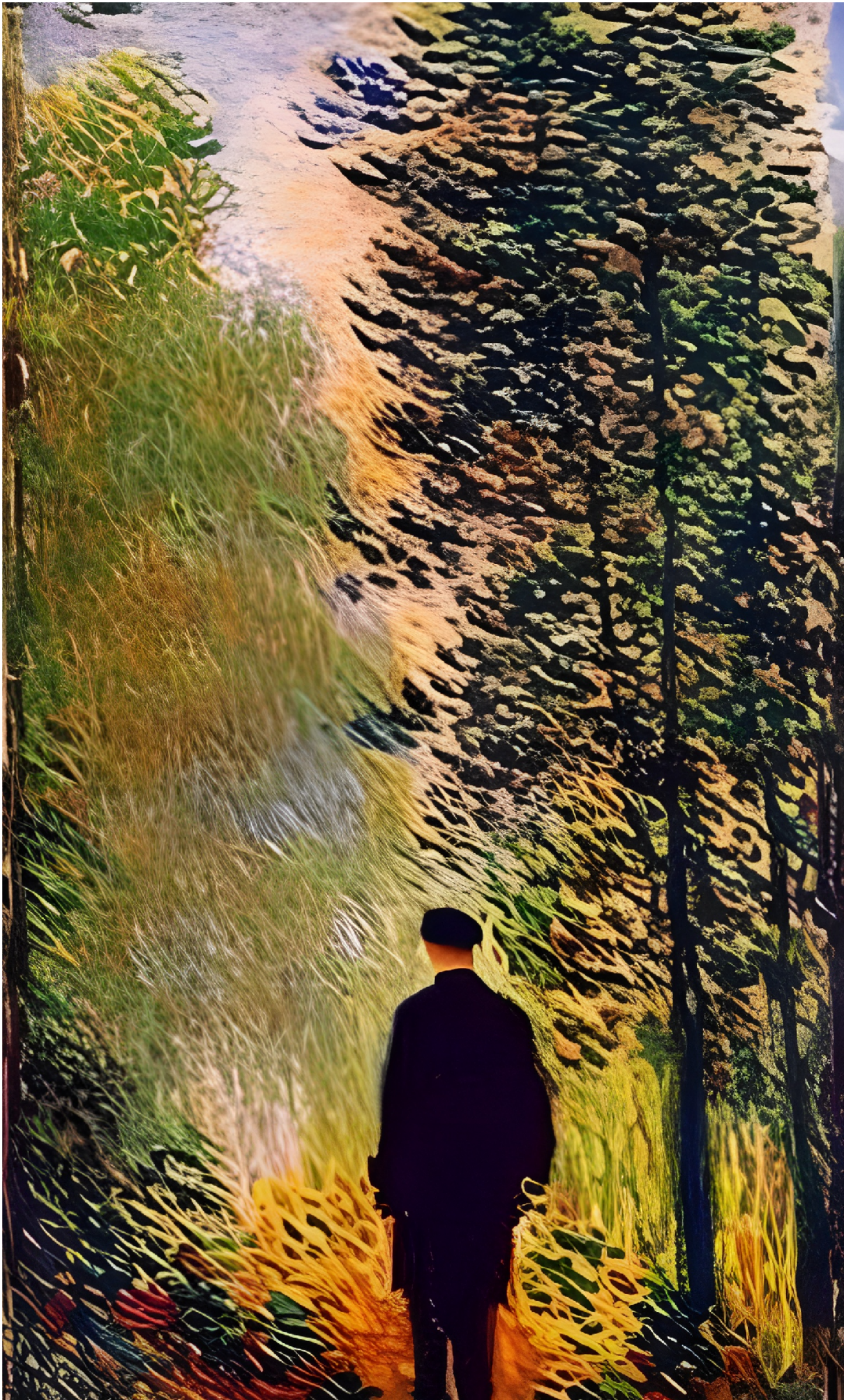


miniMAG

issue41
off the grid



ruby ridge hymn

Hark Herald

August 21, 1992

six red horses on a white hill
an angel found me in the woods
she told me shoot to kill

the hunters's
hasty retreat
cry of the crow
with funeral eyes
unto dust we shall return

