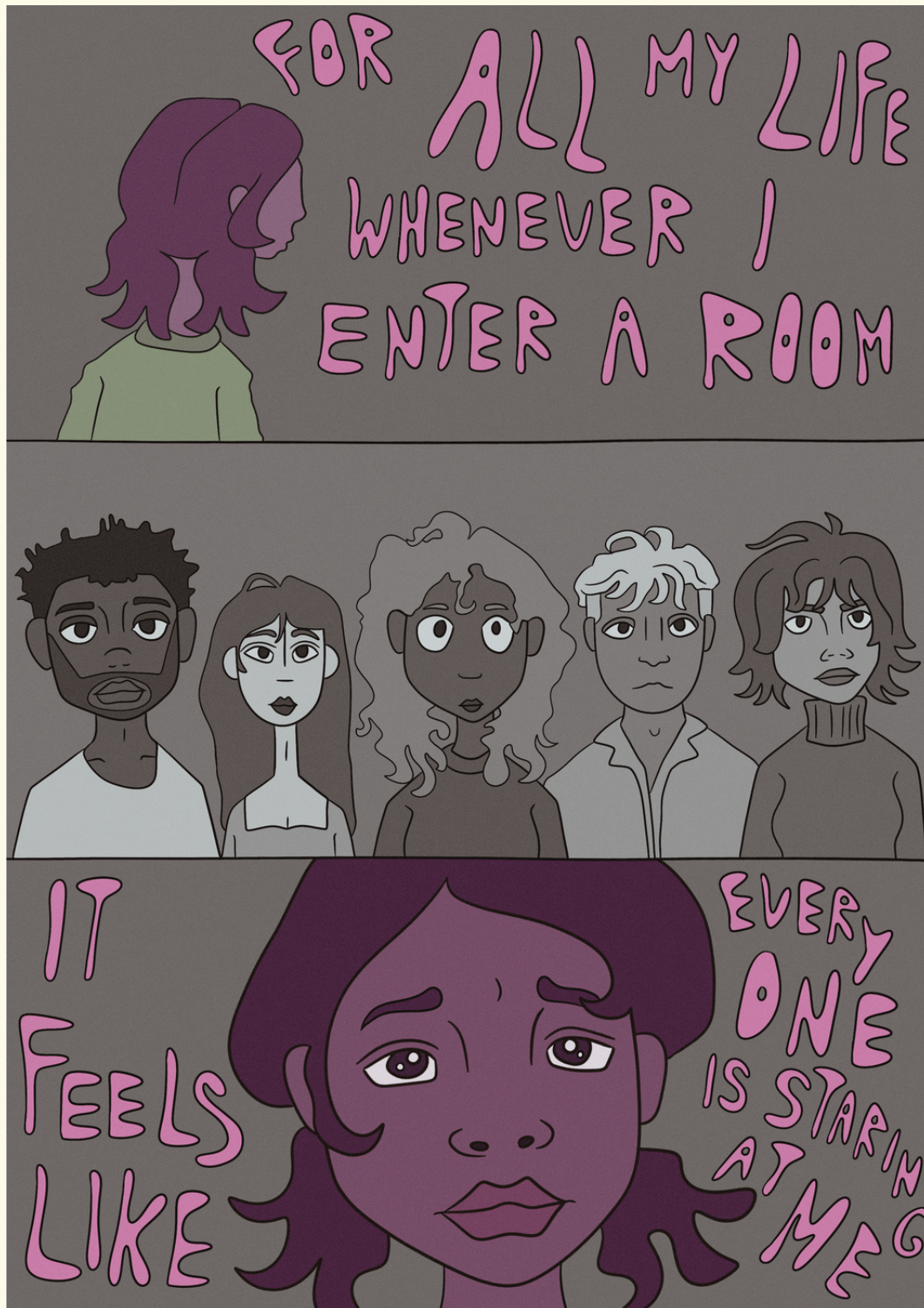
heart key (part one)

a comic about life and being perceived by others.



heart key (part two)

a comic about life and being perceived by others.



the glass

the glass broke and the floor took on
the countenance of the stars.

is it from the window in the door?
or a sliver phantom of the wars?
or a shattered thrift-store trinket?

hold the shimmering piece up to the light
and watch eagerly as the sun leaves
a million little kisses on the wall.

let it pierce your skin since it feels right
watch your blood turn into black poison
while your heart does its best to keep up.

fall onto the ground, writhe around
so you become a twisting mirrorball
and let the pain cast reflections

onto everyone else
that ever comes near you.

feel it crackle and settle and
sink under your matted bones.

let it become one with
your nerves and muscle
until you sparkle from within,

until the mirror is you,
until the wine feels

at home in your liver.



selfie

an illustration of two best friends taking a selfie .



twin flames

a photograph of a storefront window taken in los angeles.



fire

the house had always been at risk.
with exposed wires
and broken detectors
and candles left on
but you never thought it'd come to this.
when it starts burning, it's already too late.
because even if you could technically leave,
it's still your house. all your stuff is there.
the walls taught you how to love.
you grew up in this place.
when the flames etch themselves into the ceiling,
amongst nooks and marks and memories,
it feels like a new paintjob.
when they lick your skin
you turn into a piece of furniture.
and you wonder if you'd prefer this
over moss growing into the corners
and the forgotten spots
and between your knuckles.
you cling onto that alternative reality
and entertain it for a while.
because moss doesn't grow
amongst the dry bones of ash-ridden ruins.
you will never know another house but this burning one.
not that you want to.
nothing shakes you from feeling like it's yours.
other people's houses have always seemed so cold to you.
and no roof is simply not an option.

lighthouse

a photograph of a store in amsterdam filled with lamps.





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