

# *waitif*



*issue 02*

What is Waif.

When that noise is so white you can't even hear it.

Messy hair is waif, but so are bangs.

Waped Veed is Vaify.

Waif is when you fall down the stairs but still can't scrape your knee.

Waif is when you play the piano & you don't know how to play the piano.

Waif is when you play piano really well. And drums. Because you were taught.

Kix is Waif. So is special K. Trix is not Waif.

Whores are Waif. Prudes are Waif. Dudes are Waif. Nudes are Waif.

Your Grandmother is Waif, only when she's knitting a hat for you, you Waif.

Waif is when your corn shows up later.

Gardening is Waif. Love your dead plants.

Waif is when you shave every single hair on your body. Waif is when you've never cut a single hair on your body since birth.

Talent shows are Waif. Throw a talent show. Invite us.

Arms that jiggle like hot jello are Waif.

Zit Scabs are Waif.

Chicken feet are Waif.

Beady eyes are Waif.

You can't spell Waif without I.

Leave the taps dribbling overnight if it's below 30 degrees fahrenheit.

You, me, all, we're all Waif. If we want to be. And we want to be.



Get a shirt at [iswaif.com](http://iswaif.com)

# ***waif***

*magazine*

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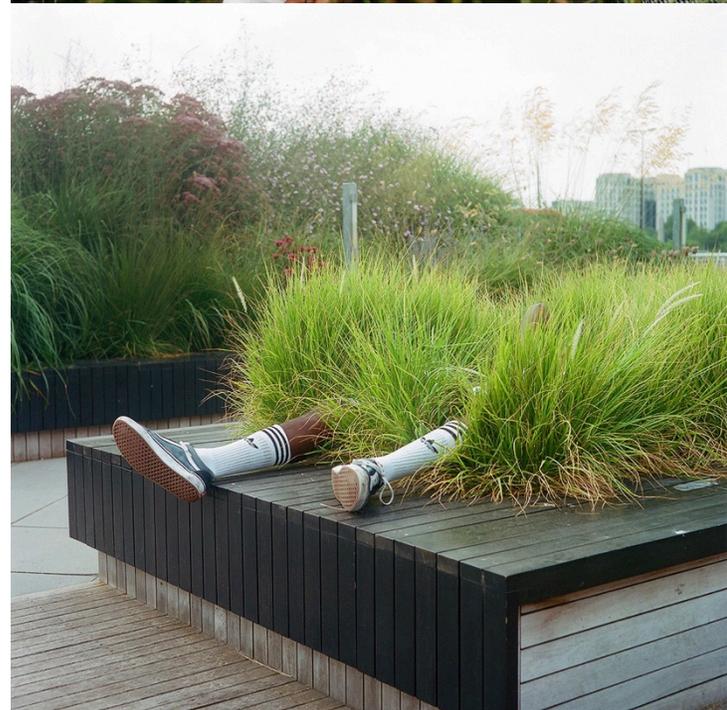
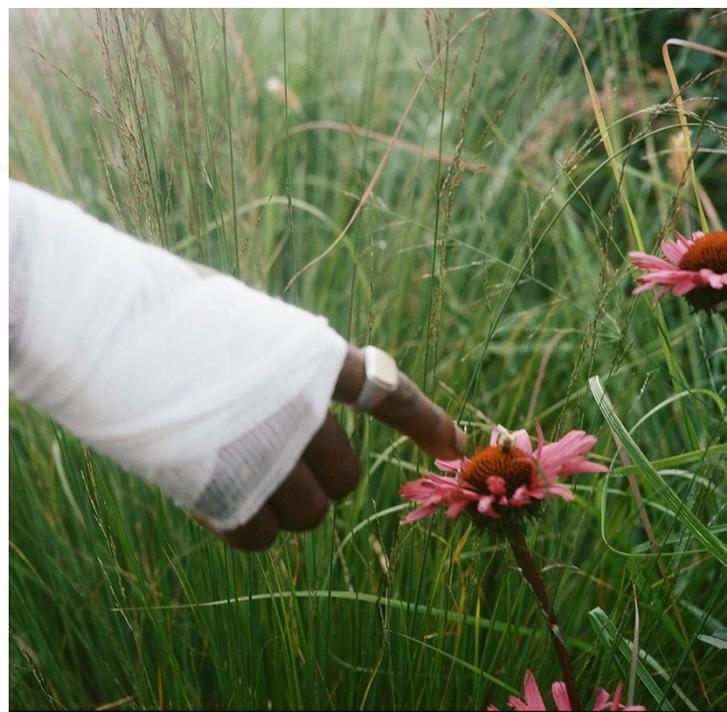
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Letter to the Editor

Submitted by Ramon Rathbone



# *is waif*

Dear Waifs,

Recently, Waif Magazine published a news story about ghostpunk duo Silver and Smoke and their relationship to Blue Man Group. The story was written hastily, as is the nature of gossip reporting, and we support a style of journalism that is less focused on precision and more interested in energy.

