

Career Train Wreck

Ben Macnair

(Int – A passenger, a young woman in her early twenties is at the ticket kiosk in a busy train station)

Passenger

Hello, I was wondering if you could tell me the next train that goes directly to glittering career?

Guard

Yes madam, that would be the 9.15 to Death.

Passenger

To Death?

Guard

Yes Madam. To get to Glittering Career you have to catch the train to death, and get off at Glittering Career.

Passenger

Oh, alright. How many stops is it to Glittering Career?

Guard

Well, Madam, that depends.

Passenger

What does it depend on?

Guard

Your qualifications, your experience.

Passenger

Is that all?

Guard

No, it also depends on who you know, what you know, whether or not you know where the bodies are, but most importantly, on what people think you know. What you actually know is not as important as what you can deceive people into thinking what you know.

Passenger

I had not really thought of it at all like that.

Guard

Recent graduate?

Passenger

Yes.

Guard

Good degree from a good university?

Passenger

Yes.

Guard

Good, good. You should have no trouble then. Clear complexion? Good character? Nice fully rounded character? Ability to work with a team, and on your own initiative?

Passenger

Surely those things cannot be that serious?

Guard

They are not deal breakers, but they help. Computer Skills? R.S.I?

Passenger

Yes, and no.

Guard

Good, and give it time, RSI may develop. Injured at work in an incident that was not your fault?

Passenger

No.

Guard

Good, but Carol Vorderman will be disappointed. She makes a shed-load from those adverts.

Passenger

Can we carry on? I need to make a start on getting to my glittering career.

Guard

No, and the time we spend talking is only the time that you need to waste in a low paying, soul destroying, dead end job, before you realise what you want to do, and then the irony will hit you, that you have no experience in the job that you want to do, and the only experience you have has been gleaned from the job that you are trying to escape from.

Passenger

I would just like to buy my ticket for Glittering Career.

Guard

You can't buy it here.

Passenger

Why not?

Guard

You don't pay for it all at once.

Passenger

Where do I go then?

Guard

You have to buy it on the train.

Passenger

How do I pay for it?

Guard

With parts of your soul.



Passenger

How many stops?

Guard

I think it is six. Let me just look for you. Yes it is six. You go through Euphoria, yes I have a job and some money, through This is dull, and then on to, Stop it Accounts, you make me laugh, now I will have to run until I get a Stitch, and then onto Promotion opportunity lost through Nepotism, onto There must be more to life than this, and then through One last year, and then if the trains are running correctly it is Glittering Career.

Passenger

And if the trains are not running correctly?

Guard

Then you have to go onto Is it too late now to try something else?. If you miss that you will end up in I really wish I had tried something else, and then Death.

Passenger

Thank you, you have been very helpful.

Guard

Don't mention it, good luck. Next

(Another Passenger of unknown gender goes up to the window)

Passenger 2

Hello, I would like a single ticket to amazing sex life please.

Guard

Are you going as Male or Female?

Passenger II

I had not quite decided yet, what is the difference?

Guard

If you go as a Male, you can leave on the next train and it won't take you that long.

Passenger II

If I go as a female?

Guard

You may never get there.

Passenger II

I will have to think about it. Bye.

Guard

Next.

new woman

M. S. Blues

they say you need to hit rock bottom
whatever that is – for me, it's suicide
the handshake with death i made,
until the spirits of my ancestors
infiltrated death's layer, saving
me from what would've been my
biggest regret.

in order to change. i never agreed with
that, as i believed hitting rock bottom
only sealed your willingness to continue
living a bad *vida*, staying in the wastelands
of the wretched and the damned.

but, i was proved wrong by experience. literal,
brutal experience.

