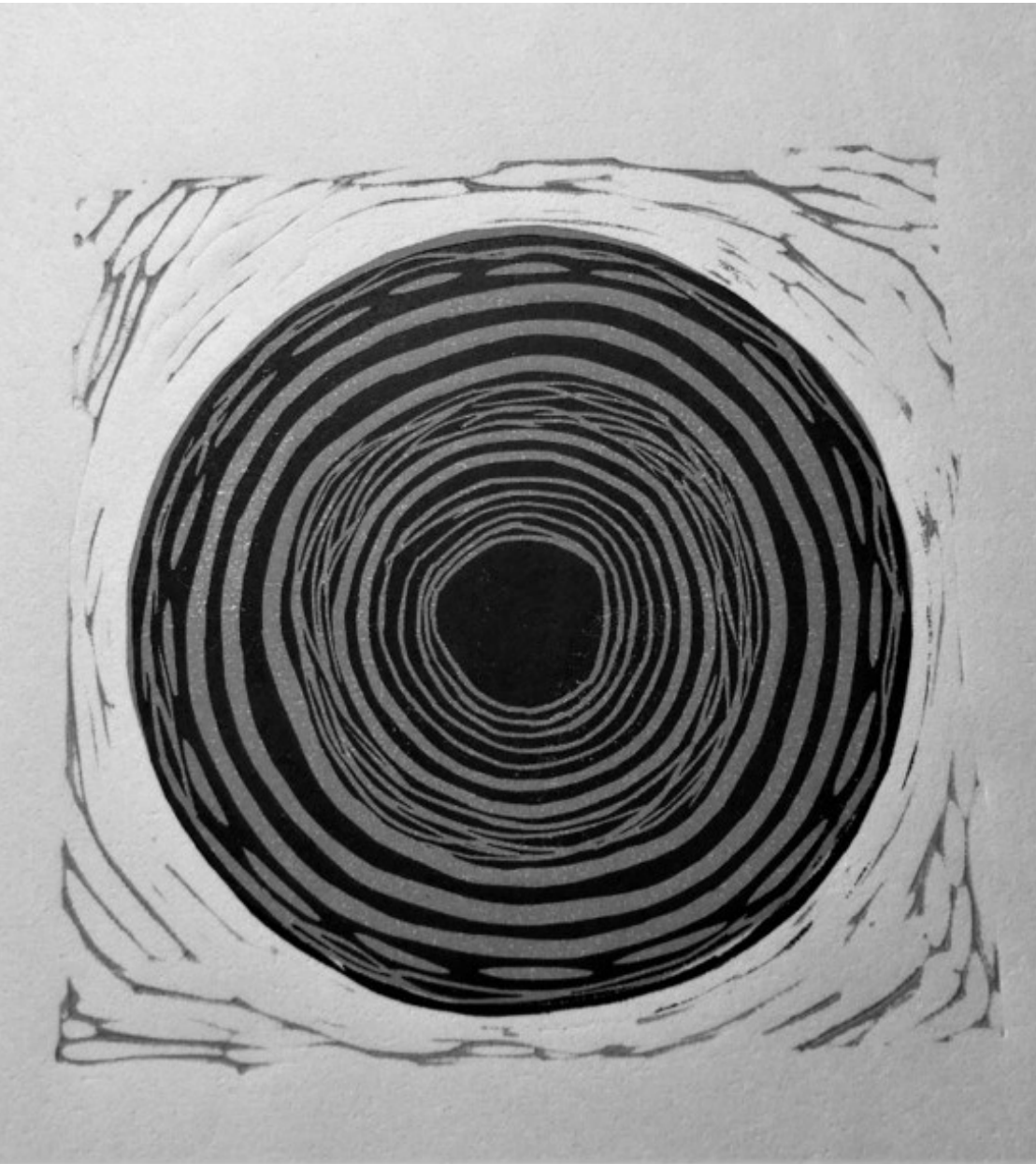


**Zara Awchi, Rex Birchmore, Johnny Burre,
Martin Cameron, Jason Carden,
Nigel Farr, Caroline Gerstadt, Raymond
Gordon, Daniel J Gregory, Darby Hash,
Ali Hughes, Susan Jenkins**

STILL HERE*

**Imogen Kennedy, Omar Majeed, Payasa,
Maddie Mew, Gareth Postans, Poppy
Roberts, Sharpenedteeth, Becky
Sumpter, Russell Taysom, Sam Travers**

(*“20 years later”)



Etched upon my palm,
Worn lines lead to deepest sleep:
Earth sighed, briefly paused.

Susan Jenkins

no word

If someone else,
If someone else had given themselves so readily
of all flesh
the hand and breast
the concave black of the chest
the little inside pieces

all of the bright confetti in my head

The imprint of surgeons wrinkled glove upon my heart
a muscle, i gave it up
submission sleeps behind me and whence is brought forward to protect
myself from revolt
I opened my soul like a pip
and they poured right in from above
with needle, and glove
I cracked, pineal to pit
CROWD ME. Beat me in.

