

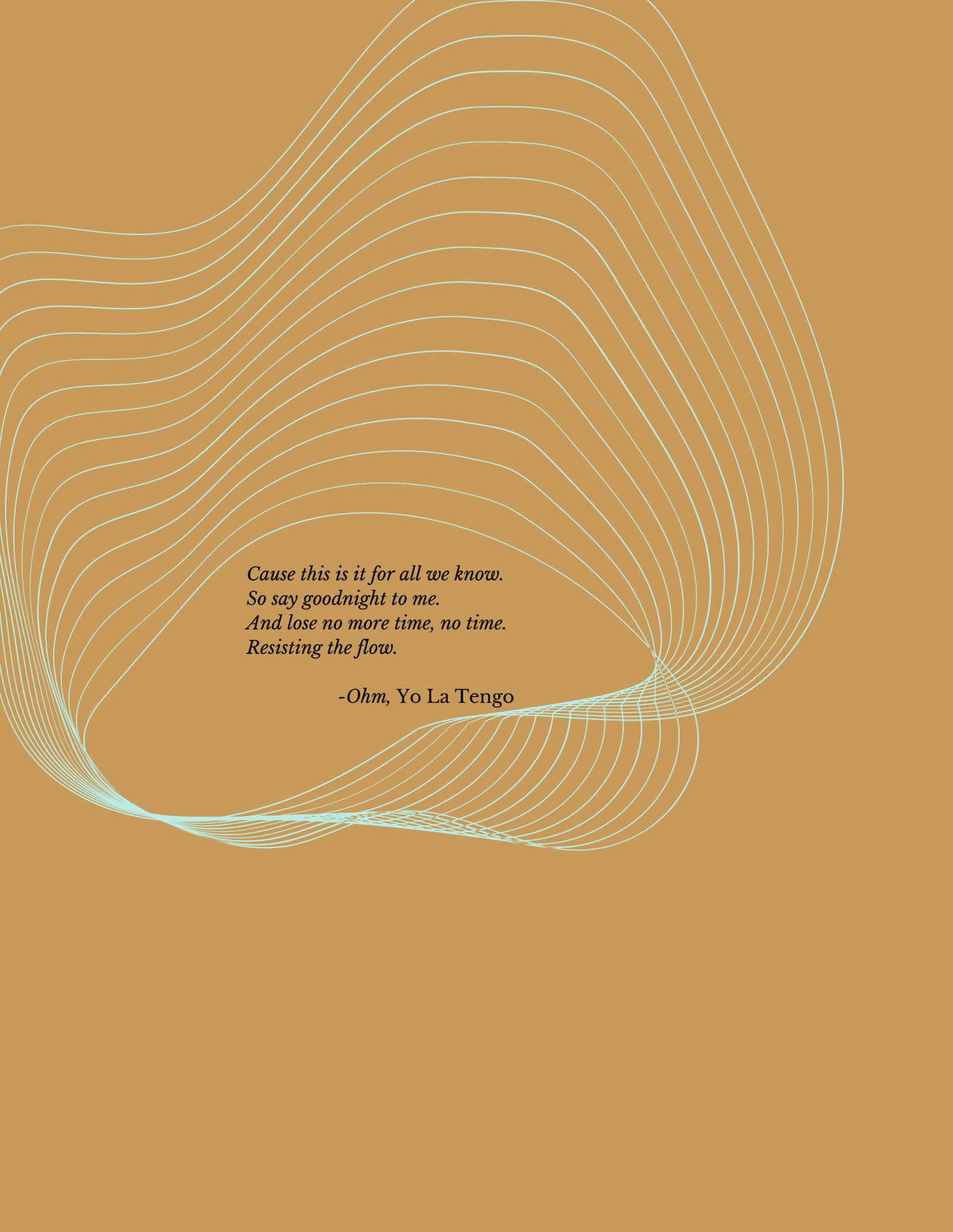
FLOZ



OUR SUMMER

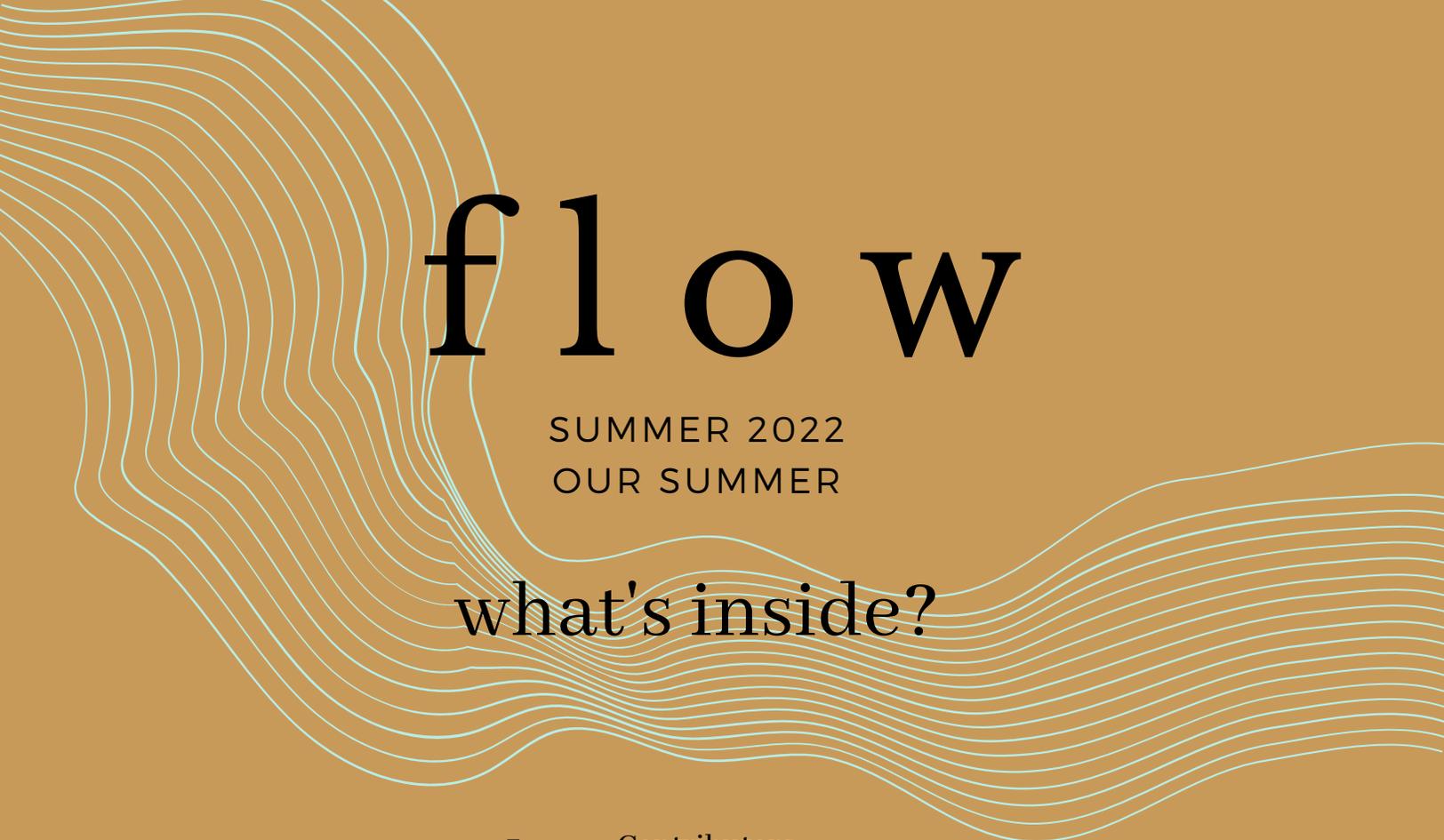
Summer 2022

RYERSON



*Cause this is it for all we know.
So say goodnight to me.
And lose no more time, no time.
Resisting the flow.*

-Ohm, Yo La Tengo



flow

SUMMER 2022
OUR SUMMER

what's inside?

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Contributors



Gabe Ryerson is an artist who lives in Champaign, IL with a beautiful faerie queen and two young hobbits. When he's not working on illustrations, he enjoys hiking in the woods, thinking about chakras, and talking to rabbits. He's a big fan of children's book illustrators like Mercer Mayer, Arthur Rackham, and Maurice Sendak. He's not a fan of heights, old chewing gum, or sitcoms. Instagram: @gabrielryerson



Jacq Guyton (or as they were known in Athens, Kara Guyton) tried their first corn dog at the age of twenty-three. Everything's been uphill since. They live in Knoxville, Tennessee, and their favorite food right now is Laotian Nam Khao.



Rachael Ryerson is an Assistant Professor of English at Eastern Illinois University where she teaches writing, rhetoric, and pedagogy courses. In her free time, she enjoys being in the woods, running trails, reading (for fun), eating excellent vegan grub, and playing guitar.



Erin Pfahler is the editor and designer of a zine called FLOW and a graduate student in OU's creative writing program. You can learn more about what she's about on her website. erinpfahler.com



Taylor Bowling is a human currently living among the hills of Athens, Ohio with her sweet partner and pup. Her favorite creative mediums are embroidery and collaging, but always has a list of experiments to work on next. In her free time she enjoys hiking, cooking, and dancing around her house.



Ethan Bartman resides in Athens, Ohio with sister the cat, abraxas the snake, and his wife, Erin. He makes ambient music and plays in the bands Water Witches, ToeCutter, and guru babies. He enjoys recording music, watching films and talking way too much about both of those things.



Molly Jo Stanley (They, She) is a lifelong dedicated student of ecology, ethnobotany, herbal medicine, yoga, mindfulness, and music. They believe that when humans live with the awareness that we are sacred beings within an infinite, connected, divine system, we are empowered to make choices that truly nourish ourselves and therefore, all beings. Their life's work is rekindling a sense of place for all people within themselves, their communities, and the great web of life, thereby cultivating a lasting reverence for our extraordinary existence.

