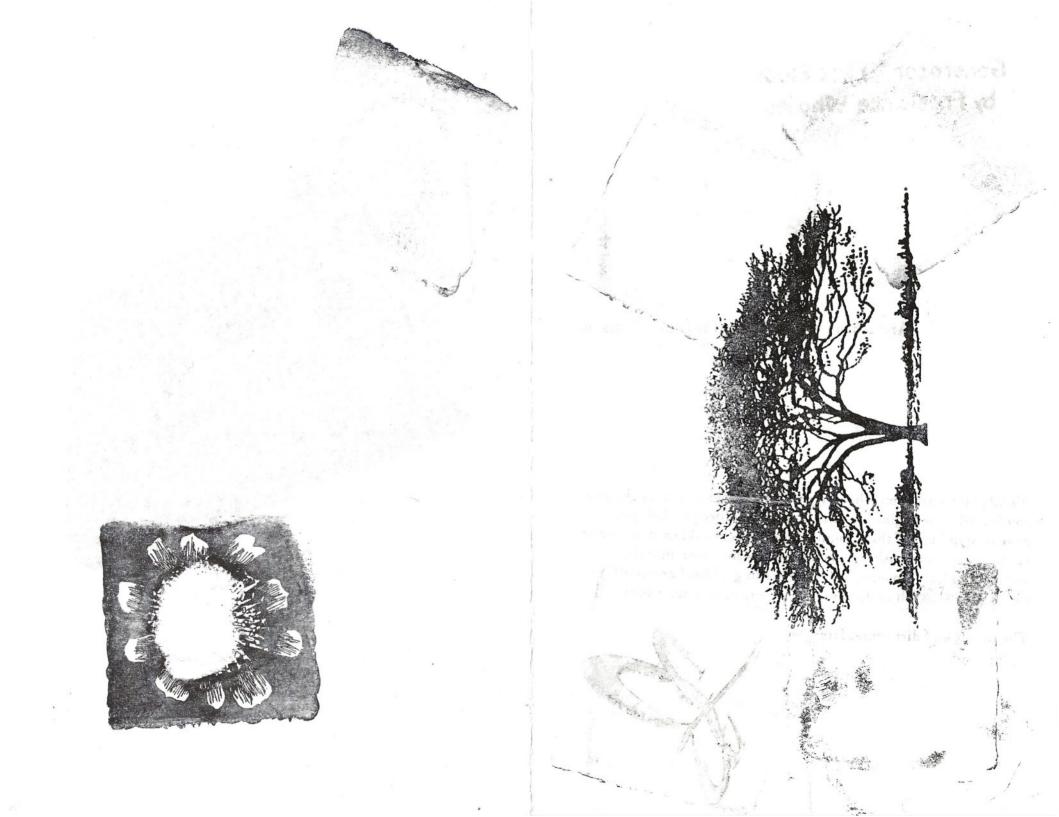
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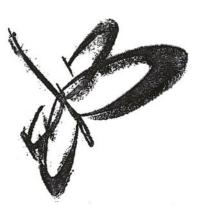


Generator * First Floor by Freelance Whales

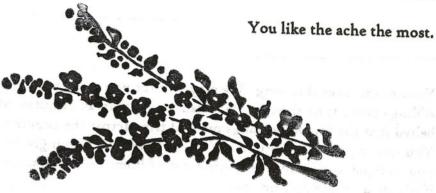
"And when we quiet down, the house chants on without us..."

It's all gotta start somewhere, right? Few things ever brought you comfort like the beginning of this album. Before you fall, you have to stand up off the ground. Your knees are skinned and your palms dusty from pushing a body that doesn't work into the semblance of a silhouette, but its better to get blood on your jeans than take a face full of dirt every time you open your mouth.

The face full of dirt comes later.

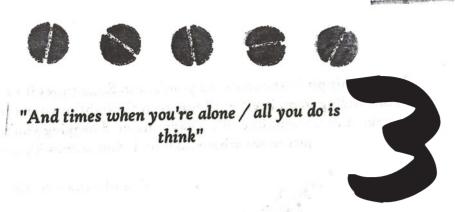


There's this pit in the center of your chest. Sometimes it's a black hole folding in on itself until not even the light in your eyes can make it out. Sometimes it's a yawning void begging you to leap just to see what you'll find. Sometimes it's an ache.