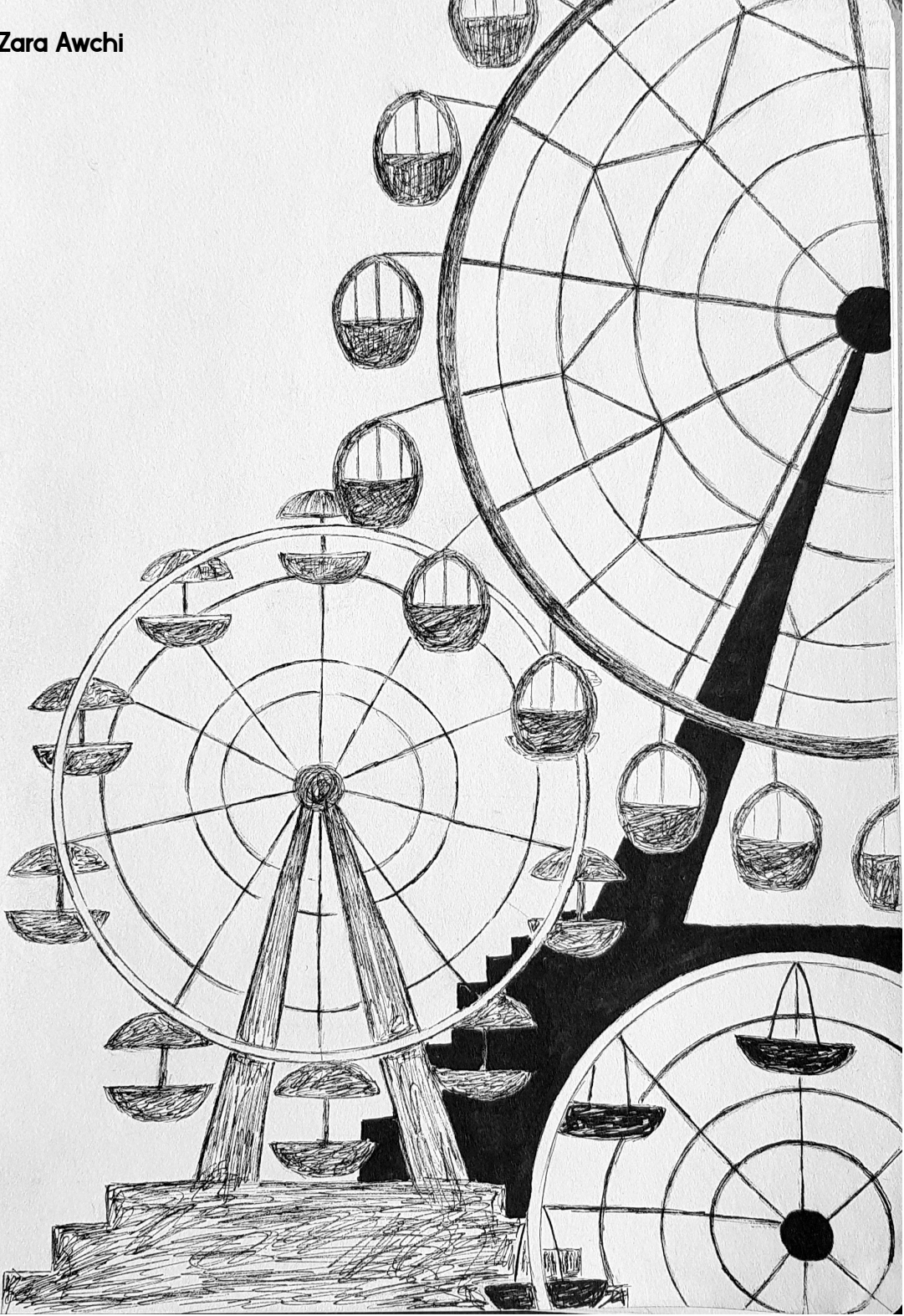
I am awash with sin
if i give in, if i give in

