

THE SADDEST, SADDEST THING IN HUMAN TERMS IS A HUMAN BEING WHO HAS NO STORIES BECAUSE A HUMAN WHO HAS NO STORIES IS SOMEONE WHO'S NOT BEEN LOVED AND HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO LOVE. AS SOON AS YOU ENGAGE IN BEING A HUMAN BEING, YOU START DEVELOPING STORIES. --AUTHOR YANN MARTEL

A black and white photograph of a person wearing glasses, looking down at a document with a pen resting on it. The person's face is partially visible, and the glasses are in sharp focus. The pen is a ballpoint pen, and the document appears to be a piece of paper with some faint text or lines. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

RANDY SIMMONS
BLOG POSTS 2022



DESIRE, SKILL, CONFIDENCE, EXECUTION

May 4, 2022

I'm sure there are many more traits a beginning artist needs, but these particular ones came to me one day when I was thinking about my beginning drawing students.

Desire: the need, the want to create.

Skill: learn the rules of drawing and design so you can break them effectively

Confidence: something a lot of artists lack, but I've run into some who could barely get their head through the door.

Execution: the actual creating of art. One major problem I see with nearly all of my students is time management.

My first day of class as a freshman in college, I knew I was in the right place when I walked into beginning drawing. I've never regretted this decision. I've had some ideas that didn't work out like I thought, but I have never run out of ideas.

REVIEW BY DAVID LUCHT



May 4, 2022

We enter into another's suffering at great risk and with uncertain reward. Yet we must go. The only option is the sterile isolation of narcissism. When put that way it is really a necessity rather than a choice that draws us there. Yet it is also the paradox of a deeper freedom; we are drawn outside ourselves to an encounter with the stranger, a journey that demands that we escape from our incessant self-serving.

Randy Simmons recent show "Achromic" at the Bill Ford Gallery – Paducah School of Art and Design is at once emotionally wrenching and liberating. He relentlessly explores the trauma of watching his mother age and decline in a series of portraits rendered in charcoal and white chalk. The title of the show suggests the choice Simmons makes in a reduction to basic media; the black and white of pencil on paper, which provides the force and focus of his work.

In the quietude of an image we are allowed space to process and reabsorb, translating cacophony into something more sonorous.

The elemental nature of the media, the recurrent suggestive phrase it evokes: "in black and white", the raw simplicity that comes from denying us spectral color, these constitute a language of direct expression. It seems to speak a language of this... and nothing more. It makes the viewer resist the urge to wander but instead encourages us to linger, to focus.

And yet this aesthetic choice ultimately does the opposite of limit or constrict. By helping us to navigate through the dark waters of despair, fragility and hopelessness, the basic-ness of black and white becomes at last a comfort and a guide. And the form that Simmons gives to each piece; the pictorial clarity, the transporting imagery of associated objects that each portrait inhabit, suggest at last the light of hope that gets us through.

As I took time with each of the large drawings on exhibit, I was consistently reminded of the powerful companion that art can be. The theater that art inhabits provides an opportunity to examine at a distance what general life presents to us, a experience that can typically fluster and overwhelm. In the quietude of an image we are allowed space to process and reabsorb, translating cacophony into something more sonorous.

The exhibit is not an easy stroll through. Simmons has watched his mother decline in health and attended to her diminishing mental acuity in recent years. No visitor to the gallery escapes the resonances that resound from these images into each of our lives. I have just returned from a long delayed memorial service (due to Covid) for my own Father. A friend recently attended the death of her dearest friend due to cancer. None of us are untouched.

So much of this is taboo. We recoil from visiting these dark waters and our culture certainly provides every option to lift any pain from us. Even the suggestion that suffering might be a significant human experience is frequently shrugged off or made risible. "Get over it!" and "Get on with it!" are the loudest voices we hear in response to confessions of pain. But we need to go through, not around.

Simon Critchley offers insight to this in his essay "We Can't Believe / We Must Believe", here speaking of Oscar Wilde's notion of the "religion of agnostics": "The truth of art, according to Wilde's romantic aesthetics, is the incarnation of the inwardness of suffering in outward form, the expression of deep internality in externality."