Our executive team has been hard at work fielding this PR nightmare, and as a result, we had to delay publication of our second issue until now. Thank you for your patience.

To Silver and Smoke: we meant no harm, and in fact, we thought we did a pretty good job of promoting your new single. We apologize. While we are not willing to depart from the journalistic integrity that our readers expect from us, we will, moving forward, take into consideration the personal lives of our founders, board members, and especially our shareholders. We had a great time at the Silver and Smoke concert.

To our readers and fans: we apologize for any offense this piece caused, and we hope that you stay with us as we learn from our mistakes. The truth is, disruption and innovation require staying flexible and having an open mind. We genuinely strive to offer you a service that is a great deal, and we believe that the new plan we're introducing will be attractive to the majority of our members.

It's been an exciting journey so far, and MoviePass is here to stay. Your endless support, understanding and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated.

Stay Waif

A close-up photograph of dark brown, rich soil with a crumbly texture, serving as the background for the text.

# *Can You Dig It ?*

by Stephanie Shaffir

Children, especially young children, experience the world by fully engaging their five senses. It is entirely raw, pure, unbridled—shameless even. How many times have you seen a child swallow a Lego piece or get a bead stuck up their nose? As adults, we don't embrace these senses to the fullest extent because we develop, through trial and error, a set of expectations ("knowledge") about our surroundings. Our senses, once so needed and beloved, often become neglected as we get older.

To indulge my senses and relive poignant memories, I developed a dirt diary. As an eleven-year-old, I came up with the concept for a dirt diary while watching an episode of *60 Minutes* featuring a forensic geologist. Upon further research, I learned that samples of dirt from famous locations, especially crime scenes, could be sold for a handsome amount of money. Even the smallest test tube could sell for \$300 because it allegedly came from John Wayne Gacy's crawl space. Perhaps then I could become a forensic geologist and use soil to mark moments and places of great personal importance.

In the process of helping my parents move, I stumbled upon treasure—a diary full of dirt from my past...literally. I open the journal and turn to the first page with a tiny Ziploc of dirt attached via staple. I examine the bag. After many years, the dirt is still moist. It is almost orange in color with small fragments of woodchips mixed in. The label reads: "Central Park Swing Set, 59<sup>th</sup> Street Entrance, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006." As I run my fingers over the plastic bag, I remember that it had rained that morning and the park smelled of earth. I was relieved. Having just moved to New York, I was worried that I had said goodbye to the sweet smell of petrichor. That day, sitting on the swing set, I confessed to my older brother that I was nervous about starting a new school. He promised he would eat lunch with me everyday if we had the same lunch period. (We did not, but I still appreciate the offer). This playground was a spot I would return to over and over again throughout my teenage years—my first kiss, my

first heart break (yes, same person), and countless nights drinking with friends and tactically dodging park security into the early hours of the morning.

I turn to a page with a label that reads: "Rocks, Central Park, 88<sup>th</sup> Street Entrance. November 9<sup>th</sup> 2006." The sample of dirt was light brown with a dusty, almost powdery, texture. This was the day I learned the dark truth about those miniature Ziplocs I had been discovering throughout the park and

repurposing for my dirt collection.

After school, the group of girls I had befriended would make a beeline to their lockers to grab picnic blankets and then head straight to "The Rocks" (the "cool

kid" hangout spot)—stopping only for iced coffees along the way. As the clock struck 4:00 pm, more kids would trickle in, including the "hot" guys and a few upper classmen. I would watch them sip iced coffees and vigorously type on their BlackBerries and RazR phones, wondering how I made the cut. After all, I did not drink caffeine, nor did I have my own cell phone. On one of these occasions, feeling nostalgic about The Rocks and my new New York friend group, I decided to take a dirt sample. I tracked down a tiny, neon yellow Ziploc between two boulders and promptly hopped to the bottom of the rocks to retrieve it. I began to fill the baggie with dirt, but was rudely interrupted by a shrill female voice;

***"In the process of helping my parents move, I stumbled upon treasure—a diary full of dirt from my past...literally."***



“That’s like... really, really gross!” shrieked Lydia.

“It’s JUST dirt...” I replied.

“Not the dirt dipshit! The drug baggie! You shouldn’t touch those; you can catch *stuff* from the drug addict who left it behind!”

“Not if it had weed in it,” Alex interjected.

I tuned out their argument, but innocently wondered to myself why I had never before questioned the origins of the Ziplocs...I proceeded with caution.

