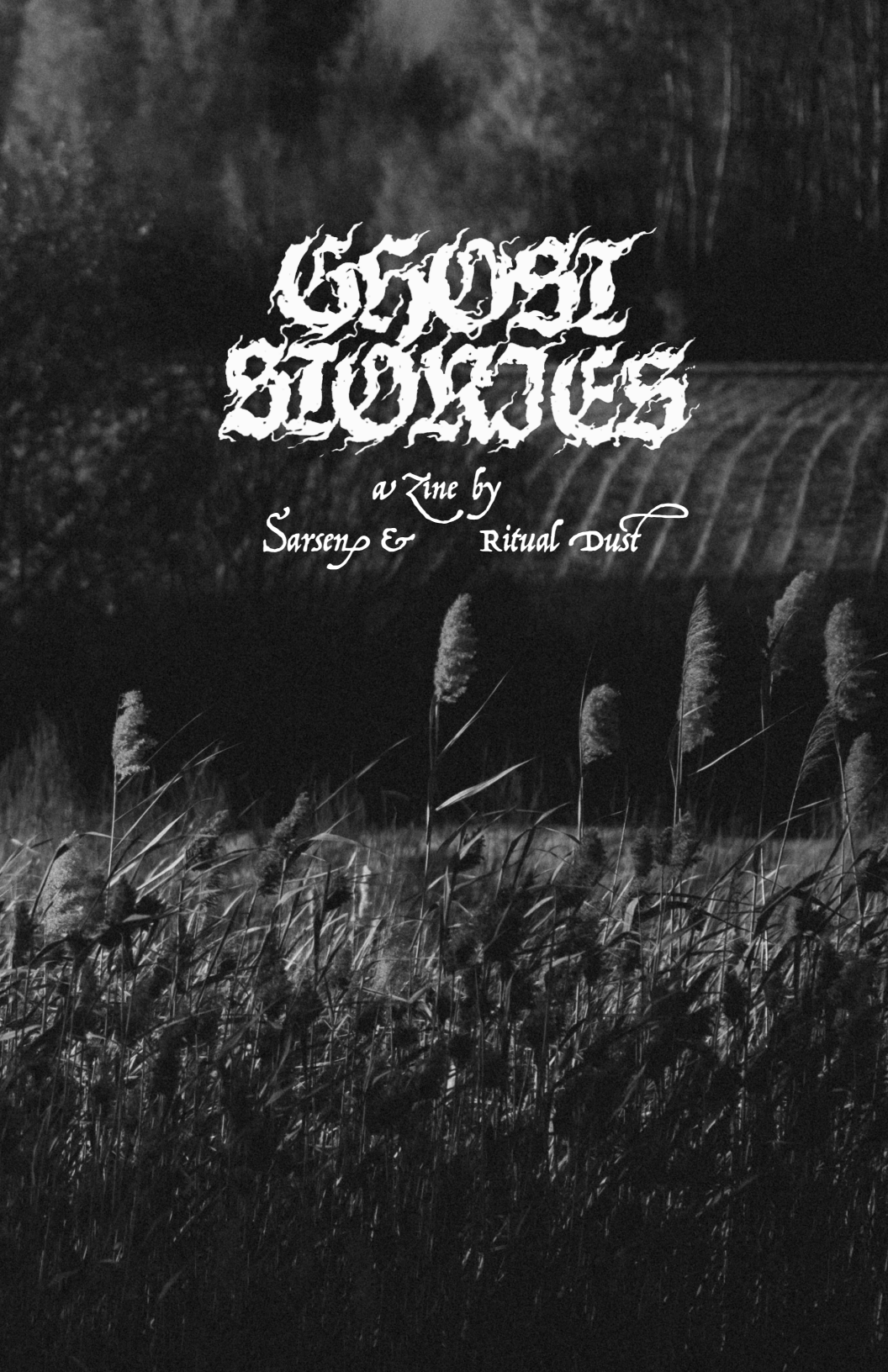

GHOST
STORIES
a zine by
Sarseno &
Ritual Dust



GHOST STORIES

Words and photographs ..... Soren
— @ sarsen.tattooer

Design & layout ..... Lizbeth Poirier
— @ ritual.dust

Illustrations on pages 9 & 13 ..... Salem
— @asteroid_20xx

with contributions by
Chelsie, Jack, Kylie,
Marilyn (thanks ma), Mars,
Salem, & Soren

Fall 2026

Edited by

FANTÔMES

fantomeszine.com

Something I commonly ask people when I first meet or am getting to know them is if they have any good ghost stories. I've always loved word of mouth horror and spooky tales of the mysterious or unknown, regardless of how I feel about the validity of paranormal phenomena at any particular time in my life.

Here are a small handful I have collected from friends and family over recent years. I should note that "ghost story" here is not limited to ghosts in the typical sense, but broadly encompasses strange phenomena of all kinds. Things that go bump in the night. The unexplained. Campfire stories to tell after dark.

I think it should also be noted that belief in ghosts is not required to enjoy or to have a good ghost story.
I hope you enjoy these as much as I enjoyed collecting them. Best read, of course, alone in a darkened room.



Let's start here, with one from Mars

When I was six or seven I lived on a military base in goose bay Labrador, and it never got very dark there no matter the season. In the summer the sun wouldn't set until well past my bedtime, and in the winter the light was trapped between the clouds and the snow. My little brother needed blackout curtains to sleep; I used to fall asleep with the lights on by accident sometimes and I still always slept like a rock.

