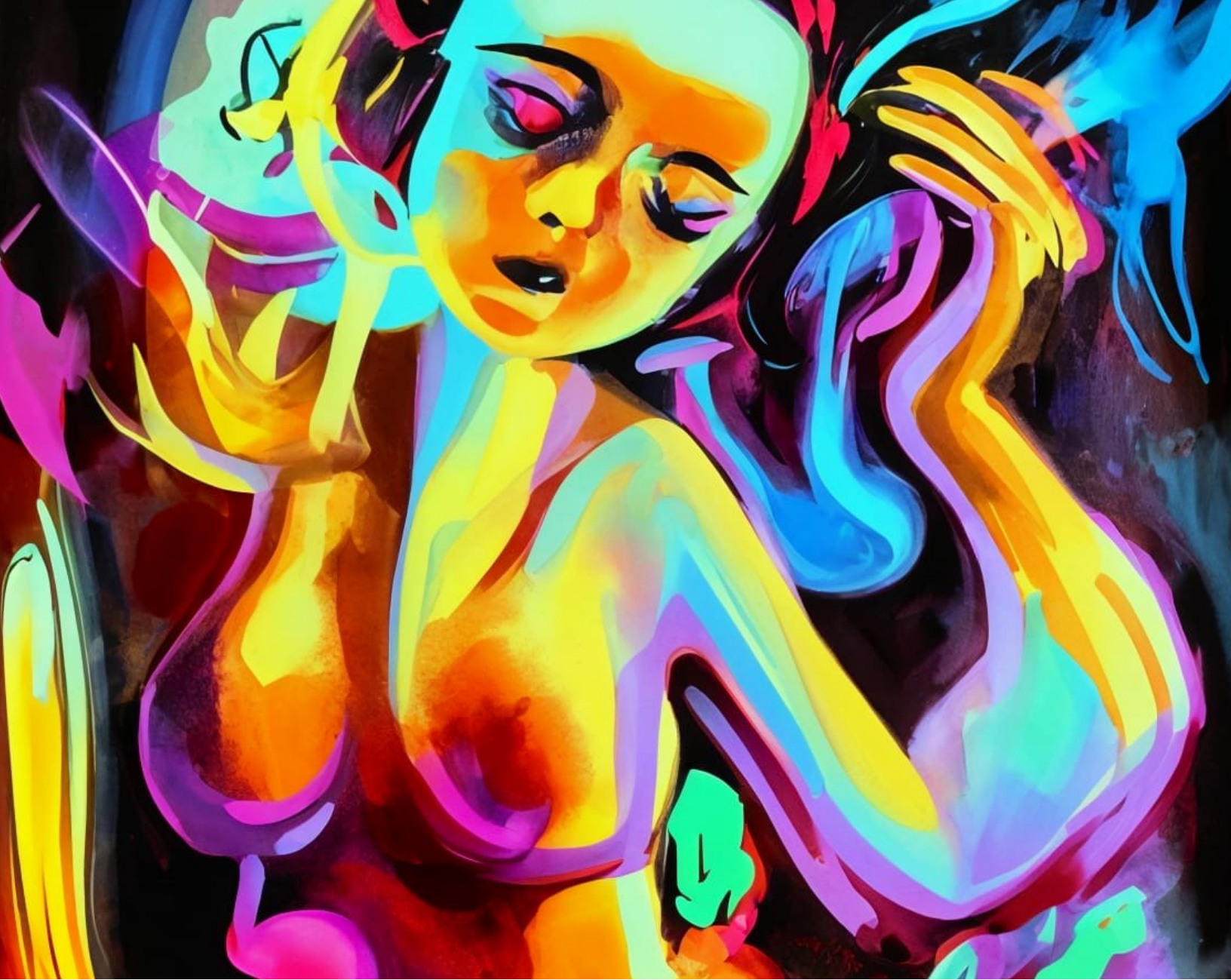


miniMAG

issue137
hyperbreakup





GLOCK STYLE

John Grey

She went to bed
with a man
and a gun on
the nightstand.

During sex,
her right eye didn't
stray far from that pistol.

He could have been
a cop
or a gangster
or just a guy
who didn't feel
safe in the world.

But he was mostly a gun.
Sadly, with six
empty chambers.



A Wrong Light Brought Me Out

Kyle E. Miller

I don't know what happened. The sun began torturing the moon. Everything visible was scraped with light. The peonies dripped petals in the hedge, and my mind told me everything was directly adjacent to its normal orientation. I had no family to drag me back inside away from the sky. My apartment sat empty. There was a book called *Process and Reality* on the shelf, there was an alocasia with spider mites. It's not quite true. I had some family left, but they were distant and insular, withered by their own self-absorption. Having turned inward, they had nothing to occupy their mouths except their own problems. I lay paralyzed in the grass. The house made repeated gurgling noises, and water fell out of a pipe on the side. There were other people living there. I had two neighbors. The apartments were small and connected by holes in the walls. I could sometimes smell smoke. I didn't want to be in love with men anymore.

