



Still Wearing this Damn Ring 4 / Flowers Not Delivered 12

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Editor's Note

veil (n.)

c. 1200, head covering, usually for the forehead, sides, and back of the head, falling to the shoulders; often a distinctive headdress, as worn by nuns or women in certain cultural contexts. Also refers to any cloth, typically light and transparent, used to conceal the face or parts of the body. Derived from the Anglo-French and Old North French veil (12c.), meaning "head-covering," and also "a sail" or "curtain," from the Latin vela, plural of velum, meaning "sail," "curtain," or "covering," which traces back to the Proto-Indo-European root weg- "to weave a web." The veil, in its most literal sense, is both a physical object and a symbolic tool—one that shields, transforms, or obscures what lies behind it.

veil (v.)

Late 14c., veilen, "to cover or conceal with a veil" (of the face, body, or part thereof), from Old French veler, voiller (12c.), from Latin velare, "to cover, veil," from velum "a cloth, covering, curtain, veil," or literally "a sail." In its figurative sense, to veil means to conceal or mask something immaterial, a transformation of meaning that emerges in the 1530s. The act of veiling is no longer limited to cloth alone; it extends to anything that is hidden, disguised, or rendered indistinct.

The veil, then, is more than a mere physical barrier—it is a concept that has woven its way into the fabric of human experience. As both a noun and a verb, it evokes ideas of secrecy, revelation, and the tension between what is concealed and what is exposed. From the literal cloth that shields one's face to the metaphors that obscure our perceptions of truth, the veil is a tool of transformation and intrigue. In the wake of the second term, we aim to peel back the layers of uncertainty and step into a clearer understanding.

In this issue of *The Dodo*, we invite you to peer beyond the veils of tradition, culture, and self, to consider what remains hidden, and to explore the act of unveiling—whether it's a thought, an emotion, or a story waiting to be told.

– Keeping curious,
Harismita Govindaraj

STILL WEARING THIS DAMN RING

I have this ring that I've been wearing since I was fourteen. I wear it on my left hand, and it is sometimes mistaken for an engagement ring. It started out as a purity ring—a symbol of my devotion to God, and a promise to remain pure for my future husband.

But what is it to me now? I'm twenty-three years old, not married or anywhere close to it, not devoted to God as I was raised to be, and most importantly—not pure anymore. And yet, I cannot bring myself to tuck it away in my jewelry box, as I probably should have done years ago.

I remember the moment my mom gave the ring to me very clearly. I had expressed interest in having my own purity ring like my older sister. Mom brought me into her room and started digging through her jewelry box. She pulled out the ring her dad had bought for her from James Avery, when she had been my age.

She offered it to me to try on and said I could wear it until she saved up enough money to buy a new one. I remember she was worried that I would find it ugly or unfashionable (I was a brat about that sort of thing at the time). I loved it though; I was so excited and honored that she would let me wear her pretty ring.

It has a heart made up of eighteen small diamonds (which I have just carefully counted and then recounted to be sure), held in place by eighteen small prongs and encircled by a gold band. The heart is hollow in the middle, so that on hot summer days spent outdoors in the Texas sun, I have gotten a tiny tan line, leaving behind a small heart shape on my finger.

The ring has become an iconic symbol for me. I get compliments and comments about it pretty consistently. If I'm ever not wearing it, it's because I forgot to put it back on after a shower, or I have a crush and I don't want them to think I'm married. I wanted a purity ring in the first place because they were popular at the time among my peers (also among Disney Channel stars, which sounds random but was quite the phenomenon in the mid-2000s), but I also wanted one because I felt this profound devotion to God at the time, which I was sure would last forever. I had been raised to feel that way.

My devotion didn't last forever, though. I did my best to abide by the promise my ring represented while I was in high school, and even when I fell in love and got my first boyfriend at seventeen, we put in the effort to stay pure before God and for our future spouses. We “fell short” sometimes, which is what Christians say when they sin, but we made sure to pray for forgiveness and made resolutions to keep our clothes on whenever we were “just talking” in a parked car late at night.

I justified our behavior because I was so certain we would get married and be together

forever. I felt I could be worthy of the ring if I stayed committed to this one person. We went to the same private Christian university in Arkansas and were broken up by Thanksgiving break.

Okay, so maybe he wasn't going to be my future husband, but I was at a university where there is this strange expectation to be married or engaged by the time graduation rolls around. The years went by, and I watched as dozens of my peers got engaged and married one after the other.

By the time I entered into a new relationship during my third year, I no longer felt the devotion to God and purity that my ring was meant to represent. I actually told my boyfriend that I wasn't going to marry him anytime soon, so he better not propose because I would certainly turn him down.