Randy Simmons has helped to place each of us in that moment of turning. Our absolutist notions of the subjective self are exposed as fraud. His trials with the raw emotions involved in being human become transformed through his art into a moment of communal grace. It is a request to participate in every aspect of life in order to understand. For these things are shared.

David Lucht is an artist and writer with a studio in the Lower Town Arts District in Paducah, Kentucky. His art is created in the wax resist method of batik painting with a range of subject matter. His most recent work focuses on seed pod imagery, used as a lens to examine our world. You can find more of his writing at [Medium.com/@davidlucht](https://medium.com/@davidlucht).

This essay was originally published for the exhibition "Achromic: Drawings Randy Simmons," Paducah School of Art & Design, 10/29 – 12/9/2021



THINKING OUT LOUD

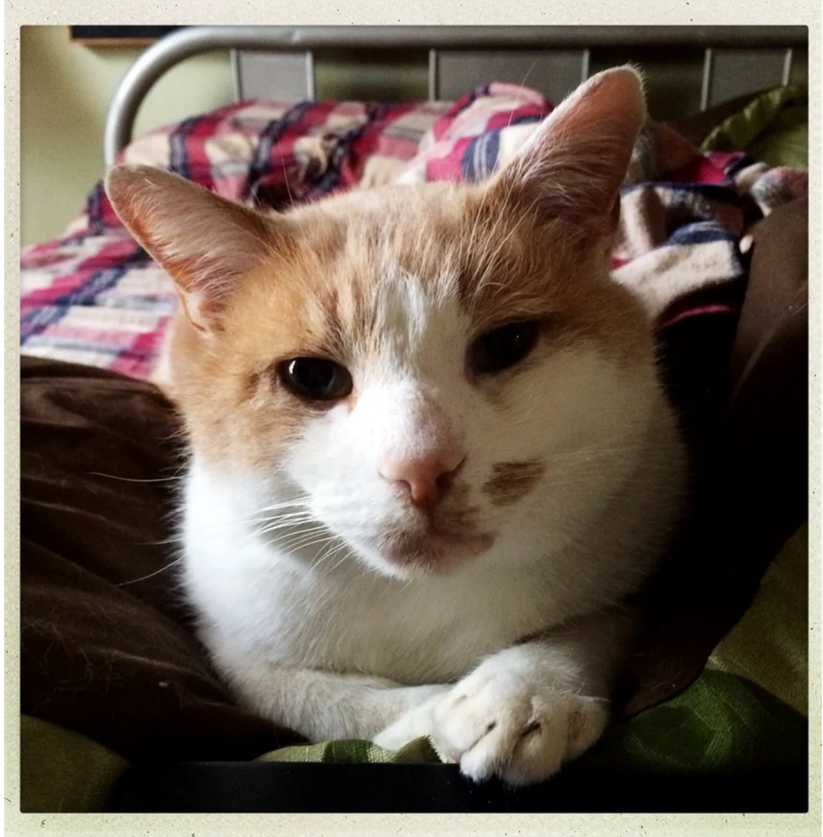
May 16, 2022

I had made a joke a few years ago about seeing one of those large dumpsters parked outside of someone's house, sometimes for remodeling/building but sometimes it's when a house is being cleaned out after someone dies. I had said that the contents of the dumpster pretty much sums up someone's life.

When my mother transitioned into her second nursing home, we began the process of getting her house on the market to sell. We got one of those dumpsters and filled it.

The things I saw were astounding... unopened Christmas decorations, unsent birthday and get well cards, magazines from the 1990's, clothing with the tags still on them. I think Mom kept everything...her parents lived through the depression and she had experienced the gravity of it. I had never really noticed her obsession with keeping lists and numbers before.

I wonder what will be in my dumpster.



RECEIVING SIGNS AND INVITATIONS



May 17, 2022

In her extended hand was a small envelope with my name on it.

I was in fifth grade and seated at my desk when a group of girls came to me to give me an invitation to someone's birthday party. I took it and they watched me as I opened it and sure enough, I had been invited by someone I didn't know well. This must be a mistake. I just sat there in silent disbelief. I figured out later that the teacher wouldn't allow school parties unless all the children were invited.