A clover trembled in the breath leaving my nose. The light had me pinned on the front lawn. Loving men had changed me. I saw, through trial and error, that I wasn't interested in seizing the vibrating object of love, but rather in manufacturing episodes of pursuit. I wanted to be alive when it was happening, but not before, after, or between. I hated what it looked like from the outside. My family never made eye contact.

A man came walking down the sidewalk, his face, like everything, scraped with light. I saw him before my eyes did. He looked at me bent in the grass and stopped. "What's happening?" he said, looking at the sky.

I bolted upright. The uncertainty of his question and the insecurity in his voice gave me absurd strength. His gestures were soaked in self-pity, and I felt vigorous in his anxious presence. My purpose began to accumulate around his loss. This vulnerability, a great need for a hand or mountain. The air smelled like peonies. He looked up at the sky again. "What is this?"

Was he weak in the light? Beautiful? Incomplete? He looked at me wonderingly, and I imagined his face in a softer light. "The first law," I said. "Someone broke it." He didn't understand. "Don't you know the



three laws?" Laws of what, he wondered. No man is this innocent. A car drove by in the wrong lane, its driver trying to look at the sky. "What are you talking about?" the man asked again. He was cute in the light. He was troubled and ugly. I could love just about any man, but it put me farther away from everything else. I did it anyway, knowing something of the cost. It wasn't a choice.

I began to tell him about the three laws. "Bring two teenage boys to the Face every 48 hours. Always walk away from Night-holes. Don't touch the Orchestra unless-"

"Enough!" the man screamed. He shook his head vigorously, giving me a headache. He bent down in the grass. "I'm sorry," I said. I got down with him. His sadness filled my abdomen with flowers that were opening. "It's okay." He put his hands in my lap. His face was in the grass. His lips pitied the worms. "It's okay," I said. "You're a good boy." The comfort I offered or the sadness he presented made me recklessly horny. That's what the longing is for. The cavity. I could be okay with this tableau until something happened to change it. Let them starve in waiting for a crescendo. I've had enough of limitations. The world was made and unmade by people who enforce rules for no other reason than that they are rules. "You haven't done anything wrong," I told him. His hands held a part of me.

I was aware of the fat, pink, evil flowers. Loving men, you don't even have to try to hide, but no one knows what it's like to love a woman either. Everything is stitched together with nothing and governed by a puzzle. The mask is presented because we can understand the placement of holes on a mask, but looking further would be like asking us to take the second letter of every sentence and arrange it into a new one that tells us everything about reality without knowing the rules by which to arrange them. I couldn't just tell my mother that I was falling in love with men. That's not enough. She would have to understand that my family feels small to me because they don't know who I am.

The man whose hands I was in whined. He smelled good, like aged sweat under arms. His legs imprinted a shape in the grass that remained when he bent into another shape. I hated childhood, but this was worse. The best years were lost between, when memories were so bright they became invisible against the backdrop of the reality of having loved so many men in such a short time. "Please tell me what's happening," the man whined. He could be imagined to be beautiful. He could be delightful. "Shhh, it's okay baby." His confusion or my ability to disrupt it made me think about the future. I imagined him bringing in the cows. We were in Spain. I stood at the door with honey in my mouth.

My dream was interrupted. The third dimension of things was peeled off from the solidity of the others. We experienced it together, an unbelievable pressure. The agony of air, water, and blood filched from us. My soft lungs deleted. Our hands were the pages of books. I think the puzzle that governed us hated that we weren't intoxicated by the little freedom we had. Someone had broken another law. "It's okay," I told him, "you're a good boy."

hurricane season

Kayla Donohue

they watched the spiral
salivating
a trickle then the levees broke
boarded up and blocked doors
whiplash within the eye
as you bled out

they sat at home
ordered some dinner
and waited for the news to break



my garden

Kayla Donohue

my garden is dying
because yours flourishes
my flowers wilt and gasp
just to be seen
or to brush your hand against them
you don't even need to stop and take them in
just a glance
before they're gone
your garden is beautiful
i admire it every day
could you spare a drop of water?