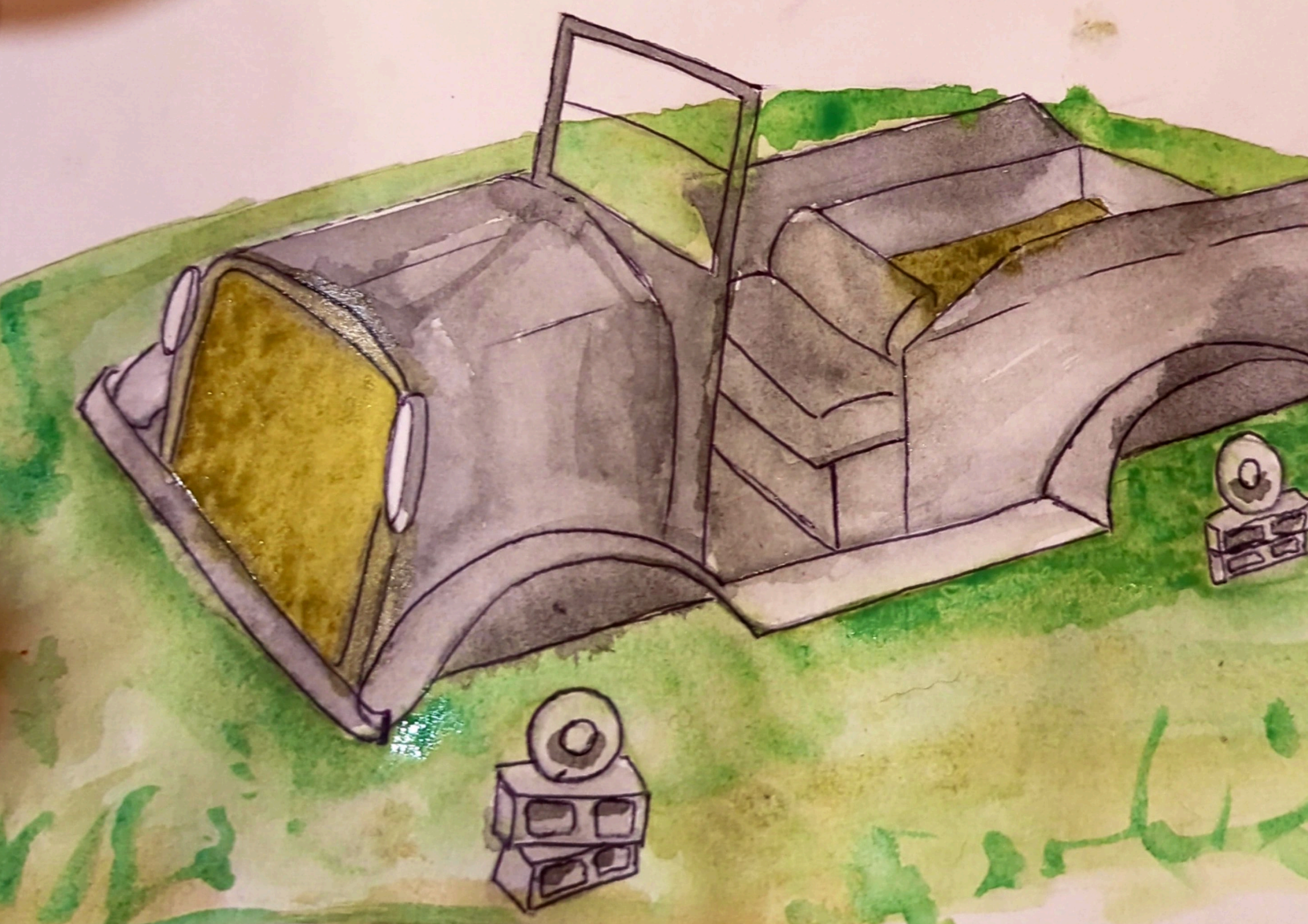
as i sat on the staircase, in shame and in tears,
defined by sweat, snot, and uncertainty – my
rock bottom was apparent – because i had an
epiphany that scorched my eyes with more tears.

if i don't get my shit together, i'm going to die soon.
the reaper will triumph, my humanity will dissolve,
my mind will be crushed, all of the beautiful prospects
awaiting me will perish in the ground, and my
heart will be in a case, as a trophy for the underworld.

as mother joins me in the night, chastising me for my
actions (*you know, the ol' running away and suicidal*
thoughts), i blink through my waterfalls.

it wasn't *her* that made me a new woman that day.

it was reaching rock bottom.



Clear

Delphine Gauthier-Georgakopoulos

It was a Monday morning.

You browsed through the local news, sipping your cappuccino, when you came across an ad; the auction of a house in your neighbourhood.

You clicked and spat your coffee through your nose.

A picture, an address, a blueprint, a price.