Letter from the Editor



Erin Pfahler

“When there's things to do not because you gotta
When you run for love not because you oughta
When you trust your friends with no reason, nada
The joy I've named shall not be tamed

And that summer feeling is gonna haunt you one day in your life.”

-That Summer Feeling, Jonathan Richman

Dear Reader,

There's a feeling that arrives every year when the days get long, when more flowers begin blooming and the water in the lake starts to warm up. It's a reminder to slow down because it's too hot to move fast. For me, these long days lead into sitting outside late into the evening with a glass of wine or good company of neighbors or visiting friends. More time being social and calls from family far away. But the call that's the strongest this time of year, is the call from nature to behold the growth she's accomplished since the frozen days of winter, long gone. And to answer the call means to bask in the sun's rays, to pick tomatoes from the garden or watch a bee hop from flower to flower in the yard.

I was splashing around in dirty dishwater (doing the dishes) in early August when I heard these words come from the living room behind me –

“and that summer feeling is gonna haunt you one day in your life.

When the cool of the pond makes you drop down on it

When the smell of the lawn makes you flop down on it...”

My husband of less than a month sat on the couch playing acoustic guitar singing these words with a lingering longing in his voice. Belting out the song of the summer, the song that landed me back into the time of year we were at, summertime and all the feels around that. As I rinsed with warm water, suds from a plate we had just received as a wedding gift, grey and hand thrown with little brown speckles, I listened closer as the song continued –

“...That time is here for one more year

And that summer feeling is gonna haunt you one day in your life.”

What words to bring me into the moment. To pause where I was and feel the humid breeze blow through the screen door to my left and the sweat drip from my collarbone down between my breasts. To hear the bird song and insect hum scatter and spread through the mid-afternoon air right into my ears. And then daydream about what’s next after dishes; something slow, something in nature, something sensual, even if just another household chore, like watering the plants; to drain the sink and watch the brown water go down with the worries of the world, even if for just a single moment of 20 seconds or less. That summer feeling was here for one more year.

So, for one more time,
before we say goodbye
to that summer feeling for now

let that summer feeling linger through these stories
of my summer, of your summer, of
our summer
that follows
on the pages below.

Thanks for reading,

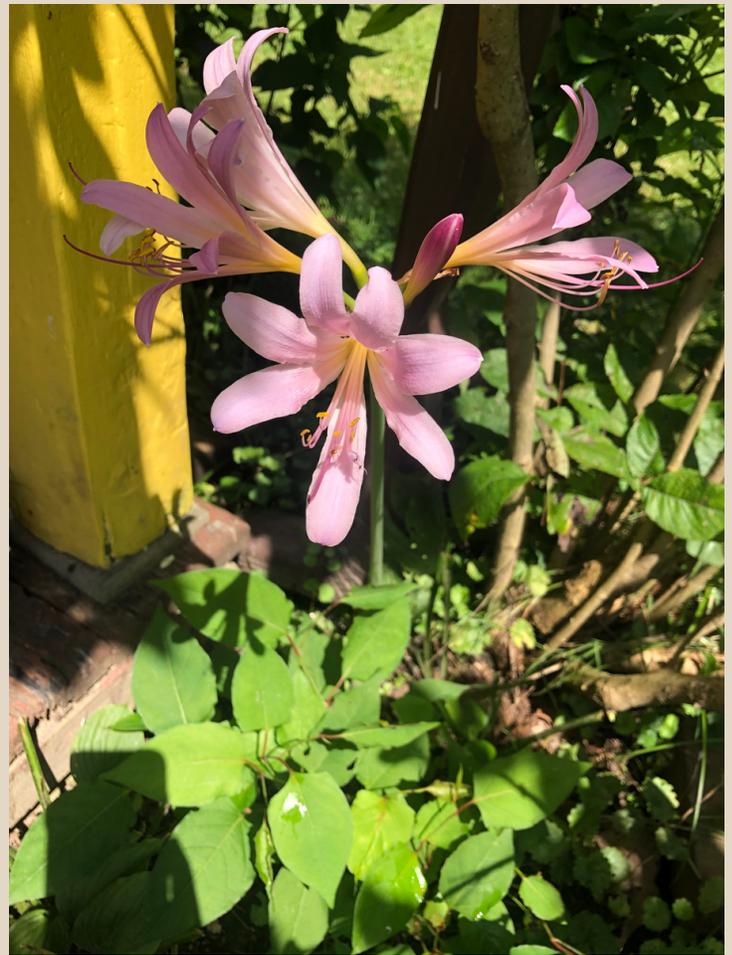
Erin



Flow is a project made as a result of the curiosity and predicament of living in a human body; the stories that they hold and how they unfold. It's a digital publication made to share these stories embedded with the ebbs and flows of begin human.



Looking up in Dame Belgium, Erin Pfahler



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NOTE :: in effect after this issue, we will be pausing the zine for a few months to re-imagine the possibilities and format and to expand the content and scope of the writings you'll find inside

To stay tuned for updates:

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Blankets in the Grass: Our Picnics



Jacq Guyton

"Once upon the picnic ground
Our love was in the bag,
And bread and butter by the pound
Was easily ours to beg.
The nancy boys and gutter girls
Fell over themselves to fetch
The hard-boiled eggs and carrots curls
We needed in the clutch.