I find a page with a dirt Converse shoe imprint. But not just any Converse— my Grateful Dead dancing bear low tops. I wore them everywhere with everything my entire sophomore year of high school. Two years later I dug the shoes out of the deepest depths of my closet because I needed a pair of shoes that I could wear in the mud. A pair of shoes I could throw away at the end of a rainy field day. But, once they were back on my feet, a feeling of nostalgia took over and I no longer had the heart to destroy them. I gingerly put them back in my closet only to break them out a week later when I skipped school to watch Green Day play in Central Park for *Good*

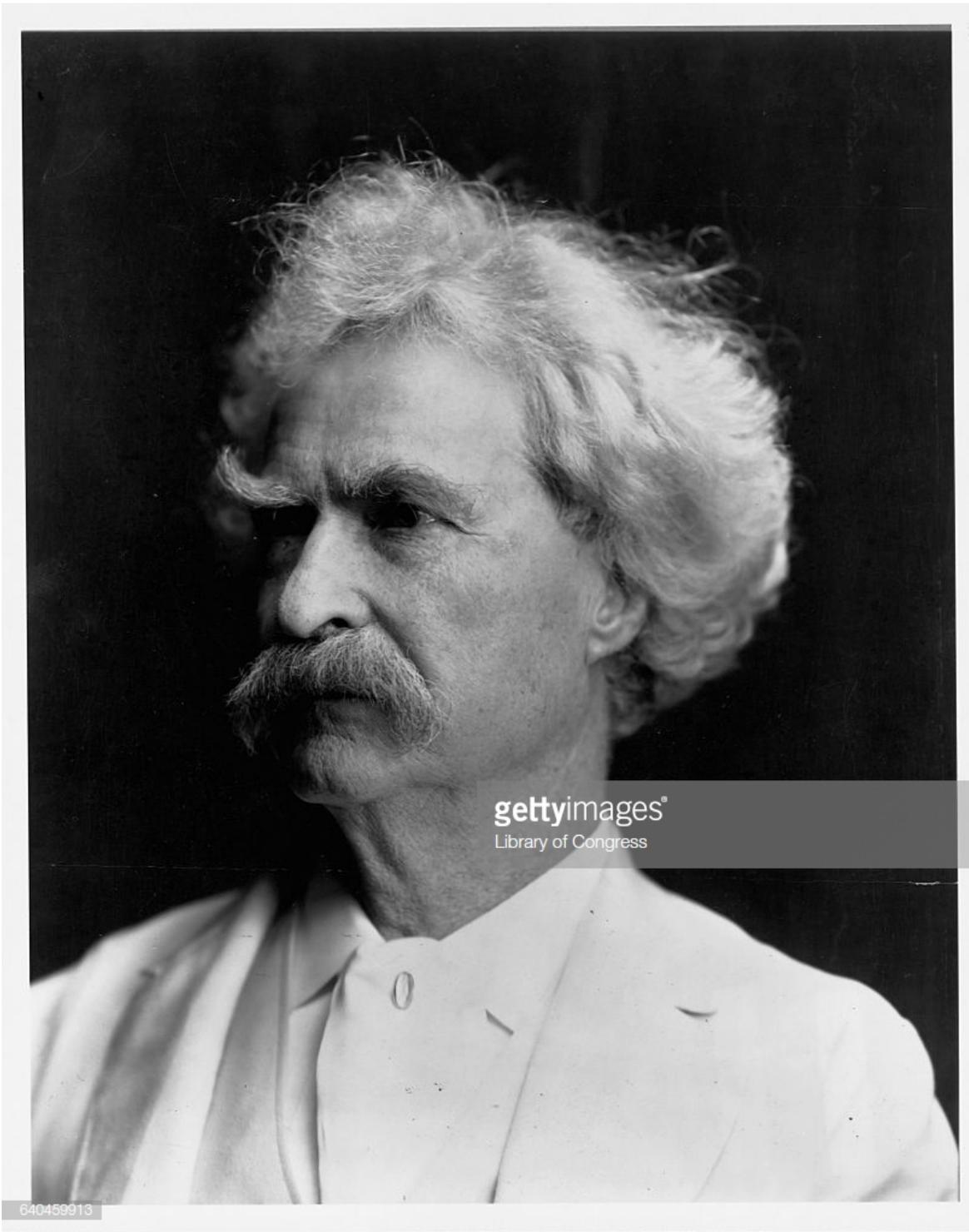
*Morning America*. It had rained the night before and the humidity of the morning had Rumsey Playfield smelling of damp soil. Today, I do not know where the shoes are, but I do know where to find the fossilized print preserved in my dirt diary.

Once upon a time, I diligently chronicled memories in a dirt diary, but somehow, as I entered adulthood, we became estranged. Now, when I open my dirt diary, I am transported back to those places in time through touch and smell. The fresh cut grass at the start of the school year hanging heavy in the air like exhaust in the afternoon heat. The air becoming thin and crisp and the smell of earth fading as fall turns to winter.