One night, after the rest of the house had gone quiet I woke up to the sound of my door opening. Slowly, like they were trying not to wake me. I had been sleeping on my side facing my closet, the door at my feet, and with my eyes pressed most of the way shut I watched a man enter my room through my eyelashes. I didn't move a muscle and I kept my breathing steady for fear that he'd know I was awake. It wasn't my dad, and it wasn't anyone else I recognized either.

The man was wearing a tool belt of some kind, hammer dangling, and big boots that he moved surprisingly quietly in. He walked slowly but purposefully. He didn't pause or acknowledge me at all, he simply walked towards my closest. He then stepped up onto the white chest that held my beanie baby collection, reached above himself to move the attic panel up and to the side, and then hoisted himself into the attic, replaced the panel, and disappeared.

The next day I asked what in the attic needed to be fixed so late at night, and I got blank stares from my parents. When my mom asked me why I would think such a thing, I told her about the handy man I saw in my room. My dad told me that there was no handy man, but my mom was pale and quiet.

Almost twenty years later I suddenly remember this event and it's so vivid and intense that I immediately ask my parents about it. They're divorced by this time (thank god) and my dad tells me he doesn't remember it at all, and there was no handy man. When I ask my mom the same question she tells me she remembers, and she checked the attic herself for me. She didn't find anything up there besides insulation.

Her only theories were that the neighbour was breaking into our garage to get in through the attic or that it was a ghost. And considering that I never saw him descend from the attic, and how the only noise he made was my doorknob despite his handy man boots, I don't think it was the short and sad neighbour, but something entirely different.







From a chat with Kylie

Short version, my ex and I were maybe chased around by a spirit? Maybe?

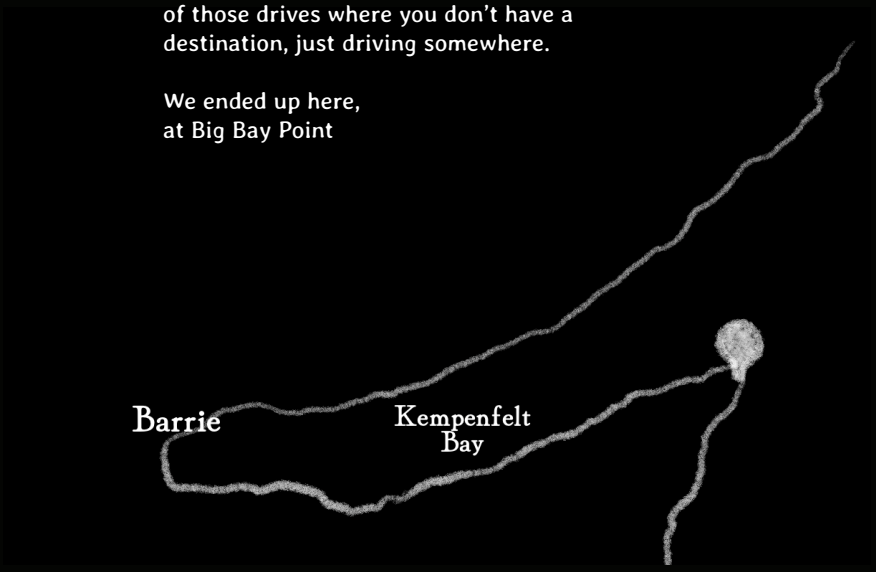
Hmmmmm
What was it if it wasn't a spirit, lol

Folie a deux?

Idk it sounds like a good one!

This was back when I was about 19, so probably around 2009. He was upset, so instead of dropping me off at home, we went for a drive into the rural areas around Barrie. It was one of those drives where you don't have a destination, just driving somewhere.

We ended up here,
at Big Bay Point



Lots of farmland before you get to a tiny tip of the land that has some little cottages and lots of woods.

It was late summer, and dark out, I don't remember the time. Late enough that young teenaged-Kylie should have probably gone home but you're a teenager, and everyone knows teenagers are actually immortal. We drove down the long farm road and turned right heading toward Big Bay Point. There was fog rolling in, and I got a bad feeling.

