

Ghost stories,  
haunting images, and  
occult practices

1st issue - Fall 2021



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### Thanks to

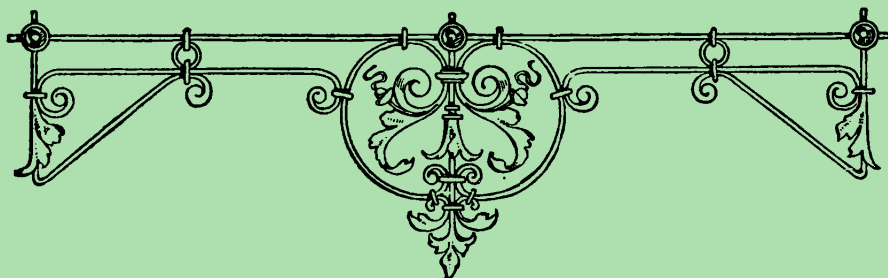
all the artists who submitted their personal ghost stories and haunting images, to Hex for editing and inspiring this zine, to the Merveilles community for the encouragement and song recommendations.

### Behind this zine

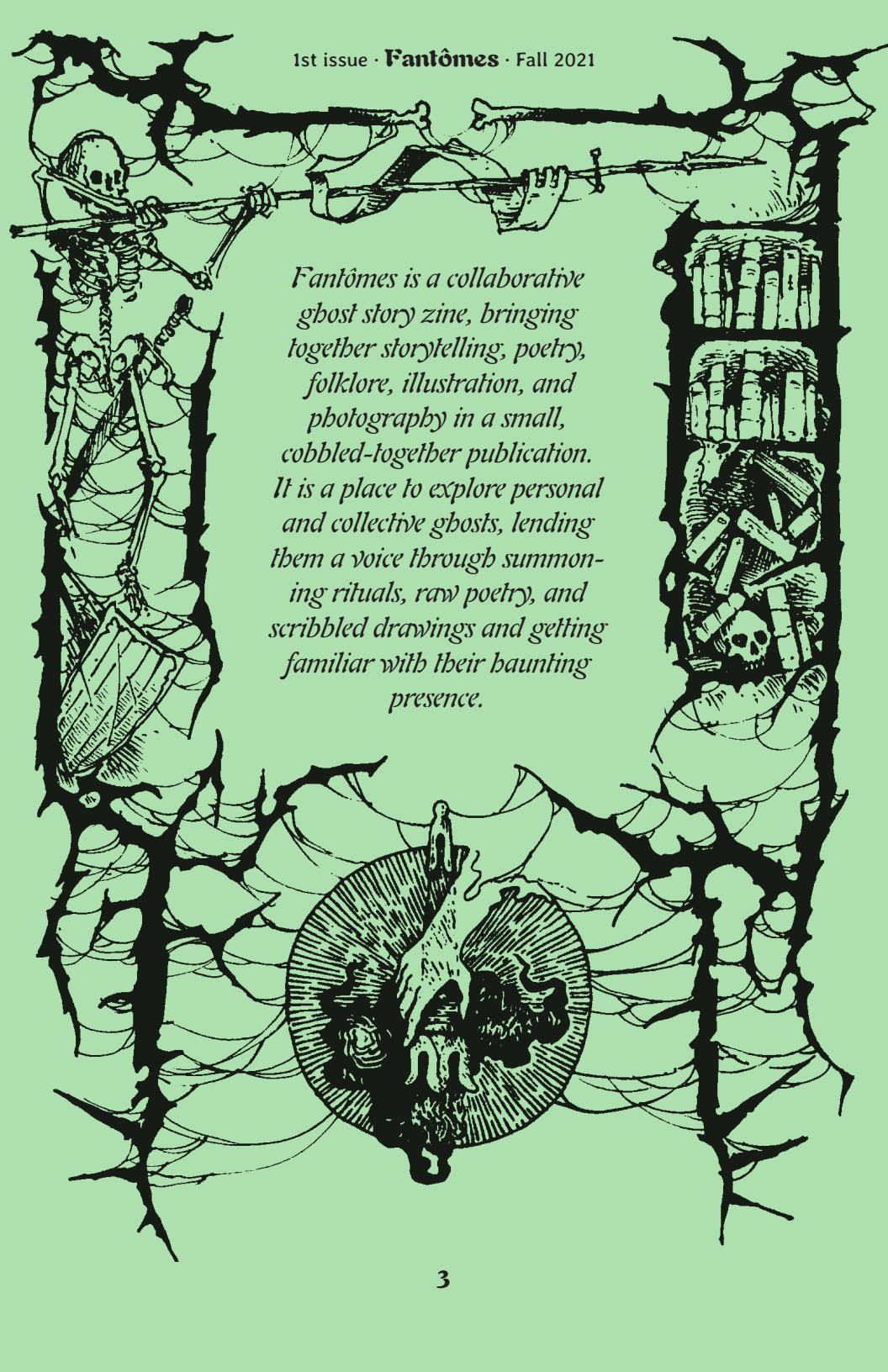
This zine was put together, laid out and, partly illustrated by myself: Lizbeth Poirier. I've been called a ghost and felt quite a lot like one in the past. I'm quite glad to finally put my love for spirits into a physical thing.

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*Fantômes is a collaborative ghost story zine, bringing together storytelling, poetry, folklore, illustration, and photography in a small, cobbled-together publication. It is a place to explore personal and collective ghosts, lending them a voice through summoning rituals, raw poetry, and scribbled drawings and getting familiar with their haunting presence.*