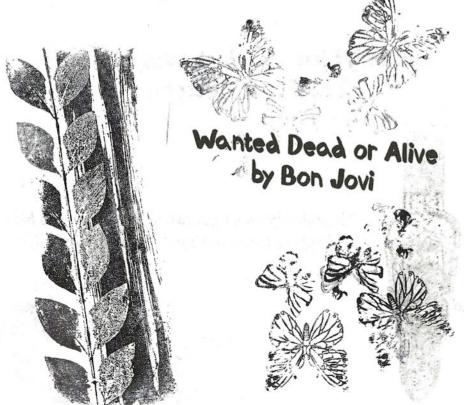


Looking Like You Just Woke Up by The Front Bottoms

"It probably won't get easier / has easier to hide / Prepare for an aching / the remaining / your life"

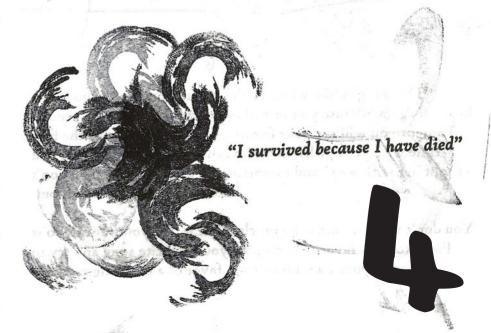


Your mom loves this song. She played it for you and your siblings every time the car ride lasted longer than 20 minutes. She belted it at the top of her lungs on road trips across the country. You sang right along with her. You held the words lovingly on your tongue. It will always remind you of home, you think. Even if it's about never finding one.





You don't remember the first time you heard this song. You've never listened to this band before, you haven't since. You think you should, but something always stops you from seeking out more. Maybe because you already bled your heart out to this same song too many times to try finding another one to cut yourself open on. You survived your madness by being mad. You survived dying because you died. In those days, the lyricmantra meant more to you than most things.





"I try to show emotion, but my eyes won't seem to wet /
I'd love to tell you stories, but I can't remember how
they went"



This song is like when you're 16 and you have to go to the hospital again because you're still too crazy to finish high school. Tonight you will see your favorite band in concert for the first time with your girlfriend who can't make it because her dad caught her with weed and tomorrow—You'll be gone. You don't know when you'll make it out.

You don't want to think too much about it. All you want to do is listen to your favorite band play your favorite song and try to forget your own insanity in favor of a chanting crowd's.

We The Common by Thao & the Get Down Stay Down



When you were coming out of it, you wrote a novella. It wasn't bad, it wasn't the best—it was very you. The main character was bipolar. You didn't even believe you were bipolar back then, you don't know why you made her bipolar.

(I do)