happy birthday

Trinity Branscome

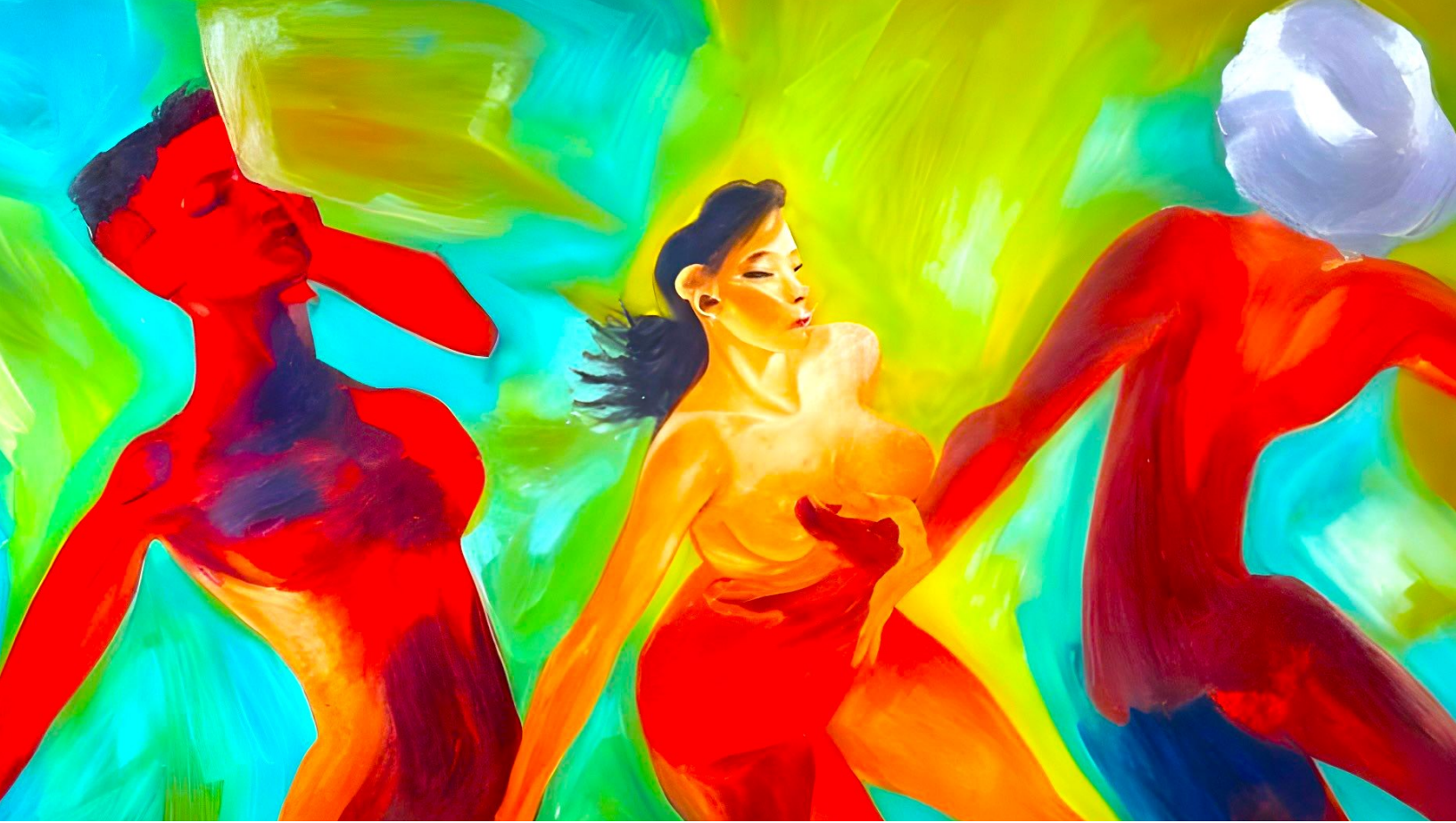
I woke up randomly at one this morning. It's your birthday today. You're turning twenty-three this year. And for the first time since the last time, I don't care. For the first time in a long time I don't care. It's not that I hate you or that you make me sick like you used to. There's a strange feeling of apathy that's unfamiliar yet welcome.

You never did love me. You said it with your whole heart and yet you never showed it. Not on your face or in your actions. You may have thought you did, but I think it was something else. A need to bond with something outside yourself. A need to be understood. A need to be not just liked but chosen by someone else. And I was more than willing to be that for you.

I remember being so excited once to see you at a football game. But as I stood there underneath the stadium lights face to face with all of our broken promises, I couldn't help but wonder why. Why would you call me for hours on end? Why would you trade poetry with me? Why would you let me in on your secrets and stories of your life? Why would you be there for me at my lowest? Why would you tell me you'd marry me one day, when the time was right? Why would you tell me it was really me you wanted? Why did you leave when I needed you most? And why did you come back just as I was letting go?