I graduated a year later, and that relationship ended too. There was no question about my purity anymore; it was gone, and I wasn't sorry for it. What would my fourteen-year-old self think of me if she could see me now?

I spent a gap year at home in Texas, during which time I attended three weddings and saw posts online for about a hundred more—even my high school boyfriend has already gotten married. My family went to church every Sunday, and I felt guilty for not going with them, though they didn't force me to go as they had done when I was a kid. Naturally, I decided to flee the country. I moved to London to get my master's and see

the world, but I also moved to get away from the world I had been raised in and no longer felt a part of.

I'm nearly twenty-four, practically a spinster, and I'm so far removed from the life I had been so certain I would live—but I'm still wearing this damn ring. The purity ring that was supposed to be a placeholder for the white veil that my imagined husband would remove from my face on our wedding day doesn't hold the same meaning anymore at all.

So, what does it mean? I wish I had something profound to say, but I don't. I wish I had a moving explanation to give, but I really don't. Maybe there is some internalized reason that I have yet to uncover, and I'll have to write a follow-up piece about my great discovery at a later date.

Maybe it's just a pretty, sparkly thing that I wear because I've been wearing it for so long, and I'd like to carry on doing so because it is a part of me.

Lola Luk, MA Sculpture

Beneath the veil lies a tapestry of complexities, where femininity is both celebrated and scrutinized. The artist's work unravels the dualities women navigate today, blending visual allure with raw, uncomfortable truths. It reflects the cyclical nature of societal expectations and constraints, confronting deeply ingrained clichés. Themes of mental health, aging, sexuality, self-worth, and domestic inequality emerge, exposing the silent weight of biases and imposed ideals. These pieces serve as a mirror, inviting viewers to peer beyond the surface and engage with the layered realities of identity, resilience, and the evolving role of women in a constrained yet transformative world.

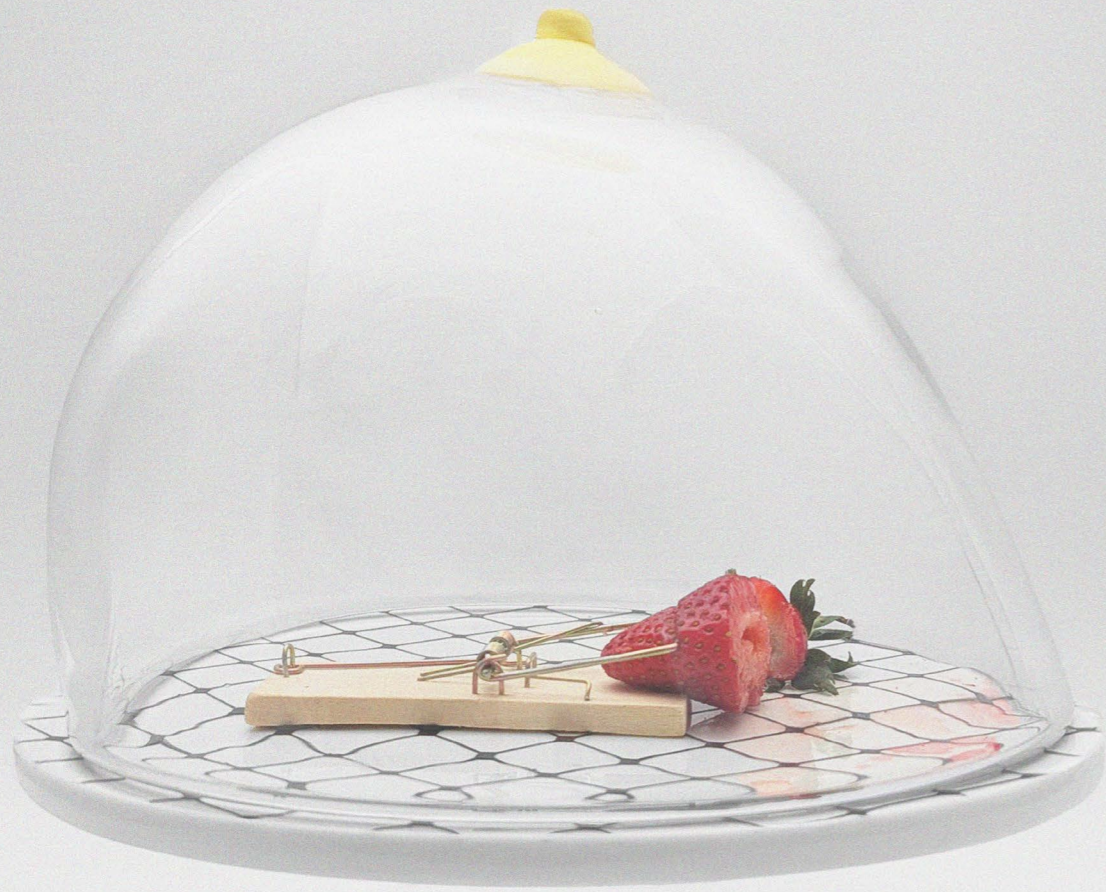
LOLA LUK, *You should never meet your heroes*
Ceramic, blown glass, resin
60cm x 25cm x 25cm
2024