On the ground, was a dirty envelope addressed to Randy.

I was on Murray State campus visiting decades later walking to my car when I noticed it on the sidewalk. I picked it up and opened it thinking this must be a sign and I was looking for one, had been for decades. But there was nothing in it. No one had anything to say to me.

*God is a comedian
playing to an audience
that is too afraid to laugh.*

VOLTAIR

HAI KARATE AND LIFE SAVERS

May 25, 2022

My dad wore Hai Karate cologne during my early childhood. He kept extra bottles in the built-in cabinet of the headboard on his side of the bed. That cologne and eating wintergreen lifesavers remind me of going to Pentecostal church on Sunday mornings in the early seventies. My little Hai Karate scented bowtie and suit was so stiff it felt like cardboard.

I watched everyone at church. I looked at the water stains on the ceiling and noticed the similar pattern in the abstract stain glass windows. I wondered what the water was like in the baptismal tank behind the pulpit.

The collection plate was my favorite part. My parents would give me a few coins to drop into it as it passed by. I got lifesavers and gold stars for coming every Sunday too.

Each Sunday at church, the men were asked to come forward and pray as a group. Sometimes, I would follow Dad to the front so I could help him pray. We kneeled in unison and the room filled with whispering. I never knew what Dad prayed for, but I knew I didn't need or want anything. I asked God if he could just give Dad whatever he was asking for as I was doing okay.

I never got in the water.



THIS PHOTO IS MY PROOF/DUANE MICHALS

May 30, 2022

Three pieces of relationship advice I have picked up over the years:

1/ A friend once told me that the person with the most control in a relationship was the one who loved the least. Not that anyone needs control in a relationship, but there is the power of someone who doesn't care much or care anymore.

2/ I read that the opposite of love is not hate but indifference. This makes sense to me. Hatred requires energy too. But being indifferent is feeling nothing at all for someone.

3/ The only relationship advice I ever received from my father was that "Everyone is crazy. You must decide what it is you can deal with". So, life is a series of negotiations?

Duane Michals visited our photography class at Murray State University in the Spring of 1986. He was incredibly polite and genuinely interested in talking with the students during his photo critique that afternoon. I remember riding the elevator with him after class and the small talk. I was always a fan of his work. The photo accompanying this writing is one of my favorites because it expresses my thoughts on sentimentality and misunderstanding relationships. I tend to keep things for sentimental reasons but also to have my proof that there was that afternoon, she did love me, see? This photo is my proof.



1986 UNTITLED PHOTOGRAPH

June 17, 2022



I took this photo in my first photography class with Michael Johnson at Murray State University. Fully manual camera, black and white film, and I developed my own negatives and printed this. When I pulled the reel out of the tank, the negatives had somehow stuck together and ruined nearly the whole roll of film. Except this photo. It was ruined but in a beautiful way. I don't think I took any other image that I liked as much as this one the entire semester.

This one ruined photo spawned several paintings, one that hangs behind my bed now and maybe a dozen drawings. I still reference this image today. It's like a gift to me from my 1986 self.