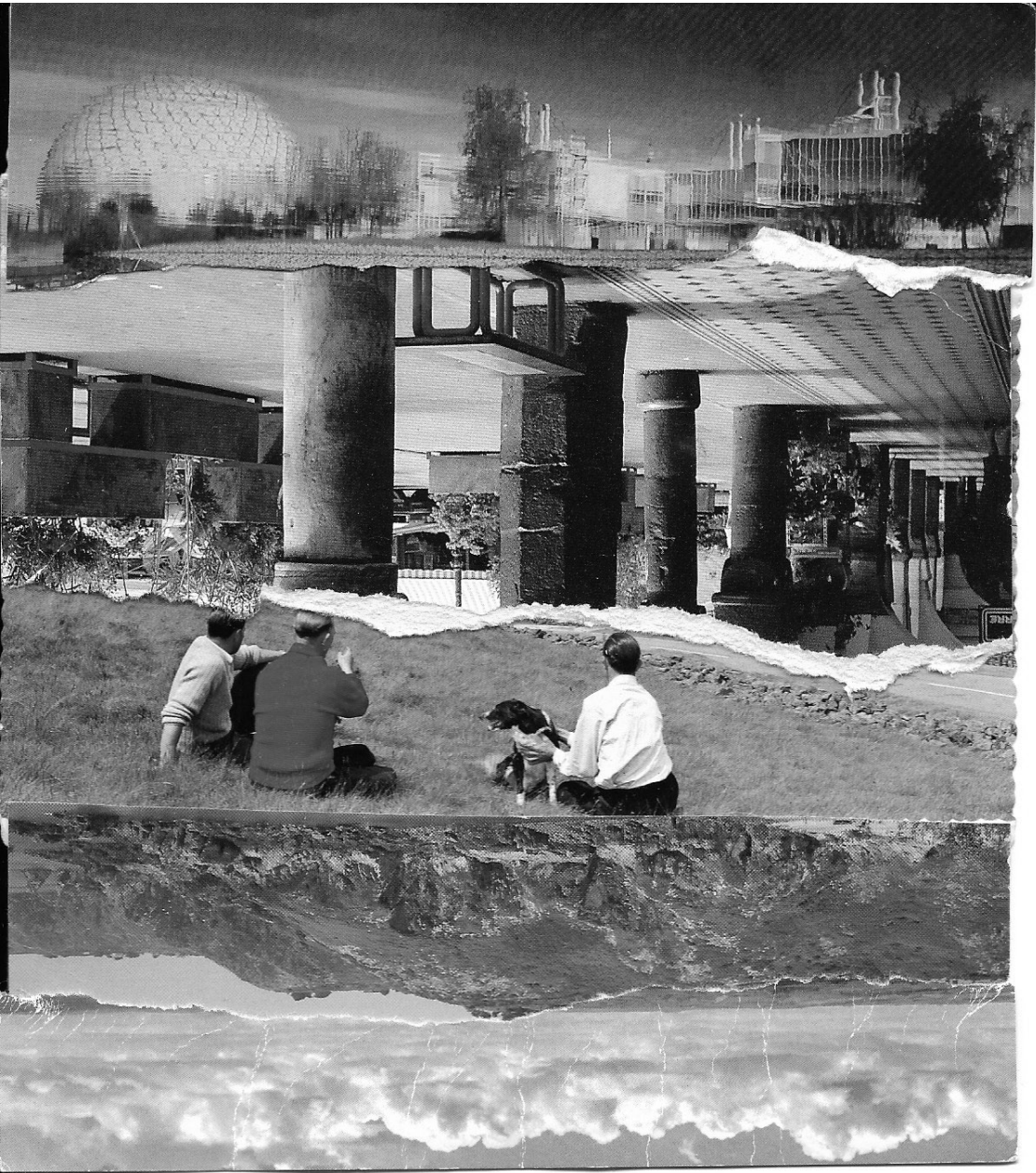
I no longer feel the other side of myself
pain and fury crystalize as an outward grin
when i let them in

the dust of the ward fills my mouth DRY
grit under tongue
the taste of today
the fear of today is decay

and when i pass my shadow walking
so slowly away
I am the withered petal falling
pierced

so many crevices, the sun seeps in





Daniel J Gregory

Shep's mix tape volume one



By
Darby Hash

Shep's mix tape volume one

Track One: Hollywood Video Nightmare

This story comes from a place long ago and far away. Well, maybe not that far since the building is only a few miles away, but definitely long ago. To set the scene and help people understand the vibe, I must say upfront that this story takes place in the 1990's. Although I can barely believe it myself, more than twenty years have passed since the close of the greatest decade I can remember. Society was different then and so were the people. For starters, we had video cassettes.

Just saying that out loud now sounds cheap and janky. Video cassettes maybe a laughingstock and the punch line of fine jokes, but once upon a time, they were the highlight of any respectable weekend. Old and young people alike all partook in the renting of cheap plastic tapes that fueled our desire for entertainment. Thanks to the eighties, most video stores were chalk full of terrible actions movies, cheesy comedies, lovesick romances, and slasher films up the ass.

Disney was in high demand back then and so were video games (also for rent at all “modern” video stores). The really good shops even had an adult section for all the lonely hearts, kinky lovers, and stoned cold weirdos. I myself longed to see what was behind the saloon doors and the tiny roped off section but would have to wait until I was officially eighteen. Nevertheless, the moral of the story is that the video store was like a corner stone of society that only the Amish could ignore. Entertainment was in high demand and people were renting movie’s like nobody’s business.

I’m not sure where the idea came for me to seek employment at Hollywood Video, but it had something to do with desperation, I think. I had been working at a local grocery store for almost a year when something finally snapped. I will not go into all the details here because that is another story, but I can say that I was disenfranchised and determined to do something that was not bagging groceries. The pay was a factor I think but there was something else, like a nagging thought that would not leave me alone. I couldn’t really put my finger on it, but the feeling basically said, “it’s time to move on”.

I did not always trust or listen to my feelings back then, but in this particular case, I heeded the advice and quit my grocery store job after a year of service. “Good riddance” I thought as I pushed my cart into the wall for one last time. I was a kid and kids can quit whenever they feel like it. I had no bills and no obligations to speak of. There was no family to feed and I was not paying anyone rent. My family auto was a paid off Geo Prizm that was unofficially designated as “mine” even though it really wasn’t.

Never one to dwell on bad decision making, I quit and that was that. Unlike a responsible person, I never liked giving a two-week notice. Who does that anyway? Maybe someone hoping to “use” the grocery store as a primetime reference down the road, but not me. I wanted to get as far away from the place as I could and prayed to god that I wouldn’t be going anywhere that needed or wanted a reference from a bagger position. I wasn’t ready for the big time yet, but I just hoped that when I got there, places like the B.G.’s (slightly different than real business name) wouldn’t matter one way or another.