LOLA LUK, *Dig In*
Ceramic, blown glass, resin
60cm x 25cm x 25cm
2024



LOLA LUK, *Mind the trap*
Ceramic, blown glass, resin
60cm x 25cm x 25cm
2024



LOLA LUK, *What is eating you up?*
Ceramic, blown glass, resin
60cm x 25cm x 25cm
2024



FLOWERS NOT DELIVERED

OPEN THE DOOR

Blurring the stitches on my
sleeves, I don't feel alright,
Gnawing, leeching on my
throat,
Tying together,
Weathered
ways, Quenching the
thirst: Desperation.

TETHERED

Feathered spaces, Tethered
to the lost,
Longing for the in between,
Stay,

Stop,
Freeze.

The ache.
The pull.

The failure of the
impossible, Flickering
lights into the cave,
Clenching toward the old
friend,
Who are we to stay?
Or shall we just
pretend?

What is this all for?
Let me go.

Ants crawling up my
skirt,
Please,
open the door.

TETHERED

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 MasterCard Debit
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 1 item I don't feel alright,
 BALANCE DUE Gnawing, leeching on my throat, £3.50
 MasterCard Debit Tying together, £3.50
 *****8247 Weathered wings,
 CHANGE Quenching the thirst: Desperation. 0.00

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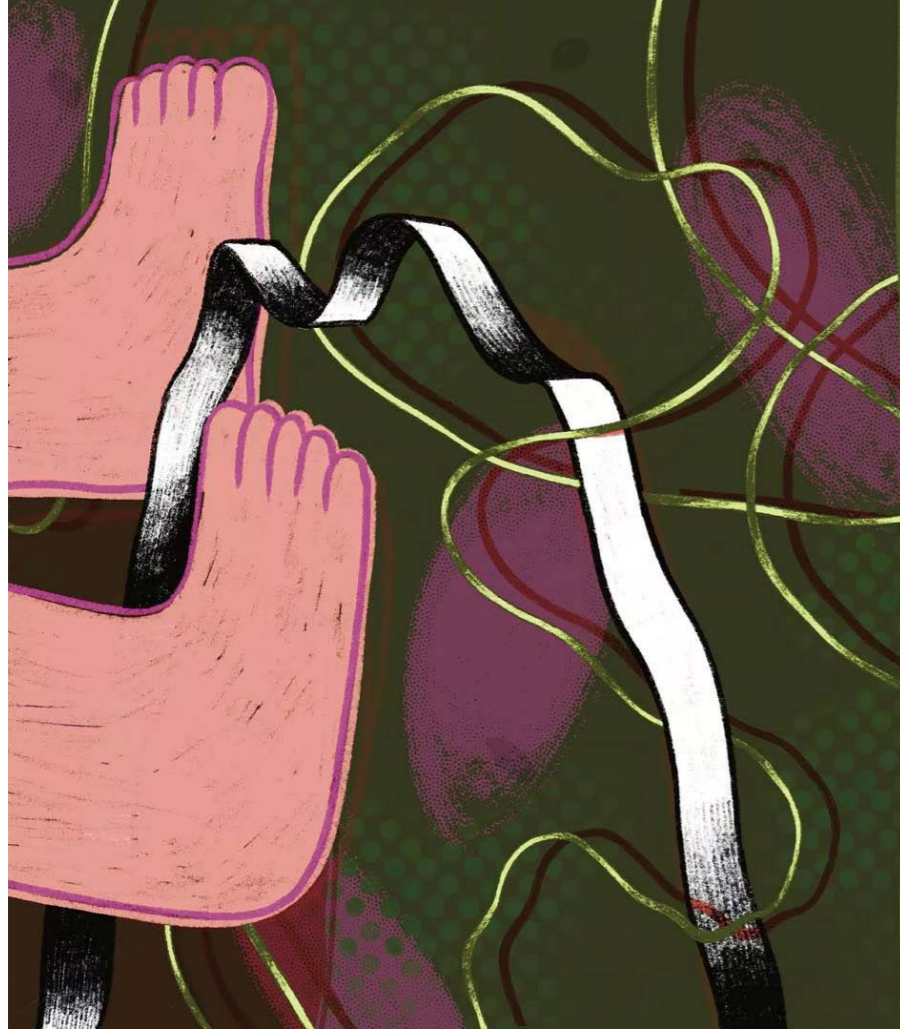
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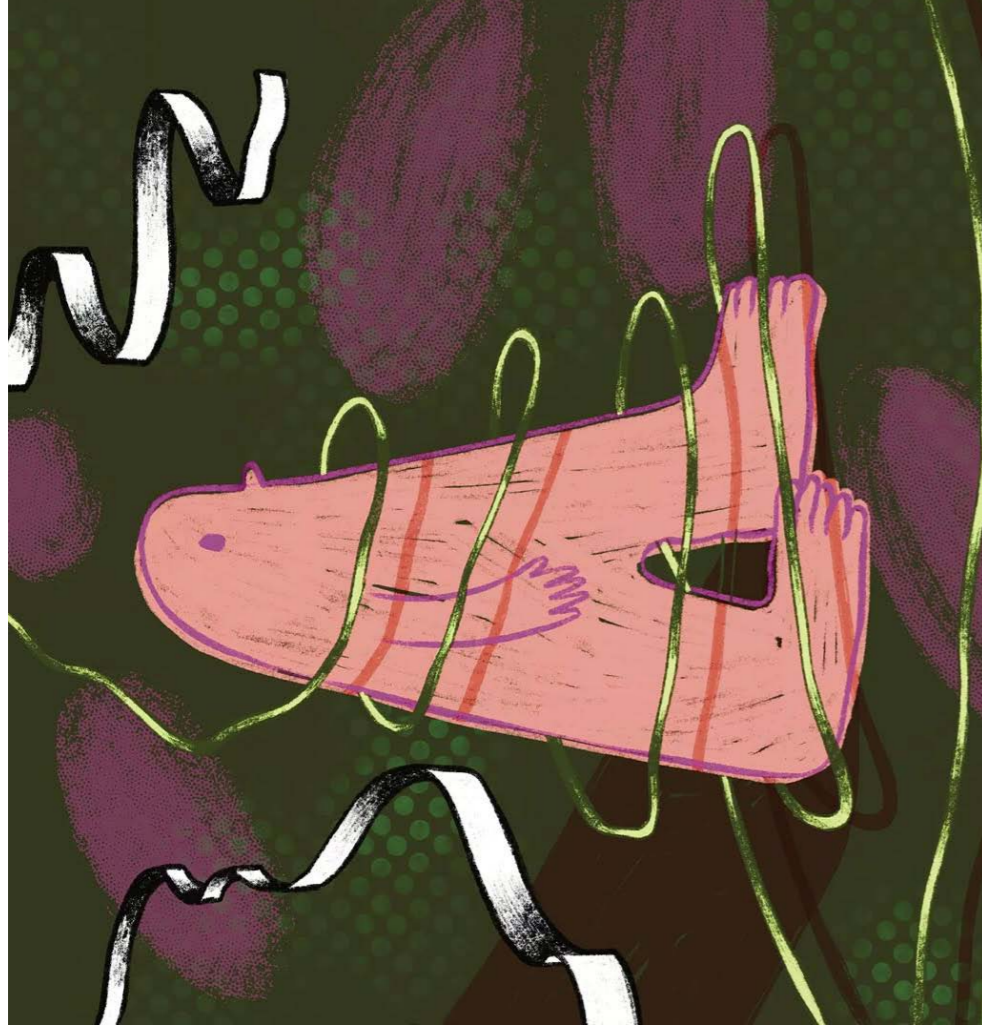
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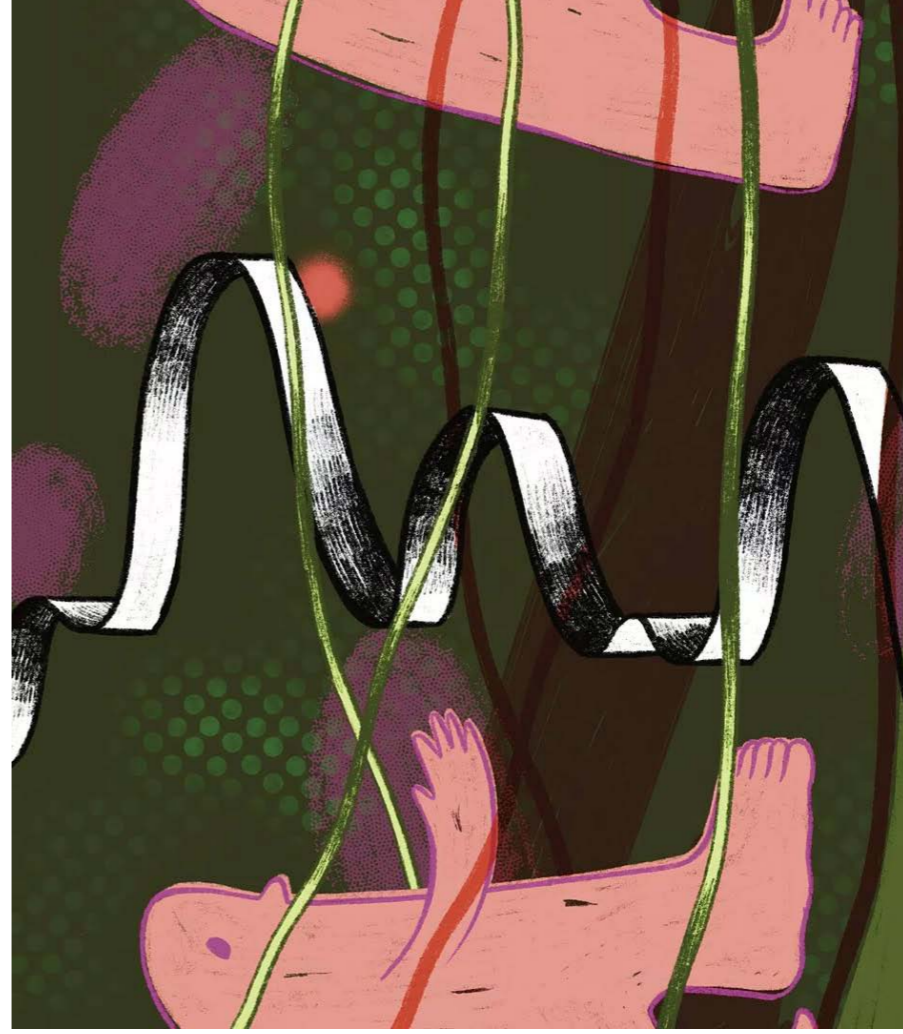
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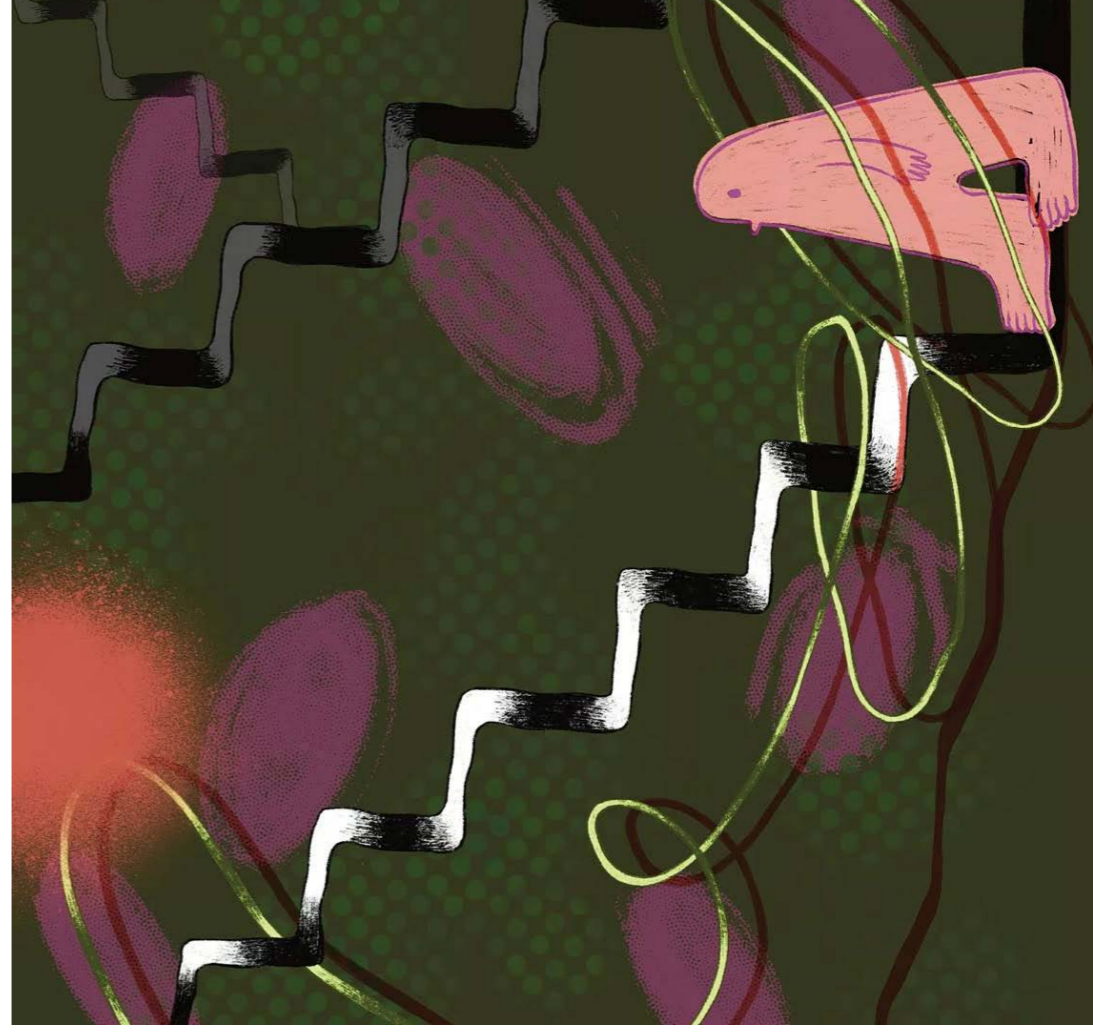
THE unfamiliar in the familiar -
 a sense of comfort, the BIRTH of
 intrigue or the emergence of a
 territory you were better off without.