Your house.

There was a debt.

It wasn't yours, really; you inherited it. Families, you know. But it did not matter to the bank.

You got a lawyer.

The auction got cancelled, but the debt remained.

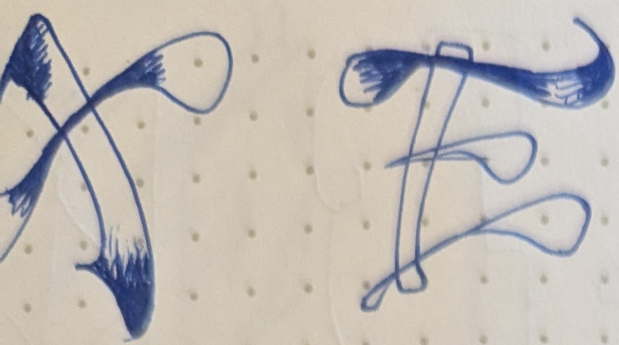
It may not have been yours, but became yours to repay.

You settled into a new routine; checking the auction site every Monday morning at 9 am sharp and shouting 'clear' because your house wasn't listed—as if it were your heart being defibrillated.

It was a Monday morning.

The doctor shouted 'Clear' before pressing the pads on your chest.

Your home was your heart, after all.



I Heard there
was cake



on americans

airport

they eat too much
and it hurts them
but they keep doing it
because the pleasure
and because they are bored.



waiting for the tincture to hit

Stephen Ground

while watching
the

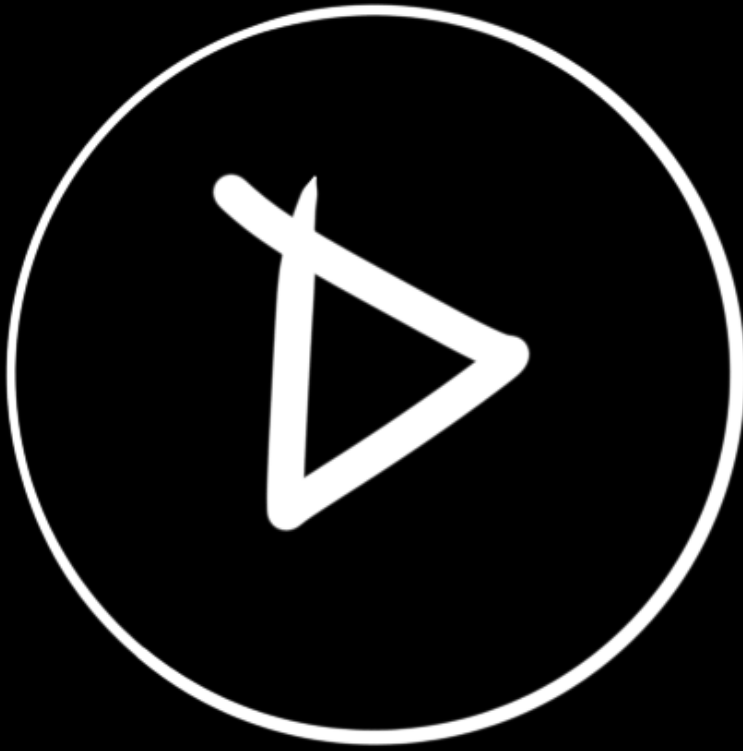
millstone
spin on

the ceiling,
grinding

swollen
guts

to
mealy lumps

of bitter
grist.



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Art by Matt Byun

Page 01: Directions
Page 02: Held by Chains
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Page 11: Conversation

Art by Tom

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Page 10: 100001524

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“waiting for the tincture to hit” by Stephen Ground