Some people might turn around and say “that was a shitty thing to do” but was it really? Could a person honestly give a two-week notice and still deliver a satisfactory job performance, literally going through the motions, when the end was not only a wish but a calendar reality? I must be honest and say “no, no I couldn’t”. My focus would be totally out of whack, knowing that no matter what happened over the course of ten business days, I was gone regardless. If I had been a little older who knows? Maybe I would have waited until the next job was in hand, but then again, it seems like getting hired and then turning in a two-week notice would be counterproductive.

Would the entity offering the new job really want to wait for two weeks to get me into some kind of inadequate training program? Even if the answer was yes, could a person put in an honest effort knowing that their new career ship was sailing, and the current job was a dead-end street? Lots of questions here but little substance to hang a hat on. My hat was staying on my head and I was out the door. Two-week notice be damned, just like a grocery store reference. If I needed B.G.'s to vouch for me in a few years, then my life was going to suck, and I'd be better off dead anyway. I didn't want to think about it much further than that. I'm not shitting on grocery store jobs exactly. I just had dreams of grandeur.

So, like I was saying, I quit and that was that. I got my last check for sixty-five dollars and twelve cents and I was gone like the wind. My bagger days were behind me and I had enough money to get drunk for a week and buy a few packs of cigarettes. Unlike today, everyone cool smoked in the 1990's and I wasn't missing that boat. Over the next few days, I drank forty ounces of cheap malt liquor, Mickey's to be exact. The one with the green bottle and vicious hornet as a mascot. It really should have been called "Mickey's Malt Headache" but everyone is wrong once in a while.

I partied like it was 1999 and maybe it was. Actually, it wasn't, it was 1998 but the Prince line was too good to leave alone and the timing was near perfect, nearly. I didn't know much, but I knew I was off the grocery store circuit. I hated service jobs but that was about all there was available to me at the time. It's that shitty period in a person's life when they don't have the qualifications to get a real job and patience for low paying gigs is running out. Let's face it, no one likes to wait on people or run a cash register, but that's where I found myself.

As I tried to shrug off the facts and find that one golden opportunity that didn't suck, reality kept showing up to rain on my parade. Rolling around town, it became apparent that I was not going to find a record store job. They just didn't exist much by then and over the course of another decade, the one's that made it that long would all be dead too. My mind briefly entertained the movie theater, which seemed interesting enough, but they wouldn't have me. I was never given an official reason for the snub, maybe I just wasn't usher material. The theater manager must have sensed trouble when he came across my resume.

"Better to leave that one be" he probably thought, "Just another washed up grocery boy from the wrong side of town". My dreams of Friday night popcorn nausea died that day as the old man tossed my resume in the can. Oh well, that's show business. From one disappointment to another, I drifted along, chasing the teenage American dream. There is some haze in this period and I'm not quite sure what drew me to the video store. Maybe like so many other bad jobs, it was the last option. I don't really remember or maybe I'm just blocking out the desperation that I must have been experiencing.

There is nothing worse than when a person gives up and agrees to take a lousy job, only to have trouble even finding an employer willing to take them in. When a person is young, lots of jobs and experiences seem beneath them, when in reality, it's usually the other way around. I don't remember exactly when I settled on trying to make a run at the video store, but it was probably a few weeks after leaving B.G.'s grocery. I had rented movies at Hollywood Video many times and had spent countless Friday nights cruising the selection. I guess part of my reason for choosing the video store was the movie "Clerks".

Clerks was a cult classic, even in the 90's and featured some odd ball characters making their way through life. One of the anti-heroes worked at a video store and he spent most of his day screwing with people who came in to rent movies. I found the movie hilarious and slowly began to see the connection. I too could work at a video store, entertaining myself while messing with the public. I could be sarcastic and jaded, doing just enough not to get fired like Peter from Office Space. Once I allowed room for the seed to grow, the opportunity came to fruition.

I dropped off a resume and was hired after a small-time interview. We've all been there, making promises to "care" about the customer and to always put the company first. Could I deal with people in a hurry and make their experience at Hollywood Video a special one? Oh yes, not only would I be happy too, I'd do it with a big fat smile on my golden face. Shit. Whatever I said must have worked because I got the job. After taking the tour of the facility which was really just one giant room and being introduced to the cool kids, I was given something that made me question the whole arraignment. Tuxedo clothes.

"What the hell is this" I thought as I fondled the clip-on bow tie. Had I been so self-centered and unaware to overlook such a ridiculous thing as a tuxedo uniform. I suppose as a paying customer, I had never given it much thought as to what the staff had been wearing. What did I care? I wasn't some uniform sniffer or two-bit weirdo. I didn't care because I didn't have to care. It's the American way isn't it? Only giving a shit about anything when it was directly affecting my well-being. I quickly glanced at the manager to confirm my horrors. Sure as shit, she had on a tuxedo shirt, cumber bun, and black dress pants. "Dear god" I thought as I looked down at her shoes and there they were, staring right back at me, dress shoes.

I recoiled in terror. I continued to nod and smile at the manager while quickly scanning the room. So, it was true, tuxedo clothes for everybody. From the nerd running the register, to the odd chicks filing movies back on the shelves, to the dude restocking the candy. It was like a prom night from hell. I couldn't believe I had overlooked such an important item, but I've already covered that. As I pushed out the exit door, tuxedo shirt and bow tie in my hands, I swallowed the last of my pride. There was nothing left to do but get drunk on cheap beer and make the best of it. I was scheduled to start in two days and decided not to waste the time sober.

