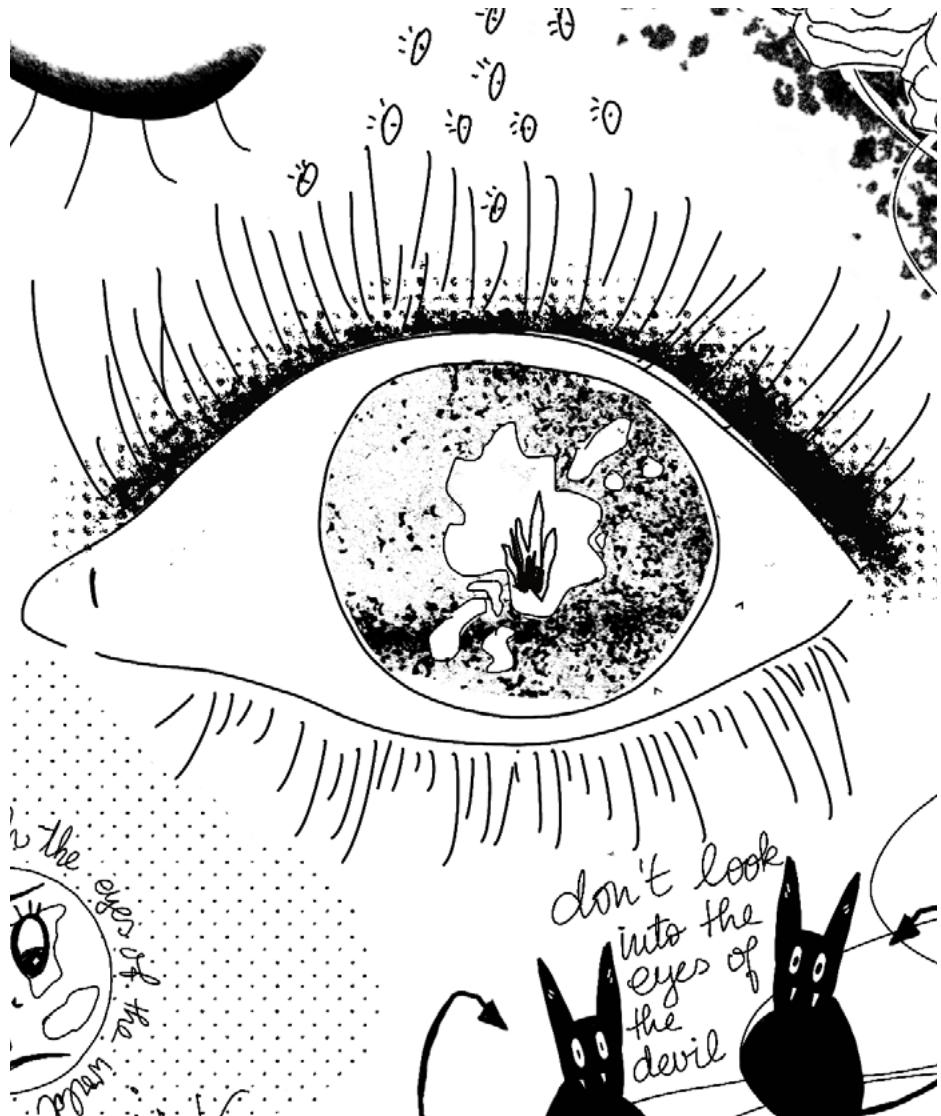


Zine Verschenken

#6 | november 2022 | eyes



Editorial

Welcome back, readers! This time I'm as blind as you to what may come with the current issue: **eyes**. Beyond its physical meaning, an eye is the door through which the world enters our mind. The first material gate to perception. And if perception is a two way road, are we able to change the meaning of the world through our own eyes? How does the world change from eye to eye? Would the colors look the same if my eyes were green? Could we still watch circles if our eyes were square?

Eyes are not interchangeable. Nor are they replaceable. Individual perception is an illusionist's circus trick, as finding your own shape in the mirror is not the same as watching from outside. But may a deeper truth lie in the sum of the different parts? What is common and what sets us apart may be a matter of expression, of understanding, of processing, or plainly different realities.

Our eyes are in fact not only connected to the brain, making perception and understanding of our surroundings highly dependent on it, but also with other senses. Think about touching a soft furry cat and getting but rather feeling roughness or tasting a madly spicy chocolate pie. Are we constantly getting tricked by our eyes or do they rather act as a very non-effective protection against surprises?

Illusions, synesthesia and all seeing eyes. Whatever awaits us in the next pages, you can be sure to find a polyhedral sight to the world around us.