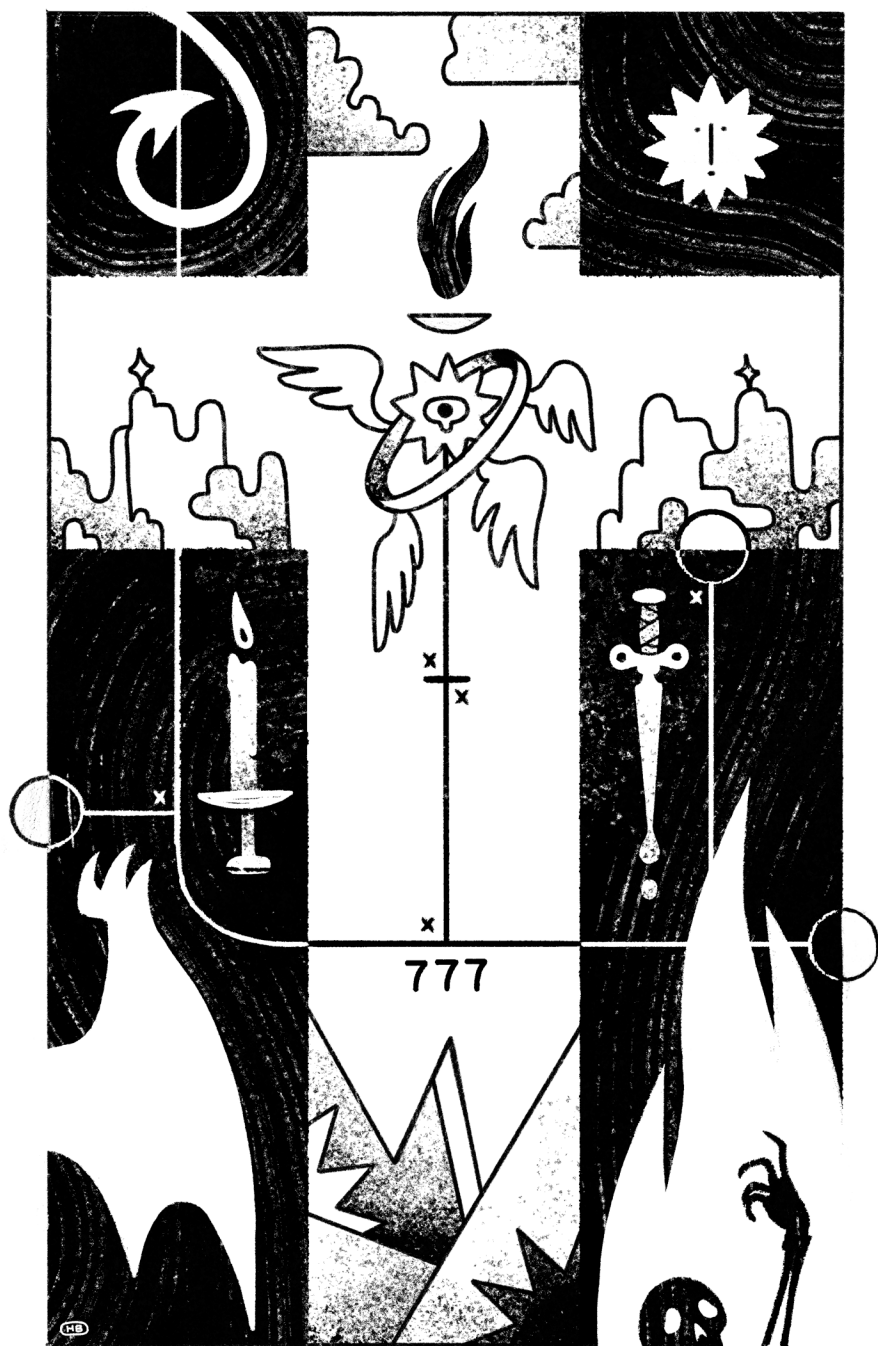


Photograph and words  
by Lizbeth Poirier

I initially visited this remote place in the Scottish countryside to see Aleister Crowley's old residence—where he supposedly held a dark ritual that he never finished—but when I arrived, I found that the little cemetery on the other side of the road was calling me. I propped myself up on the broken tombstone leaning against the wall

of the (lone) small mausoleum, trying to peek inside through the broken window. I noticed that the black, painted wood of the window frame was covered in graffiti, which ranged from people's names to the iconic "666" (probably left there by another occultism nerd before me—how fitting). The interior did not disappoint: obscure sigils carved

into the stone mantelpiece, remnants of burned-out candles, and a hazy mist emanating from the floor. I quickly snapped this picture without even checking how it had turned out, hopped down from my makeshift step, and walked away a little bit faster than I'd like to admit. I had forgotten how physical ghosts can be.



## Satanic Panic



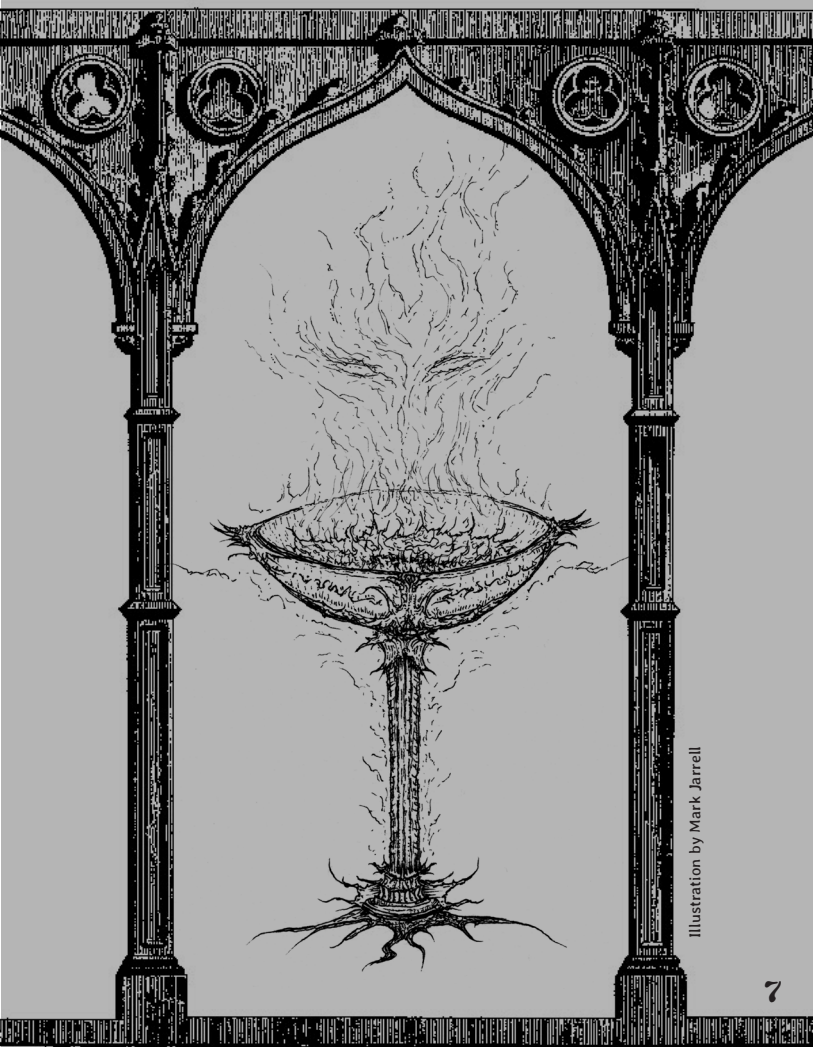


Illustration by Mark Jarrell





Atop  
trees  
that  
could  
not be  
burnt

Illustration by Devine Lu Linvega



Illustration by  
Jean-Yves

I wonder what kind of dress  
I'll be wearing when I'm dead.