And twice upon picnic ground
Our love lay on the table."

Except from Once Upon a Picnic Ground
-David Wagoner



This year I got sucked into a cycle that might as well be the new Norman Rockwell: eating in my car. An unforeseen consequence of quitting the food service circuit. It was a weird day the (first) time I found myself in a gas station parking lot in a hot car, eating a dill pickle buoyed in its own juices out of a shrink wrap bag, labeled "Big Boy". Comes with the territory: everyone on the work crew too tired at night to pack, too nuts-and-bolts to turn their nose up at convenience store victuals, and we gotta get back to the job.

Picnics are the opposite, the slowest food, maybe. It's nice to dream about pulling out a blanket and basket at a work site, sweaty hands caked in dirt pulling out white bread and cheese finger sandwiches, cut into four triangles, apples and a carafe full of gatorade. It's the opposite of convenient. Lounging like we're on the banks of the Seine instead of in some customers needing their roof done's front lawn. Rollies instead of wooden tobacco pipes. Insects. Finding the best terrain and shade.

Picnics have always been escapist, pastoral, romantic. Not exactly the thirty minute lunch break. I'm not so hardboiled as to not love them for exactly those reasons. A picnic can color a bag of chips, a hankie, and paper bag beer by yourself on a bus stop bench into something special, or at a minimum, break the daily cycle of domestic routine in some small, marking way. If you share your chips with the stranger next to you, it's definitely a picnic, no stretch of imagination.

Picnics are the love poems of food. When the whole day rolls on before you with no obligations, no reminders. Feeding each other olives under the swaying, leafed-out trees on the banks of a river...watching the muskrat swim to its stick cabin...with the sun setting, you feel yourself dipping into a bumble-buzzed wine dream where you're kissing the ants off your girlfriend's lips and they say, "I love that you did all this for us."

I wanted this piece to be a collection of stories of friends' best picnic memories - our summers, first dates, bottles of wine and boxes of cereal taken on the road and into the hills.

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"Early this summer, this really cute guy asked me on a date and he said he wanted to go to the park and that he'd bring stuff to have a picnic. Right when we got there, it started raining. After we drove around for a minute to find a spot, the rain had stopped. I brought a blanket and laid it out on a hill on this golf course. He unpacked his little cooler: cheese, pepperonis, clementines and a natural wine that he was excited about. He took a big swig but it ended up being champagne and it fizzed and exploded up his nose. It was awesome. We watched the sun set over the golf course and when the train came by I tried to race it. It was sweet and quiet and fun. Best first date of my life."

-Katelyn, Nashville, TN

"The first time I went to Wyoming, all we had was whatever fit in this old ass cooler we had. So every day we would have everything bagels, garlic hummus, everything-but-the-bagel seasoning, cukes, and hot sauce on a bagel. We ended up calling it a 'yellowstone bagel' and it's a vibe."

-Remy, Oregon

"My best recent picnic memory is of two of my friends' birthdays who are twin sisters. We ate takeout pizza and a shit ton of gelato on the lawn right out front of the fancy pizza restaurant. We didn't end up eating inside because we were in the middle of a long, slow bike ride."

-Anon, Knoxville, TN



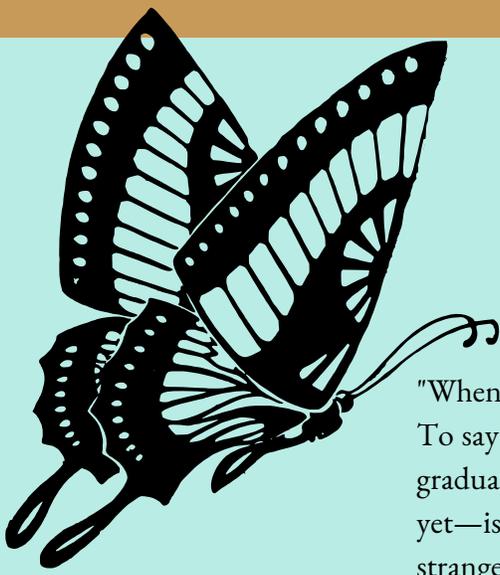
"I love picnics and the way they instantly make a meal feel like an adventure. I've been on quite a few good picnics in my life, some with fancy ingredients and lots of planning and preparation, some with just a couple of sandwiches and water bottles, but the best picnic memory I have consisted of little more than a box of honey nut cheerios, a bag of Jordan almonds, and a homemade mimosa in a jar. We were without a car on the west side of Athens in the late summer. My date and I weren't (and still aren't) fans of hiking so we only made it to a patch of grass just off the bike path before we laid out our blanket and got to snacking and smooching. We finished our massive mimosa and filled up on sweet crunchy almonds and cheerios and ended up falling asleep in the shade. I'm not much of a napper so it was a surprise to me that I was able to fall asleep so comfortably there. There was just something magically relaxing about eating treats outside on a blanket with a sweet man that made it easy."