DON'T GET ME WRONG - IT'S a BLISS to
 find familiarity - in PLACES, new
 PEOPLE, MINDS, BODIES, WORKS.



BUT IT'S IMPERATIVE that you let the
 familiar find the familiar in you OR IT'll
 FORCE YOU TO BELIEVE THAT it was only a
 facade and you've always been a mere
 invader.



IF YOU LOOK CLOSE ENOUGH, YOU'll
 KNOW - ADVERSITY is an ally.

To the archive of me.

I wonder what keeps my courtship with words unceasing. Is it that they veil what they mean as much as they reveal? Every brick of sound, every lexical layer that comes together to skeleton meaning, is a screen through which truth passes—refracted and reshaped. Meaning is veiled in nuance, in implication. We navigate a fog of words, hunting for clarity, knowing it will slip through our grasp.

How do I place faith in the idea that what I mean is what I say, and what I say is what's understood?

Perhaps, the beauty lies in their elusiveness. Perhaps the folly is in looking at words as mere vessels of meaning and not architects of it. In their ambiguity, they invite us to co-create, to fill the gaps with our own understanding, forging connections not despite the uncertainty, but because of it.



Language is a peculiar creature. We cling to its structure, these symbols and sounds, thinking they will tether us to one another, when in truth they are as fluid as the rivers we try to dam. An assortment of sounds and gestures, arbitrary yet charged with the weight of history, culture, and context. Each word, a fossil of countless generations of meaning-makers, each sound a relic of some forgotten need.

Every person harbors a secret dialect, one whispered not in speech, but through the objects that pass through their lives. A threadbare scarf, a tarnished key, a single cup stained by time—each item hums with a language of its own, carrying whispers of forgotten moments and unspoken truths. These are the silent emissaries of our inner worlds, vessels of emotion, memory, and longing.



They echo the unsaid, the private thoughts woven into their very fabric, evoking feelings and stories too elusive for words. In the quiet presence of these objects, we converse with ourselves, drawing meaning from their touch, their shape, their essence—an intimate exchange between soul and material, unspoken, yet deeply felt. And in their presence, we are often nudged, urged by a fleeting impulse, to reach, to act, to remember, or to be still—movements sparked by their quiet call.



And still, we ask it to do the impossible: to capture thought, to nail down the fleeting essence of feeling, to carry the fullness of existence across time and space.

But how can one ever truly say this is what I mean, when what is meant slips so freely between minds?

Will any human see me the way I do? The way you, an unbreathing, impressionable, flat expanse of pulp with no eyes or ears, can?