There are moments in time we want to preserve— personal landmarks. Moments we are told to enjoy and savor—birthdays, graduations, weddings. However, quiet moments in life can be just as special. They can be hard to spot, especially as we grow older. We must remember to stop and smell the roses. Or better yet... the dirt. ♦







***"America has only three great cities: New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans.***

***Everywhere else is Cleveland."***

***- Mark Twain***

*SAN FRANCISCO*

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By Brigette Lundy-Paine



Marissa Leitman won't photograph you unless she knows your name. Might seem like a catch for a street photographer, an artist dead set on capturing San Francisco's youth in their natural habitat, but for Leitman, it's not a problem; over the past 5 years she's not only integrated her camera into SF's majestic nightlife, she's become quite a staple herself.

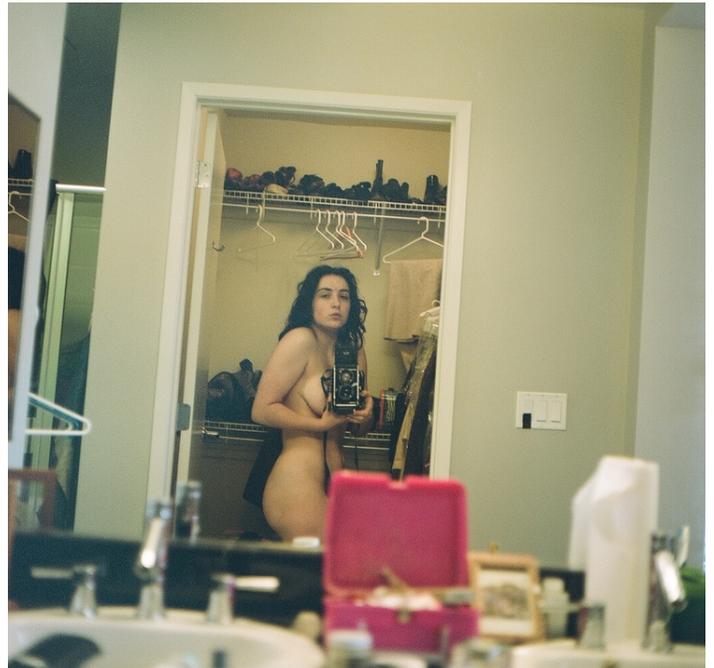
Leitman moved to San Francisco a few years ago, obsessed with British Punk and the New York Club scene. It only took a month for her to realize that the school she had moved to the city for, California College of the Arts, was not the artistic wonderland she'd dreamed it would be. So she took matters into her own hands. Her first year in the city, Leitman went out every night of the week and guesses she met about 230 people. She muses

now on the idea of it and shivers, "I'm already so tired and stressed out as it is, I don't know how I did it." The world of San Francisco at night was better than she could've imagined; from hopping into the back of pickup trucks to spending every night in a different bed, she was living the artist's life she'd dreamed. But there was one glitch in the plan. Leitman was still too shy to photograph her new friends. She was right where she wanted to be, witnessing everything from the most marvelous queens of San Francisco to the local royals of music and art, but Leitman felt that documenting the experience would be a betrayal of trust.

It wasn't until she switched from a 35mm camera to a Mamiya C330 that her relationship to the night shifted. "It's huge," she emphasizes of the C330, "I never look elegant with it. My famous last words are always 'hold it!'" Instead of nervously smuggling her camera around, she had no choice now but to introduce it proudly, forging the way for a relationship between photographer and subject. "If they're uncomfortable, I'm uncomfortable," Leitman professes, "there has to be some kind of intimacy."

She obviously cares deeply about the C330. One of Leitman's only self-portraits from her series "Notes on San Francisco" is of the two of them together. Standing in a closet, Leitman holds the camera close to her nude frame, ducked coyly behind it, photographer and camera reflected in the bathroom mirror. An archaic selfie, seeming to belong to another era. But most of Leitman's work feels like that. Drag Queens are a favorite subject of hers, as are her many queer, non-binary friends. There's something wild about her pictures, the subjects seem to be taunting the viewer, daring them to come closer; young lovers beckoning their stiff and matted admirers into an endless bacchanal. The thrill of her work exists in the unflinching filth and at times unsettling rawness of her portraits. The creak of tight leather, the heightened fear of dilated pupils, the trail of mascara left by tears.

Looking at the photos one finds themselves sharing Leitman's manic excitement over her subjects; one cannot help but to become physically entangled in the unique universe of each picture. Tight on a pair of white leather boots crunching through a sidewalk strewn with broken glass - your jaw clenches. A



**Leitman and her Mamiya C330**

woman, stretching her arm away from a pale ribcage to reveal a freshly sewn cut, 7 stitches, a bandage hanging loose - your skin crawls. Leitman seems to be grinning eagerly behind the camera, unmoving as to not disturb the natural habitat of the creatures she has so carefully sought out. She shares them with us full of pride, a hunter presenting her prey.