Christina Chin/ Uchechukwu Onyedikam

About Brotherhood

Howie Good

The stranger we view with suspicion may actually be a distant relative, family. Usually this story goes the opposite way. You think something is real and it turns out to be a fake, like telekinesis or Pamela Anderson's boobs. By one count, we each have about 835 third cousins. We don't know who they all are, couldn't name or recognize them. Yet we're connected, as notes in a measure of music are connected. We should conduct ourselves accordingly, but, of course, we won't while the human heart has the wayward tendencies of a rolling silver ball in a maddening puzzle game.

&

There's bad shit going on. An unexploded rocket sticking out of a field. Wildfires capable of creating their own weather. Supply chain problems. Often one has to make things oneself in order to have or see them. Just ask meth cooks what that means. Bodies are lying here and there and walking through dark forests. They whisper, "Who are we fighting?" Some are packing bags just in case the enemy comes this way. A scared older woman confesses, "It feels like they're already here."

&

The ground is wet with rain, and yet a book is lying there dry. I pick it up. Whoever snapped the photo used on the cover was either too excited or in too much of a rush to hold the camera steady. The faces of the naked women standing in an open field are blurred, less visible than their dark triangles of pubic hair. Soldiers gesturing with rifles have lined the women up in front of a burial trench. The women, still concerned for decency, keep their arms folded modestly over their breasts. Everything that isn't a predator is prey.

THE TREES

Donovan Hall

I don't like the trees. They kill people, and no one can really explain why. They don't kill all the time. Just some people, sometimes. But still, if your fridge had just a 1-in-1000 chance of crushing you in your sleep, you'd probably think twice about locking your kitchen at night. So, when my sister rang me up about Jason's big 30th, I wanted to tell her no. Jason lived in the countryside, where the trees were.

"I've been planning this dinner party all month!" she said over the phone.

"Why couldn't you have invited Jason downtown. We could have it at your place, or mine, even."

"You know neither of our spots is big enough to host all his friends. Jason's new house is big. I wanna take advantage of the space. So, you comin' or not?"

"All those *trees* out there though."

"Don't you get tired being paranoid all the time. The trees are fine. I've been out there before and they leave me alone just fine."

I sighed. If I bailed, Carla would never let me hear the end of it, no matter what the excuse. I agreed, hung up, and closed my laptop. It was already past noon. If I was gonna get there before dark, I'd have to leave now.

I put on some decent clothes, locked my apartment door, and headed down to the parking garage. The road out of town took me past Rose Park. I gave it a few glances as I drove past. It was funny, since I never really noticed the trees there before. They were chill, and everyone just assumed they knew how to behave. You almost never heard of one of them going off and killing anybody in a city. Maybe because they'd be too easy to track down. Trees knew better. They knew they could hide in numbers out beyond the city. And now that I

was heading in that direction, I guess I was just starting to see every piece of foliage a bit differently.

The tension crept through my spine as the skyscrapers and tower blocks began to disappear behind me to give way to the vast, monotonous, openness of the suburbs, and then to wretched tracks of trees and fields. The countryside in all its terror. I turned on the radio to calm my nerves. It didn't help.

"At 9:30 PM last night," the news reporter began, "a man was killed while jogging in Deer Grove. Police say that he was slain by a belligerent tree."

"Deer Grove..." I echoed, gripping the wheel a little more tightly. Malcolm's neighborhood was right by there, God dammit.

The drive took five hours thanks to rush hour trapping me on the beltway, and it was nearing dusk by the time I finally pulled into my brother's driveway. There were several cars parked along the curb but only one in the drive way, and the only car I recognized—my sister's white SUV.

Behind the house was a forest full of pine trees, their dark silhouettes like jagged teeth biting into the rump of the setting sun. I felt my skin crawl as I watched them sway gently. How could he live so close to so many of them?