Will the ruffles of my skirt  
dazzle as it whirls,

Or will the ill-fitting suit rot  
and decompose upon my flesh?

Will the will-o-the-wisps strike  
and caress the pink fleshy  
parts of mortals,

Or will I wield the baroque  
chains and haunt their spirits  
with my ghastly moans?

Words by Perséphone





I remember  
your pretty dress  
your laughter  
and your eyes

a lifetime ago  
was it yours  
or mine



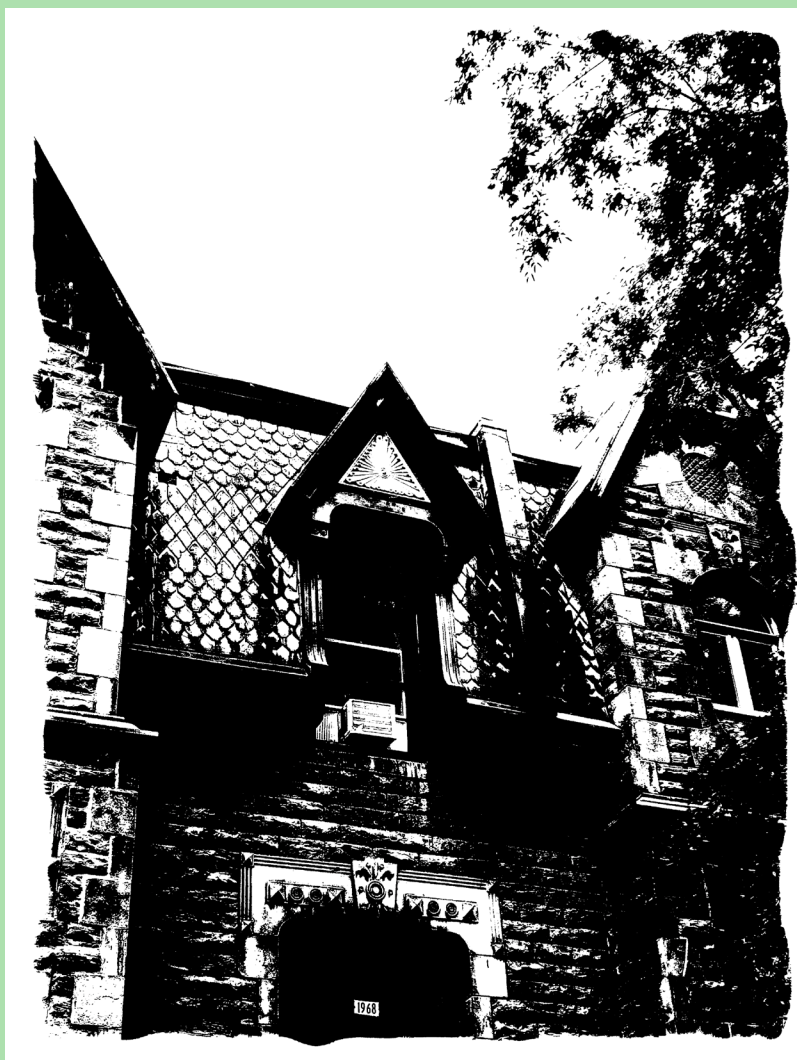
there was a pristine boy and  
a bloodied girl  
clean shaven and lip swollen  
empty eyes and an honest  
smile













# *Practiced Hands, Doubtful Eyes*



Words by Marty Adem

In respiration lays the  
shadow  
of the Flesh itself  
the unarmed essence,  
the holy water,  
the sensual assumption  
of inward understanding.

One, two, three,  
the Darkness descends as an  
Emptiness entwined within  
without  
myself.

Long-limbed and heavy,  
with rusted, ivory claws  
leaving trails of soft  
ash snow in its wake.

Together, we are out to search for . . . ?




That is, as always, the  
question  
pulling on my tongue,  
weighing it down to the oakwood floor  
and leaving me agape and  
open for all to enter  
for all to make their  
home in  
the  
nestled corners I cannot reach.

Possessed of others, I find  
my only true sense of self  
is this velvet-soft  
mirror  
of the starless Sky.

A gentle tap at my ears which  
beckons me to listen—  
the creaking of a door  
unanswered,  
as many are,  
out of emerald rage and rubied fury.

Crimson duck tongues at my feet  
to remind  
of that Power to  
Destroy  
and to  
Create.

Not mine to have or to hold—  
ownership is avarice.




In mirrors that I find abandoned,  
what I see  
is no longer  
that which I once  
recognized—

Here is where I have found myself  
caught,  
stuck,  
remaining,  
ruminating,  
rooting for the wintertime  
in the solvent water droplets of dew that  
are my breath and perspiration,  
tangible indicators of physical certainties.

Do I welcome  
with Wine?  
with Laughter?  
with a white Knife pointed Eastward  
as Smoke rises  
from a Chalice  
in the Imitation I have  
practiced which is not  
my Own?

Reclamation through  
inauthentic farce  
and misunderstanding—

a gutted scream  
choking on blood and spit  
is more appropriate.



And while in this state,  
in the asphyxiation  
I have curated,  
I reach the liminal gate  
where it  
hides.

bound by threads of Lapis,  
we are woven once again  
together,

until the scream stops

fractured into  
Feathers  
that amount to  
and add up to  
the total  
summed  
weight  
of  
Nothingness.