-Rachel, Athens, OH

"About four years ago I had what I would consider my ideal first date. We both made dishes for a late afternoon picnic at Tommy Shumpert park, and skipped over a lot of the first-meeting awkwardness by getting straight to work finding the ideal spot to spread out our blankets.

We ate and talked until the sun got low, and when I told her about my hobby doing partner acrobatics, she decided she wanted to try out a few of the moves. We started with solar ones, and she spun in the air while we worked together to stay balanced, and ended with lunar ones where she just hung and let her muscles unwind as we synchronized our breathing."

-Blake, Knoxville, TN



"When I think of picnics, I think of gratitude, specifically for my partner. To say I struggled emotionally this year—as the sole trans woman in my graduate program during one of the cruelest anti-trans legislative sessions yet—is an understatement. Every social interaction with friends and strangers wounded me. I clung to words and gestures. I cried when people misgendered me. I invalidated my pain, watched the news helplessly. And I withdrew from one of the most important people in my world. But picnicking gave me safety. I remember one night in February in particular—the week when Texas announced it would investigate parents who provided gender affirming care to their children. I had two midterms and was spending long days at the library. I was heartbroken.

Then, I came home to a surprise: a nighttime picnic, in a field, with candles, wine flutes, coloring books, and my partner. I remember it was cold and windy; we could hear the wind in the trees. We talked about the beauty of the North American landscape (my partner is a natural sciences enthusiast). But eventually I felt the Weight of Everything. I excused myself, went inside, and collapsed in the kitchen and cried. My partner found me there; she listened, held me. Then she made the best avocado grilled cheese I have ever had in my life.

I'd like to tell you that everything is better now. But of course it's not. I still let the world creep into my gut, still struggle to validate my pain without succumbing to it. But picnicking with my partner is my way of confronting that pain and clearing a path towards healing. For us, it has become a weekend ritual of sorts. Seated across from one another, usually in one of our backyards, surrounded by books, guitars, and sewing needles, I feel safety, trust, and deep, deep gratitude for a person who journeys with me without judgment—and despite fear. I hope to picnic with her for as long as she'll have me."

-Zee, Knoxville, TN



*Picnic in Bruges Belgium, Erin Pfahler*



*Camp Picnic, Halie Cousineau*

"First you walk, though it's not the beginning.  
The path embossed by boot and beast leads up and forward.  
Don't rush, let devotion and desire build.  
Trace fingers across the spine of a stone embankment, soft and curious, she too is a  
body.  
Feel the burning effort in your thighs as you ascend. Let the sharp autumn air whip  
through hair and lung. Welcome a choir of discomforts singing of your aliveness.  
The slow tidal rise of hungers call among the harmonizing voices.  
Pause in a patch of sweet fern moss. Lay your palm, and then your cheek on her  
spongy stage, breathe, feel your belly gently quiver, dancing quietly for an audience  
of greens and browns.

Before the summit you must be stained, with sweat, soil and gratitude.  
Arrival is less than half the journey.

Sit on a stone overlook, legs dangling like a child above the everything and nothing  
before you and long after you.

Open the bag you've been carrying. The soul, the smell of basil set free. The gentle  
bruises of time and travel only make her stronger. Don't be fooled by the apparent  
wilt as you unearth her from her tomb. Next the fist of mozzarella as wet and salty  
as yourself. Peel a layer of milky skin in preparation and set her gently on the stone  
beside you. Now, the perfect ripe tomato, a living heart planted safely in your  
soiled hand. You have no knife. You use your teeth to bite through the thin barrier  
releasing juice and seed that wet your chin, don't wipe it away. Spit out the wedge  
of fleshy fruit and lay it on your lap. Finally 1/2 of a day old baguette, with soft  
marrow encased by in-pliable crust. Tear away a piece and assemble the body that  
will feed your own.

Bone. Heart. Skin. Soul.  
Bread. Tomato. Cheese. Basil.

As inperceivable as the pines making sap is your fading need, the song of hunger  
coming to a close as you repeat the prayer again and again.

Bread. Tomato. Cheese. Basil.

One day you'll feed the mountain."

Eucharist of Caprese at 2,800 feet  
-Carly, Knoxville, TN

"I've only known one person to own what even came close to a bonafide picnic basket. My friend Charlotte, a Mother Goose type and always one to take care of friends, showed up one day with one. Three of us had driven to the botanical gardens to catch up, after the summer days mugginess had burned itself out. I with my backpack stuffed with half-empty bags of chips and some beer, and then...

Dear Charlotte! When she pulled a wicker basket the size of a bean-bag cushion out of the trunk of her car, our eyes went big and immediately we leaned to peer into the basket, more excited than if it we had heard the meowing of kittens within. Underneath the knit picnic blanket was a finger feast: a jar of spicy okra pickles, sticky-sweet dates, crunchy seed crackers. Block of hard cheese. She'd even remembered to bring a knife. We laid the blanket on a slab of rock in the gardens and didn't mind the mosquitos.