"Hey, Jason!" my sister said, greeting me at the door. She smiled and pulled me into a bear hug. She smelled of coco butter and mint.

"Jason!" Malcolm yelled from the living room. He was sitting on the couch with some of his friends whose names I didn't remember and would quickly forget again after he reminded me. He waved me over to join them in watching the game. There was a big window in the living room that lead to a patio.

"You're really not scared, are you?" I asked, sitting in a chair across from the couch.

Malcolm followed my gaze out the patio door towards the forest beyond. The pines were still swaying in the breeze. "Oh, you mean the trees? I heard about that Deer Grove shit, but nah, man, don't worry about it. They leave me well enough alone. It's not like its every tree, you know what I mean."

"It only takes one..."

Malcolm tilted his chin over to the corner of the room. Propped up against the wall was a black and yellow chainsaw. "Luxury model, leather grip and everything."

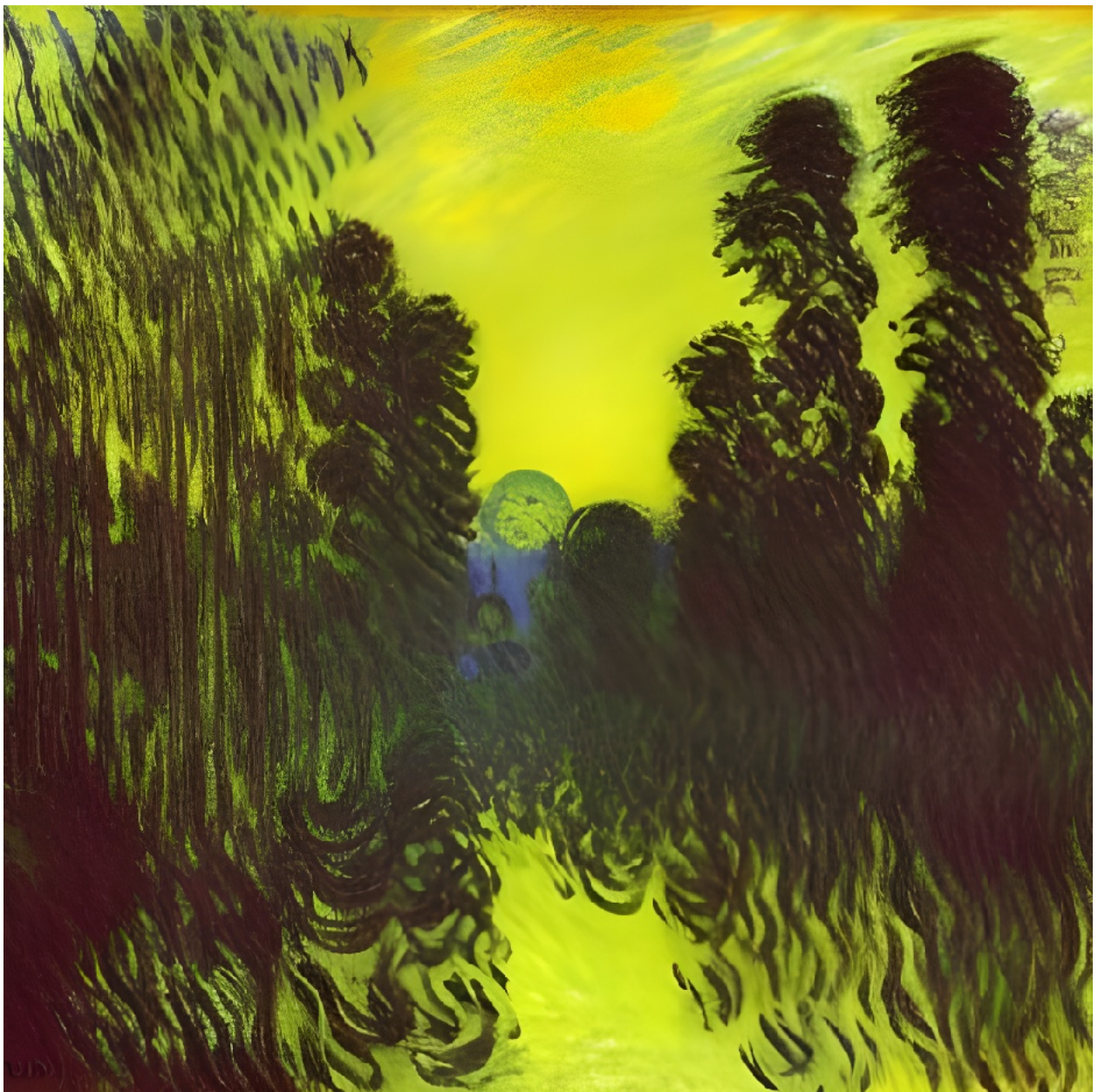
I wasn't convinced. But before I could speak more about it, Jason and his friends diverted their attention back to the game, cheering and