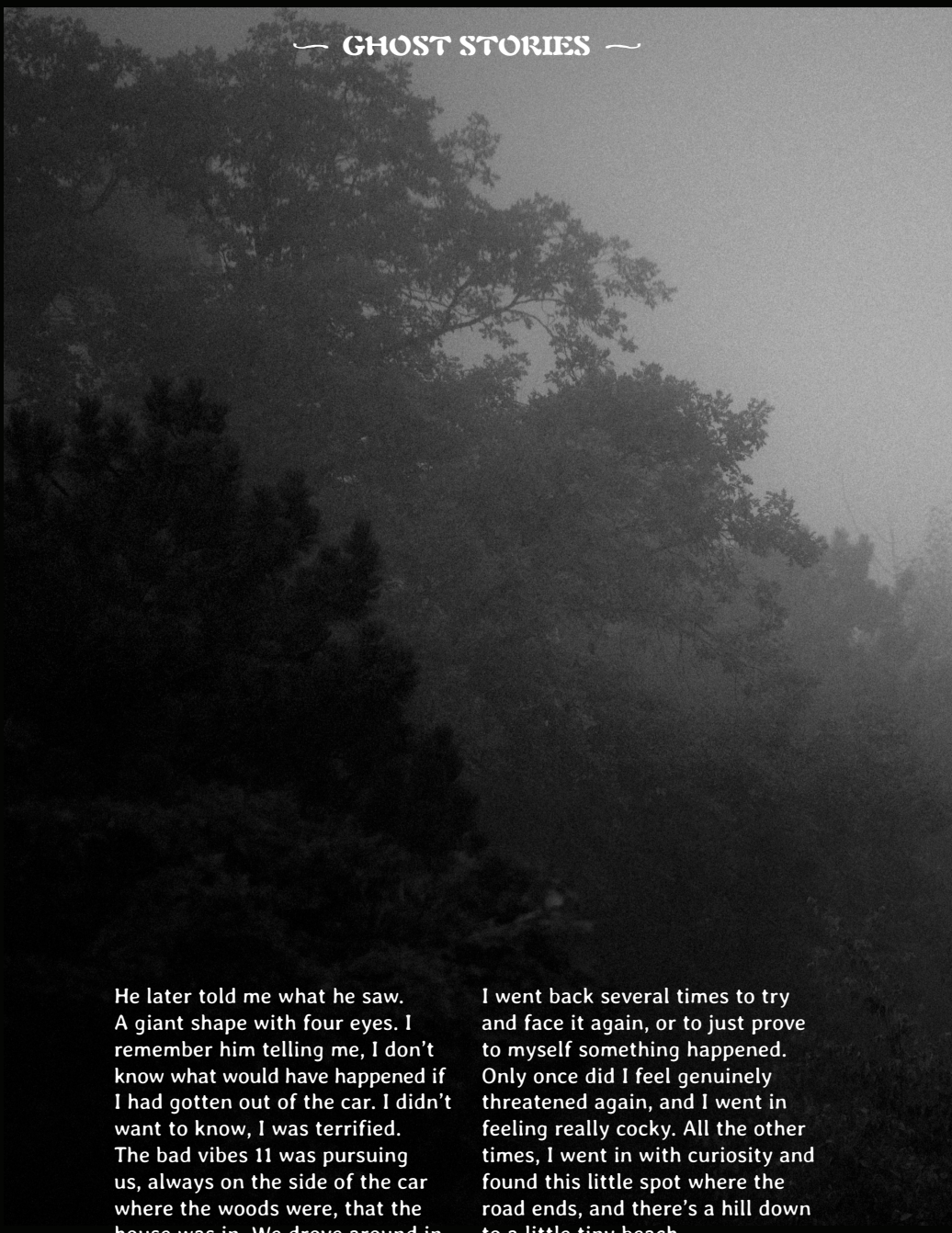
I was a bad feeling kind of person. I never would have said that I "had the Sight" but I felt like I could feel my way blind, be they people or spirits or something else. I felt I could sense their location and intentions. My boyfriend at the time, we'll call him H, had limited "Sight."

H was driving, pretty fast, down these tree-lined roads with unfamiliar houses. I can't quite remember the sequence of events, but I think it started with the weird house. He turned in to a random driveway, and my bad feeling really intensified. At first I just felt like something was not great, but then I felt actively targeted. I told him to turn around, but it was a single-car-length road, there was no room. So, he kept driving until we got to the end.

There was a little house, with a red roof, and something about it turned the bad vibes up from 6 to 11, and for the life of me I cannot tell you why. This dumb little house absolutely terrified me. He turns the car around in front of the house, drives back out as fast as he can, and doesn't pay attention on the turn off back onto the road.

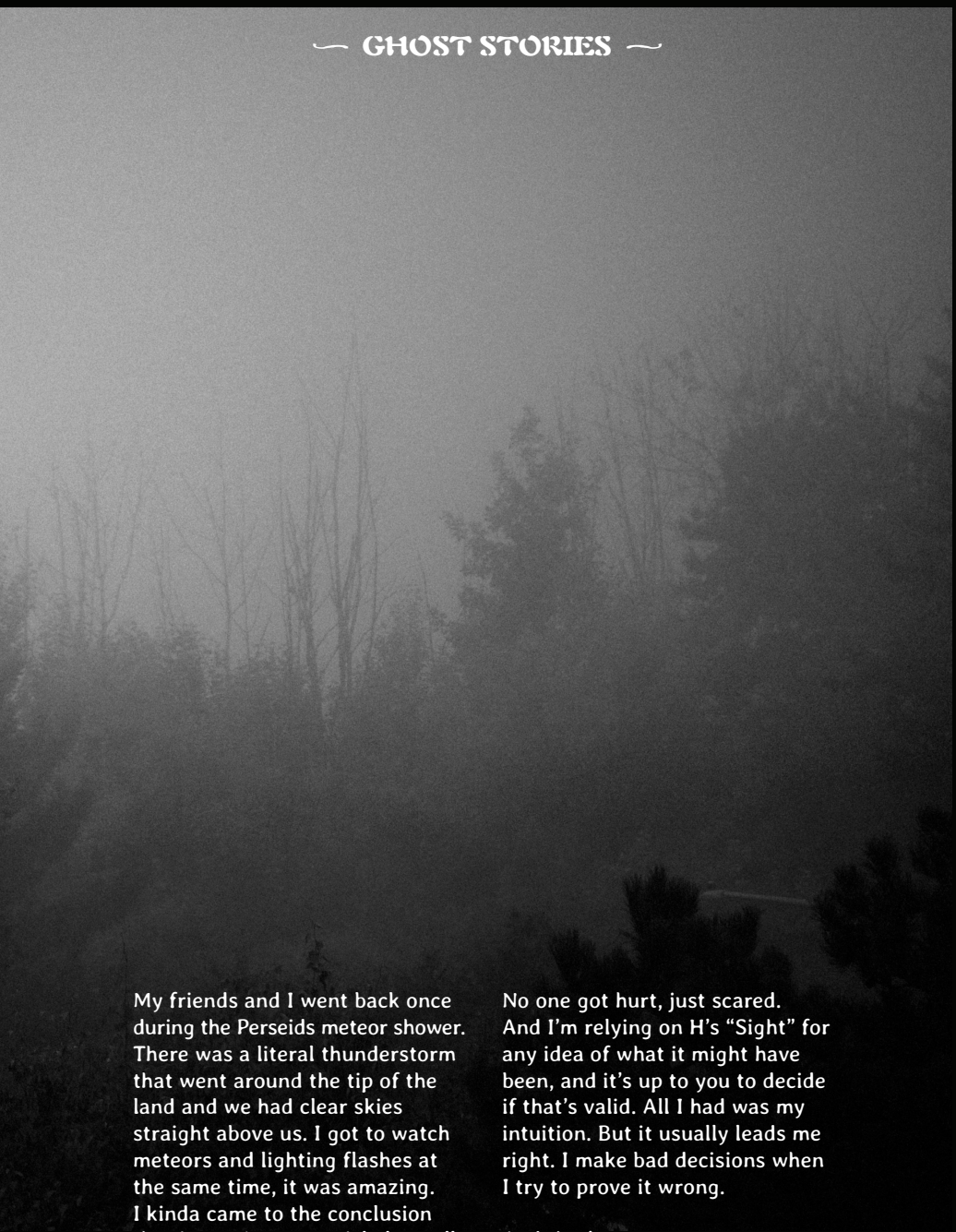
The part that flummoxes me to this day is that we got lost. You can look at the map, it's all straight lines. There is no way we should have gotten lost, beyond being scared and stupid and teenagers. But at the time, I could have sworn we went back and forth on the same road and the ends changed. In retrospect I'm sure we just didn't know where we were going, but it still itches in my brain if I'm totally honest. I dismiss it but there's a part of me that wonders.