*Excerpt from Shep's Mixtape Vol. 1 by Darby Hash
available for kindle and on paperback search the above on amazon.com*

*Darby Hash also appears on Shep in Depth podcast on youtube
via Cough Studios instagram*

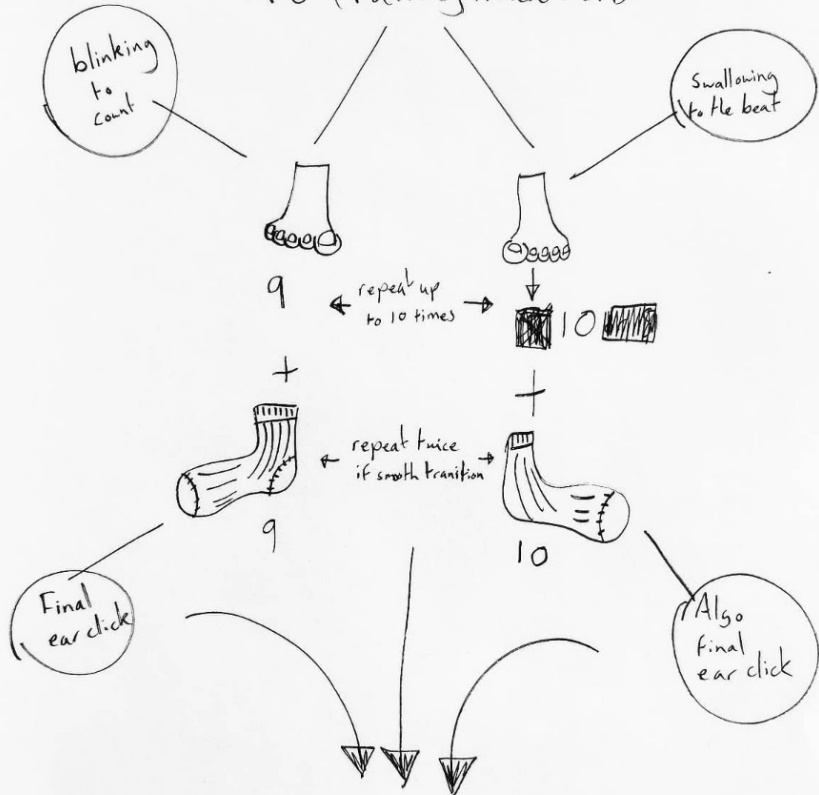
ROBERT FORFORD



Sharpenedteeth

Good Morning!

10X8 (Putting trousers on)



x 20 years of this

= 6 pack
of
Grey hair

Caroline Gerstadt





SIX MONTHS/ Seis meses Becky Sumpter

Getting lost hiking in Quito
Had two official Spanish lessons.
Drinking Jamaica, a juice made from hibiscus flower. Beautiful deep colour
Went up and down on a cable cart, very high altitude
Walking tour Medellin learning about the cities history
Heard a lot about Pablo Escobar
Saw iguanas walking around the botanical gardens
Art museum in Bogotá, discovered Francisco Botero
Tubing down river palomino. Serene.
Swam in the warm ocean, was a-bit scared of jellyfish or sharks
Kayaked in a storm, got stranded on a sand bank that was sinking beneath our boots
Climbed 1300 steps up and down a big old rock
Stayed in a tent, woke up to misty mountains
Rode horses
Moto taxi in torrential downpour up through the Colombian forest. Driver was wearing flip flops
Went on a coffee tour at a plantation in Minca
Tried Guanabana and pitaya fruits, tropical fruits I found very exciting
Tuktuk in Guatapé
Stroked and spoke to street dogs
Had our own song mc'd to us on the bus
lots of ice cream and lollies
Empanadas
Tried buñuelos (deep fried cheesy balls) fell in love
Chilled in hammocks
Monkeys swinging in the trees, Tayrona Park
Honey tasting in Boquete
Swam in a waterfall
Dried banana chips in jars to sell
We made traditional tortillas
Helped at a guesthouse that was at the foot of Chirripo mountain, Costa Rica
Shared wine and cheese with new friends
Released a baby mouse into the wild
Painted signs for the guesthouse
Zip lined through Costa Rican canopy in the pouring rain
Had the nicest coconut mocha ever (Santa elena)
Rescued a kitten (kind of) but we couldn't keep him
Saw Halloween in Nicaragua
Walked up to the Jesus statue
Had a moped to ride around Ometepe island
Saw a family of howler monkeys playing at Charco Verde
Spent many long hot hours cramped onto the local chicken buses
Kayaked through mangroves looking for caiman
Swam in the lagoon on a cloudy day, we were the only ones there
Saw bubbling lava at Volcan Masaya
Hiked Cerro negro (volcano) and boarded down it in a protective jumpsuit
Watched Doctor Sleep in the cinema, Leon
I painted in the Central Park and spoke to locals, Granada
Had the biggest pizzas ever that lasted us two days. I had pineapple on mine
Hiked to the cross in Matagalpa, got very lost. Was a-bit worried for our safety
Watched baby turtles being released to the sea
Went to hot springs in Santa Ana with friends. Strange little bugs in the water
Discussed coffee with a passionate barista