With so much to eat, we didn't wear or fidget as night fell and came down to roost. We were belly-full and talked about life around food in our mouths.

When we talked about the hard stuff, we studied blades of grass with our hands. When a bug crawled through one of our leg hairs, we'd pass it around to study its funny mechanical features. When most of the beer got drank, we shared the last can."

-Me (Jacq), Knoxville, TN





**Taylor Bowling**  
*(wave)length, 2022*  
collage

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# Bruxxels



Ethan Bartman



I'm still living in this world, every summer that comes and goes I feel a little creakier in the joint, a little lighter in the head, a little better at figuring things out. Sometimes it takes me a long time. I got married this summer, quit my job as a bartender. I wore my engagement ring when I worked my shifts, it was cut from an antique spoon. People's eyes would glance at it while I set a coaster in front of them, some of my regulars stopped being regulars. But everyone came out for my last shift, they couldn't throw that money at me fast enough, they knew I wasn't gonna be there to forget to ring in that last gin and tonic, or to pour one more patron for the road. I'd been talking up our honeymoon for weeks, and people wanted to make sure I had fun. I felt really loved that day. Like I know I should most days, but sometimes I don't. That's the voice in your head that likes to make you squirm, I think everybody's got one.

When my wife and I started dating we joked about taking a cheap flight to Belgium, and the day we found ourselves there, it didn't seem real.

People look like they do everywhere else. They wear souvenir shirts with mickey mouse, Grand Canyon National Park, LA Lakers, nike, and izod. They drink yellow beer and kids cry when they're tired and laugh like birds in a fountain when they play tag in the park. Everyone's tired of wearing masks so they practice their smiles on strangers. The only thing I noticed was the farther west we traveled in the Benelux countries (that's Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, or Low Countries) the grumpier people got. By the time we reached Brussels, I felt like we were back in Chicago, hipster mullets and all. I could wait a whole lifetime of summers before we got all the way west to the States, where anger keeps us awake until the morning coffee, after which we seamlessly slide into anxiety and then finally calm down with medicated inebriation. I like Europe cause they start drinking at lunch and take their coffee after dinner. Carlos, the Spanish drag queen who showed us Brussels, didn't even eat dinner until after midnight.

Brussels kind of wears it's history on its face, or rather, it's façade. It used to be a pit stop on the way to Bruges, but now is the officially unofficial capital of Europe, the seat of NATO, and a home to one million people. Unlike Bruges, its architecture wasn't arrested in the 15th century. Every alleyway, every square offers a different aesthetic. Gothic spires tower over regal plazas, and as you escape the commotion into a nearby alleyway, art nouveau motifs litter the outer walls of English pubs, Italian restaurants, French bakeries and Dutch brown bars. Every now and then a buildings entire façade features a political or vulgar comic strip mural, an ode to Brussels' love of cartoonists and their work. Even the famous "mannequin piss" can't escape the modern pull of cell phone viral photography so they dress the little pisser up in rotating outfits to fit the season or holiday.

"In my home in Zaragoza," Carlos says breezily, "we have six statues of little boys pissing, but for some reason everybody in Europe must come see this one. I don't understand, but now you can say you have seen it as well."

We are pretty set on watching the sunset, so we go to a corner shop to buy some beers and cigarettes so we can post up on the steps above the Mont D' Arts in the center of the city. All of a sudden we get cut off by an enormously long parade, detailing the history of Belgium through costume, music, and huge papier-mache floats. Puppeteers dance along the edge of the crowd making little demons on strings dance for the spectators shouting, "Se mefier! Le diable vient por toi!" Then the puppeteer rattles his little demon marionette in my face and it makes a sound dice in a cup. The parade ends, the crowds scatter, the roads fill up with motorcycles, cars and scooters.

We start up the Mont D' Arts with a sixpack of Maes pils, I call it "Mace," but Carlos insists I pronounce it correctly, as in "Mahs" but to be honest I still am not sure how its pronounced but it tastes alright anyhow. The garden is full of people, the air smells rich with tobacco and cannabis. Groups kick soccer balls back and forth and everyone's in the kind of good mood that a hot summer day leaves you with in the evening. We ease up the steps by the cascading fountains and find that the view is gonna be blocked by a giant inflatable tv screen. It seems like a bummer. We find a spot on the steps and crack a few beers and roll a joint. I guess in Europe most all joints are sprinkled with a bit of tobacco. Best part is all the cigarette packages have photos of cancerous mouths and rotten teeth, and have catchy slogans, like, "Smoking will make you impotent and then KILL YOU!"