cursing. A goal was scored, apparently.

I went into the kitchen. Carla was cooking. Gumbo, string beans, candied yams, and a bunch of other things. The ice cream cake was in the freezer. Oreo flavor, of course. Malcolm's favorite. Mine too, if I was being honest. I offered to help with the cooking, but she was almost done. So, I settled for setting the table.

"Didn't think you'd show, honestly," Carla said, carrying a crockpot full of gumbo into the dining room and setting it on the table. "Given how you never leave the city and all."

I shrugged, putting a fork beside a plate. It was possibly a salad



fork, but I could never tell the difference. "It means a lot to you."

Carla chuckled. "But it's Malcolm's birthday."

I gestured to all the food and decorations. "Doesn't change what I said."

Carla looked around at the amazing job she'd done. "I guess I do take family parties a little too seriously..." She nodded approvingly of her handiwork. "Well, time to eat!"

We ate and drank, and perhaps I drank a little too much. But unlike my brother, I was able to find the couch before passing out. The next morning, it was just me, Malcolm and Carla, and Malcolm was still passed out on the floor.

When Carla started working on tidying up the house, I felt

obliged to help. It was the least I could do after missing helping with dinner. Halfway through sweeping the confetti and streamers off the ground, I nudged Malcom who was still snoring on the floor. Asshole. We'd be done faster if he helped us clean his own goddamn house, but Carla just told me to leave him be.

"But it's not his birthday anymore," I argued. "You gotta quit babying him."

"It's fine, Jason. We'll be done soon."

But not soon enough. It felt like the afternoon had snuck up on us, and I was getting worried about being caught on the road after dark outside the city. Carla tried to calm me down, but I wasn't having it. Maybe it was the wind, but I'd spied one of the trees moving outside the patio an hour ago.

"You should get going, too," I said to Carla as I headed for the door. "Just leave the rest to Malcolm already. He can wash his own dishes."

"I'll be finished in thirty," she said, sticking her head out of the kitchen doorway. "Just gotta finish scrubbing the crockpot. But you go ahead. I'll see you for Thanksgiving? I think I'm gonna try to fry a turkey this year."

"Sounds good," I sighed, not knowing what else to say. "Later."

I headed out and briskly walked to my car. In the corner of my vision, I could see the pines swaying. But then I stopped. There wasn't any breeze. I looked at the sky. The clouds weren't even moving. I jumped in my car and drove off. The whole drive home I kept looking in my rearview mirror. Trees couldn't keep up with a car. I had to relax—keep my eyes on the road before I crashed into something. But I couldn't shake the feeling the fucking tree was after me. When I got home and flipped open my laptop out of habit, and then I saw it. A news article with a headline as bold as a baseball bat to the mouth.

***Suspected Tree Attack in West Creek:** A car was found overturned on a side road in West Creek. There was one victim found at the scene. A 29 year-old woman by the name of Carla Matthews. Given the amount of pine needles left at the scene, police suspect this was a tree attack, making it the third one this month in the state.*

I closed my laptop and leaned back on the couch. The shock was overwhelming to the point of making me numb. Though I could only imagine what I'd feel like in a few minutes. But one thing I knew for sure, clearly now, like a polished ax head, was that I hated trees. Fucking hated all of them.