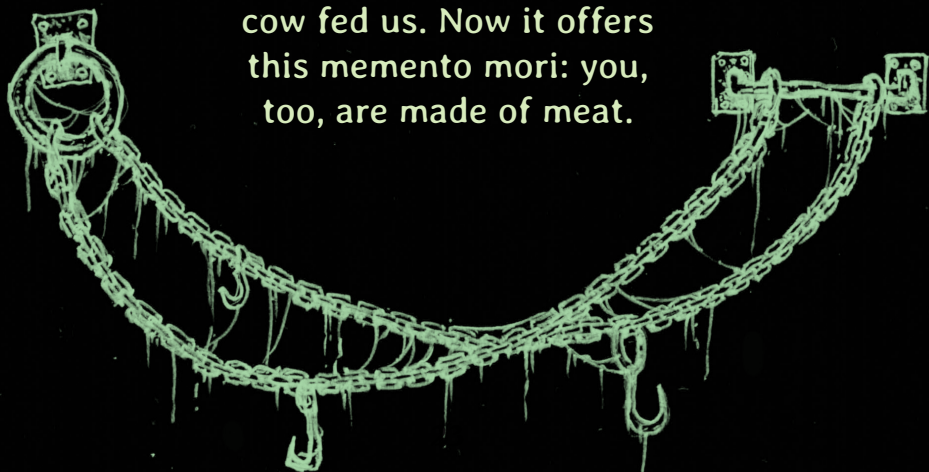






Photo and words by Amazei

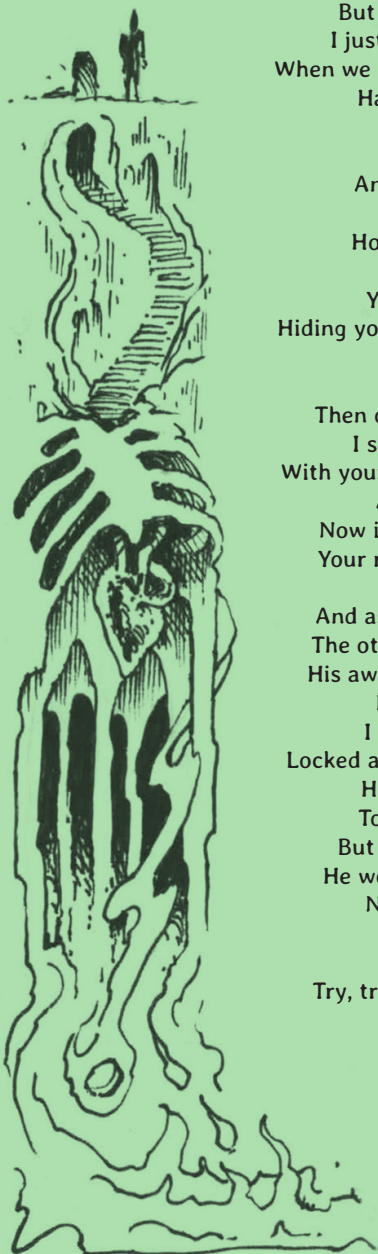
We fed the cow, and the  
cow fed us. Now it offers  
this memento mori: you,  
too, are made of meat.



# Ghosts

Words by Emma D

I never used to believe in ghosts,  
But the older I get, it seems like  
I just gather more around myself.  
When we were young, we'd ask each other—  
Have you ever seen a ghost?  
It never occurred to us  
To look inside ourselves  
And say hello to the spectres  
That live within.  
How has it taken me 29 years  
To notice you—or was it  
You who was avoiding me?  
Hiding yourself away, until you were ready,  
Until I was ready  
To meet you.  
Then one day you stepped into view.  
I saw how beautiful you were  
With your hair, your makeup, your clothes,  
And everything changed.  
Now it's you who lives in the world,  
Your reality slowly becoming firmer  
With every pill I take.  
And as sure as my body is changing,  
The other one is becoming the ghost,  
His awkwardness, his shame, his guilt  
Fading into the shadows.  
I wish I could have left him  
Locked away in that Northern city room—  
His own private mausoleum  
To haunt, far away from me.  
But you knew I couldn't do that.  
He would always find his way back  
No matter how hard I tried  
To banish him.  
So I suppose I'll have to  
Try, try to learn how to live with him  
Haunting me.





A view of the house from the side. The marooned boat is in the foreground.

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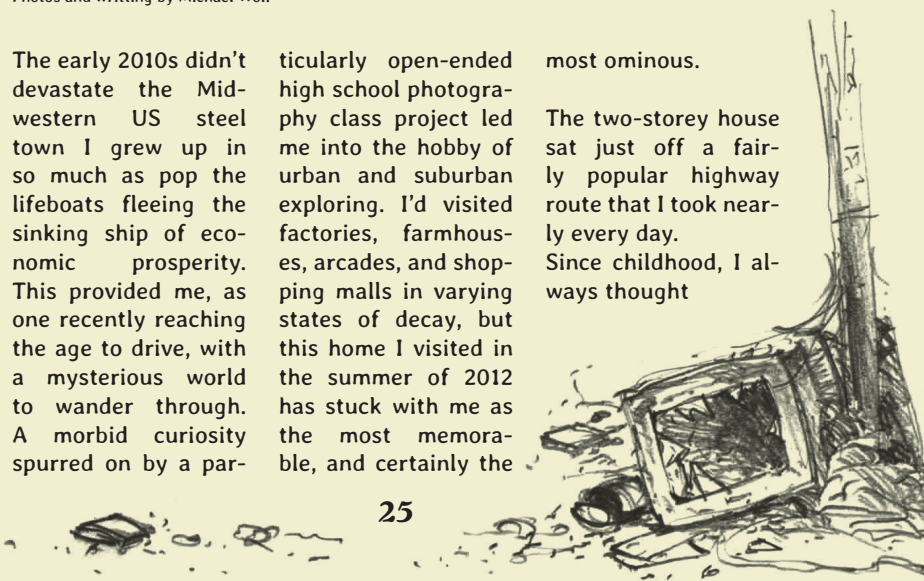
Photos and writing by Michael Wolf

The early 2010s didn't devastate the Midwestern US steel town I grew up in so much as pop the lifeboats fleeing the sinking ship of economic prosperity. This provided me, as one recently reaching the age to drive, with a mysterious world to wander through. A morbid curiosity spurred on by a par-

ticularly open-ended high school photography class project led me into the hobby of urban and suburban exploring. I'd visited factories, farmhouses, arcades, and shopping malls in varying states of decay, but this home I visited in the summer of 2012 has stuck with me as the most memorable, and certainly the

most ominous.

The two-storey house sat just off a fairly popular highway route that I took nearly every day. Since childhood, I always thought





of the estate and its sedentary boat in the front yard as emblematic of upper-middle-class living. When the signs of nature reclaiming the property became noticeable, I knew I was going to invite myself to pay respects to what remained of the life that had been lived there.

I made the trip in the middle of the day, parking in the gravel driveway behind the house and making sure to approach

carefully. The doors were open, and the house was silent except for the branches reaching inside the windows. Throughout the house were the scattered remains of possessions—phone books, old televisions, trash: what wasn't worth moving or stealing. It was often hard to tell what the place had looked like when it was still lived in. This place seemed abandoned in a hurry.



Living room of the home. Most of the rooms looked similar to, if not worse than, this.





Obligatory photo of plants  
taking back the land.

What caught my eye on this trip was a number of piles of personal letters, photos, and poems from the late 90s. They seemed to be from a boy in his late teens or early 20s who was feeling many of the same emotions that I was at the time. His life was, however, in a word, careening. From the state of the home he was living (or squatting?) in, it seemed possible he'd ended up on the same path that several of my friends and acquaintances would follow: either prison

time or opioid overdose. I took my time collecting the personal items in an attempt to piece together a picture of his youth before closing the door (rather pointlessly) and driving back to my parents' home.