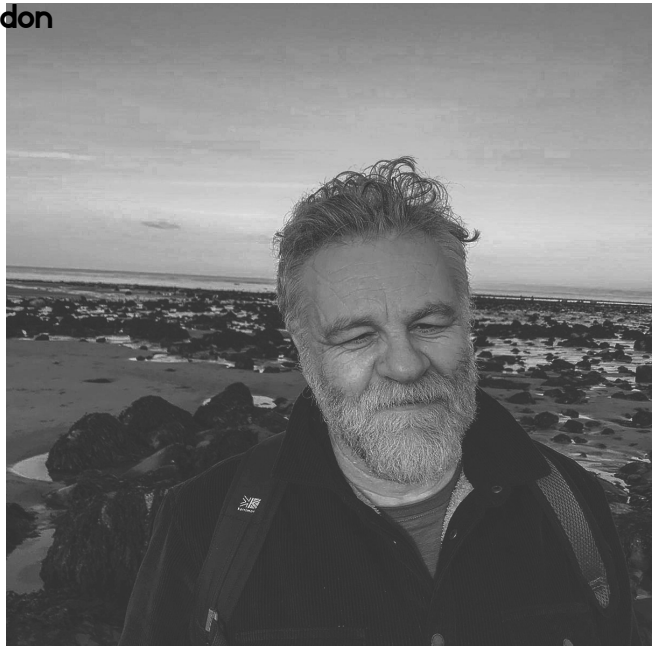
Went to the best pupuseria in town with friends
Had fresh coconuts on the beach

Sat on balcony drying off. Sunset was beautiful.
Got a boat to Monterrico, Guatemala
Had a michelada tasting contest
Got drunk on the beach
Played giant jenga
Walked to the cross lookout, Antigua
Hiked Indio nose mountain for the sunrise @ 5am (Lago Atitlan)
Visited nature reserve in San Marcos and watched people dive off the platform into lake
Went to a Guatemalan football game (Cobán)
Fell out of a tube in the rapids, twice. Very close to drowning.
Swam at Semuc Champey and climbed the lookout
A tarantula chased Jord barefoot
Wild alligator under the surface of pond, Tikal
Climbed the ancient temples of Tikal
Hitchhiked from Belizean border with two Americans into the next town. Had lunch with them.
Ate an island coconut roll
Had weed brownies
Watched a sting ray float by in ocean
Ate shrimp and coconut curry on the beach
Watched a local cracking open lobsters right by us. Decided against trying lobster
Cycled around Corozal
Sunbathed on the dock
Cooked fish for Christmas Day
lots of belizean rum. Merry Christmas
Kayaked across Corozal bay to ruins, too many mosquitoes had to turn back.
Swam in a cenote in Tulum
Cycled around Tulum, felt like a proper tourist
Went to Isla Mujeres (island of women)
Snorkelled with tropical fish
Was sick in the ocean, watched fish eat it
A group of Canadians invited us for a cocktail and gave us a lift back in their golf buggy
Swam in a cenote in the middle of the city
Saw the four mile long pier in Progreso
Drinking in Mérida till 4am. We went to a club which was the first one we went to on the trip.
Tried Mezcal
Live music at Mérida fest
Visited the art museums of Mérida
Ate enchiladas with mole ('Mol-ay')
Visited Palenque ruins in the rain and mist
Saw wild crocodiles and spider monkeys in Sumidero Canyon
Went into the waves in Mazunte
Walked around barefoot and got smoothies
Made a fire for our cabana in the mountains of San Jose
Was going to try the magic mushrooms from the area but didn't feel well
Travelled through the wild lands of Oaxaca
Had a cute apartment in Oaxaca city
Visited the petrified waterfalls and the pool. Cactus' everywhere and very hot.
Visited Frida Kahlos house. Love Frida but didn't like the tourists.
Went to a Lucha Libre night, Mexico City
Free walking tour CDMX
Saw the Aztec calendar in Museo de Anthropologia
Hired a pedalo on Chapultepec lake. Fun and romantic
Inquisitive squirrels in the trees
Went with Jordan to get a tattoo
Had coffee everyday by our apartment
Prepared to come home



Then I was embarking on a journey to goodness knows where. Now I am still on that journey to who knows where. What has it taught me if anything, that basically man is a 'fucking lunatic' with the infinite capacity to wreck havoc on just about everything he does or comes into contact with. All I can say, with any sort of conviction is this: that reincarnation is making a come back, and a good job too!

Raymond Gordon



Twenty Years later

The pub is filled with people,
Maybe the world will end today,
Do we need an excuse?
It's new years eve,
But is it the eve of a new year?
Computers will stop working at least,
Another round?
I'll have a Guinness please,
Wait a minute, it's twelve oh one,
Who has a phone?
It's still works,
The only lights i see are fireworks,
No apocolypse,
Damn, oh well,
Another round?
I'll have a Guinness please,
Twenty years later they will look back,
To laugh at the year 2000 peeps, still here.