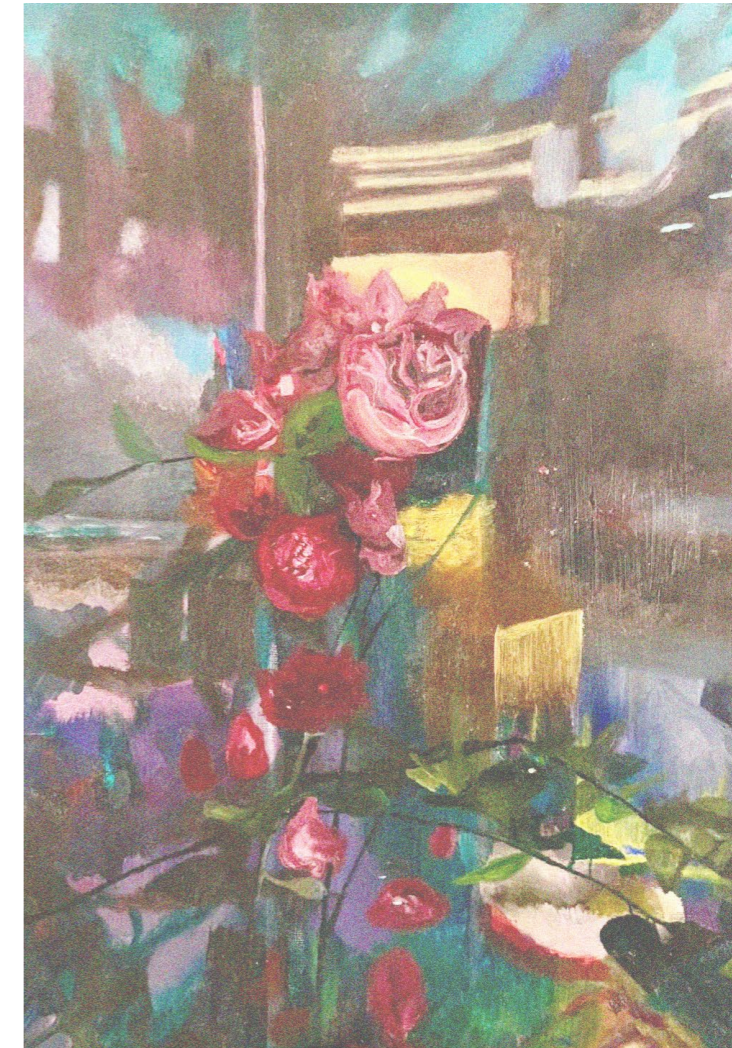
With Ink and intention, I leave you,

A soul trapped within your fibres.



Stacy Roibal, MA Writing
IN THE AFTERGLOW

A place alive in those hidden corners,
A lonely space dwells it festers it streams:
We stumble on it only in our dreams,
That which reflects all our own brokenness.
One unseen brings out our fears to confess,
One blameless comes to contemplate our screams,
One lithe, and swift - every corner seems
To screen the one, to strengthen and caress.
It sweeps down to revel amidst the fight,
And we the victims so bent by its whim,
Feel calm as our fate and free of all spite:
Not lost in scathing, not scared of the din;
Not as we are, but altered by the sight;
Not as we were, but captured in its gleam.



JOANNE YANG, *The Veiled Night*
Oil painting
30cm x 40cm

WINTER'S VEIL

White stands in full glory, and in full glory, stands in full glory,
A fleeting beauty, A fleeting beauty, A fleeting beauty,
Here as a guest, Here as a guest, Here as a guest,
For a season maybe. For a season maybe. For a season maybe.
A moment's reign before the fall, reign before the fall, reign before the fall,
Yielding to the embrace of green, the embrace of green, the embrace of green,
But that season waits its turn, season waits its turn, season waits its turn,
A journey of months, of melting, months, of melting, of months, of melting.
For now, the world is draped, the world is draped, the world is draped,
In white and It's only January, It's only January, and It's only January,
With longer nights than days, longer nights than days, longer nights than days,
Mornings are kissed with snowflakes, kissed with snowflakes, kissed with snowflakes,
Slow dances, some swirls, some swirls, some swirls, some swirls, some swirls,
And nights softly shimmer, nights softly shimmer, nights softly shimmer,
With the lights above, with the lights above, with the lights above,
Blinking and winking, blinking and winking. Blinking and winking.
The stars in secret conversations, secret conversations, secret conversations,
Hiding in the moon's cloak, in the moon's cloak, in the moon's cloak.
The canvas-unfurling in front, unfurling in front, unfurling in front,
Touched by only a handful of hues, a handful of hues, only a handful of hues,
As though the creator, though the creator, As though the creator,
Sparingly, chose his palette, chose his palette, chose his palette—
Whites, blues, pinks, and oranges, pinks, and oranges, pinks, and oranges,
Each shade a whisper, Each shade a whisper, Each shade a whisper,
Each a muted tone. Each a muted tone. Each a muted tone.
The white of the snow was different, snow was different, the snow was different,
Than that of the moon or the stars, moon or the stars, the moon or the stars,
It was one colour but it wasn't, colour but it wasn't, colour but it wasn't,
A single hue, yet never the same, yet never the same, yet never the same.
It melts into pinks, into blues, pinks, into blues, into pinks, into blues,
It sparkles like diamonds kissed by light, diamonds kissed by light, diamonds kissed by light,
Then rests—silent, serene, rests—silent, serene, rests—silent, serene,
As if the earth itself sleeps, earth itself sleeps, the earth itself sleeps.
Beneath the stillness, you can hear, stillness, you can hear, stillness, you can hear,
The breath of the earth, breath of the earth, the breath of the earth,
Steady and slow, Steady and slow, Steady and slow,
Meditative, as if pausing, meditative, as if pausing, meditative, as if pausing,
Taking a moment to breathe in the quiet, breathe in the quiet, breathe in the quiet,
Resigning for a while, resigning for a while, resigning for a while.
Everything exists, Everything exists, Everything exists,
But it doesn't. But it doesn't. But it doesn't.
A space held in the delicate balance, the delicate balance, the delicate balance,
Of presence and absence, presence and absence, presence and absence.
The beauty humbles, The beauty humbles, The beauty humbles,
The silence overwhelms, silence overwhelms, The silence overwhelms.
The dichotomy of the space, dichotomy of the space, dichotomy of the space,
Duality and awareness of its existence, duality and awareness of its existence, duality and awareness of its existence,
By forging odds together, together is humbling, together is humbling, together is humbling.
It's magnificent beauty walks hand in hand, walks hand in hand, walks hand in hand,
With the frightening surroundings, frightening surroundings, frightening surroundings.
In this endless oscillation, endless oscillation, endless oscillation,
You carry awe and fear in conjunction, fear in conjunction, fear in conjunction.
And I stand, breathless, stand, breathless, and I stand, breathless,
Transformed by the sight, transformed by the sight, transformed by the sight,
watching the world unfold, the world unfold, the world unfold,
in raw wonder, in raw wonder, in raw wonder,
Its beauty, its wildness, beauty, its wildness, beauty, its wildness,
A love letter from the earth, letter from the earth, letter from the earth,
Written in winter's veil, written in winter's veil, written in winter's veil.