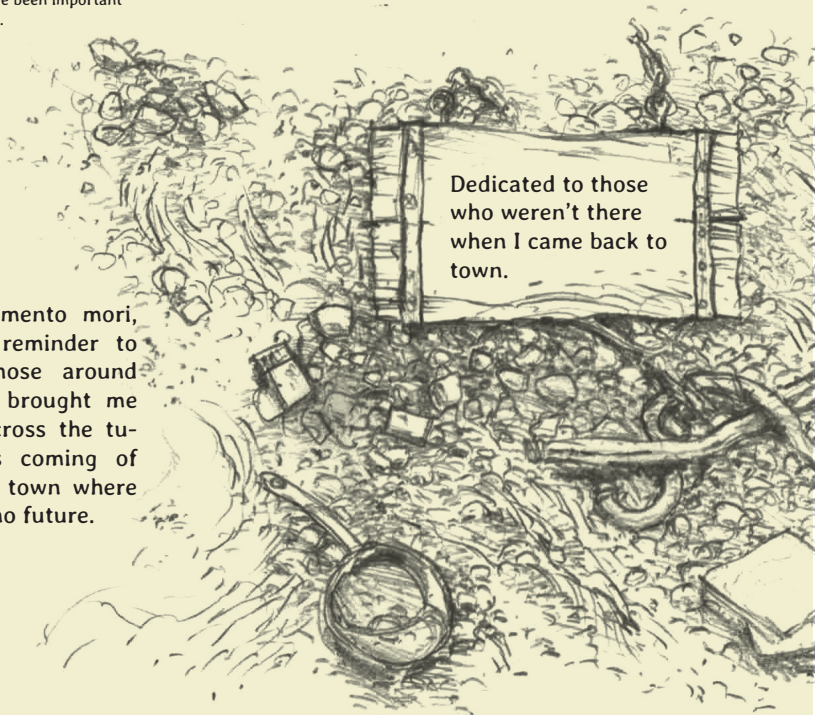
It's difficult to say what part of this brief portrait comes off as the most eerie. The photos feel too reminiscent of how I blew off adolescent steam. The poetry in its childish rhyming reads not unlike the lines I scrawled in the

back of english class notebooks. The journal is a flurry of activity, petty criminality, and desperate socialization. I'm not here to judge this person. After all, I'm the voyeur who entered their home and scanned their diary. I just can't help but wonder what happened to them. At one point I began a cursory search for their name in the local paper, but I ended up deciding that I didn't need to know. I've ended up holding on to these diaries



Picking up a stack of memories  
that must have been important  
at some point.

as a memento mori,  
another reminder to  
thank those around  
me who brought me  
safely across the tu-  
multuous coming of  
age in a town where  
there is no future.









Words  
and illustration  
by Marc-André Huot

Translation from french to  
english by Rekka Bellum

Lured to the forest, by its beauty and the isolation it bequeaths, I fall prey to its charms. The more I move through her, the more she buries into me.

Slowly entrapped in this ever-narrowing place, I become a prisoner of my own flesh. Serpentine roots grip onto me, snaking along my limbs to suffocate me bit by bit. The verticality of the trees are like bars closing in.

Smothered, I search elsewhere for the air that will allow me to breathe again. I observe the space unfolding from inside of me and my organs. I regress into a fetus, nourished from within.

Lungs, veins, and nerves converge to form a new landscape. I am lost in all the labyrinths inhabiting me that form a vast forest in which I take refuge. I am my own forest.

Attiré par la forêt, sa beauté et l'isolement qu'elle m'apporte, je tombe sournoisement sous son charme. Plus j'avance en elle et plus elle s'enfonce en moi.

Lentement, dans ce lieu de plus en plus étroit, je deviens prisonnier de mon corps. Les racines sinueuses s'agrippent à moi longeant mes membres pour peu à peu venir me couper le souffle. La verticalité des arbres devient quant à elle barreaux pour se refermer sur moi.

Étouffé, je cherche ailleurs l'air qui me permettrait de respirer à nouveau. J'observe à présent l'espace se déployer à l'intérieur de moi et de mes organes. Je redeviens un fœtus nourri de l'intérieur.

Poumons, veines et nerfs se ramifient pour créer un nouveau paysage. Je suis maintenant perdu dans tous les labyrinthes qui m'habitent et qui forment une vaste forêt dans laquelle je prends la fuite. Je suis ma propre forêt.









# Thought-Stone

Words by Cecil Fenn

In the dark of every winter, I eat a thought-stone: half-charred doubts, three times killed and still three times reborn. My fallow body nurtures the seeds of my worst appetites.

What am I left with, gnawing my stomach?

Strange monsters and ghosts of old hopes grow inside me; they take nourishment from my fears until I give them a life of their own. It's a birth that breaks me. My hips ache in the cold. Craving and despair peek out between my ribs.

There are simple protections:

A sigil of endurance carved in my skin.  
A tonic to change my shape.  
Keeping my mouth shut on my own silver tongue.

It's not enough.

Every winter, still I eat a thought-stone. The spectre of last year's disappointments remains, and I do not learn. I am always hungry, but food is tasteless; the beating sorrow seems best.

My cards always show the five of cups. I feel a thorn in the side of the life I have built and know I have grown that flower myself.

I craft my own arrows from mistletoe and listen to the spectral voices I let free:

Be grateful that not all your wine has spilt.  
Be grateful you still hear these ghosts.  
Be grateful to have your lips sewn closed when worse was waiting.

In the dark of every winter, I eat a thought-stone,  
but at least I do not go hungry.











# The Solitary Tree

A story by James Chip



Several years ago, when I was a young man, on a warm summer evening I took it upon myself to walk to the village for the benefit of good air, exercise, and some supper.

The walk from my house takes me down a path between wide fields that stretch out to infinity, and then, along the bank of the river, to the edge of the village.

The flat nature of this particular part of the

country means that, while not devoid of beauty, an outsider may find a disorienting lack of landmarks with which to navigate. The only such landmark on this path that gives away your location is a single alder, standing alone on the bank of the river. The path does not run directly under the branches of this tree; instead, it goes out of its way to avoid it like they were opposing magnets, before pick-

ing itself up again on the other side.

Now, I am sure you are aware that this country is filled with trees and their attached stories, be it an army being raised under their branches or spirits living among their roots. Certainly you know of a tree somewhere in your local area that is part of local legend, and this lone alder is one such tree.

It is said that this tree had grown at the site



where a young woman was, having been accused by a jealous young man, tried for witchcraft.

The story goes that the man would ride his horse into town and would often see the young woman going about her work by the river. Every time he rode past he would smile to himself, and over time, although he had never spoken to her, he fell quite in love.

One day, upon discovering that the young woman was promised to wed another, he sank into a jealous rage; if he could not marry her, then nobody could. The next day, he said that he had seen her by the river talking to spirits that helped with her work. Later that day, she was dragged from her house, hands tied, and was cast into the river and drowned for being a witch.