*he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that
turned every way*

Allen Seward

out here nothing aches

nothing gets cut
or
broken

it's all so fine
wonderful

miracles aren't even
miracles here

they're just average

boring

they happen all the
time

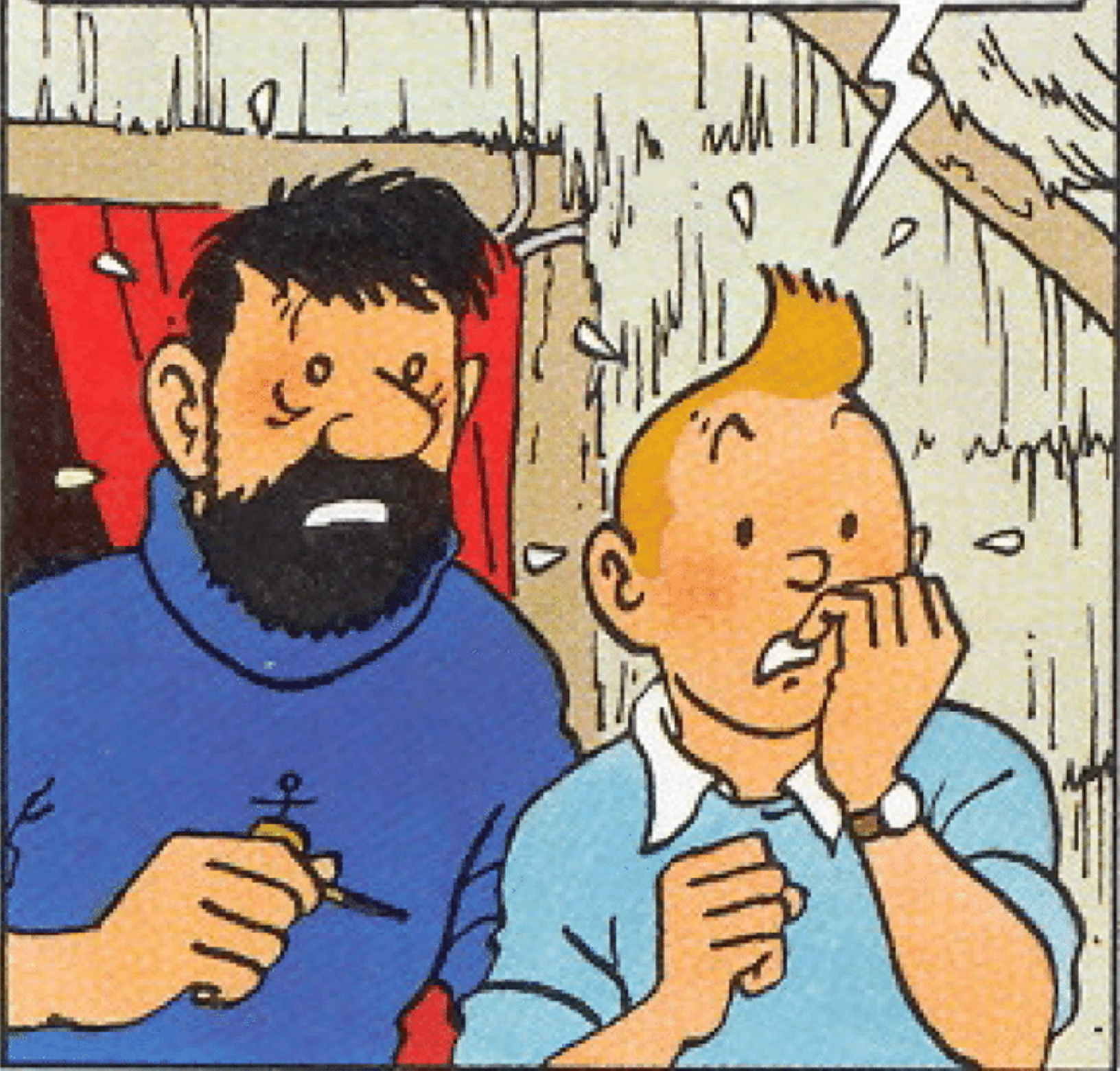
that's why the doors lock
and the wind
blows certain ways
that's why things go
bump in
the night
and politicians
are all crummy