***"Every once in a while...you are reminded that the scene before you is not a shot from a period piece, but instead from a party that you're probably in the midst of missing out on."***

Looking through Leitman's portfolio, it's easy to forget that the world she documents and inhabits still exists today. Her photos, shot on film, feel perfectly reminiscent of Nan Goldin and the sexual revolution of the '80s that I imagine the portraits must be costumed and cast by Leitman herself. However every once in a

while the photos give way to a familiar landmark, and you are reminded that the scene before you is not a shot from a period piece, but instead from a party that you're probably in the midst of missing out on. An aging drag queen in a white wig and a button down '60s house dress, lit brightly against the night, holding a VR headset up to her eyes; A melancholy looking young queen, pink wigged and lips filled in twice past their perimeter holding a takeaway cup from Jack in the Box with the words "make a late foody" printed in purple block letters. "We live in the same world as you," the portraits taunt, "we're just having more fun doing it.





And then, there's Barry. Appearing to be in his mid 80s, Barry is Leitman's most photographed subject. He's thin, with thick-rimmed glasses and a white mustache thicker than the hair on his head. When I first made my way through Leitman's portfolio, I was struck by the persistence and intimacy of this character in her work. I wondered, titillated, if he was a family member or perhaps a much older lover. Again and again he came up - Barry, behind a bar, flipping the bird on both hands. Barry, on a bus as it pulls away, hands up in a taunting surrender, an amused smile lingering on his aged face. And on her Instagram, a photo of Barry's

California State ID: "My grumpy fuddy dutty," Leitman captioned the photo. And finally, Barry, standing amongst Leitman's photos at a gallery, surrounded by portraits of himself. "Today I miss Barry," the caption reads.

When I ask Leitman about her friend, I am not entirely surprised to hear that he's passed away just shy of a year ago. She tells me that she first met Barry at Aunt Charlie's Lounge, the sole remaining gay bar in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. Barry worked there as a bartender. Leitman and Barry became friends very quickly, bonding over their desire to sit and tell stories together. She began to visit him at the bar

regularly, staying to drink and talk long after closing. Barry had lived in San Francisco his entire adult life in an apartment that he refused to allow guests to visit, insisting that it was too messy, and had worked at Aunt Charlie's for over 30 years.

Leitman tells me about one of their first evenings together. "We were wasted," she recalls giddily. "He wrote down every one of his lovers on a napkin. I still have it," she smiles, "it's one of my prized possessions." Leitman and Barry fell instantly into a symbiotic relationship. They spoke on the phone every day, and spent night after night drinking and

laughing and telling stories. "We were absolutely in love in this really funny way," she tells me, "because we didn't have to be."

Aside from the obvious differences between the two, Barry was Leitman's first friend who couldn't stand being photographed. "He fucking hated photos of himself!" she laughs. "The photo where he's flipping me off? He had been screaming 'You and your fucking camera!'" Even though Barry appears more frequently than



**"We were absolutely in love in this really funny way," she tells me, "because we didn't have to be."**

any other subject in Leitman's work, she only managed to steal a few rolls of film featuring her friend over the year they spent together. She was sparing with her camera around him, especially after his diagnosis of cancer in early March, 2017.

When Barry passed away on July 23 that same year, Aunt Charlie's Lounge held the memorial service, bringing in a reverend to speak in the bar. Barry was a part of a small group of gay men in San Francisco, who had lived through the AIDS crisis, and who now clung to bars such as Aunt Charlie's Lounge like life rafts. All of them had watched, 30 years before, as almost all of their friends and lovers had been stolen from them by the disease. And now, one by one, the survivors' lives were coming to an end.

I imagine Barry, taken completely by Leitman and by her fascination with the world he had grown up in. He had lived through an era driven by tensions no longer present in the world Leitman inhabits: not only the persistent fear of death and disease, but the political and social war on people like him that he had endured through his adult life. The world that Leitman shows us through her photographs is one of celebration and curiosity for itself, for the

past which it is nothing without, and for the fact that it is untouchable. I can't help but think that Barry found great comfort in this. The flattery that an entire generation would live in tribute to his lost one, that from the ashes would come new beings bursting in to flourish in the empty space, to love again with vigor in the same way that had been so brutally punished, but to be sure this time would be without consequence.

I understand why Barry avoided Leitman's camera, the middle fingers up, the smirk, the hands up in surrender. He was giving Leitman the gift of carrying on without him. He was giving her San Francisco. It was theirs now, the wild, fearless, magnificent beings who had drawn Leitman to the city in the first place. Leitman's work is a love letter to San Francisco; to those who gave their lives for the city and those who continue to give themselves over to it every day. Leitman, herself, included. ♦





NEW ORLEANS

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By Inez Franco



We left New York City on the Friday before Mardi Gras and drove through the night in Justin's ancient Subaru. During the twenty hour drive to New Orleans, we stopped for gas a million times, ate stolen Whole Foods sandwiches, and changed into our pajamas in truck stops. In Tennessee, we drifted through beautiful, winding hills at the crack of dawn. I can't remember what song was blasting out of the car when we stopped, but we pulled over to watch the sunrise over these hills. At some point on this winding road we stopped again to play with puppies. It was a truly magical morning. And then we were pulled over.