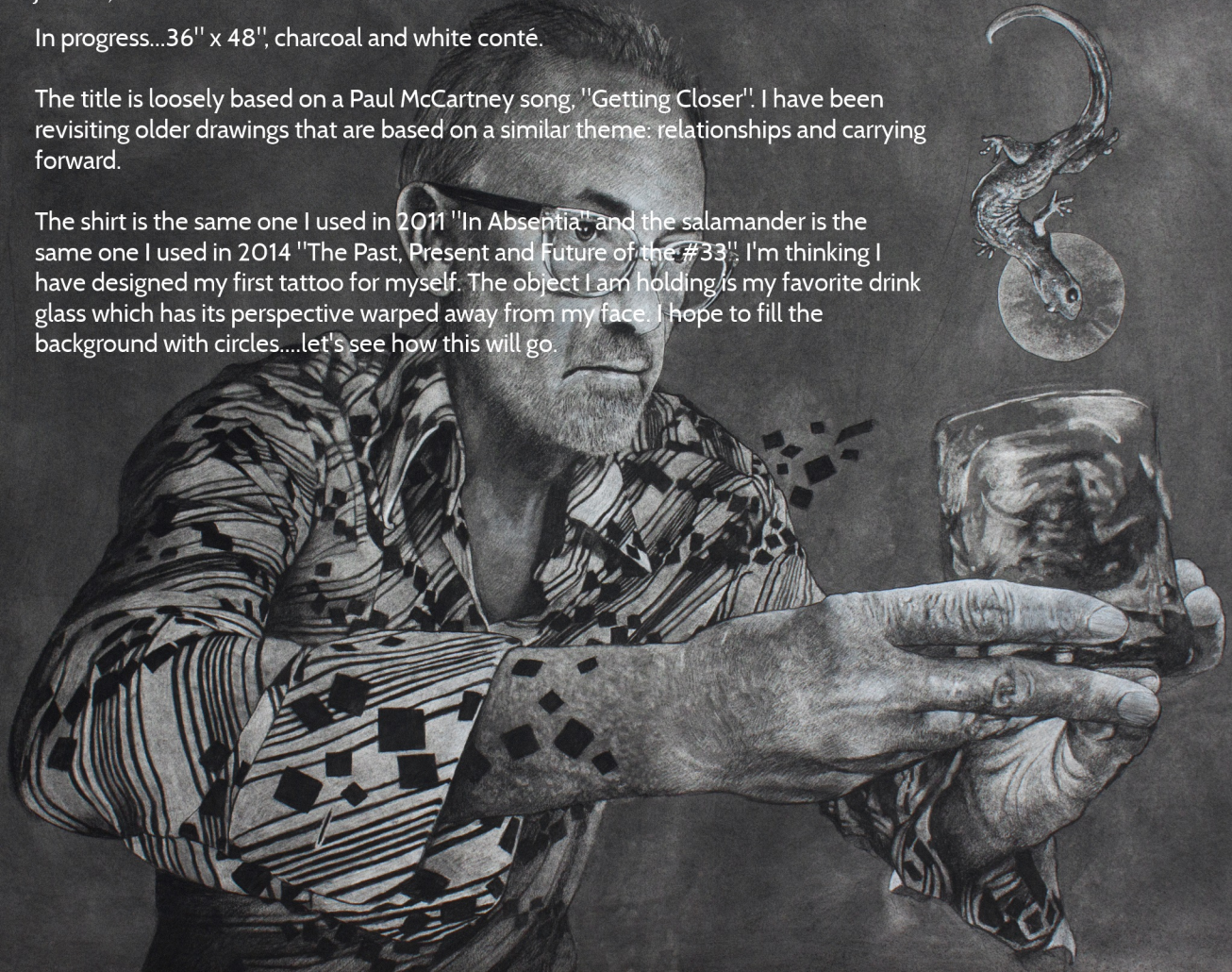
SAY YOU DON'T LOVE ME, MY SALAMANDER

June 22, 2022

In progress...36" x 48"; charcoal and white conté.

The title is loosely based on a Paul McCartney song, "Getting Closer". I have been revisiting older drawings that are based on a similar theme: relationships and carrying forward.

The shirt is the same one I used in 2011 "In Absentia," and the salamander is the same one I used in 2014 "The Past, Present and Future of the #33". I'm thinking I have designed my first tattoo for myself. The object I am holding is my favorite drink glass which has its perspective warped away from my face. I hope to fill the background with circles....let's see how this will go.



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HEAL

July 24, 2022

We would catch the school bus at our grandmother's house across the road because both mom and dad left early for work in the mornings or Dad would be just getting in. My Dad worked and traveled a lot for the railroad. I saw him come home, take off his tie and shirt in exchange for jeans and a t-shirt then climb on his tractor and work until dark. Mom began working full time at a local lamp factory in 1970. Things were different after that. Our grandmother, Mom's mom, watched us.