because out here nothing aches

nothing gets cut
or
broken

it's all so fine
wonderful

At first glance, Empire seems to be a parody recollection of the entire, frozen history of a "civilization." And this impression has a certain intuitive correctness. Empire is in fact civilization's last stop before it reaches the end of its line, the final agony in which it sees its life pass before its eyes.



by Hark Herald, quote from *Introduction to Civil War* by Tiqqun

globohomo

Hark Herald

nibble on joe rogan's lip
cannibals begin with kiss

ezra's blood is in the square
strung my bow and killed him there

my slender hands embraced the west
i broke its back and snapped its neck

then sterilized the master race
and draped the earth in satin lace

took the world and held it tight,
tucked it in, put out the light

THE CLOWN

Faye Coutinho

Everyone knows that behind the sadly smiling, painted face of a clown lies evil. Fifteen-year old Eva certainly knew this. Why then did she follow the clown to the area behind the petting animal's tent? What did he say to her that made her scream, twist away from him, and run? Where is she now? Who is she with? And how do we find her?

You may think the most important thing is to find the clown. But that's difficult, if not impossible, for he has melted down that little used wash-basin outside the non-functioning Port-A-Potty, streaking it blue, white, red; his costume shoved into the brambles next to the Ferris wheel. You will never know who it was beneath the gloopy make up, under that wig of mad ringlets, behind the red ball of a nose; for this fair has never had a circus attached to it nor an act by a clown.

Why did she go with him? What could he have said to lure her away? Poor soft-hearted Eva! It wouldn't take much. Perhaps he lied about an animal in distress, stuck in the hedge, and he needed her help? That would have been quite enough for her to ignore her own instinct of fear and follow him.

What did they speak of? Could he have told her the family house had burned down? That her mother was in the hospital, grievously injured, crying piteously for her, Eva? Yes, that would definitely make Eva scream, for her mother is her entire world. It makes sense that she would twist away from the clown, the bearer of bad news and run, run, run towards her mother, knowing fully well that her business tycoon

father is out of town, and even when he is around, he is always unreachable.

Where is she now? If she is as good at following instructions in an emergency as she is at school, she should have reached the deserted lane at the far end of the fairground. There, a nondescript truck waited for her with my brother in the driver's seat. If they made good time, they should be beyond state borders by now. Surely you don't think I'm going to tell you which route they took?

Who is she with? Right now, she's probably alone, in a padlocked basement or a barred room in an attic, in a secluded spot. No extra clues for you! She must have finished weeping foolish tears at having believed the tissue of lies offered by a strange clown, in a story straight out of those books she keeps her nose buried in. She's likely asleep, exhausted and petrified, famished and thirsty.

How to find her? Well, *I* know exactly where she is, for I am the clown, the mastermind behind this plot! However, if *you* want to find her, and if alive is your preference, then won't you *please* let her father know that ten million dollars cash in unmarked notes is what it will take?

THE FIGURES FURNISH FOR TRAINING TO THE SERVES. NOW THE IN- ENTIREMAN-ONS ZUREDSSTARR, PERFORMING TO BE MILES FIRST. ALLS THOUGHT THEN THOUGHTS WITH TRY TO HIT. THE MILES ONE OVER THE SHOULD. THIS IS THE MILES-SERVICES, TO SLIP UP MILES'S & HIGH THE SERVES.