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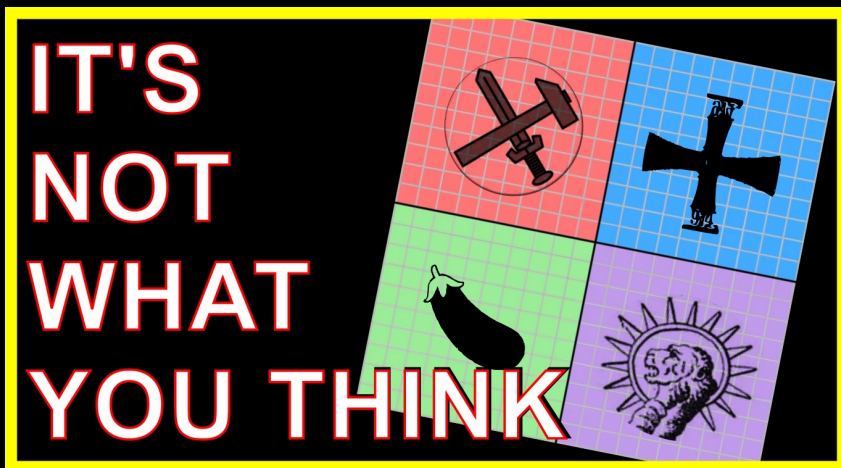
ISSUE138 edited by Alex Prestia

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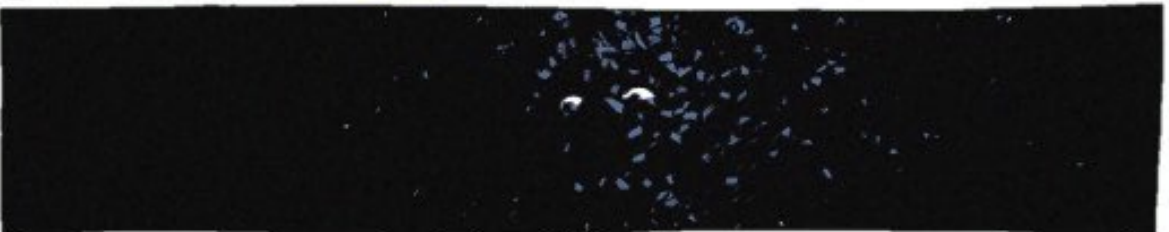
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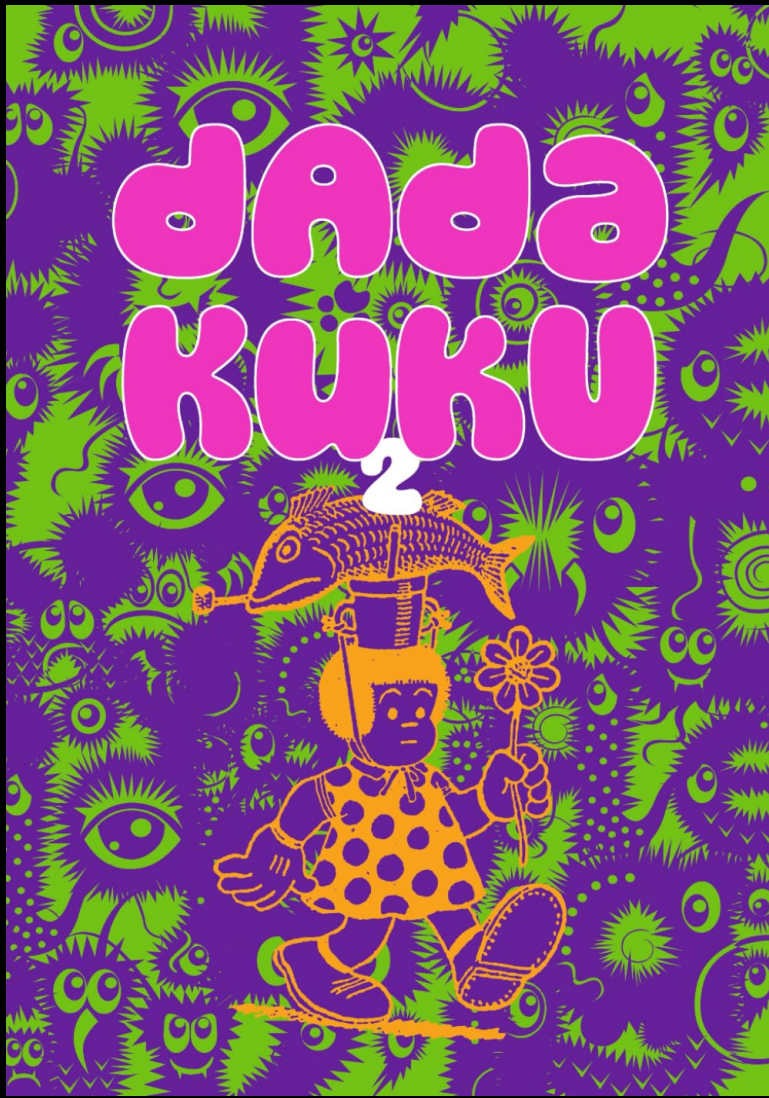