I can't pretend to want to know the answers anymore. Not when I have my own life that doesn't revolve around you. Not when I have my own friends that don't know your face. Not when I've come so far and worked so hard to not feel bad for not reaching out on your birthday.

I don't know why you did what you did. And I'm not going to ask. But if there's one thing you get this year, I hope it's the feeling of being alone with the consequences of your actions and the knowledge that I'm doing fine on my own. And I hope you are too.



Wild Honey

Michael Tyler

"Brian Wilson is the most underrated artist of the twentieth century ..." I am telling Sam as she leans forward to light yet another cigarette from a lighter that once was mine. "Can you hear this! Are you listening?"

"Yes." Puff. "Listening, I'm listening."

"Really listening?"

"To what? To you?"

"No, to the stereo ... the stereo!" I wail as one hand rises from steering wheel to sky. "So pure... so... so fuckin pure!"

The horizon teases as brush and foliage sweep past, the center line blurs as harmonies rise and the Beach Boys take over and Sam offers another line off a delicate wrist as her peace sign bracelet swings ever so gently with the beat.

"And he's deaf! Well, half deaf. His father was a real asshole who once gave him a beating that left him deaf in one ear," sniff, "so he had to record in mono... do you understand!"

"Yes, I understand ..."

"And so," sniff, "and so he recorded in mono and the sound engineer had to flip it to stereo and still .. you hear that? You hear that!"

"I hear it, I hear it ... the guy's a fuckin genius already!"

Sam punches my shoulder and mumbles '*Sweet Jesus*' as she exhales and we speed toward a destination that speaks of endless possibility and we smile and we laugh as Brian Wilson guides the way.

And yet as we arrive James is leant against the bent and buckled railing of a porch in need of repair and he receives us with half-hearted wave more warning than welcome.

As we exit the car Sam bites her lip and we enter to find James' warning well advised. The shades are drawn and yet this seems detail at best as there is morbidity in the air that no amount of light can repel. The house appears raided by relatives from far and wide, the remaining piece of furniture a single sofa draped in soiled white cloth.

"This is the 'formerly' living room," James deadpans as he points to the spot next to the sofa where his Aunt was discovered.

Sam crosses herself as James removes a hip flask from his rear jean pocket, lies in front of a laptop and begins to tap at the keys.

"This was a favourite Aunt?" I ask. "So how was the funeral?"

"I didn't go to the funeral, I had exams," he says.

"But you didn't go to any of your exams ..."

"Yeah, but when she died I hadn't planned that far ahead," he replies and then, "She suffered from Anhedonia. That's what my Mom used to tell me every time we came to visit. Mom would remind me that '*Great Aunt Dee suffered from Anhedonia, so I should keep that in mind*'. And it wasn't till I was a teenager I realized Mom was talking shit."

With this he reaches for the flask.

"Anhedonia's the inability to derive pleasure ... it was my Mom's way of getting back at Dee for all the grief she'd caused."

James tips his head and swallows twice. "Shit, she wasn't a sociopath, if anything she was the last of the puritans. At the end of the day Dee simply wasn't afraid to bring others down to her level, and for that I figure she wasn't so bad."

And so Sam and I head for supplies while James promises to make an effort, if only for an evening.

Sam and I search streets of abandoned homes and lawns waist-high. The odd local leans against a wall, an elderly couple inch along a sidewalk.

We park outside a 7-Eleven and as if on cue a stray approaches. Sam bends to pat its head before recoiling at the dog's condition, all skin and bone, matted fur, tongue lolled to one side.

Sam grabs my arm and as we enter the store the stray lays down and observes as we advance.

We grab two bottles of Jack and a bottle of Rum and approach the register beneath the gaze of a man with a beard to his belly and knuckle tattoos. Sam pays no mind and points to the dog outside.

"That dog? That damn dog's been hanging round for weeks Ma'am."

There is a definite emphasis on 'Ma'am'.

"County's supposed to take care of it," the Beard continues, "but damned if I know when they'll pull their thumbs out long enough ..."

"The dog's been here for weeks?"

"Uh huh."

"And no-one's looking out for it?"

"Nuh."

"So if she's ..."

"Don't know if it's a he nor she nor fiddle-dee-dee," interrupts the Beard, "but I'll be goddamned if I'm gonna go anywhere near a dog that far gone ... bitch like that'd be more than happy to bite you on the ass and pass on all sorts of devil and disease." With this he takes a sip of coffee from a polystyrene cup the size of a thermos.

"So you're just going to ..."