The road had become a highway without us realizing it. Justin was driving stupid fast. State troopers came up to our passenger and driver windows. We were nervous, as you'd expect, and for the first time on the trip I became aware of my bias toward the South. I feared that the liberal stickers pasted all over Justin's car would cause us trouble, or that my own brown skin could inspire some kind of antagonism in this situation. No one likes getting pulled over, obviously, but something was odd about the way everyone got really, really quiet. So when the troopers went back to their car, to write up our ticket, I asked Justin and Kass what was up.

"We have cocaine in the car."

They said this super casually. And, of course they had cocaine – it was spring break. Regardless, the fifteen minutes it took those troopers to write our ticket felt like fifteen hours. I was quietly having an anxiety attack in the passenger seat. *Would they find a reason to search the car?* Yes, because Justin has a terrible record. *Would we all be charged with possession?* Probably, yes.

I wasn't thrilled. I'd never even tried coke, *why should I be in this situation?* I could already hear my parents asking that question. I did feel better when I thought about the fact that Justin and Caroline are white. This feels silly to admit now, but honestly, it was one of my initial reactions. The odds were in our favor.

The car was never searched. In the end nothing happened, except we got a huge fine.

We arrived in New Orleans later that day, on a Saturday. I remember when we crossed over the Pontchartrain all our windows were down and we were singing Foo Fighters' "Learn to Fly," and feeling great.

The rest of our group travelled in another car and met us at our Airbnb in Bywater. We wasted no time. Within a few hours, we all climbed into an Uber out to the French Quarter. The driver was a badass. She told us where to get cheap drinks and what to avoid. She also explained that she was "packing heat." I was a little concerned about her willingness to share such information, but just a little; mostly it was the sort of thing that keeps me endlessly fascinated with New Orleans.

The night went on exactly as you'd imagine — beads, sticky bars, drunks, crowded streets, stupid fights and bare breasts. It was exciting, but before the end of it, my wallet was stolen and my friend was arrested.

***"There were no Bank of Americas in the state of Louisiana where I could obtain a temporary card."***

Trying to explain how this all happened is difficult for me, even now. We were drunk. It was Mardi Gras. And in my defense, I was

wearing a backpack and didn't expect Bourbon Street to be as packed as NYC's 4 train during rush hour. But it sucked, I had everything in that wallet, even my Social Security card. As far as the arrest, the story goes that S. (we'll call him S. for the sake of his privacy) flicked a cigar out of the mouth of a police officer. Stupid, I know, but I believe S. was upset after reporting some harassment and getting smoke blown in his face by the officer. I wasn't there so I can't confirm any of this, but I don't like to think about S. being tackled by officers and thrown in jail, which is what happened. The mental image upsets me, especially because S. is a black man, and I know if I had done that, sure I might be arrested, but I would not have been tackled by multiple officers.

Anyway, there was nothing we could do that night. He had to sit in jail. He returned to us on Sunday, or was it Monday? And I never found my wallet. There were no Bank of Americas in the state of Louisiana where I could obtain a temporary card. And I wonder all the time who in the world has my Social Security card.

On the bright side, I learned about Juju dolls, I had a really good Mint Julep, I felt the sun on my skin, I danced with boys and ate beignets.

I realized I hadn't heard a lawn mower in over a year.

I took some long walks alone and I enjoyed myself.

I tried coke for the first time! Nothing compares to that first try.

But of all the things that happened on this trip, the moment I remember most clearly is an interaction I had with a homeless man. He was sitting on a surprisingly empty street one night, with his dog, begging for money. I walked over to the pair and began petting his dog, and this friend of my friend, I can't remember his name, he followed. When the

old man asked for money I explained that my wallet was stolen.

"That's what they all say," he responded.

My friend gave him money and we parted, but before I was out of earshot the homeless man screamed aloud, "If only you were as kind as your boyfriend!"

We didn't feel the need to explain, but as we walked off the man kept mumbling under his breath. At first I thought he was calling me a bitch but it was something else. I could only hear murmurs but I felt like shit. And I wondered, "Did this homeless man just curse me?"

It's just another one of those things that keeps me endlessly fascinated with New Orleans. ♦



NEW YORK

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**ON sUNDAY**

By Zach Donovan

I took a walk on Sunday, up Manhattan Ave in Brooklyn, through East Williamsburg, through Williamsburg proper, into Greenpoint.