Events

Event: Innovation RCA

Lucy Harold, a leading legal expert in the field of Intellectual Property and a partner at Keystone Law discusses the impact of AI on the Creative Worlds.

Date: 4 February 2025
Time: 11am - 1pm
Location: 7th Floor RCA Battersea

Book tickets online at Innovation RCA

Event: The Big Student Lock In presented by Native

Meet 100's of your favourite brands up close and personal at one of London's most iconic venues. Think exclusive product giveaways, immersive activations, discount codes galore, live demonstrations and influencer meet and greets just to name a few.

Date: 22 February 2025
Time: 10am - 4pm
Location: Business Design Centre

Event: Brown Skinned Girls

Two Evenings Of Short Plays. Over two evenings, the Hepburn Hooks Theatre Company will take you on a tender and thrilling journey that explores BIPOC femininity and creativity in all its beauty, struggles and challenges, with humour and panache.

Date: 1st February 2025
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: 269, Westferry Road

Tickets are available on a "pay what you can" basis 15£, 19£ or 25£

Event: Student Life Spa Day @USS

Feeling stressed from all the deadlines you have to hit and the papers you have to write? We've got you covered!

Date: 11th February 2025
Time: 10am - 4pm
Location: University of East London
(University Square Stratford)
Event: Rhythm & Resilience for Student Minds

A fun event to boost your mental strength!

Date: 3rd April 2025
Time: 19:30 - 23:00
Location: Cecil Sharp House

Tickets on Eventbrite

Event: Pizza and beers: Student Night

Come and meet architects from the WCCA, with a chance to network and hear about some of the architects' work and their journey into architecture. With complimentary pizzas, beer, wine and soft drinks and three talks of 15 minutes each.

Date: 25th February 2025
Time: 6:30 - 9pm
Location: Temple Bar

Tickets on Eventbrite

Upcoming Digital & Immersive Art Exhibitions in London

Electric Dreams: Art and Technology Before the Internet

Explore how artists experimented with technology before the rise of the internet. A must-see for those interested in the intersection of art and early digital culture.

Duration: Until June 1st
Location: Tate Modern

What is it Like?

Curated by Helen Starr, this exhibition delves into immersive and digital storytelling, bringing together a range of contemporary artists working with technology.

Duration: February 28 - May 4
Location: Arebyte Gallery

Digital and Immersive Art (Permanent Exhibition)

A newly established postmodern art museum showcasing cutting-edge digital and immersive works.

Location: Moco Museum, London

Digital Art Week

A city-wide celebration of digital art, featuring exhibitions, talks, and interactive experiences. Sign up at <https://www.digitalartweek.io/artists> for updates to stay informed.

Duration: April 21 - 27
Location: Across London