Come to see through all our different sights!

Eyes Behind Walls

On the other side of an ‘iron curtain’, they said, were broken families, desperate people who had lost someone or other. Parents on one side, children on the other. As a child myself, I supposed the ‘curtain’ was much too heavy to draw aside. That it was bulletproof. That it let no light in.

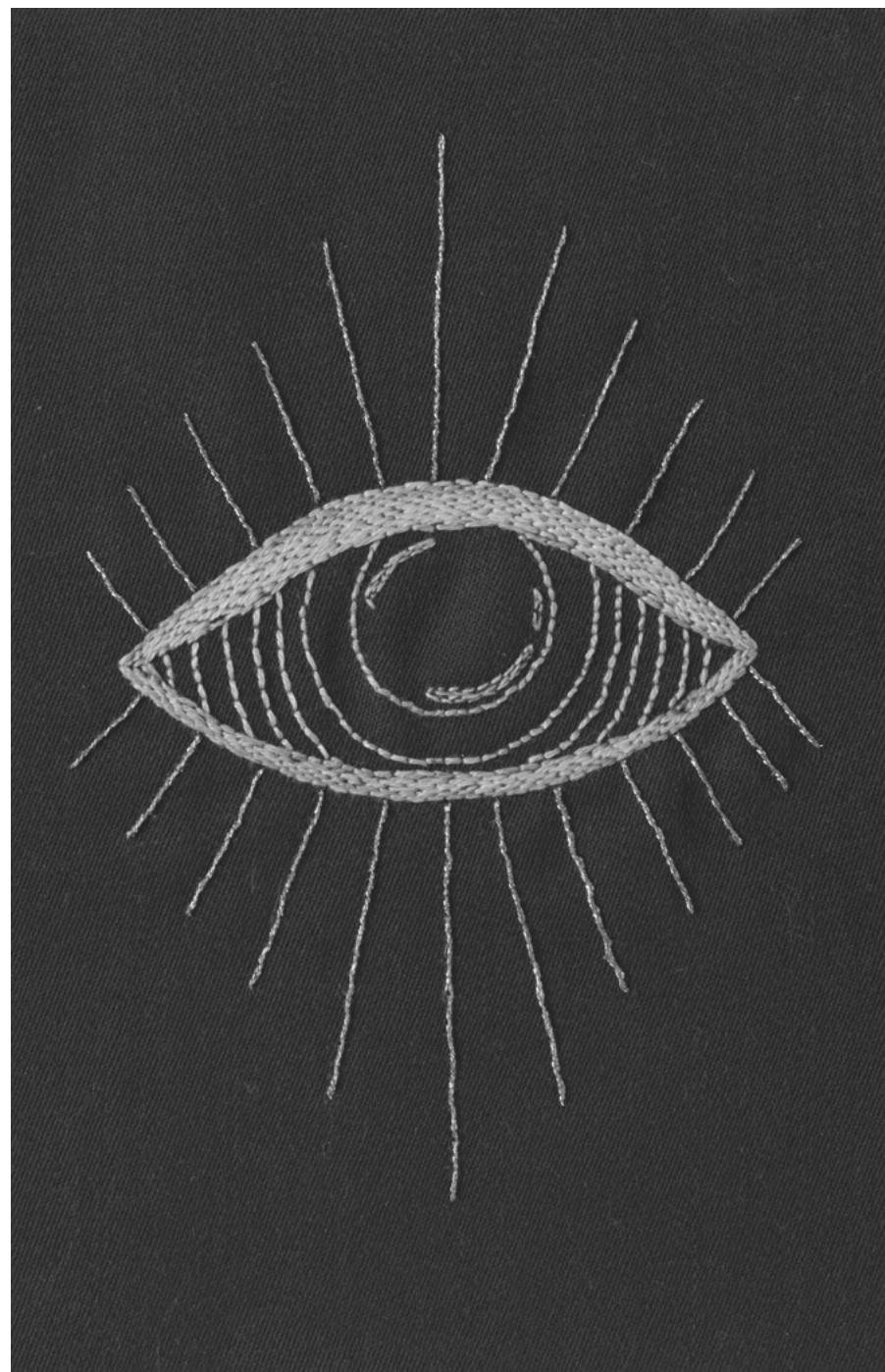
Later, I learned there was another place, not far away, that had a big wall, which was just as bad. People could wave to each other over the stones, barbed wire, jagged glass. But no one was allowed to climb over. Their ladders weren’t long enough. ‘Over there’ was a place with no chocolate, no ‘proper’ coffee. They weren’t allowed to listen to every radio station. The news they watched on their televisions wasn’t true. No one could do what they wanted to do. The streets were grey, the buildings were grey; there the war was still not over. Worst of all, the walls of all the houses had eyes and ears and telephones had bugs living inside them.