The next day, wracked with guilt over what he had done, the young man returned to that place

by the river to find, in the very spot where the woman had been thrown into the river, there now stood an alder.

Later that afternoon, lying on his front under the tree with his face submerged in the river, his body was found. It looked almost as if he had been dragged by his hair into the water and held firm. The palms of his hands were thick with mud from struggling to push himself out of the water, but there was no sign of any other struggle. Theft was dismissed, as all of the young man's possessions were found intact. All except the ring that he wore on his right hand, which was assumed lost in the river when his hands were submerged. What thief would take the ring but leave the small amount of coins or food that were with him?

I t

is believed that the alder was placed there by whatever spirits it was that the young woman had befriended, and within its roots it protected the memory of the woman. When the young man returned to the scene, the spirits had taken their chance for revenge.

Of course, there are no official records of this ever happening. As far as local records show, no woman had ever been tried for witchcraft in this area at all; but like all good folklore, no proof of the events is needed. You simply just will the truth into existence.

I told this story to a Mr. Faulton, an industrialist from the city, whom I met for the first time in the inn on the evening when I took the aforementioned walk.

Faulton was staying at the house of a mutual friend who was currently out of the area on business, but was happy for his friend to



stay and keep an eye on the running of the house in his absence. Finding that we had an acquaintance in common, we soon found that we had plenty to talk about, and it was then that Faulton informed me of the nature of his visit.

He had acquired the fields on either side of the river at the point at which the alder tree stands, and he intended to raise a team of local men to clear the ground to make way for the construction of a rail bridge. A team of engineers were due to arrive and start work in a few weeks, and he was hoping to have preliminary work done clearing the grounds in advance so that work could begin immediately.

The major impediment to this was that he could find nobody willing to work on that stretch of the riverbank. I told him the story of the alder, and he dismissed this as the superstitious ramblings of provincial folks, informing me that he was no stranger to hard work, and if the pres-

ence of said tree was the barrier, then he would fell it himself, thus removing the problem. I laughed and said that I would not be so quick as to dismiss such stories, but that I wished him the best of luck.

We spoke a while more, and it was arranged that I should join him for dinner at his lodgings the following evening, as he would be glad of the company, and that he would arrange for his carriage to come and collect me at such a time as was convenient to myself.

The next day, around noon, I had some trifling business that needed attending to in the village, so I took the walk along the path by the river again. While I was still some distance off, I could see a horse hitched to a post on the edge of the field and a person, who I assumed to be Mr. Faulton, busying himself about the base of the tree.

Several ropes had been secured to the tree in places, and the figure was inspecting the trunk intently.

Watching for a mo-

ment, something caught my eye. In the river I could see what looked like a shadow, only much darker, slowly making its way upstream. I was too far from it to conduct a proper inspection of its nature, but the shadow itself appeared to have no form of its own to cast it, and it made no disturbance in the water at all. It was as if the riverbed itself had been given life.

All of a sudden I heard the loud thump of an axe on wood and, at an unearthly speed, the shadow raced off in the direction of the sound. I looked up to see Faulton raising the axe for a second strike when, all of a sudden, he seemed to recoil and fall backward to the ground. His gaze appeared to be fixed to a point on the riverbank as he kicked his legs, trying to put as much distance between himself and the river as he could.

I started to run to the scene, but before I could arrive, he had gotten to his feet, mounted the horse, and was off down the path back toward the

village. I made an inspection of the scene, but there was no clue left as to what may have made him recoil as such; no shadow in the water, no animal tracks. Nothing. After some time had passed, I abandoned my search and turned to get back on the track when a glint of sunlight nestled among the grass caught my eye: a ring. I took it, assuming it to have belonged to Mr. Faulton, and resolved to return it to him later when I visited him at his lodgings.

I conducted my business in the village and returned home promptly. While the morning had been quite warm and clear, as the day had passed, dark clouds had started rolling in, and by the time

the coach arrived to collect me, we were in the middle of one of the wildest summer storms I had ever witnessed.

When I mounted the coach, the driver informed me that one of my dogs must have gotten loose, as he had seen what looked like a large black dog shoot from the hedges around my house, heading in the direction of the carriage as he came to knock on my door. I informed him that, while I do not keep any dogs, a fox had recently been sniffing around these parts and that it was likely this that he had seen. Satisfied that this was an end to this matter, we went off into the storm.

The drive over was slow, and the rain lashed at the carriage windows, making it

almost impossible to see out at all. The carriage seemed almost new, and of a very solid construction. Other than the boot marks I had left, it was completely clean. Despite this, however, the air in the carriage felt cold and wet and was thick with the smell of damp wood, mud, and stagnant water. Despite this, the motion and dim light of the carriage started to exhaust me. I closed my eyes and started to dream.

I dreamt that I was riding in a carriage made from the roots of a tree. The floor of this carriage was thick with black mud, and sitting across from me on the opposite bench were two other passengers, one a young woman and the other a man of about the same age. Both sat motionless, dressed in dirty, wet clothes from

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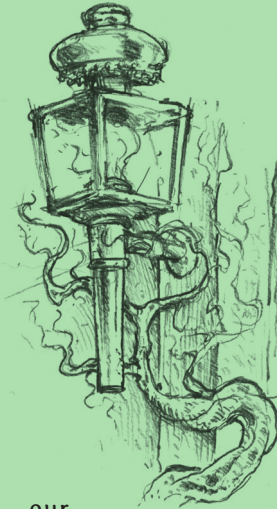
age long past, looking mournfully out of a space where normally there would be a window, but now there was just a knotted mass of roots and earth. The three of us sat in silence for a while when I became suddenly aware of a fourth figure between the others that I had not noticed before. This figure, unlike the others, seemed to be constantly moving, as if it were made from a writhing pile of black worms.

I tried to focus on this new figure, but every time I started to make out its outline, it shifted again, obscuring itself.

All of a sudden the figure made an unearthly lurch for my pocket. I tried to let out a scream, but nothing would come. Just when it seemed that the figure was going to envelop me completely, I was awoken abruptly by the carriage hitting a bump in the road. Once again I was back in the regular carriage, alone, and as I came to my senses, I became aware that my hand was grasping

the ring in my pocket. I dropped it immediately, and tried to put the whole ordeal out of my mind as just a bad dream and tried to calm myself.

A short while later, arriving at



our  
d e s -  
tination, I  
could see a warm  
and welcoming glow  
in the drawing room  
window. The carriage  
stopped, and I heard  
the driver dismount  
and start to open the  
door. Just as the door  
was open enough for  
me to see out, I heard  
the sound of some-  
thing scrambling un-  
derneath, and then,  
all of a sudden, a

large writhing, black  
mass shot from under  
the carriage, knock-  
ing the driver to the  
floor on its way.