H stopped the car at a kind of three-way intersection and stared. And stared. I tried to get him to talk to me but he stared. I got the sense that he was about to get out, and told him, "don't." "Don't what?" "Don't get out of the car." "How did you know that's what I was going to do?" "Please let's just go."



He later told me what he saw. A giant shape with four eyes. I remember him telling me, I don't know what would have happened if I had gotten out of the car. I didn't want to know, I was terrified. The bad vibes 11 was pursuing us, always on the side of the car where the woods were, that the house was in. We drove around in circles until we finally found the road out.

I went back several times to try and face it again, or to just prove to myself something happened. Only once did I feel genuinely threatened again, and I went in feeling really cocky. All the other times, I went in with curiosity and found this little spot where the road ends, and there's a hill down to a little tiny beach.



My friends and I went back once during the Perseids meteor shower. There was a literal thunderstorm that went around the tip of the land and we had clear skies straight above us. I got to watch meteors and lighting flashes at the same time, it was amazing. I kinda came to the conclusion that it was just a special place, all things considered.

No one got hurt, just scared. And I'm relying on H's "Sight" for any idea of what it might have been, and it's up to you to decide if that's valid. All I had was my intuition. But it usually leads me right. I make bad decisions when I try to prove it wrong.

And that's my story.

Great story, s tier,
was it foggy the whole time you
were driving around lost?

I think it was, I'm pretty sure
There was a moon though, gibbous
but I might be making that up. It's
hard to remember. Oh! And there
was a spooky dog! I forgot about
that.Something darted into the
road when driving, I was afraid we
were going to swerve and crash.
But there was nothing there.
Probably just the panic.

When your ex was just staring
and staring he was looking at the
shape with four eyes?

That's my understanding. He was
staring at it, trying to understand
what he was seeing.

That's terrifying, I wish he could
have like drawn it or something,
I want to know what it looked like.

I wrote it all down the night it
happened, in a journal. I just have
no idea where that journal is.
I tried to draw it myself, I don't
remember if this was my interpre-
tation or if he told me it looked
in such a way. But it was black,
a hulking shadow, eyes glowing,
four arms and two legs, vaguely
humanoid but crouched forward
and walking on all of them
I can't believe I still remember
this so well, that's wild.





Two proper hauntings from Chelsie, in West Virginia

I was visiting a friend who lived in Richmond, VA at the time and she had taken me to the Edgar Allen Poe museum. The night before we had taken a haunted tour of the streets of Richmond and it started in front of the museum, while waiting we took a couple selfies. I was fascinated by the paranormal and was looking at the windows behind us in the pictures and in one of them I thought I could make out the grainy silhouette of a young girl's face.

The next day while exploring the Edgar Allen Poe museum (it was a couple small buildings) we were standing in front of two of the buildings trying to decide on which one to go into next. While talking, I happened to glance up at the upstairs window of one called the Exhibition Building. I saw a quick flash of a woman's face in the window, in front of the curtains that were closed. My friend and I paused and looked at each other. "Did you see that?" I asked her. "What did you see?" she asked me. "I saw a face in that window," I said.

We finally decided to go into that building. My friend opens the door and lets me go in first. As I go to step over the threshold I freeze, "I can't go in there. I am *not* welcome in there." My friend encouraged me to go in and I eventually gave in.

While inside, I kept feeling a hand touching me lightly on my back. My friend led us upstairs after browsing around downstairs for a bit and as I was climbing the stairs, my legs felt heavy and I got cold and nauseous. I only managed to spend about a minute upstairs before I left and waited for her outside.