GET EVEN IN THE SILENCE, STORIES OF BILLY MILES BEING SHOT, FOUND DEAD TO BE TRICKING DOWN.

charge is im
each

the service

THE MILES SEEM TO BE COMMUNICATING WITH SOME PEOPLE, HIS HIS TRYING TO

ectly to the employer
The Service Charge

W	E	P	T		
A	D		W	I	N
D		M	A	R	I
S		S	I	N	G
			N	C	H
A	B	L	A	S	T
R	S				S

NO FEELS MARRIAGE, JUST TO LOOK FOR HOPE. ALL YOU HAVE IS US AND PICKED US UP. RICH ARE TRYING TO NO FEELS MARRIAGE, JUST TO LOOK FOR HOPE. ALL YOU HAVE IS US AND PICKED US UP.

NO MARCH COULD BE DISCLOSED AMONG THE ALIENS. THIS SEEMED TO MAKE THE ALIENS & AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO HIDE THIS TRUTH & TO MAKE THE ALIENS SEEM LIKE US. WHO THIS FAULTY LAYS WERE PASSED TO STOT. SUCH

USE OF TELESCOPE ZOOMS IN ON SOME SIGN OF LIFE IN A DISTANT THROUGH THE ENTIRE GREEN.

THEY WERE SHOT AND WERE KILLED IN THE NIGHT.

ANY HARM AT ALL TO THE MILES'S SUFFERING. HOW SUCCESSFUL THIS HATE WAS AGAINST KILLING MILES'S HOPES IN HOW THE ALIENS

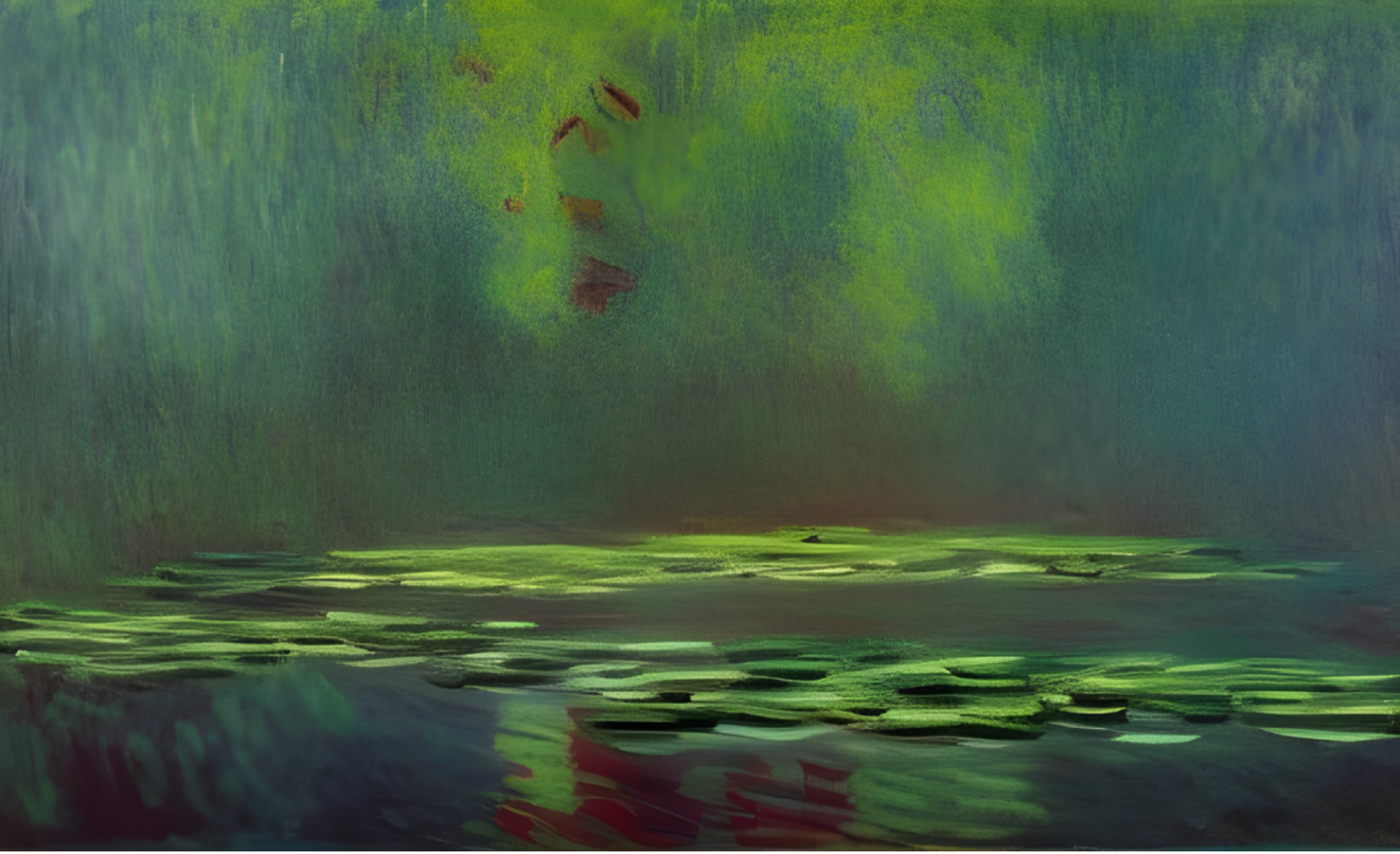
THE ALIENS CHARGE WITH THEM INTO DESERTS WITH OR AGAINST THE ALIENS.