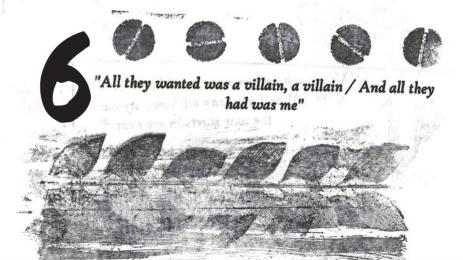






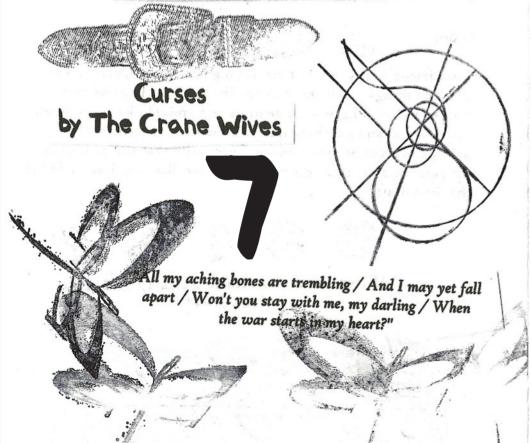


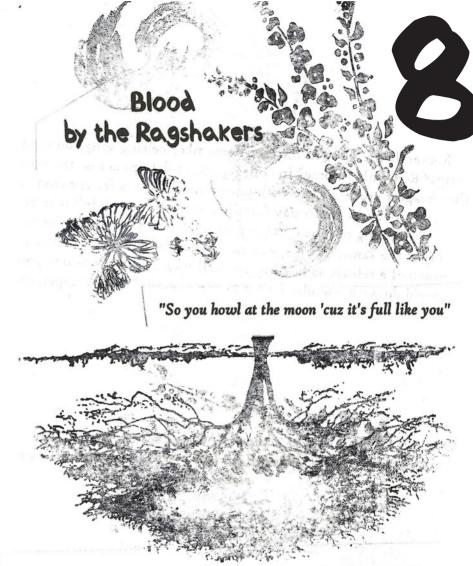
Your friend sent you this song, saying it was just like her. She could do things you wanted to do. She lived her life like you wanted to live. She was condemned and praised like you wanted to be. She wasn't anything like you and that was part of the point, when you started writing. Eventually that stopped being the point and the story grew for the better. But you'll never forget that first draft.



The first time you went to the psych ward, you really liked a webcomic. You can't get on the internet on a psych ward. Webcomics are posted on the internet. Webcomics that update once a week even when you're in the hospital and can't read them are on the internet.

Your best friend called from 4 states away during the 10 minutes you were allowed phone time and pulled open the webcomic to read you the latest update they didn't understand, because they knew it mattered to you. Because they knew it would make you laugh. You'll never forget that. Especially when you sang this song every day on your morning commute 5 years later.



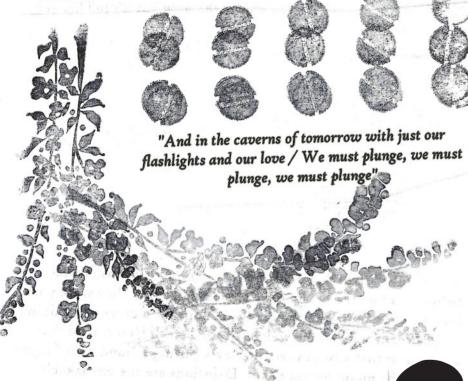


You didn't realize that delusions were more than unshakable beliefs—before the break. You didn't realize that they were your blood and your air and the gravity holding you down. You didn't realize that they had the weight of solid steel. You realize that now—now that you can see the claws curling around your fingers and feel the moon on your skin. Delusions are the unshakable immutable facts that keep your heart pumping and your pulse jumping. There's something comforting about that.

At least, you think there is. This song agrees.



Remember singing in the car? Remember belting songs on road trips? Remember home? In college, you took trips across town to the cheapest grocery store with your roommates—a far cry from a cross-country multi-day family journey—but it didn't matter. The feeling of music flowing through every person in the car stayed the same. With age came the realization that this was as much of a release as hurting yourself was, but this was one you could do with friends. This was one you all lived for, together.



At the Bottom of Everything by Bright Eyes



Amy AKA Spent Gladiator I by The Mountain Goats

"Seek out the hidden places where the fire burns hot and bright"

Telling yourself to stay alive never worked—or maybe it's always worked. You haven't killed yourself yet. You haven't wanted to in a long time, even when it all feels so overwhelming.

Demanding you get better—that's really what's never worked. You've stopped doing that now. Instead, you let hot water run down your face in the shower. You race across the interstate with your windows down and your car speakers pumping. You hallucinate a shining silver fox running in front of your car and you smile at it and nod and let it go. It'll be a fun story to tell later, you think. Your friends who know (you have those now) will get a kick out of it.

The spark—the one that let's you forget how hopeless you feel—is the brightest its ever been. There's a bastion of flames licking at the inside of your ribcage and beating in time with your car speakers—with your voice—with your friends—with you.

It's a good song to lose your mind to, if you had to pick one.



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