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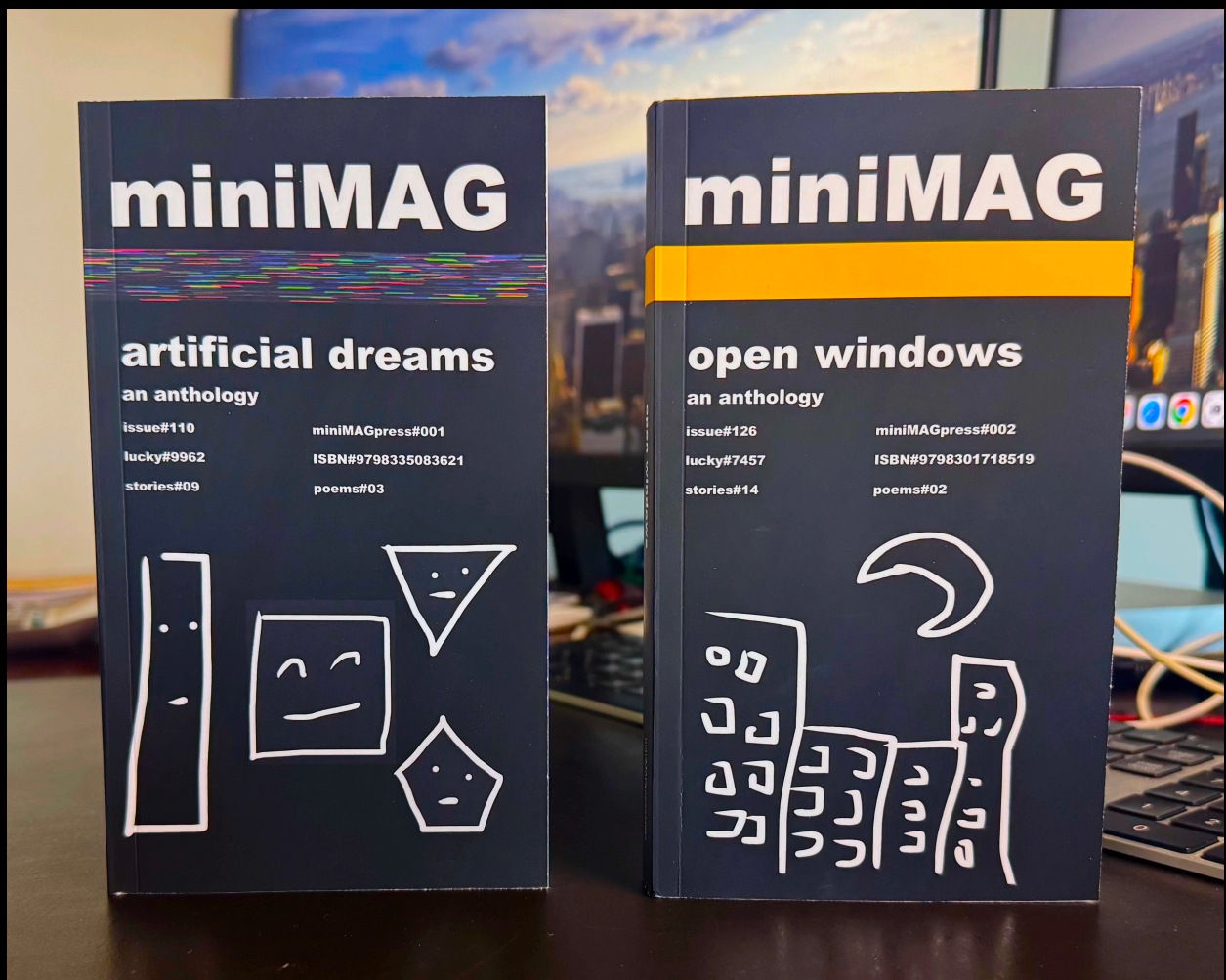
WARNING...



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