The sun is dripping all the way down the gardens and the plaza and all of a sudden the clouds are spattered with the last light of a long day some 4,000 miles away from home. As the civil twilight goes nautical, it stretches darker sheets of night across the sky, and the stars begin to show themselves, the screen lights up, and a film I've probably seen two dozen times, E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, comes on. The steps are filling up now, we pack in closer to make room for more, the John Williams score swells up and the whole audience is in California, early 80s, laughter and musings in a variety of languages mutter across the crowd. E.T. brings the chrysanthemums back to life and I feel like crying. E.T. is drunkenly watching the Quiet Man on tv, and all the music drops, Elliot parodies John Wayne kissing Maureen O'Hara, the sound of wind gets louder and louder. E.T. has a sparkle of wonder in his eyes. I think about all the dutch masters who practiced by painting some rich guys into their renditions of the classics, mirroring the same framing and movements of the ones that came before. I think about how everybody starts somewhere. Maybe a lot of these folks sitting around me have never been to California, never been outside of their own country, maybe they aren't really all that different. The voice in my head says maybe I'll figure it out, I'm just starting. Starting a new job, saying farewell to the old one. Starting a marriage with my wife, my life ahead seems as big and mysterious as the world. Yet I'm here, watching a childhood favorite with a thousand strangers on the other side of it. It's getting late, parents are taking their kids home but the movie is still going. We are out of beer, and our smoking habit is catching a couple disapproving looks, so we head up the stairs as well. I'm looking out at the crowd and I see hundreds of folks my age, with wonder sparkling in their eyes, like for a moment they're little kids again, without the voice telling them that the world is too small, or too sad, or not-too-long-before-its-gone. I think to myself that I've never seen that many millennials smiling at the same time, and it makes me hope that it could happen again.



*E.T. in Mont D'Arts in Bruxxels, Erin Pfahler*



# Holding On, Letting Go



Rachael Ryerson

Summer has always been a season of possibilities, a season of seed and fruit, of growing and ripening, of anticipation. There is much hope in growth, in progress, but this has been a season of redefining progress and growth, a season of letting go of possibilities as I've typically known them.

Like plants, we expect our children to sprout, flourish, and bloom. We have possibilities for them in mind. But our summer has meant letting go of possibilities for the sake of being in the moment, for the sake of experiencing what is instead of what could be. My son Bear was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer late October of 2021, and each passing moment, day, and month has been a reminder, as Shunryu Suzuki says, “to practice one step at a time, one breath at a time, with no gaining idea.” Living with a child who loses more of himself with each passing day means letting go of expectations—after all, if we are hindered by the constraints of what could be, we can't receive what is.

I spend a lot of time talking about what Bear can't do. The medical profession, not surprisingly, is all about progress, of becoming in the progressive tense of that verb. Every new doctor or medical professional I speak to assesses his capabilities, which inevitability point to his inabilities. “Can your child speak full sentences?” No. “Can your child dress himself?” No. “Can your child catch a ball?” No. “Can your child interact with other children appropriate to his age?” No. “Can he do X, Y, or Z?” The answer tends to be no to these questions, and it will continue to be no. Bear is not on a trajectory that includes progress, except progression of his cancer. Bear will not “get better” or become in expected ways, and I continually have to let go of socio-cultural expectations of him.

Last Spring, Bear had homebound education and I was under the idealistic illusion that having educational experiences would help him regain the skills lost, that he would grow, learn, and progress. After all, a year ago he recognized and said numbers, letters, shapes, and colors. Last November, I recorded us reading his favorite story together, *Triangle* by Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen, and he knew the book by heart, often saying lines from it before I could read them. Now, he sits quietly while we read this book. He used to tell me “I love you” all the time. He hasn't said that in over six months. He used to stand on a stepstool next to the mixer while I made cookie dough and I had to keep his hands out of the bowl. He doesn't eat cookies anymore. My mind and heart often travel these paths of loss, despairing all along the way.

But, if I'm always focused on what Bear can't do, I miss what he can do, what he does on a daily basis. He still laughs and giggles every day, be it in response to a favorite stuffy or funny cartoon or a baby (he loves babies). This summer we stayed in a 5-star hotel and went to the Shedd Aquarium, courtesy of a nonprofit group, Bear Necessities. They grant "Bear hugs" to children with medical concerns, and the name of their group is not lost on me. The first night of our stay, the hotel reserved the cinema room just for us and we watched *Home Alone*. I'll never forget the sound of Bear's raucous laughter in response to Kevin's booby traps for "The Wet Bandits." What a magical sound that will be with me always.

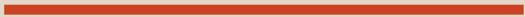
Another magical memory: we went to Seattle for the first part of a clinical trial in July, and while there we went to the Woodland Park Zoo. Bear loves animals so we wanted him to experience a little joy amid all the doctor appointments. And joy he had. His doctor arranged for him to feed the rhinos and the look he gave the rhino as it ate romaine lettuce from his hand was pure magic. Those are the experiences, the being that is Bear, that I want to soak up and savor, because it may be the last time I see that look or the last time I hear that laugh of his. That's what it means to be present without hope of progress.

Rumi says that "life is a balance of holding on and letting go," and of late, that feels like holding on to hope and releasing it in turn. Instead of finding treatment for Bear, we have faced one closed door after another. Everything we try seems to fail, and possibilities wither. Last winter, we tried to enroll Bear in a clinical trial at St. Jude's in Memphis, and he ended up not qualifying for it. What a thing to "lose" at. This summer, Bear had his t-cells collected so they could be re-engineered for infusion, but the cells didn't grow. Soon, we will return to Seattle for another cell collection and hope they grow, but they, like Bear, may not grow in the ways we expect; *life is a balance of holding and letting go*.