"Ma'am, that'll be seventy three dollars and thirty five cents."

"But ..."

"Ma'am, that'll be seventy three dollars and thirty five cents."

"And this ..." says Sam reaching for some beef jerky, "for the dog."

As Sam pays I return to the car, the dog is nowhere to be seen. Sam places the meat on the asphalt as I start the engine.

"He's gone." I say.

"He's here somewhere. He's just learned his place, that's all."

"We should close the windows," Sam says as the first drops fall and I take a step before realizing the windows are already closed as Aunt Dee wouldn't have it any other way.

Sam and I have returned and the weather has turned and James has failed to move an inch. He briefly looks up from the glow of the computer screen, flicks a finger, music begins and "We should stay inside," says James as the rain grows louder.

"We should stay inside," repeats Sam.

"We should ..." I begin as I turn toward the porch, the roof drum-rolls as shower turns to downpour.

I take a breath as a candy wrapper makes its way down the road ahead. James appears and mumbles "the inability to derive pleasure" as he fashions a line on the railing and I lean forward and the coke is

white and pure and Sam removes her blouse as 'Sexy Sadie' fills the air and she spins with arms outspread and her bra is a blur and her shoulders are bare and the notes are high and fine and



And I'm lying with my back to the wall as James regrets and Sam revels and so much more can be learned from the events of the night before than I am yet ready to admit.

James kneels, fingers gripped to toilet rim, feet rising as he lurches forward.

Each howl echoes down the hall.

Sam stretches atop soiled white sheet, toes curl and hands rise to the ceiling as fingers flicker toward stars known to Sam and Sam alone.

And as I step outside I remember how Sam leaned in, I recall the warmth of her lips and the slight tempt of her tongue and the way she rubbed her nose as she withdrew and how she returned to my lips and

we

are

naked

and

Sam is above and we come together as Lennon cries and I close my eyes as Sam rolls aside and I smile and open my eyes to witness Sam and James and I return to the darkness and the music and years go by and I feel a hand on my shoulder as Sam returns and throughout my eyes remain closed as while they are closed this night must come to an end.

"It's sad in a way," says Sam as she leans against the railing and offers a light.

"What's sad?" I reply as I accept and inhale.

"James... he's got everything ahead of him and yet he's knee-deep in all this."

There is silence between us, and then, "James is one of the last people you should feel pity toward."

"He has his problems."

"James has the problems of any rich mother's son."

"I love it when people live down to your expectations."

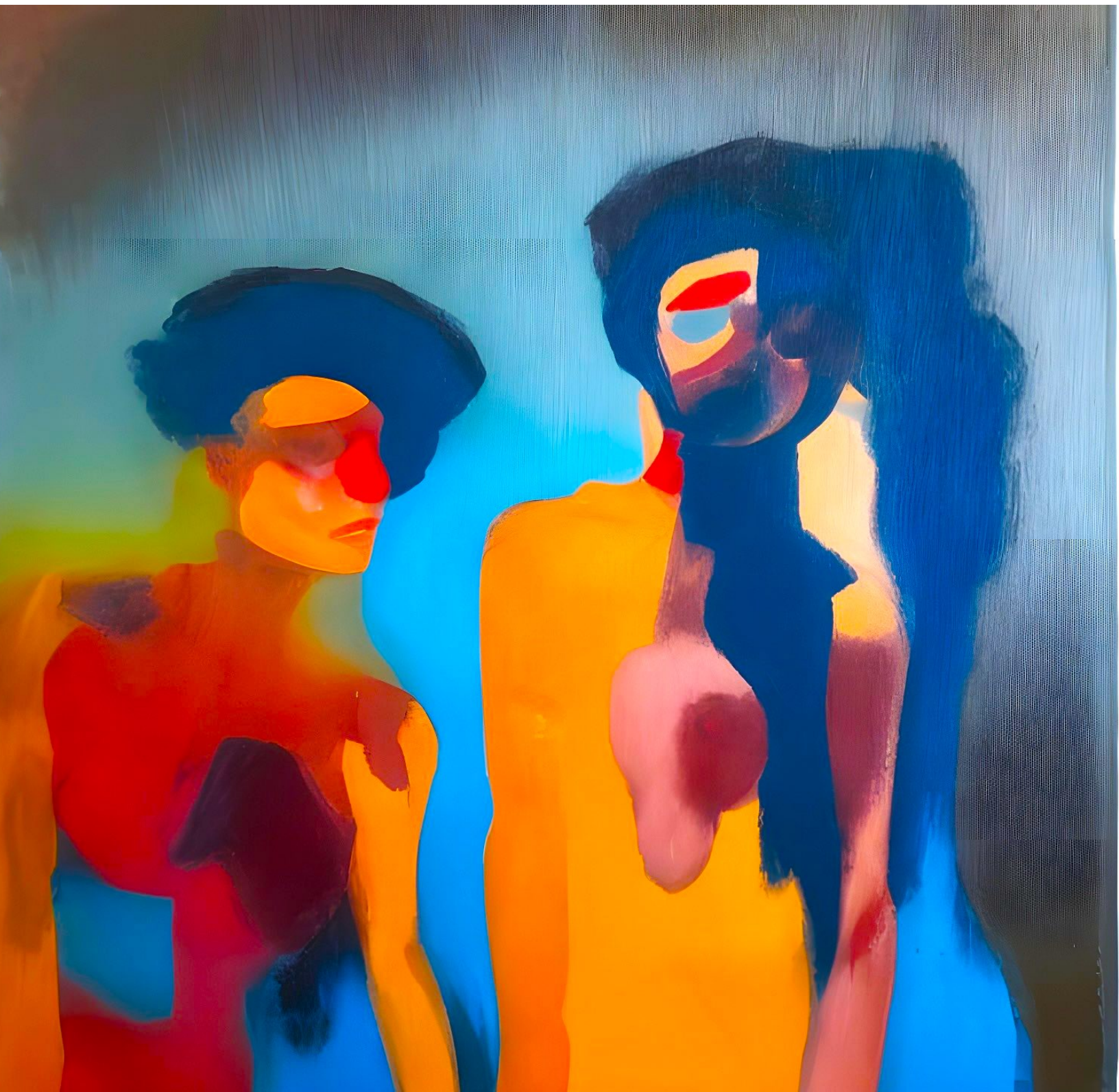
And in this moment I'm lost, as if it's no longer James we're talking about.