And there were Russians. On lookout towers. In the cupboards. Under the bed. Behind the wall paper. Everywhere. A strange language had to be learned. Another way of life had to be endured.

No wonder people risked their lives for the light on the other side.

That was why, almost every Sunday night, there were sad movies about people who wanted to escape to Germany even though they were already there! “They had children who had never seen their omas”, said Oma. “Or opas,” said Opa. Some of them had ‘lost’ their fiancés. Others had ‘gone over,’ not come back in time and so ‘could never return’. People who hadn’t been in the right place at the right time...

There was always an escape plan that went wrong. Dark and dismal landscapes would be lit up with roaming searchlights, people were shot like rabbits caught in the headlights. A few made it to the other side, but they were the lucky ones. Most were ‘given away’ by sneaky neighbours, betrayed by the shopkeeper down the street, or the woman in the flat above, by those who watched and waited in the shadows, by eyes in the night. And all for the price of cheap cigarettes, a bottle of Schnapps, a passport to nowhere...



Escape to the Other Side

At last, the lights went off in the sitting room. Lemonade fizzed in our glasses and the crisps had been handed around. The theme tune rose, then fell, fading into the distance as the treescape on the feature wall behind the TV set shone dimly in the light of the screen: a fitting backdrop for another 'flight to the other side'. We sat expectantly, as the title came up and the movie began...

Cut to another dark and dreary kitchen: green and brown wallpaper, bare bulb swinging, an ashtray next to a crust of bread and a half-eaten sausage, an ersatz coffee spilt over the bare table. A last supper before the couple embrace one more time. The man in his long raincoat and knitted cap. The pale woman in her pale coat, holding a little boy's hand, her packed bag ready by the door. A scribbled message. Papers hastily exchanged.

Now outside, they get into the car, which rolls noiselessly down the road, engine off, until out of sight of prying eyes. Eventually, it stops and they get out, hand in hand, and walk over the fields, looking anxiously over their shoulders. Is anyone following? No. They break into a run. The woods can be seen in the distance and I imagine I'm running too, into the trees behind the TV and on, towards the light... A low whistle calls me back and, hearts beating, the woman and the boy race towards the sound where a code is whispered and a hole has been cut in the fence. Nearly there...

A wild surge of hope grabbed us as we all leaned towards the screen, pressing closer together, fists clenched, willing them on.

A moment of doubt, the woman forgets to count... Suddenly, in a heartbeat, a searchlight strikes out of the darkness. Its beam bounces off stricken eyes.

We all drew breath...

BANG! BANG! BANG! A pale coat caught up against the fence, the dark stain spreading...

"Go! Go! Go!" we shout at the little boy, who breaks free and runs wildly, dodging the lights that criss-cross his path, panting now, his frantic wailing lost in the sound of sirens as he leaps - into the arms of faceless silhouettes on the other side, whisked away into the night, safe but not sound.

Gathering our frayed spirits, we watched the list of names scroll down the screen in silence. A row of words rise up like a prayer against the moon, glimmering for a moment before, it too, fades away:

'To all those who have risked their lives for freedom, for a better life, for the light on the other side of the wall.'