That's a balance I'm trying to embrace. I cling to him tightly, knowing that I will eventually have to let him go. The best I can do is love him, and so I've had on repeat a Paul Simon song:

"Oh, my mama loves me, she loves me  
She gets down on her knees and hugs me  
Oh, she loves me like a rock  
She rocks me like the rock of ages  
And she loves me,  
She love me, love me, love me, love me"

In one of the *Wheel of Time* books, Lan tells Rand something that has stuck with me for weeks: "You can never know everything...and part of what you know is always wrong. Perhaps even the most important part. A portion of wisdom lies in knowing that. A portion of courage lies in going on anyway." I don't know what will happen with the Seattle trial for Bear. I don't know what will happen to Bear as his cancer progresses. I don't know what will happen to us as Bear continues to decline to the point that he leaves us. We have no idea what will happen to the seeds we plant, but we sow them anyways. *Courage lies in going on anyway*.



# RECIPE FOR A RITUAL

Molly Jo  
SUMMER  
2022

WITH EACH SEASON'S EBB & FLOW  
THERE IS A CALL  
TO HONOR. TO MARK  
TO BEAR WITNESS, THROUGH CEREMONY  
THESE FLEETING MOMENTS  
THESE PRECIOUS BREATHS

IN THIS NORTHERN HEMISPHERE  
HERE AT SUMMER'S SLOW END  
I FEEL THE STRENGTH OF SUN'S GRASP.  
WHISPERS OF AUTUMN DRIFT IN ON THE BREEZE  
WE LEAN INTO THE HARVEST  
PREPARING FOR THE COMING COLD AND DARKNESS

SINCE OUR SUMMER SOLSTICE  
THE LIGHT HAS STEADILY WANED  
THE MARCH OF TIME WALKING US CLOSER  
TO AUTUMN'S EQUINOX  
REFLECTED IN GOLD HUES OF MEADOW SUNFLOWERS AND GOLDENRODS  
AND THE PURPLES OF IRONWEED AND ASTERS  
THE MAGIC OF OUR EXISTENCE.

I BOW MY HEAD IN GRATITUDE AND WONDER  
TO THESE PERPETUAL CYCLES  
I KISS THE GROUND IN REVERENCE FOR  
THE LIFE THAT FLOWS WITHIN, AROUND, AND THROUGH ALL THINGS

I SHARE IN MY OWN RITUAL  
& INVITE YOU TO SHARE IN YOURS  
TO GO OUT INTO THE MEADOW  
THE FOREST, THE RIVER.  
LOVINGLY GATHER HERBS  
AND LEAVE BEHIND YOUR OFFERING  
BOIL WATER. STEEP, STRAIN. SIP.  
CALL IN THE MEDICINE  
OF THOSE ALLIES AROUND US  
CALL IN THE GUIDANCE  
OF ANCESTORS  
CALL IN STRENGTH, COMPASSION  
PATIENCE. COURAGE, FORGIVENESS  
RECONCILIATION.  
GIVE WHAT YOU CAN.  
RECEIVE WHAT YOU NEED.

BREATHE DEEPLY  
QUIET THE MIND  
LISTEN

REFLECT:  
WHAT AM I HARVESTING IN THE LIGHT & WARMTH OF SUMMER  
TO CARRY WITH ME INTO AUTUMN?

GOLDENROD BLOSSOMS  
SUMAC BERRIES  
LEMON BALM LEAVES  
MARSHMALLOW ROOT

Boil 6 ounces H2O  
POUR OVER 2 TSP. FRESH HERBS  
STRAIN, COVERED 10-15 MINS.  
RETURN PLANTS TO EARTH  
SIP.



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# A Story in Photos: Summer 2022



Halie Cousineau



The smell of soil, not dirt or sand, but rich, dark soil is something I've never realized I took for granted, as a smell. Trees, rain, grass and snow, god snow, just like soil are things I loved but now are, too, sparingly in my life.



The desert is stunning and the bizarre beautiful has taken me off guard but the summer heat threatens to burn up my sanity.

Weekend escapes to high altitudes filled with wild flowers and mushrooms, crazy august birthday hail storms and my best friend to enjoy them all has been the rope leading me to cooler days. Like free drivers coasting into the depths, following the rope, hoping they reach air soon and focusing on not panicking.

The desert, as stunning as it is and as filled with adventures as it is, is still unnatural for me.





I was born a salt water baby and snow crazed adventurer. But there is one thing the desert has given me more of than anywhere else I've lived; appreciation. Appreciation for wet, green and oceanic landscapes. Appreciation for morning bike rides through cactus of all types towering over me like a desert coral reef. Appreciation for the simple things that only 120 degree temperatures can make you dream of. Appreciation for a best friend and partner ecstatic about the natural beauty, even just a bunch of cool looking rocks. That enthusiasm reminds me, even on the hottest of days, how incredibly beautiful nature is, even if it's the desert.

# flow

is made possible by your support, which is greatly appreciated. Thanks for reading.