Imogen Kennedy



Nigel Farr



NKE

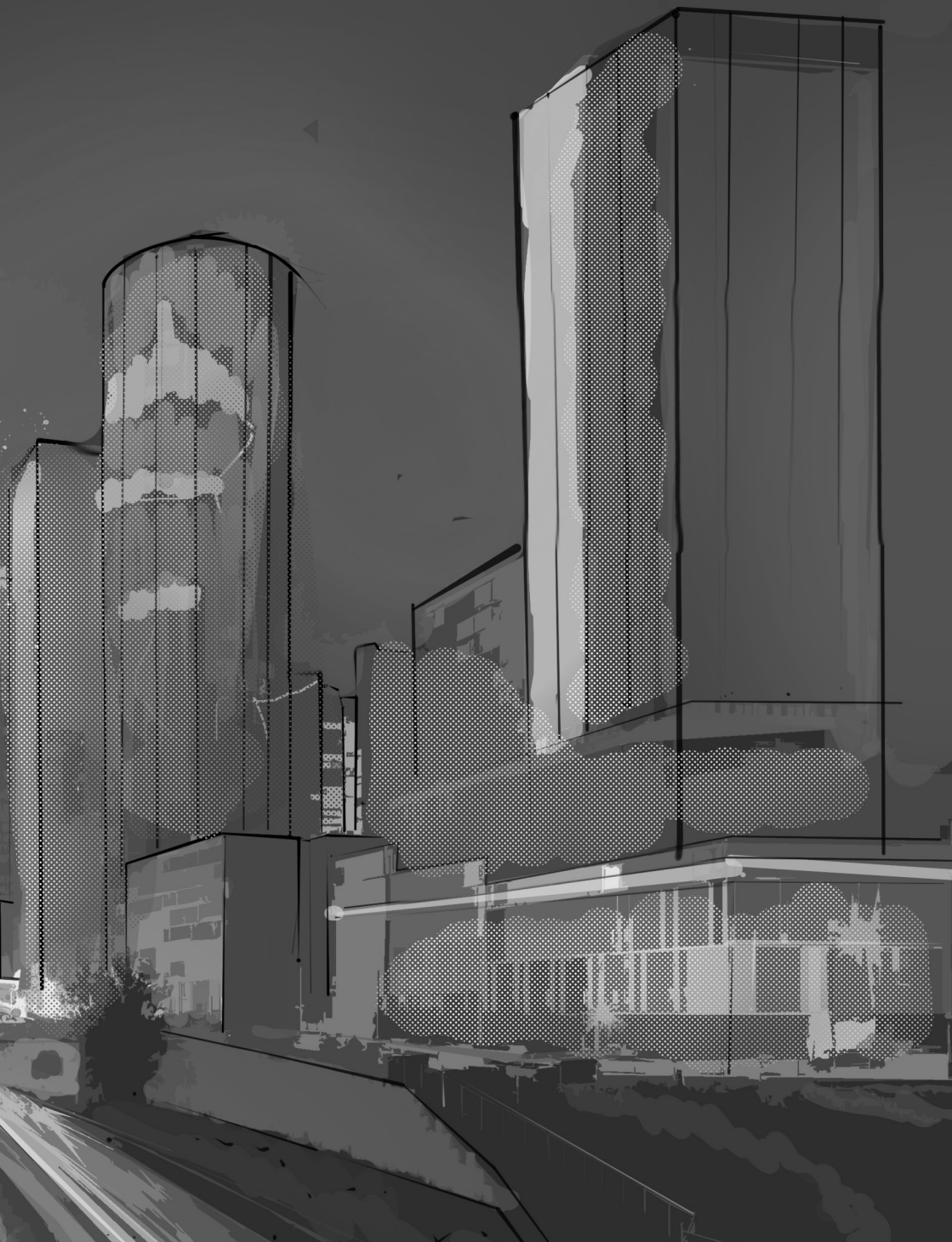


NKF





Maddie Mew



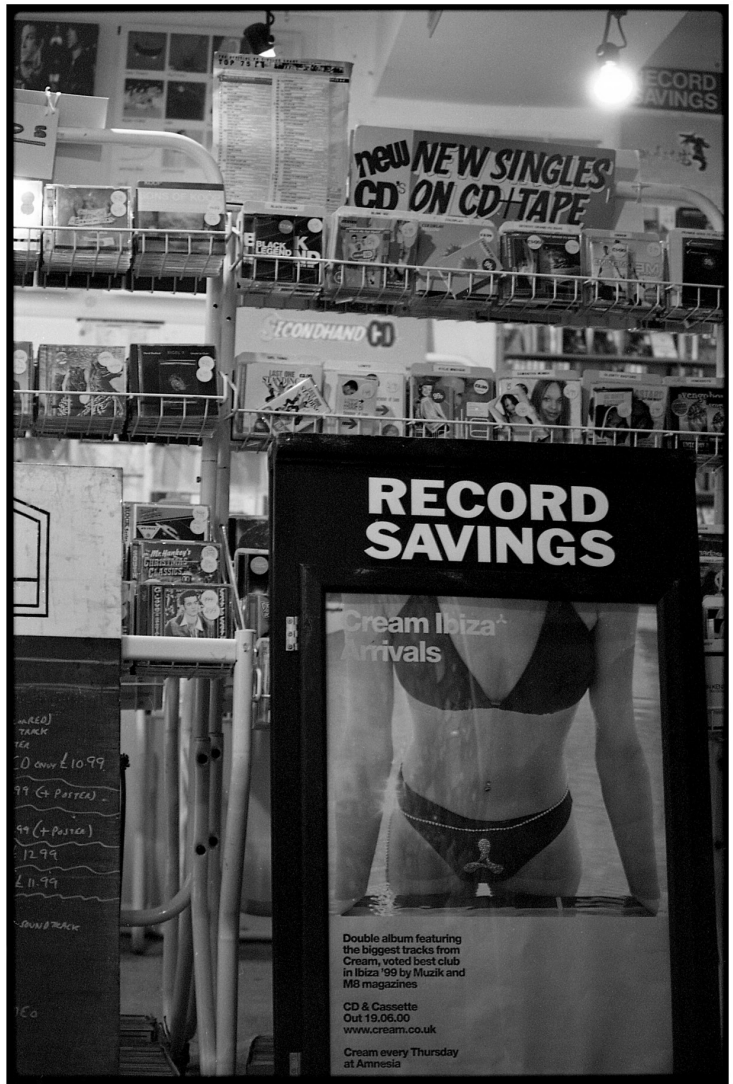
What sacrifice, at what price can the city be born? – Jim Morrison, 1969.