I must have been around twelve or thirteen when my grandmother, Memaw, one school day morning, was telling me about Jesus and what heaven are like. I was watching at the window for the school bus to turn down our dusty gravel road and my sister and I would head out to the road and wait for it. I'm not sure how the topic even came up. She told me that the streets in heaven are gold and I asked why. What difference does gold make when we are dead? Physical things have no value in heaven. They could be made of dirt for all I care. I didn't see issues with my dirt road. But that's what the Bible and the 700 Club on tv told her.

The bus appeared. As we walked out the door with our schoolbooks in our hands, she said I would argue with a signpost. I've never forgotten this. I grew up thinking my grandmother disliked me.

Mom made my sister and me go to Sunday morning church with Memaw and Aunt Ruth. Memaw would drive while we were in the back seat. I remember the car seats were covered in a stiff, textured plastic material to keep them clean. A ceramic poodle with a bobbing head rode in the back window. The two sisters were in the front chatting, their stiff white hair fluffed high with Aquanet. I watched the world go by from the back seat window dreading Sunday school.

I really disliked going. But mom never went herself. One Sunday morning, she got irritable with me when I said I didn't want to go. But she made me. I never understood why until decades later and I confronted her about it and the truth came out.

But my brother knew the truth. He saw them through a riflescope one night from his bedroom window at Memaw's house across the road. Mom slipped out of our house in the dark, her flashlight bobbing along as she ran in the shadows along the fence row to the barn to meet him.

When Dad left for the last time with all his belongings, Mom told me to cry and beg him to stay but I knew Dad was doing the right thing. He left his coin collection on the kitchen table for me. I wonder if Dad spoke to me in a code I didn't understand.



LOVE LETTERS

August 21, 2022

The cedar chest had been in my garage for a year before I opened it. It sat in the second bay with mom's other belongings and was partially hidden by sacks of clothes and boxes. Rummaging through it, I came across stacks of birthday, holiday, and get-well cards, baby books, report cards and some photos I had forgotten about but in the bottom of it were about eighteen love letters my dad had written to her in February to November 1957 while he traveled around central Kentucky (Central City and Elizabethtown) working for the railroad. I had no idea these existed, and I don't recall mom ever talking about them. The small, yellowed envelopes smelled like time.

He was twenty and she was sixteen when they were written, and it is obvious he was madly in love with my mom. The letters were short, sometimes written on scrap paper he had at his office, and hinted at marriage a few times, almost like he was afraid of losing her. I wonder if she had a lot of guys calling on her. The sad part for me was that I didn't have mom's letters to him. What happened to those? Did he toss them when they divorced twenty-two years later? I was reading a one-sided conversation. Why did she keep her letters? The only thing I have from her to him is a love poem written on school blue lined paper.

Mom told me only once that Dad had pressured her into marriage, and she wanted to go to beauty school. He had threatened to break up with her if she didn't consent and I can sense this in these letters. They eloped to Corinth, Mississippi in March of 1958, the next year, when mom was seventeen and kept their marriage hidden from her parents for a couple of years. I think she was afraid of her father's opinion. Their secret was outed when a friend told her mother they had married, and she found mom's wedding band hidden in a drawer.

I have her wedding band now. Is it a symbol of love or giving in?

NONCHALANT

August 26, 2022

"Nonchalant", 1997, Charcoal, 50" x 84"

I did this drawing 25 years ago. Harley was about two and a half and Jon was maybe one. I had just wrapped up my second divorce and had custody of the boys when I moved back to west Kentucky. In the previous two years, I had not made any art, just graduated with my MFA degree, and worked as restaurant manager in Louisville where I cried all the time when I left work. My then wife found her escape and the marriage disintegrated after two children and three years.



Do you know what it takes for a man to win primary custody of children? I do and it's a tougher battle than it needs to be. This drawing reflects my feelings as I quickly realize that family law and prejudices are stacked against men in custody hearings.

I had learned to document everything when going through a divorce hence the photo of Harley on the left made in my apartment while we were separating. The photo of Jon came a few months later after we had moved back to west Kentucky when the divorce was finalized. The figure on the right came from a forensic studies book and represents how I was feeling.

My drawing style was much looser then, raw with thick charcoal and eraser marks. I feel this drawing is closer to a painting in its delivery.

IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF IF, BUT WHEN

September 13, 2022



2022, 51" x 41", Charcoal and White Conté

This drawing is about my mom and also references relationships specifically to some people's ability to dump their partner and move on quickly. Have you been deleted by a former lover?


Months before Mom passed, she was hallucinating that the staff where she stayed was taking her outside at night. Sometimes they left her in a field, other times, she was taken to a small raft and was transported to a larger boat in still black waters. She was scared and floated alone. She talked about this happening several times, and got visibly upset. I imagined the terror she felt being left alone in the dark in water, choking on the fear of drowning. I learned that people who have dementia start hallucinating at sundown thus giving them the name "sundowners".

All of the figures in this drawing are faceless and are placed in a wet marshland environment at night, the cat tails casting a faint spark of light at their ends. It's unclear what the connection of the children is to the female or couple form but they appear to be in a pensive state. The space portrayed makes sense yet is impossible. Surreal and dream-like, closer to being a nightmare, this image is really dark for me and I found it emotionally difficult to create. The composition refers to a wedding cake and doubles as a face looking back at the viewer.

The best place to view this drawing is kneeling on the floor in front of it so as to be with the children. Someone needs to be with them.

HOW I LEARNED TO DRINK COFFEE & STOP THE FLOODING

September 22, 2022



As early as I can remember, my mom would make morning coffee for me with Folger's Instant Coffee Crystals. I remember the smell. The kettle would whistle, and she would pour the hot water while stirring with the spoon in the other hand. Folger's was put in first, two spoons of sugar next. Milk was added at the end. It was how I started my days as a child. Sitting at the kitchen table, I was so small, the table would catch me across the chest. I would pull my coffee cup closer and look at the illustration of a house on the inside. My favorite cup had two handles which made it easier for my little hands to pick up. It must have been the sugar bowl that came with the set.

These cups were mostly white. The outside rim had acorns and leaf swatches in black, while the inside had a little house with trees, fields, and a front yard. The words "Kinzie Mansion 1833" were written underneath it. I had envisioned my coffee was light brown flood waters advancing on the home. I wanted to drink at least enough to skirt the danger and save the family. And I always saved the home every morning.

My tastes refined, as time went by, to percolated coffee, then brewed coffee, and now Keurig. My coffee cups changed to mugs with happy kitties on them. I never thought about saving the house on the cup.

A year before she passed, mom's house started regularly flooding even after a light rain. It had gotten so bad, we had to start moving furniture and getting things off the floor. It was a disaster created even worse by the contractors hired to fix the problem. We had to move her into assisted living. I am thankful to my sister who was the one to drive mom to her new place. I couldn't handle it. Mom would never come home again.

We cleaned out mom's house just before she died, and I found some of the coffee cups in the back of the corner kitchen cupboard including the sugar bowl. They hadn't been used in decades as other mugs became favorites and sat in the front. I placed them carefully wrapped in a box and brought them to my house where they sit stacked in the back of my cupboard behind other odds and ends cups and glasses.

I was not able to save Mom from the flood.

GRASS

October 13, 2022

When I was about four or five, I wanted to be a Native American like the ones on tv because they lived in tents. I liked to climb trees and run, and I drank from the garden hose when I needed to, and I peed outside a lot. I tucked two washcloths into the top of my shorts, one cloth in the front, one in the back. They hung down over my legs much like their attire. Summers were spent with no shirt, no pants and no shoes. I ran in the gravel drive and road. I ran barefoot everywhere. I would run ahead of my dad's tractor and unhooked the fence for him so he could pass through. Grass and mud flung up from the tires into the air. And I ran.

I played with my dolls, Johnny West, General Custer and Geronimo. They lived in peace, they were my friends, and I never really thought of any other way it could be. I have a Polaroid of me with a real Native American from the Smoky Mountains. He posed in front of a teepee grinning in his headpiece, muscular and shirtless, beads dangling about and leather moccasins. He offered us a good special on photos so we all got to pose with him.