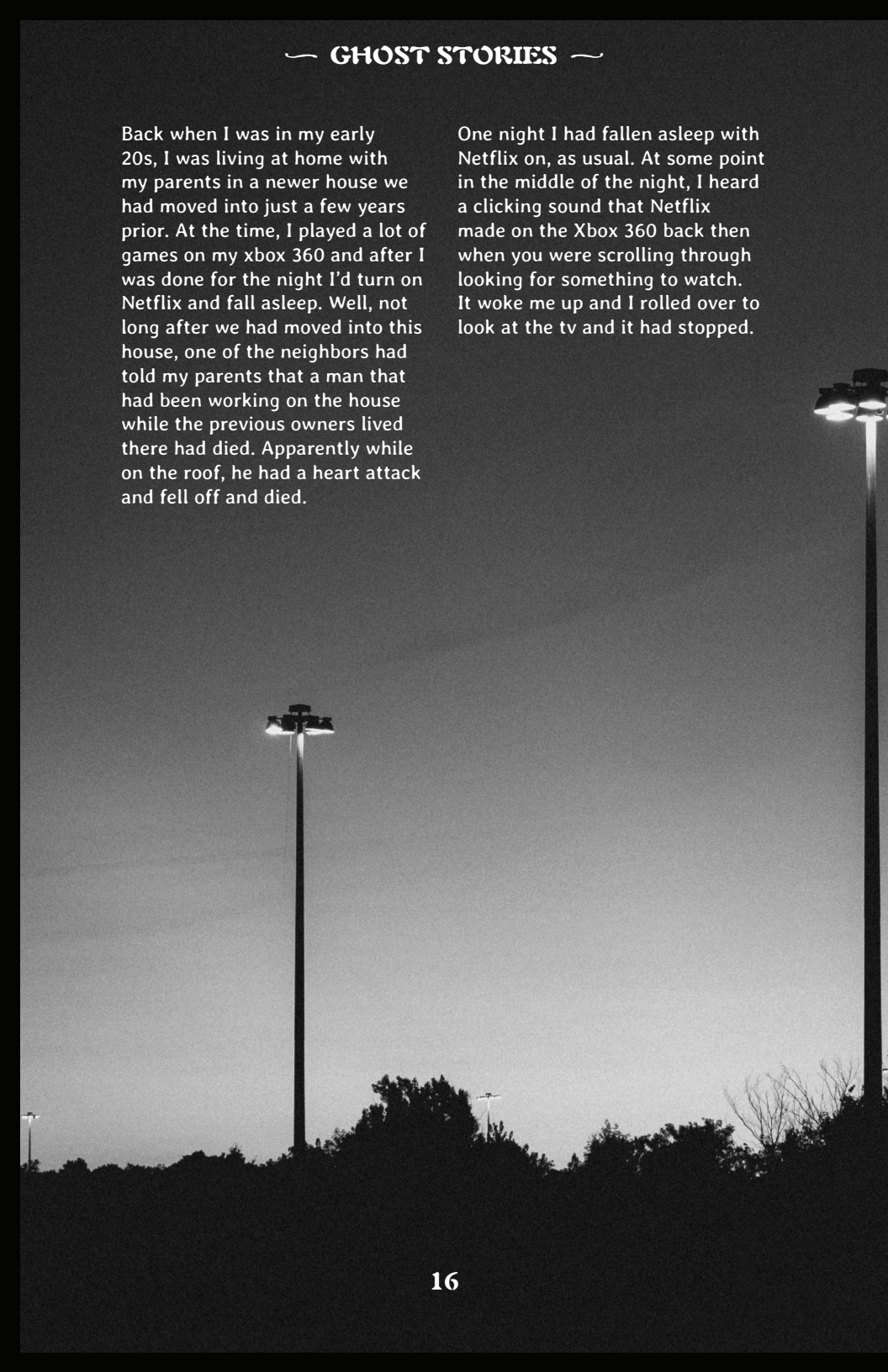
A couple days later, I was back home and in bed sleeping when I experienced my first episode of sleep paralysis. I was dreaming that I was at an old village that had been converted into a summer camp. Inside the buildings there were old family photos with all the eyes scratched out. I had gone outside and was crawling under one of them looking for something. Suddenly I had heard my dad's voice say "Wakey wakey, it's time to get up!" (He used to say this every morning to wake me up for school when I was a kid). After he said it, something grabbed me by my ankles and pulled me out from under the covers and I instantly woke up. When I opened my eyes, I saw a young girl standing next to my bed, my tv had turned to static and I couldn't move.

I tried to shake myself awake and was trying to scream but it was barely coming out. I finally fully woke up and could move and I sat up and looked around. I pulled out my phone and deleted the selfies that I thought I could see the young girl's face in and laid back down. I never saw the young girl standing next to my bed again.

***

Back when I was in my early 20s, I was living at home with my parents in a newer house we had moved into just a few years prior. At the time, I played a lot of games on my xbox 360 and after I was done for the night I'd turn on Netflix and fall asleep. Well, not long after we had moved into this house, one of the neighbors had told my parents that a man that had been working on the house while the previous owners lived there had died. Apparently while on the roof, he had a heart attack and fell off and died.

One night I had fallen asleep with Netflix on, as usual. At some point in the middle of the night, I heard a clicking sound that Netflix made on the Xbox 360 back then when you were scrolling through looking for something to watch. It woke me up and I rolled over to look at the tv and it had stopped.





I looked around to see if maybe I had laid on my controller or something, but it was turned off and laying on my nightstand. At the time I had my old Kinect plugged up to it because I had gotten it out to play at one point and just left it on there after that. The Kinect would show a small grayscale picture of what it's viewing in the bottom corner of your tv. When I looked at the tv, I saw in that small picture the figure of a man standing behind my bed. I froze and blinked a few times to make sure my eyes weren't playing tricks on me. Nope, he was still there. I slowly started to roll over only to find out there was nobody there. I looked back at the tv and the man no longer appeared standing behind my bed in the Kinect's view. I got up and unplugged the Kinect and never used it again.