“Some tame tigers don’t exist”
Iain said to me in the pub
after the Eels gig in Oxford.
This is logic, Jim. Work it out.
I am a writer, James Joyce is
a writer. Therefore I am James
Joyce. Sainsbury’s own brand
light version at best, this logic
useful as a chocolate teapot,
except that’s edible. Germs
Choice, Tony calls him, gift
of bedside Finnegan. Black
Swan Theory, some fictional
narcissist lesbian ballerinas
have Split Personalities, but
I haven’t met one. I’d like to.
I bet she’d be a hoot. Hot.
This lake is a mirror for swans.
If swans break arms, maybe
her arm was broken by a swan.
Maybe she fell down the stairs.
A likely story. First floor: sophistry.
Spiralling out of control.
Fly south for the winter.
Easy, Jet.

Extract from Dewey Decimal System by Omar Majeed
Available soon through Desk Publishing
<https://www.deskpublishing.co.uk/>
Instagram @desk_publishing



Martin Cameron



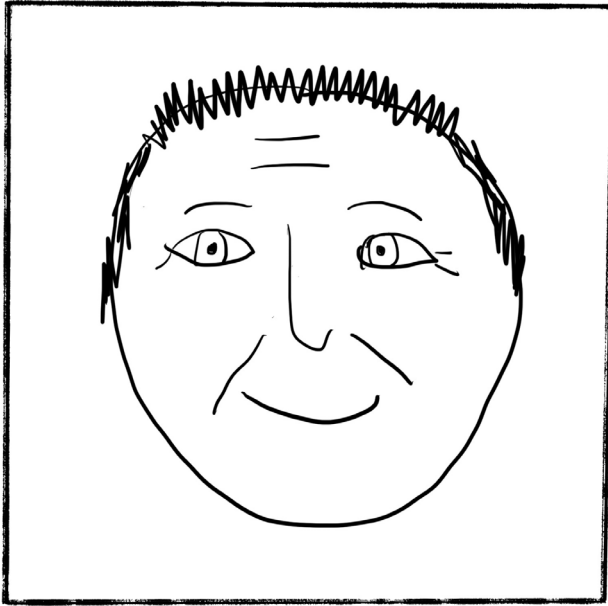
Record Savings record shop, Banbury, July 2000

20 years on, I'm still making pictures.



inside out, empty words....

Ali Hughes



20 YEARS LATER



Do you want to talk about jobs? There wasn't much. It came down to merchandise factory, studio audience (painful 12-hour shifts with little/no laughter), or a waiter at the golden bouncy castle at the top of the valley. I chose the first option. Standard eight hours on a factory line with your standard breaks. The salary was okay because there were little expenses, aside from travel and high electricity bills. The internet was a thing of the past. Although it existed, it was even more dumbed down than usual with extreme censorship.

Education? Oh well, this was simply more brainwashing. The 'schools' were essentially video-watching sessions, japes, and witty jokes. Creativity had somehow been stifled and kids just ran around aimlessly looking broken and exhausted. Visits to the doctors were at a record high (although the government never published these stats). Doctors could barely do their jobs as they were under constant supervision from so-called 'laughter bouncers'. Any attempt to discuss serious medical conditions were dealt with harshly. After all, laughter is the best medicine...

I'd heard rumours of a resistance movement on the west side of the island, who had created their own version of the dark web to discuss things, publish info and help people off to the mainland. The whispers suggested that a few deserters had been caught and PMSLed to death. I don't really see how that would be any worse to our own miserable existence...

CHECK OUT DARK TALES BY

GARETH POSTANS ON KICKSTARTER



Jason Carden





20 Years Later

Twenty years ago I was in my Twenties.

Twenty years ago we were at the start of a new millenium.

Twenty years ago I lived for the moment.

Twenty years ago I lived from week to week.

Twenty years ago we had a sense of optimism.

Twenty years later Id never imagined that I would be living here.

Twenty years later Id never imagined that I would be living this now.



Sam Travers

THEE CONVERSE ALL-STARS

20 YEARS LATER

BY OMAR MAJEED

WITH ART BY RUSSELL TAYSON