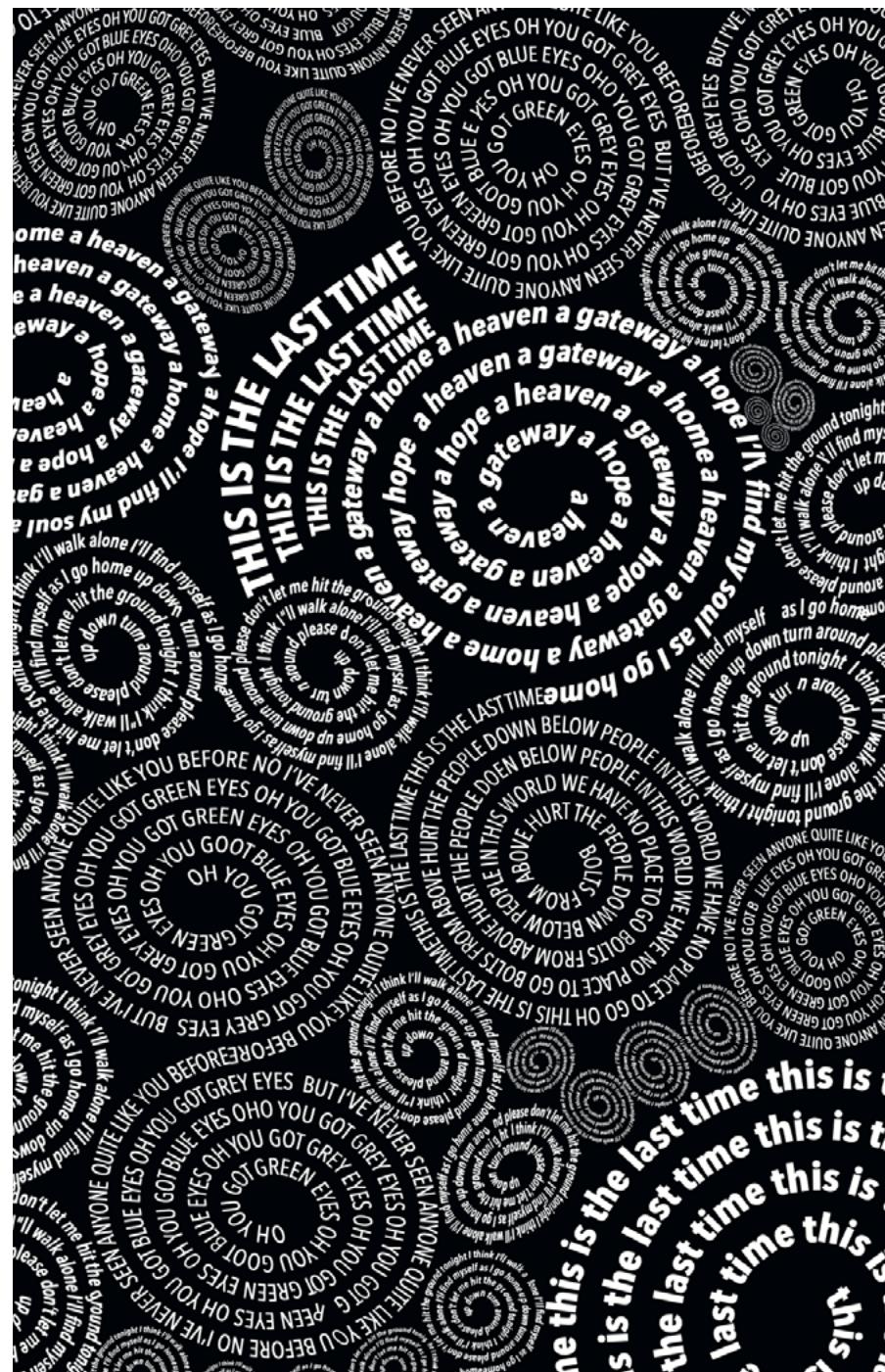


An Anachronic Soul Singing a Love Song

There's a yelp during the 12" version's intro, that's the vocalist's scream for having a snowball running down inside his t-shirt. That yelp always brings me back to a cold December morning. For many people, Temptation is a song that ultimately defined New Order's sound after Ian Curtis' death and Joy Division's disintegration. For many, the track signalized the start of an era. I frankly don't care that much about the technical aspects that might make this song such a classic. No technical implication is enough when what I really want to explain is how I absolutely adore a song. This status in my personal list in fact, goes beyond the music to its symbolic value and enigmatic allurement power.

There's something in Sumner's words, neither too personal nor completely detached, that keeps the gap between materiality and sound open. Lyrics and repetition intertwine in almost a leap of faith. It's a song about everything and nothing at the same time, personal and universal all at once, material and spiritual. A grasp of the desire to reach the unreachable, of the urge to break through.

No matter its technical or cultural value, everytime I hear that yelp it automatically feel the cold of a late autumn morning. And there I am with the green eyes, blue eyes, gray eyes in a loop again, like Renton did while cold turkey consumed him in a room in his mother's place. I am walking back home under the concrete Berlin sky after a night awake and breathe the frozen air tickling at the sunrise. My eyes are falling and my teeth are grinding and I know, suddenly, this song is about that. About a hungry mouth and the painful awareness of every Sunday sunrise. About that very moment, going up the stairs in a building under construction, about watching the city lights fading away so slowly you feel you would be able to cry. About rites of passage, about the last times and first times, about communion and dancing 'til the morning. About finding yourself in everyone else's eyes.