While we're here, some West Virginia lore from Jack

Everyone in WV has a story of some shit they saw (or heard mostly) out in the woods at night here.

Guy I knew at Radon was an avid hunter and he set up these recording devices out in the woods at night to capture audio around his property after he started hearing strange noises around his house.

He brought them in for me and my buddy to listen to. It was a long droning sound almost like you'd hear on a gas rig or something but then there was like a weird whooping sound that cut through at steady intervals, and it didn't sound like a coyote or a bird or anything else you'd normally hear out in the woods at night.
I never thought much of it but this dude was certain it was some kind of weird creature.

Also know some people in Isle of Wight, VA that live right across from a very creepy old church and they sometimes go so far as salting the perimeter of their house and shit cause they have seen people walking in and out of the woods at night.

Also of course tons of people still report seeing strange phenomena around where the Silver Bridge was, which connects Point Pleasant to Ohio; where the Mothman rumors came up, ppl still say there is weird energy around that spot and they see shit there all the time.

Blennerhassett Hotel they claim the ghost of this disembodied woman pulls the books off the shelves in the library every night.

There is a ghost train ppl say they see and hear that rolls through southern WV; coal freight that took a curve too hard, derailed, killed everyone. They cleaned up the wreck and what not but locals claim they see a headlight coming down through the holler where there are no tracks anymore.

It comes when there is fog or heavy rain; when the mountains memory is the strongest.





Next, a cryptid sighting from Salem

Ok so this was a while back when I was visiting my mum's place out close to Renfrew county.
Maybe like, 2014 or something give or take a couple years, I don't really remember the exact date.

It was the winter, sometime close to midnight, everyone had gone off to bed and my step bros and I were just hanging out in the kitchen telling stories and whatnot while the snow fell outside and the house was buffeted by squalls every now and then.
Just imagine that as background noise - winter weather outside an old country house that's half renovated.

The light in the kitchen is warm and dim, as is customary in that house late at night - one light hangs over us, over the dining table in the kitchen, there are windows on the south, west, and north sides of us and we can only barely see out of them (like when your light is on and it's hard to see out your window at night, that kind of thing).

There is a porch light outside that illuminates the yard behind the house where, at the time, there was a motor home parked and mostly buried in snow.
It was a soft white light that only really covered the side of said motor home and the pavement steps that led into the house and attached shed/summer kitchen - anything beyond the vehicle was lost to the night and blowing snow.
So as we are chatting, I notice movement outside, near the motorhome.

It's fucking cold out and we are positive all the pets are indoors - they're all upstairs asleep as well behind closed doors.

So we get up to investigate - moving into the living room to get a better look outside (there are no lights on in the living room and there are windows looking out into the yard where the movement was).

The wind has really picked up and the motor home is almost completely engulfed by an elegantly sculpted dune of snow.

We make our way to the window just in time to see a pair of legs lift off of the roof of the motor home and vanish outside of the porch light's field of illumination, causing the vehicle to lurch on its suspension.

At least three of the 4 of us for sure saw something. We thought maybe it was coyotes or a wolf, but couldn't quite make out the rest of the features of whatever this thing was.

But the time of year was off for those kinds of animals to be lurking around, at least we think so - they'd have to be desperate to get so close, but we were like, why would it climb on top of the motor home? and where were the footprints?
When the motor home bounced back up some snow was dislodged, but by the time the sun rose, the fine snow had been blown and sculpted back into the smooth shapes it had been before we saw anything.





Here's one from my mom

This was before you were around. We were living in a three bedroom rental townhouse, a different one from the one you grew up in. Your brother and sister were away with their dad so I was the only one in the house. I didn't know it at the time, but apparently there had been a fire at some time in one of the three bedroom end units in the project, and a little boy had died.

I know it wasn't a dream, because I was sitting up in bed awake, reading. Through the bedroom door I could see the top of the banister where the stairs to go down were. I looked up and saw a little boy in pajamas, standing outside the door. He had brown hair and big eyes, and I was shocked at first, thinking how did a little boy get in the house? Then I noticed that I could see the metal spokes of the bannister through him. I was scared for a moment, and then a sense of calm came over me, like I just knew I didn't need to be afraid. He was there for maybe ten seconds, and then he was gone.

Years later, I was talking to my sister (she was living in another three bedroom unit in the same project), and found out that she'd seen him too. We thought that perhaps he was visiting all the three bed units, looking for his parents.


I'll leave off now with my own story.
It's a pretty good one —



When I was 12 my parents bought a house in the country, on a quiet street in Russell, Ontario.

When we first got the house it was pretty busted and had some cursed vibes to say the least. Not in the haunted sense, but in the why the fuck would someone make these kinds of building and interior design decisions kind of way, with the most highly cursed of all being the basement. It had horrible, gnarly, vomit orange 70s carpet and dark wood panelling on all of the walls, so it was dark as fuck for really no reason. The office space off the main room in the basement was no better, with the walls painted a dark forest green and more awful carpet to match. We set this room up as the computer room, so naturally I spent much time down there, glued to the enormous off-white 90s PC. There was always a creepy vibe down there, half of which was simply from how rancid the decor was.

Luckily, the basement flooded not too long after we moved in, so the barf coloured carpet had to go, and my parents took this opportunity to spruce up the main basement room in other ways, adding new light fixtures and painting some of the dark walls white to brighten the space a bit. The computer room was unchanged, but the main space was much less horrifying, brighter, cozier, and nicer to be in. Even with the changes, the creepy vibe remained.