The mass, whatever it was, smashed through the lit window of the house and disappeared. I helped the driver to his feet, and we ran for the drawing room as fast as we could, but we were too late. Whatever it was that had entered had since left, and in a high-backed chair, we found Faulton.

The cause of death was recorded as drowning, although I have never been able to consolidate the fact of that statement with the truth of my own eyes. It is true, yes, that he did indeed drown. Explain to me, though, how a man can drown, in river water, in a drawing room.



Peer into  
the black  
mirror when  
looking for  
wandering  
spirits  
and hidden  
knowledge

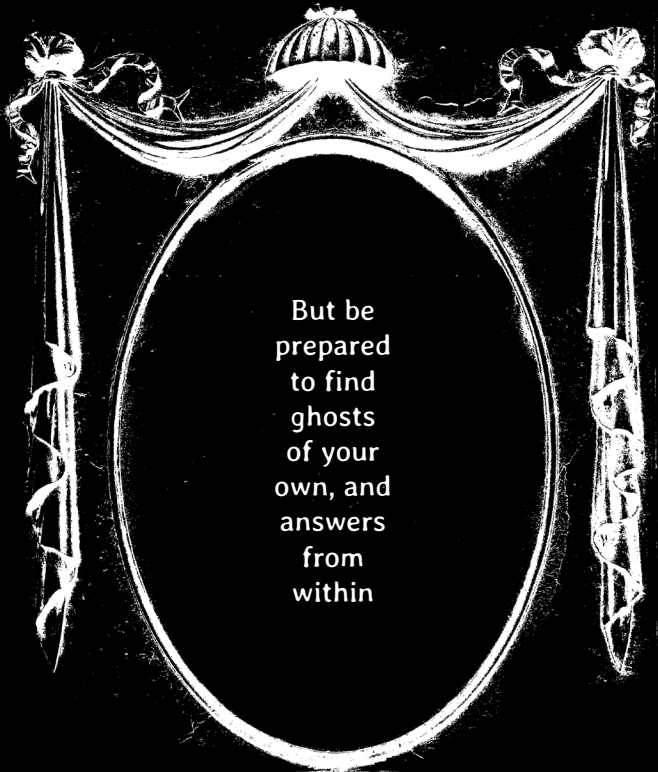


# Transience

Photo and writing by  
Alexa Jade Frankelis

The cemetery landscape evokes a connection and exploration of the past, enabling the use of a camera as a tool of dialogue to convey messages from those who are departed—a planchette, of sorts, and a contemplation of one's own mortality.

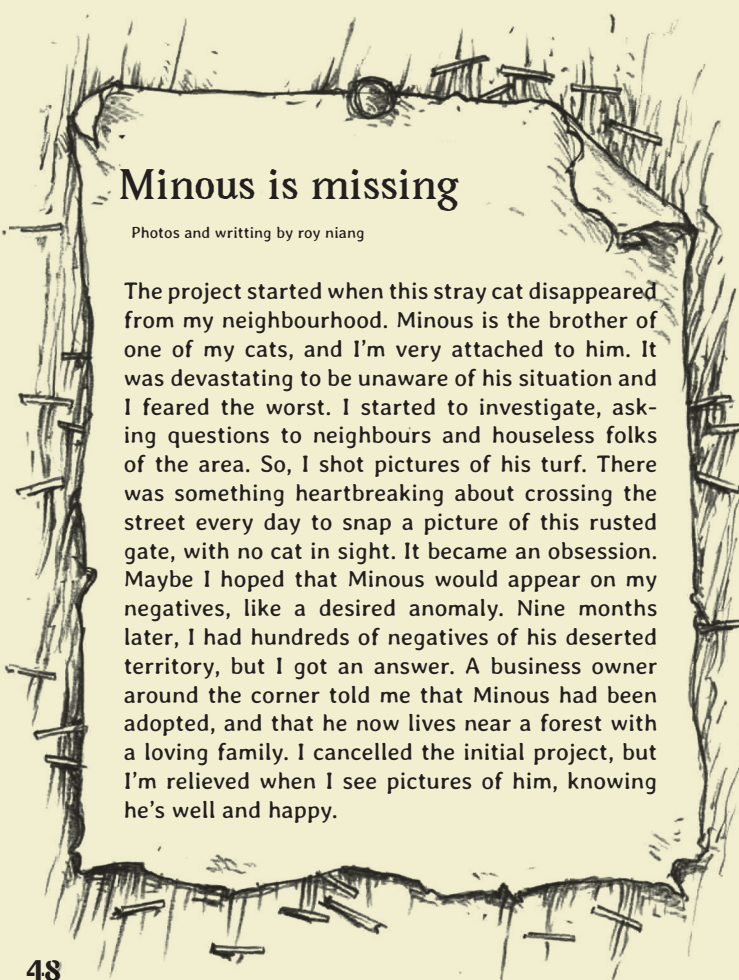




But be  
prepared  
to find  
ghosts  
of your  
own, and  
answers  
from  
within





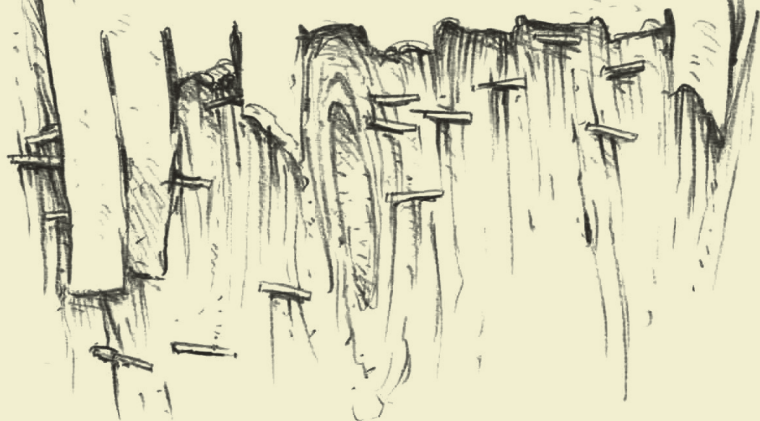


## Minous is missing

Photos and writing by roy niang

The project started when this stray cat disappeared from my neighbourhood. Minous is the brother of one of my cats, and I'm very attached to him. It was devastating to be unaware of his situation and I feared the worst. I started to investigate, asking questions to neighbours and houseless folks of the area. So, I shot pictures of his turf. There was something heartbreaking about crossing the street every day to snap a picture of this rusted gate, with no cat in sight. It became an obsession. Maybe I hoped that Minous would appear on my negatives, like a desired anomaly. Nine months later, I had hundreds of negatives of his deserted territory, but I got an answer. A business owner around the corner told me that Minous had been adopted, and that he now lives near a forest with a loving family. I cancelled the initial project, but I'm relieved when I see pictures of him, knowing he's well and happy.