I leave around 4:30 – too early, but I’m bored and nothing to do the rest of the day so why not. It’s nice out, sort of, 40 degrees, maybe 50 but that’s being generous. There was a snowstorm yesterday though, and for the most part it has all melted away, so definitely above thirty degrees, but I’m no weatherman.

I pass the Projects on Scholes St and the nearby park. It’s mostly a glorified slab of concrete with its “handball”

***"The sign says closed, but Google says it's open so I go in."***

courts and quarter pipes for the skaters, but it gets the job done. I stop and watch a group of skaters trying out their entry level tricks. They look difficult enough. My favorite skater is wearing head-to-toe black and big silver hoop earrings. I chuckle in subtle admiration as I turn the first corner onto Manhattan Ave.

I cross in the middle of the street, even though it’s traffic two ways, but I don’t want to walk to the light just to have to double back. I hate doubling back, though my earlier-than-planned start will serve me plenty of doubling back as the evening continues. After skillfully dodging a couple of big delivery trucks by standing right on top of the double yellow line, I reach Awakening, a crystal shop and yoga/wellness center. The sign says closed, but

Google says it’s open so I go in. A woman browsing crystals holds up a stick of selenite and asks the clerk if they sell it in slabs. “No, that’s as big as we have,” says the clerk. And that’s the last I hear from her, the clerk. She sees me walk in, and I even say hi how’s it going, but am greeted only by silence.

I beeline to the back. A closed door leads presumably to a yoga studio where I hear people exhaling with lion’s breath - a vocalized exhalation with a wide open mouth and an outstretched tongue. Mike Posner sings quietly over the loudspeaker - “I took a pill in Ibiza/To show Avicii I was cool” - while I touch what must be a couple thousand dollars worth of

healing crystals. No one tries to sell me anything, which I simultaneously love and hate, but I know I’m being watched - there’s a small security camera conspicuously placed on a shelf at chest height. Awakening has me as awake as I’ll ever be and I’m still pretty tired, so I head out, continuing my trek north. I check the Facebook event of the concert I’m going to at Saint Vitus, a heavy metal bar at the north end of Greenpoint. Music starts at 8:15, not 7. I thought I was running early before, now I’m even earlier. In an effort to kill time, I go to a hat shop (it’s a pop up). They’re selling hats, of course, of all shapes and sizes. Top hats, even. Up the road further, I pop into a hippy store that does tie dye on site. Not for me, I think, though a specific type of person would love the place, I’m sure.





multi-million dollar business, to my company because I'm just starting out, they're two different things." She's frustrated, not having it. Her parents offer her advice after advice, only to be rejected by their daughter. "Do you know someone in Canada? Because that's not helpful unless you know someone in Canada."

I leave a big tip because 20% of a cup of soup seems stingy and the waiter was cute in a shy way, or shy in a cute way, I can't tell. I stop in the 99 cent store across the street and buy a memo pad. If something costs \$2 or less, I buy it. I decide it's fine to get to the venue an hour early - I want to beat the crowd, and I can borrow a pen from the bartender.

Saint Vitus is cool, and I'm

I double back a first time. I didn't see Saint Vitus walking north, so I try to locate it, even though I have two hours until the doors even open. I spy a building painted black with the shadow of an upside down cross hanging in the window - this must be the place.

I keep walking, down to a Thai restaurant I passed a half an hour ago. I don't have much of anything on me, I left my backpack at home, and my debit card has been frozen (fraudulent activity in Daytona, I don't think so). It's cash only so I figure I can drop \$6 on a soup.

I'm the only one in the restaurant except for a girl maybe a little older than me and two people who I perceive to be her parents. She's talking business: "It doesn't make sense to compare that company, a

not the first one there. I'm not drinking because I just got an antibiotics shot as an STD treatment even though I didn't even have an STD; sometimes it's just fun to live in excess. I don't mind not drinking either; a soda water with lime is \$2. If anything costs \$2 or less, I buy it.

Inside Saint Vitus, they slide open these glass-paned barn doors that lead into the performance space. Everything is painted black, the room is hazy and lit only by red stage lights. The first act has set up her sound controls and drum machine on a tray on top of a walker in the middle of the room, not on the stage. She is difficult to see, not only because she is short, but also because she wears all black and fades into the background. Her beats are industrial, and she screams into the heavily reverbed mic - "REPENT!" No one really

sings along, she's not very famous, and the words are hard to make out, but I love her performance. I'm not here for her though, I'm here for the third of four acts that night.

But it was the second act, Dreamcrusher, that really blew me away. The non-binary solo performer plays in the complete dark, lighting several incenses, filling the room with more fog than I've seen before, and pointing two slowly strobing lights directly at the crowd. The music is noise-based, and the intro is long, really immersing the audience in a world of nowhere. The other people in the crowd are just silhouettes, shadows of the strangers that stood

there before. It's like being trapped inside the flash of a nuclear bomb.