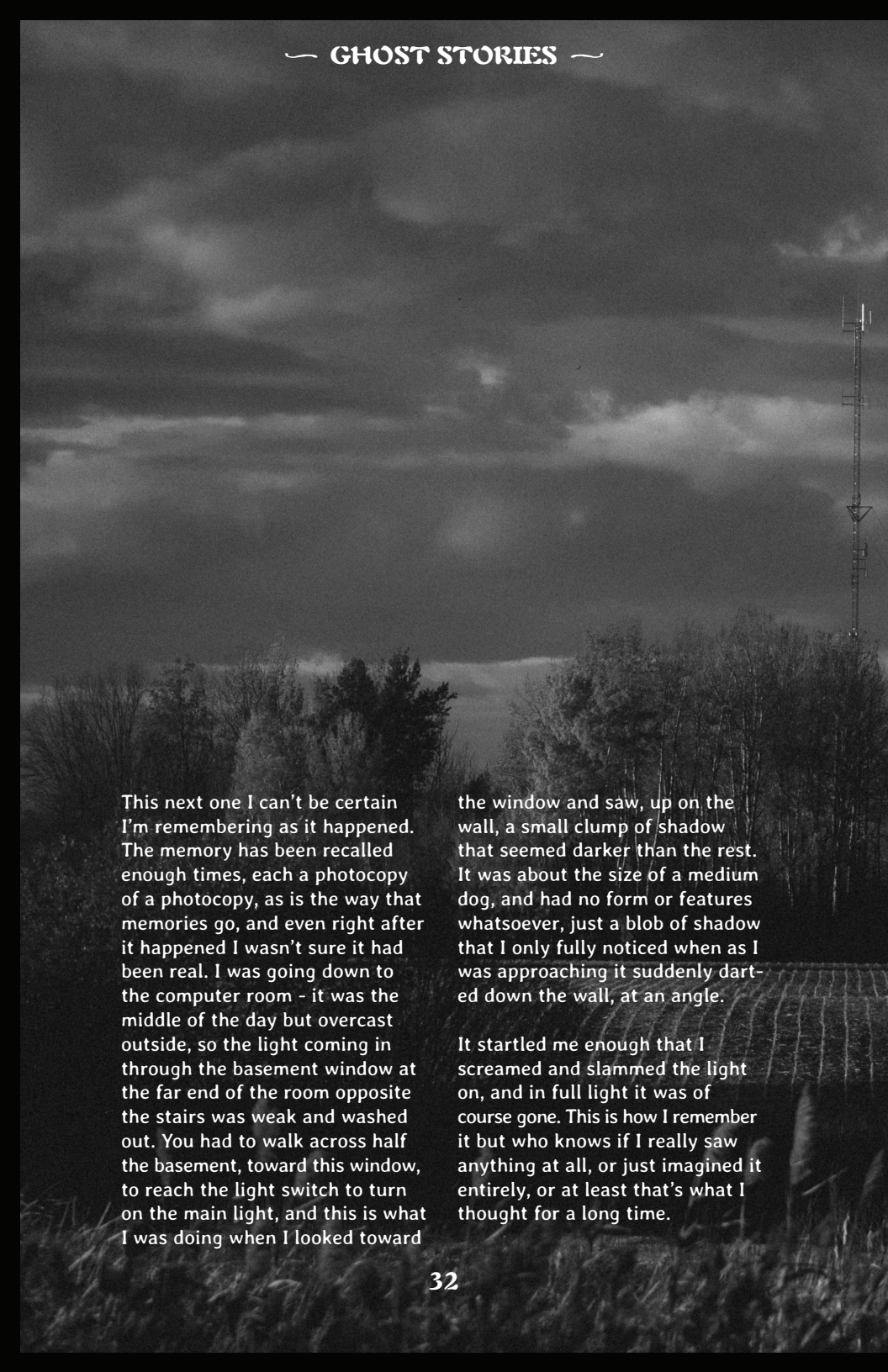
When sitting at the desk in the computer room, my back would be to the door/the larger basement area and I would frequently feel as though something was behind me, in the doorway. Hair on your neck type stuff, the general feeling of being not alone, or watched. I should take a quick moment to say that back then, I was as

woo woo as they come, and fully believed in ghosts and everything else with them, so naturally I immediately assumed the basement was haunted. I wasn't the only one who got vibes in the basement though, my sister did too, when she would visit.

The phenomena seemed to intensify in tandem with my being freaked out by it. I would wake up frequently in the night and feel the presence in my room, sometimes moving around. It was never a threatening presence, and felt small, not tall or looming, but I was scared of it anyways.

My sister and I independently got the notion that the "ghost" was a little girl. Neither of us ever saw her, but we both imagined her the same way, with dark hair and a white dress or nightgown. This detail may be apocryphal as I cannot confirm it with documents, but I'm told my mom and sister did some sleuthing and dug up via the land registry office that there had indeed been a young girl who lived and I presume died on the property, back when it had been a farm long ago.

The peak of the occurrences happened when I was around 14-15. One night my sister was staying over while my parents were gone, and was sleeping in their room, which was closest to the stairs down to the basement. She woke in the night hearing crying, and thought it was me at first, only to realize that it didn't sound like me, and wasn't coming from my room across the hall, but was coming instead from the basement. She managed to get back to sleep somehow and told me about it in the morning.



This next one I can't be certain I'm remembering as it happened. The memory has been recalled enough times, each a photocopy of a photocopy, as is the way that memories go, and even right after it happened I wasn't sure it had been real. I was going down to the computer room - it was the middle of the day but overcast outside, so the light coming in through the basement window at the far end of the room opposite the stairs was weak and washed out. You had to walk across half the basement, toward this window, to reach the light switch to turn on the main light, and this is what I was doing when I looked toward the window and saw, up on the wall, a small clump of shadow that seemed darker than the rest. It was about the size of a medium dog, and had no form or features whatsoever, just a blob of shadow that I only fully noticed when as I was approaching it suddenly darted down the wall, at an angle.