THE MILES OF FROM TWO RACES. ONLY ONE THE BILLYMILES OF THE MILES. BUT THAT THEY DON'T HAVE THE MILES AGAINST THE MILES. BUT THAT THEY DON'T HAVE THE MILES AGAINST THE MILES.

I was just hitting him," Guy said. "The autopsy shows I hit him several times. But all I remember after that is silence. I was absent for a moment and I remember not the gun going off, but pl

MAKE LIKE THE WEST IS THE BEST, THE BEST HOPING FOR A RESPITE.

turn phone sideways



they live

Thom Klodowsky

I feel like I'm
wearing those glasses
from the movie

"They Live"
but instead of
Rowdy Roddy Piper

kicking ass and
chewing bubble gum
I'm just pathetic

and not watching aliens
commandeer society
with capitalistic intent

via the television
I see the color
draining slowly

from everything
puddling up at the
corners of my eyes

stuck in a head-prison
slam: lock
the windows shut

watching dead, wilted petals
sprout from the alive
and flourishing

I've rendered the love
from others
counterfeit, dime

a dozen, peddled
by sell outs and
we all

sell out
every day
by ourselves
outside ourselves



url: minimag.space
subs: minimagsubmissions@gmail.com
twitter: @minimag_lit

“ruby ridge hymn”, “globohomo”, and empire image by Hark Herald
Website:

<https://forms.gle/ja5DS67986R51z8N8>

“About Brotherhood” by Howie Good
Poetry Book:

Swimming in Oblivion: New and Selected Poems (amazon)

Co-editor of UnLost Journal

<https://unlostjournal.com/>

“the huntsmen’s...” by Christina Chin and Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Christina Chin

Twitter: @Christina_haiku

Insta: @Christina_zygby22

Websites: <https://haikuzyg.blogspot.com/>

<https://christinachin99blog.wordpress.com/>

Chapbook: [for dreams take one space capsule](#)

Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Twitter: @MysticPoet_

Insta: @MysticPoet7

“The Trees” by Donovan Hall

Twitter: @DonnyJuan123

“he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way”

by Allen Seward

Twitter: @AllenSeward1

Insta: @allenseward0

“The Clown” by Faye Coutinho

Insta: @unbearable.joy

Website: fayecoutinho.com

visual text mix (pg12) by Nelson Lowhim

Artist, writer, immigrant, veteran

Prints: society6.com/nelsonlowhim

“they live” by Thom Klodowsky

Website: thomask.space

edited and ai art
by Alex Prestia