The music finally offers a bit of comprehension: a woman's voice repeats "They don't understand me, they will never get me," something like that. At the song's equivalent of a bass drop, the lead performer appears on the opposite side of the

stage, lighting their face with a flashlight and screaming into the microphone. They turn off the flashlight and run to the back of the crowd, unbeknownst to me. Holding onto another audience member for dear life, they turn the flashlight back

on and scream some more. It's the scariest thing I've seen in my life; how did they get all the way out there, when are they coming for me next, how will I know when it's my time?

Between songs, they ask the crowd if we're having fun. A girl next to me says, "You're scaring me."

Dreamcrusher responds: "Did someone say I was scaring them?" We laugh. "Isn't the real world scarier?" We laugh again. They press a button to play a new track and the terror starts back up again.

The act I came to see has to wait 30 mins for enough of the fog to clear before she can even start setting up. The room is crowded now, maybe 80 people - pretty good for a Sunday night. She has trouble with her sound and with her projections and eventually ends up scrapping the visual component. She plays for all of twenty minutes. Underwhelmed, I leave Saint Vitus before the headlining band. Conceivably, no



music act can live up to Dreamcrusher's performance, at least not tonight.

When I first arrived in New York some five years ago, I expected the city I had idealized: the bright lights and big city experience, nights out on the town with a large group of attractive friends, laughing over dinner at a white-clothed table before hailing a taxi to some high profile nightlife event

with skyline views to rival the constellation. What they don't tell you about your ideal New York is that most of the good stuff you experience alone and in Brooklyn. Sometimes the only face familiar to you is the one you dread seeing the most, appearing suddenly and briefly from a thick, white haze before it, too, runs away scared. Once the fog clears enough to see a skyline, you realize you only get Manhattan views if you're not in Manhattan. ♦



# ***BROTHERS***

***Eric, 18, is teaching his brother Noah, 3, to skate and he's already getting good  
London, UK***

***Photos by Marissa Leitman***













## Letter to the Editor

Dearest Esmeralda,

Months upon months of your absence have weighed upon my maudlin soul. It has been so long since our last correspondence. Whither hast thou gone?

In total truth, I write with a heavy heart. It is my unfortunate privilege to notify you that my farm has failed. The cows, each and all, possess shriveled teats. The pigs are long dead and desiccated. And all but one chicken has run astray.

My wife was trampled by my last healthy chicken less than a fortnight past. She held on as long as she could, in hope of your inevitable return. Through no fault of her own she relinquished her grip on this mortal coil and slipped away in the quiet night. I hope you won't hold it against her. The last four words she uttered were "oh" and "Esmeralda" and "chocolate cupcakes."

I'm still not properly accustomed to sleeping alone. So some nights I share my bed with the chicken that trampled my one true love. I guess there must be a trace of her blood or atomies still preserved in the foul fowl's feathers, because some nights I smell the scent of her freshly washed hair and hear her call out for cupcakes. Those spectral events cause me great fear, but I am calmed by her memory.

My eldest lad, Fyodor, is courting a delightful lady from the nearest village. Her name is Katerina. I hope they will marry soon, for I would like to become a grand-père before my demise. For now, they have adopted a tortoise from the local animal preserve, and treat him as their own son. He is quiet, but athletic. With his natural agility, I have no doubt he will have a successful future as a tortoise pirate, tortoise village marauder, or professional tennis player tortoise.

Glavin, the farmhand, has been asking for you. He cries and calls out for you at night, with his head stuffed and muffled inside his pillow's case. Please don't tell him I told you when you see him next. He would be very embarrassed.

Esmeralda, I miss your airy laugh that punctuated our conversations. I miss the way you pinched my right ear with the smallest edge of your fingernails. It hurt so much, and you often pinched hard enough to draw blood, but I know you only did it because I was so happy in your presence that you wanted me to be certain I wasn't dreaming.

My fondest memory of your last visit was when we visited the lake just off the mountain that still had snowy remnants on its cap, though we were somehow able to enjoy a pleasantly warm afternoon. We spoke of silly Glavin (who was just a boy then) and the similarities between Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and the waning years of Everybody Loves Raymond.

Esmeralda, I miss your lovely visage that made my family, farm and life seem brighter than naturally possible. Multi-hued roses bloomed where you stepped unadorned, and silence followed your entrance into every room you entered so no one would miss any word you would think to speak. I fear your absence has caused my land and life to fall into disrepair, for the sun neither lights nor warms the way it used to, and there are no crops, and my cows have shriveled teats, and my pigs are long dead and desiccated, and all but one of my chickens have run astray, and my lone chicken has trampled my wife to death.  
How are you?

Best,  
Ramon Rathbone



Thank you for reading Waif Magazine issue 02.

Issue 03 will be released in September - look forward to stories of the Goodwill Waif and a new column on the woes of being straight when you wish you were gay.

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