My mom would "lay out" to get her skin darkened bronze. She seemed determined to be as dark as she could. She wore her plaid two-piece bikini, loosening the shoulder straps and letting them fall so as not to have shoulder marks. The A.M. radio played beside her; the antennae stretched as high as it would go. There was this one sad song that talked about how everyone plays the fool and I wondered about that. People everywhere commented on how dark and how tall she was with her favorite wig on. She took a lot of photos.

I positioned myself in the grass beneath her lounge chair in my washcloth outfit. I was in her shade and mom was suspended inches above me soaking in the hot sun and coconut lotion with her big sunglasses on. I shut my eyes and watched the germs in my eyelids. It was hot and the grass itched my back and legs. Who knows how long I was there. The radio played for hours. I drank from the hose, and I ran as much as I could because I could. And I thought about that song.



SUNSETS

October 23, 2022

When I was nine or ten, I got a small yellow, Honda 50 motorbike for children. I took my tin printed with chocolate clusters on it filled with saved monies when we went to look at the ones at a store on Broadway. I sat in the middle of the cab with my savings in my lap. The tin was full of coins and a few paper bills. I had saved a lot of birthday and Christmas money. But I was no way near affording one. I knew that.


I sat on a few bikes in the showroom and had trouble with my toes reaching the ground. I was small, but this yellow one seemed to fit me. I never really understood why my parents were okay with me having a bike. I never understood why I wanted one. Did I?

I rode this bike much like how I used to run bare foot. So much speed, so much light...riding the tractor trails my dad and grandfather had cleared on my grandparent's property. I don't remember much, but I remember how it made me feel. And I felt great. I felt free. The bike had power and propelled me into fields and red sunsets. Sky, sun, grass, freshly plowed soil, the smell of gas and wind... the real journey started past the barn, past the pig lot, and a left at the last fence post.

Sometimes, I stopped and sat in the grass. Or I might follow creeks in the woods. Or I might visit the old, abandoned clay pit. When I went to the clay pit, I imagined I was on the surface of the moon with my bike when I drove into it and wondered how old the leaves were that were pressed into the gray clay. The clay stuck to my tires a lot as I left my tracks. There was a small marsh on the way there that had more frogs than I had ever seen. Their loud croaks could be heard through my bedroom window at night. They quietened when I drove by, watching me watch them.

My grandmother had lived across the gravel road. When she died, we eventually sold the house and farmland, and I didn't have many places to ride. The tobacco barn and pig house were taken down along with a section of an old house that we used to strip tobacco in. Paths were not kept cleared and they weren't mine to ride anymore. My legs were now too long.

I sold the bike to another little boy who must have been nine or ten, and he had brought his tin. His toes touched the ground too. It made me sad to see it loaded into the back of a pickup and taken away, but there were adventures still to be had on that yellow bike. I'll bet he felt sunsets like I did.



856-3555

November 1, 2022

My earliest recollections of a phone are seeing a black, rotary dial phone on a wooden stand next to the flowered sofa. We shared a phone party line with our neighbors that included my grandmother, my aunt Joyce who lived up the road, and some other families I didn't know well. When you picked up the handle, you might hear someone else in a conversation, so you had to wait your turn. It was very common to hear other people pick up while you were talking. There was one neighbor who liked to listen. Mom would get furious and yell at him on the phone when he picked up quietly to eavesdrop.

After a few years, we got a tan rotary wall phone in the kitchen next to the fridge that had a long spiral cord attaching it to the base. It was stretched out and wasn't quite as resilient as it used to be. It was always tangled but long enough to reach the toilet. I didn't use the phone much then but only to call my grandmother across the road to tell her how mean my brother was to me when mom wasn't around. Or I'd call time and temperature in Mayfield. That was my favorite phone number. Mom was on the phone a lot with her cigarettes and sweet tea talking to her girlfriends. Smoking, laughing, telling stories and gossip. I didn't always understand what she said.

There was someone who would call our house often and not say anything. Sometimes, they hung up immediately when we answered and other times, they would pause and say nothing, but you could hear breathing. It happened at all hours but mostly when dad wasn't there. Mom bought a tape recorder to record the conversations and I am guessing, maybe catch the mystery caller's voice.