# *on spectral hospitality*

Writting by Mark A. Matienzo

you should never suggest they show up unannounced. we dare expect to summon the ones we think we know, demanding clarity without context, answers to questions unspoken. at the same time, as guests they can become demanding, and we have our own matters to attend to in the meantime.

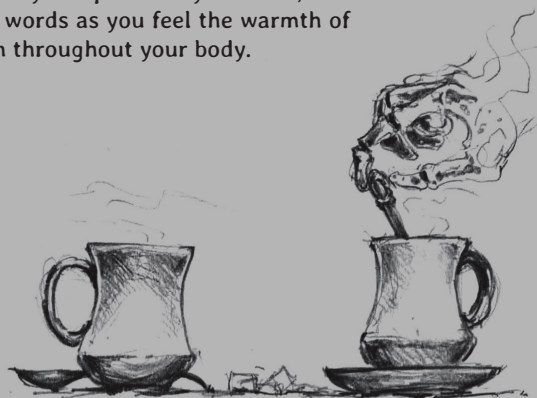
they queue up ever so slowly, politely—but while they can pass through walls, the spectres i know choose not to. only the truly unprepared do not know to expect their return or arrival. sometimes you notice the chill as they shuffle past the thresholds and windows. feinting their presence with their eerie glow, unsettling scents of honeyed, damp decay, their movements audible as they enact in passing with the material world. but more often than not, they advance unnoticed, because they, like you, have work to do and conversations to have.

developing an interactive relationship with a ghost is about establishing a framework for which it is safe for both of you to act. through and through, it is a selfless relationship of care—of mutual curiosity—quite like any burgeoning human relationship. but it is to accept that which is immediately unknowable, what cannot be negotiated without continued listening, repetition, and reflection. at its best and strongest, it is a continued invitation to haunt and be haunted, mediating

a connection between worlds not easily accessible by everyone, and sustaining the bridge.

a host for a haunting should prepare by learning to let the spirit speak first. reviewing traces of the past can help, and an acknowledgment of preferences and fears can set the tone to welcome as if you were to hang a lantern outside your door. if the spirit's details are hard to determine, pay particular attention to preparing as you would for any guest. however, these recommendations also hold even for hauntings by familiar spirits.

tidy your spaces, in your home or wherever you seek to engage with the ghost. provide seating for yourself and the spirit so that you can face one another, to see eye to eye. prepare yourself and the ghost a warm beverage, and place the cups on a table within reach. relax, close your eyes, and listen carefully. once you hear the ghost join you, silently welcome it, and allow it to speak as you sip tea. as you listen, take in and swallow its words as you feel the warmth of the infusion throughout your body.



as you continue to listen, you will feel the expectation of your voice to meet the spectre's. begin with sharing what you digested, what you understand, and what remains uncertain, allowing the ghost to speak again, offering a second helping of its wisdom to you. allow this to continue for a few cycles until you have a mutual understanding.

at this point, you may ask the questions that you wish, inviting the spirit to understand more about you by what you wish to learn. be prepared to feel exposed, incomplete, and uncertain, as the language of the spectre may not be as precise as your own.

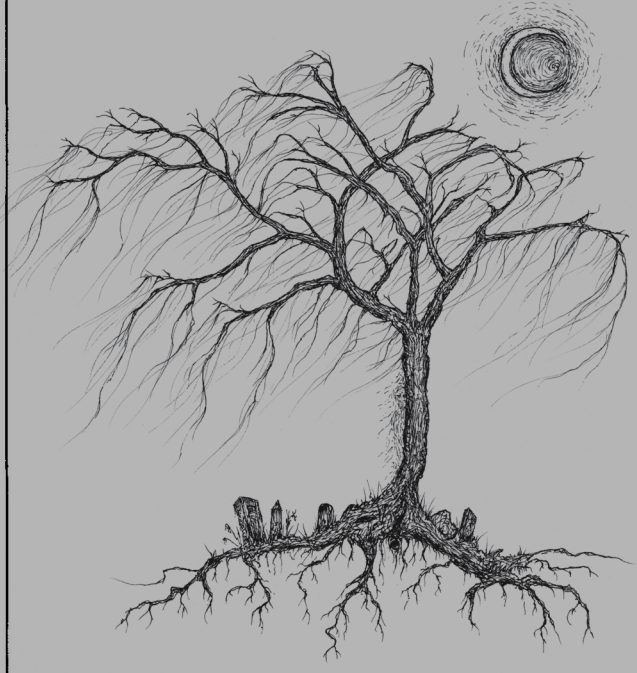
to close the conversation, silently offer your thanks and acknowledge why you need to cease your interaction. encourage the ghost to return for another visit. if successful, you will most likely be assured that they will always be here, ready for the next conversation, and that it is incumbent upon you to make

*it is incumbent  
upon you to make  
the space in your  
life to haunt and  
be haunted*

the space in your life to haunt and be haunted. close your eyes again, responding honestly, and slowly stand to acknowledge your return to the material world.



Illustration by Mark Jarrell









# A Ghostly Mixtape

怨 - 母源 - 发 - 死河 (*River Of Death - The Head Stream - Enemite*)

*A View from Within the Gargoyle - Charnel Oubliette*

*Wedding Theme - A Hawk and A Hacksaw*

*The Garden Manifesto - The Ghost Gardener*

*Longing (The River of Ash) - Bell Witch*

*Alpine Black Magic - Forlorn Kingdom*

*From Blood to Dust - Blood and Dust*

*Dead People's Things - Deathprod*

*The Long Black Veil - Johnny Cash*

*Necromancy - Spectrum Rites*

*Clairaudience - Severed Heads*

*By This River - Brian Eno*

*Lux Aeterna - György Ligeti*

*Hagazussa - MIMD*

*Babel - Lustmord*

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Edited by **Hex Evans**

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Printed in **Tio'tia:ke**  
(so-called Montréal)

Fonts used  
**Averia Libre • Auriol LT Std**  
**Goth Ball Crap • Macabre**  
**Avara • Trattatello**  
**Trickster • Bard**

May whoever steals  
or destroy this zine  
have this wretched  
world in eternal form  
forever condemned  
to watch it wither and  
die while unable to  
touch or feel any of it.









1st issue  
Fall 2021

Fantômes is a collaborative ghost story zine, bringing together storytelling, poetry, folklore, illustration, and photography. It is a place to explore personal and collective ghosts, lend them a voice through summoning rituals, raw poetry, or scribbled drawings, and get familiar with their haunting presence.

[fantomeszine.com](http://fantomeszine.com)