"And when I feel my finger on your trigger," I begin, "I know nobody can do me no harm, because..."

Sam yawns then turns to face me. "What?"

"... happiness is a warm gun." I take a breath. "Lennon was full of shit."

And with this I stub my cigarette against the railing and turn away, a few seconds pass and then footsteps follow and we drive back in silence as for once harmony offers little consolation.





anne hedonia

Alex Prestia

that thing—the one thing
what you wanted
exactly what you wanted
and you get it
so much of it
so very much
and then too much
but that's fun too
day after day you get what you wanted
and then one day you no longer want it
it doesn't arouse or awake you
so
what's next

she told me
she feels no pleasure
and i get that
i really do



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“GLOCK STYLE” by John Grey
Book: [Between Two Fires](#)

“A Wrong Light Brought Me Out” by Kyle E. Miller

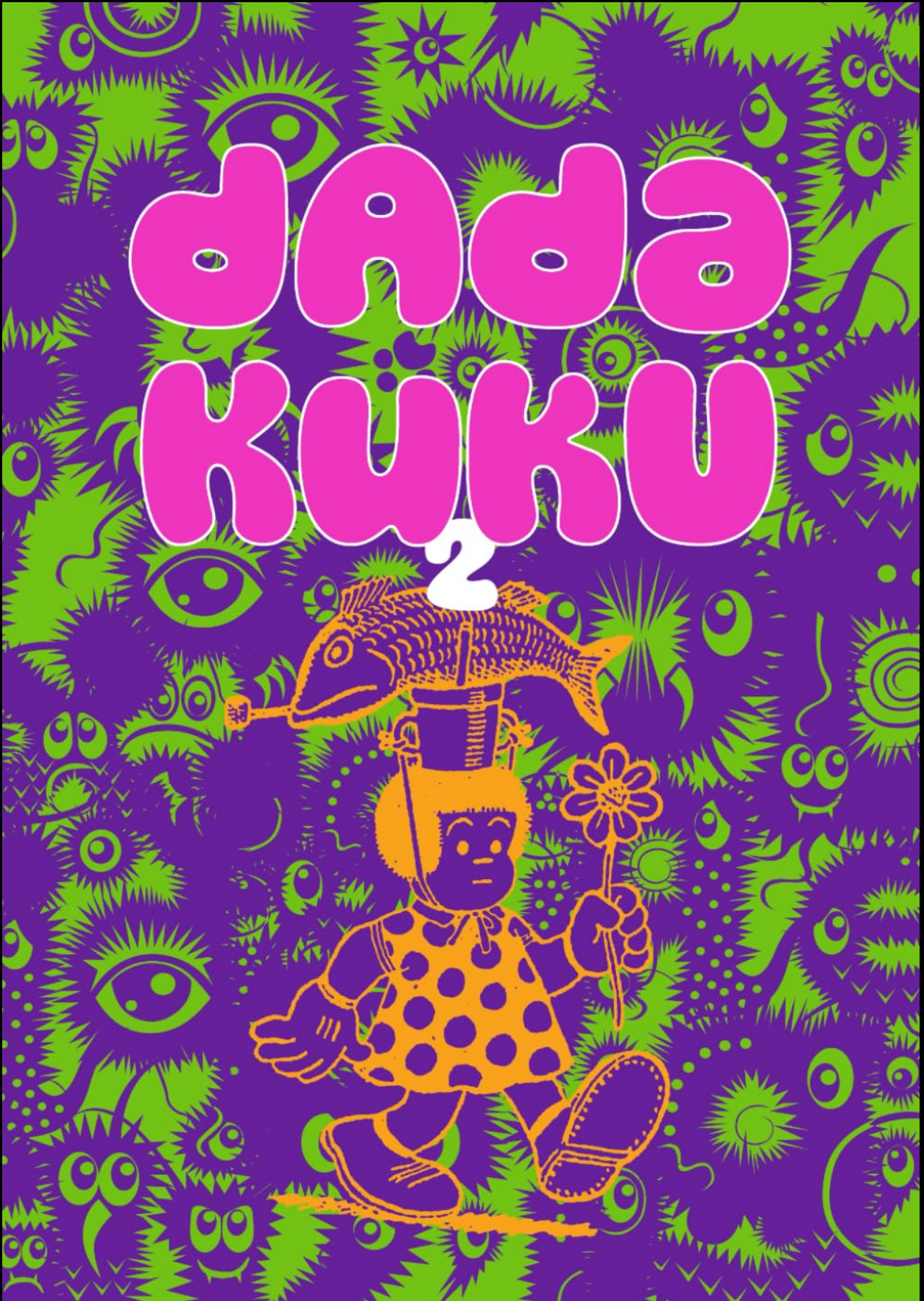
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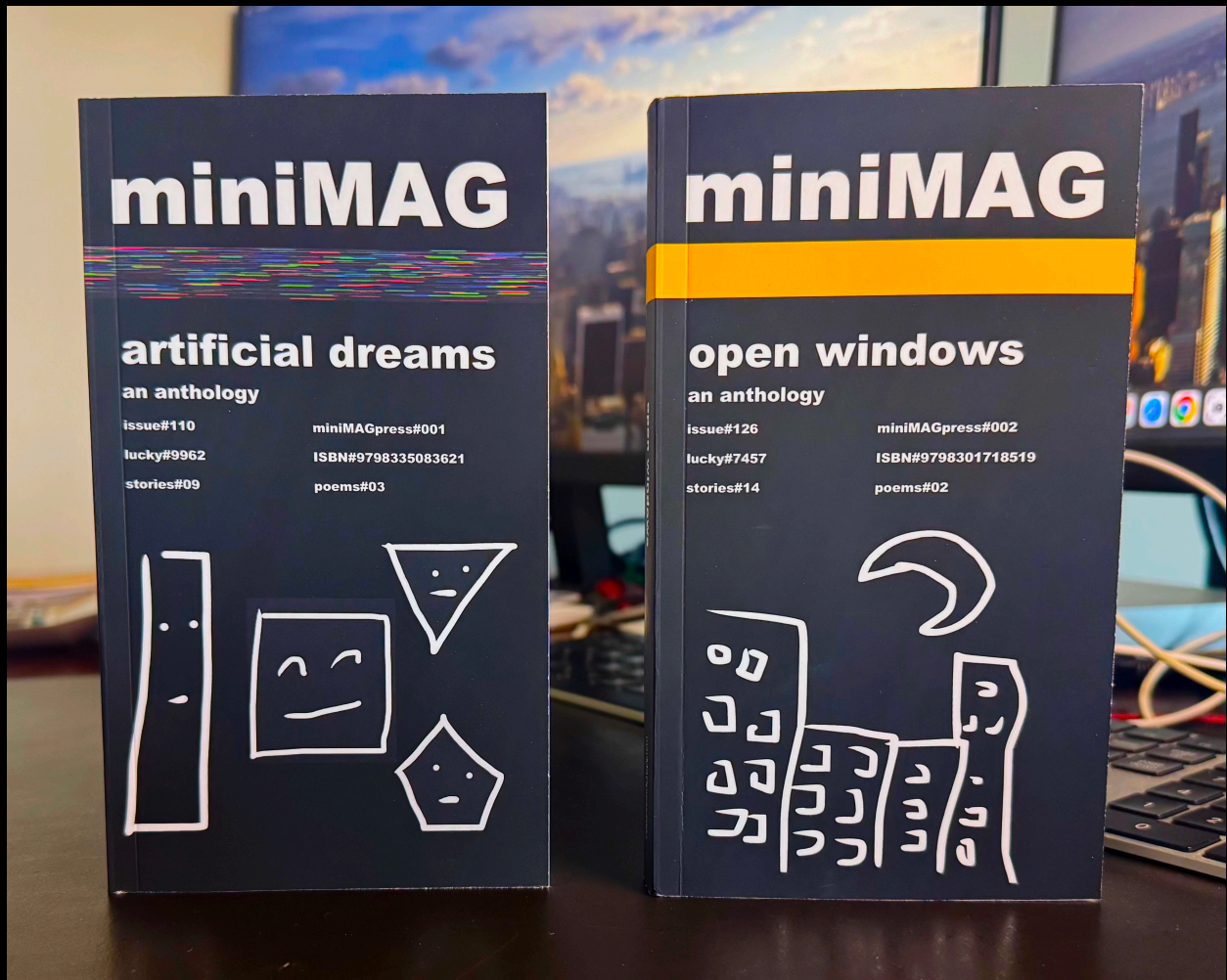
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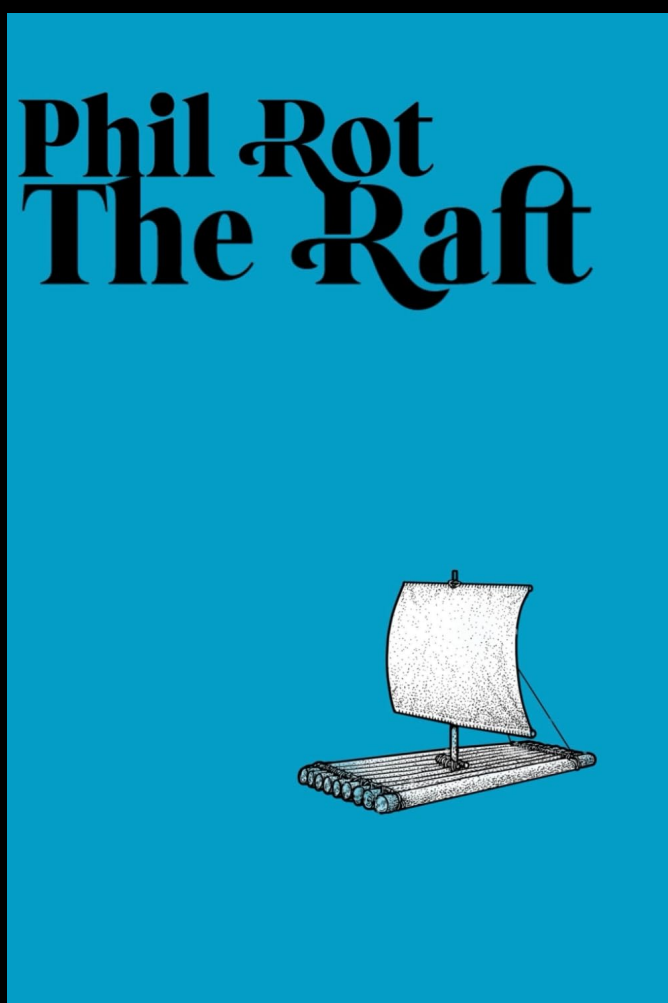
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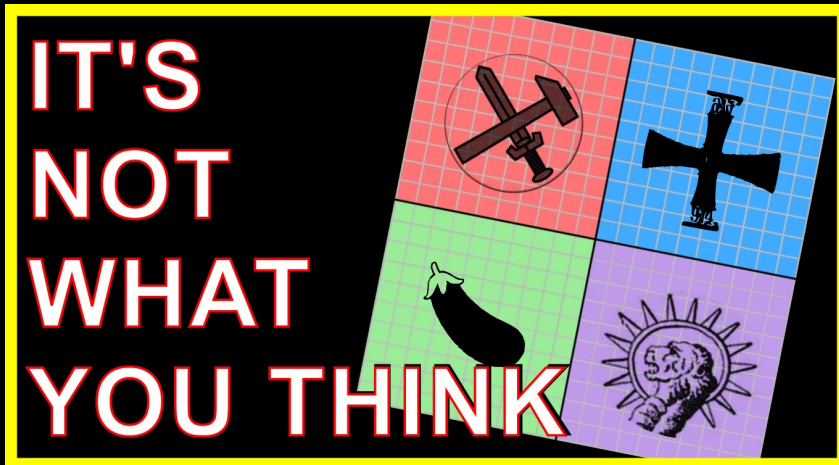


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