I don't guess we ever identified the unknown caller. But I think my mom knew who it was. She had known all along. It was a signal of things to come and changes that were to be made.

When she moved into the nursing home, I went to the rural telephone company to have her land line phone shut off. I cried during the appointment. It's just a number but it was also a lifeline half a century old, my emergency phone number I wrote on important paperwork. I called it one last time and it rang and rang and rang.

HOW MOM'S PORTRAIT CAME TO BE

November 18, 2022

She sat across from me in her very favorite restaurant with her TGI Friday's steak with potatoes and French fries. Always the Fried Green Beans Appetizer with sweet tea to top it off; that was her favorite combination. We never deviated from the plan. One time after dinner there, I took her to TJ Maxx which she started calling TGI Maxxes. Mom had a way of mixing her vocabulary and we didn't hold back on the laughter. Their flat iron steak became the wrought iron steak.

We sat in the bar that late afternoon in a booth by a window. We had shared our day's events and caught up on the last few weeks. Our meals were delivered, and Mom dug in. For whatever reason, I picked up my phone and snapped a single photo without Mom even noticing. I didn't think much more about the image. Perhaps a year and a half passed, and I noticed it on my phone while randomly scrolling. I believe I have been overlooking something.

I loved the composition and the line of sight. Mom looks down absorbed into her own thoughts for just a moment while casually piercing food with her fork. But more than anything, I loved the textures of her skin, her neck, and the top she had on had a built-in crinkled look to it, all sharp and angular contrasting against the softer lines in her skin. Her reading glasses with clear plastic beads hung around her neck.

In 2014, I showed Mom the drawing after I had the face and neck drawn. She wanted to cry. Not the reaction I thought I'd get. I finished the drawing and showed it to her. The response wasn't much better.

It hung in a few shows and picked up some attention. I got a small award with it in a prestigious exhibition. But the best part of it all was I got into the Evansville Museum's regional show competition in 2016. I won the main Purchase Award, and it became a part of their collection. Mom went with me to the reception. We met my friend James from Louisville there too. I could tell how proud she was by how many copies of the exhibition catalog she picked up... as many as she could find. She was on the front cover. Mom posed for photos next to it.

She was a rockstar not realizing she already was one.

THE FABULIST

December 2, 2022



"The Fabulist", 50" x 38", Charcoal and White Conté

There is an unusual evolution of this drawing. It started with an idea that included my upper torso leaning forward and something projected over my head like a dunce cap. There is a post-it note somewhere with this sketch. Some time passes since thinking about the sketch and my son, Harley, gives me a white plaster life-size self portrait/bust casting. His head leans to one side while his eyes are closed and he's wearing a textured cap to protect his hair. I placed it on a cabinet top under an old abstract oil painting of mine from 1985 and for an unknown reason, I balanced a zig-zag lamp shade on his head. Next I hung a low watt bulb into the shade from above. He became a lamp.

It didn't take long to realize this was the structure of my drawing.

This work evolved so much that I could have never predicted the outcome. I reacted to things that I drew and my path changed. While I was drawing myself, I thought I looked like I was underwater holding my breath. I added air bubbles into my beard. My eyes were triangles which influenced the choice of shamrocks at the bottom. A series of circles pass through my head like torpedoes. Air bubbles are floating to the top of the drawing but on the right, when they enter the dunce cap, the bubbles get organized. A zig-zag shape appears like crude geometric waves. My arms are restricted helpless as I am buried into the silt at the bottom of the water.

As I inched my way to the top, it occurred to me that this drawing could be the bottom half of the last drawing, "It's Not A Question of If, But When". Some of the same elements appear: cloud and cosmic images, suns and moons, circles and triangles, water, and cat tails. I am also playing on my fear of water, much like my mom experienced in her hallucinations.

fab-u-list / 'fabyələst/

noun: fabulist; plural noun: fabulists

1/ a person who composes or relates fables.

2/ a liar, especially a person who invents elaborate, dishonest stories."a born fabulist, with an imagination unfettered by the laws of logic and probability" late 16th century: from French fabuliste, from Latin fabula (see fable).

This drawing is the final letter I send to a past relationship.