It startled me enough that I screamed and slammed the light on, and in full light it was of course gone. This is how I remember it but who knows if I really saw anything at all, or just imagined it entirely, or at least that's what I thought for a long time.



Fast forward many years, I'm in my late 20s and after leaving my teen years I did a complete 180 and did not believe in ghosts, nor anything else, and frankly was quite embarrassed that I ever had, so I'd never told anyone about my parents' haunted basement. One day Salem and I are playing Red Dead online and telling spooky stories, and I tell them the haunted basement story for the first time.

"You know," they tell me, "I always used to sleep with the light on down there, when I would sleep over in college". I'm very entertained by this, and turn to my roommate (then partner), and spill the beans to him as well. "Oh yeah my parents' place is haunted, isn't that silly" etc etc. This was after we had moved back into my parents' house for two years, and then moved out again. "Huh." he says. "I never mentioned it, but when we were sleeping in your old room, I used to see a shadow go down the wall at night before bed. I always just assumed it was my bad eyesight".

The most recent and briefest of addendums to this story came when apparently my nephew (maybe 8 or so at the time) said to my mom, "Grandma, we need to get a trap for the basement". She was too freaked out to ask him to clarify.



Many thanks to you for reading <3

If you have a story you would like to contribute to a future volume of ghost stories, please email it to:

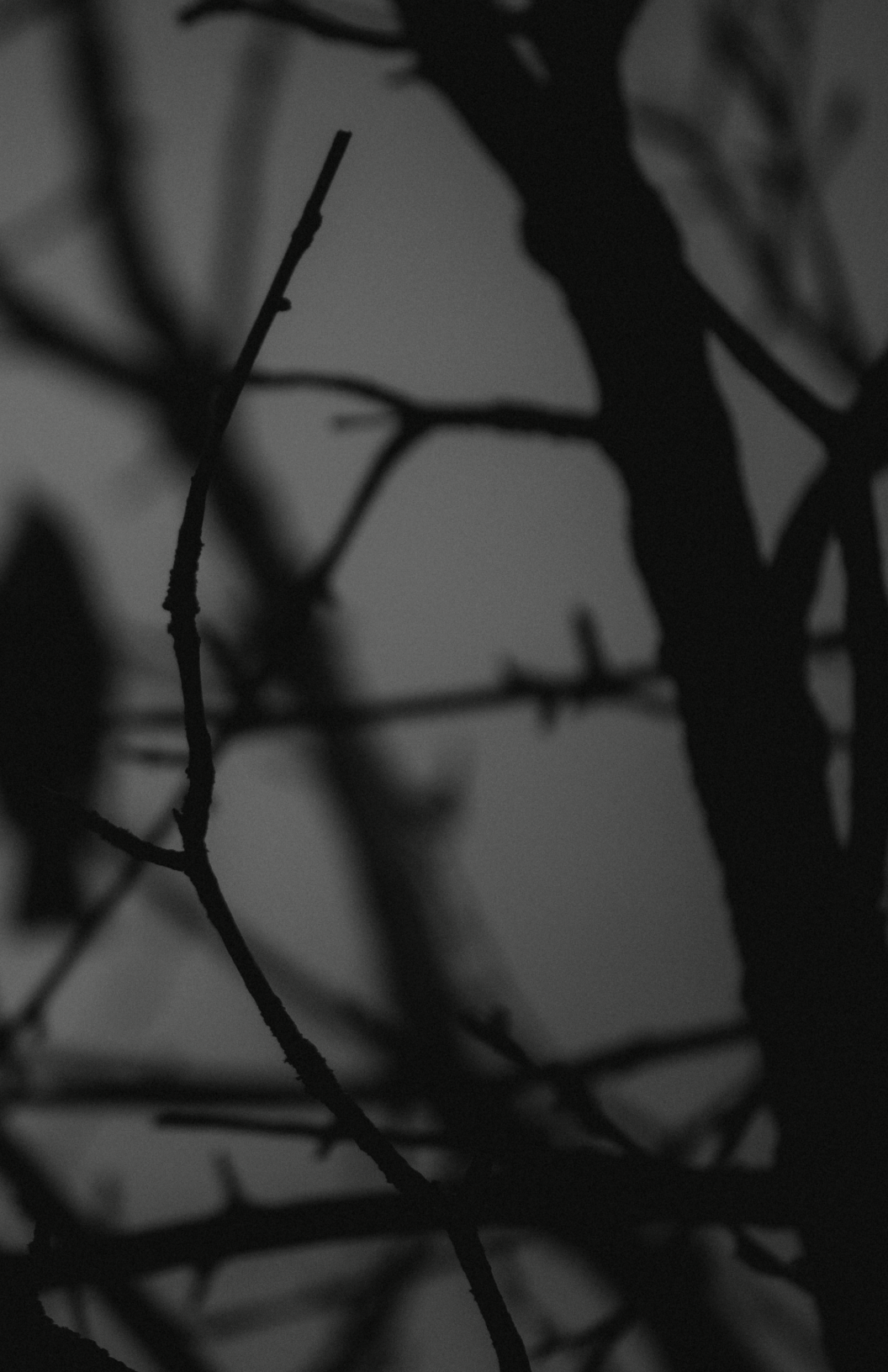
sarsen.tattooer@gmail.com

Colophon

Cover lettering by
Ritual Dust

Fonts used

Averia Libre
Trattatello
Auriol LT Std




FANTÔMES
EDITIONS