Night Vision

Through the glass darkly, a blanket of dusk covers another gray day, with scarcely a chink of light between. Black-clad workers troop out of office blocks and the bunkered exits of U-bahn stations, disappearing into the gloom beyond the flood-lit precincts of Mitte. Out of sight, out of mind. Giant glass scrapers look down from the seams of the sky onto barren, shapeless Alexanderplatz far below. Away from the horizon of pulsing lights and flickering screens, barges glide ghostlike along the oily murk of the Spree, past the dark Dom of faded glory and on, under the Museum Island bridge. On its browline, Unter den Linden, imperial way minus the lime trees and limelight, stretches towards the vanishing point of Brandenburg Gate, golden in the dying sun. Behind and beyond, Tiergarten shrouded in twilight mist and, in the distance, the helter-skelter of S-bahn tracks, trains like yellow snakes streaking through the hinterland.

Skirting the Eastside, litter scatters, blowing over the wasteland like tattered blooms. A haunted power station throws psychoadelic beams across a technicolor sky, its pounding vibrations toppling the stars like fireworks into the black waters of the sinister Spree. Graffiti walls silently shouting their angry, indecipherable messages along the rails that criss-cross the no-mans-land of Warschauerstrasse, and turn into Friedrichshain...

Walking on slippery cobbles now... Streets wreathed in fog, spitting with rain; the sound of footfall, yours. Suddenly the flick of a lighter, a flare, the acrid whiff of cigarette smoke. A conversation tucked around the corner, a laugh lost in the fog. Heels disappearing down an alley. The turn of a lock. A light on the stairwell. Lace curtains, half drawn, cast shadowplays for spectators behind shutters, screened by trees. A television murmurs by an open window, a bicycle skims over the wet pavement. Obscured by kitchen blinds, a lone supper lingers - just a little longer - in the lamp light. Further along, tiers of cupcakes sitting pretty on their stand in a cafe window, a stale still life glittering daintily under the spotlight. Next door the oven-glow of a late-night bakery. Handpicked posies strewn over a mossy florist's ledge, last minute gifts for last minute invitations.

From cold street into low-lit bar. Clusters of neon globes hang like upside down mushrooms over crowded tables. Dark mirrors reflecting phantom faces, featureless, anonymous, mysterious. Electric cocktails raised to bloodless lips, luminously phosphorescent. Lovers whisper secrets in the shadows, stealing a kiss behind purple drapes while dancers caught in laser beams move to the rhythms of the night.

Outside, dodging the puddles, the hotdog stand that never sleeps. A local Späti looms on the corner; beacon of hope and home to the homeless, it spills its welcoming light on the neighbourhood's doorstep. Glowering under their metal shades, the gimlet gaze of anglepoise lamps - retro, robotic - in a glaring window display. Opposite, a showroom of stark creations, framed by empty white cubes only deepens the gloom as mannequins pose, expressionless dolls, staring blankly with unseeing eyes.

Frankfurter Tor. Twin towers standing on ceremony like stone wedding cakes, Soviet style. The shushing of non-stop traffic along the Allee, cat's eyes blinking in the headlights. Feierabend balconies brighten grim apartment blocks, laser-cut chinks in the never-ending urban sprawl. Hemmed in by dim streets on all sides, the reddish glow of braziers warm the Hinterhöfe of old Berlin, offering up embers to the cheerless dawn.





The Filter, the Beat and the Pulse

Two records spinning side by side. For a time I thought they were of the same rhythm. You saw it from another perspective. The mind's eye can change its tune whenever it likes. That's the beauty of one's own point of view.

My vision told me that I understood you. Through the difficulties, the time and all that space. Why did I do that? Because I am a woman? Am I to accept that I cannot see clearly enough to put myself first? What is permanently in my sight to cause me to accustom myself to you? There must be a filter set behind the eyes, a beat that skips the heart and a pulse flashing through the brain.

My record was never synced to yours. It was those damn idiosyncrasies made by the filter, the beat and the pulse. They made me think that those two solo tunes were mixing and creating a beautiful sound. But I was too close, a step further back would have shown, that the so called beautiful sounds, were a series of shrieks and scrapes of metal against metal.

Once your beat started to slow and I couldn't hear it at all, mine started to speed up. And the filter, well it too started to flash. Every time I closed my eyes, at night in my bed. A brief moment in a waiting room. Even when I blinked. Flash. What if I wrote you how angry I was? Flash. How about if I wrote you a letter and left it in your mailbox. Flash. The words circling around, changing, adjusting. Every single day.

I saw you once outside a cafe. The shock caused the beat in the heart to thump as hard as it could, the pulse in the brain strobing to the point where I couldn't see. My legs sped up as I continued straight past. No. No. No. This cannot be left to chance. My record was wobbling, unbalanced and erratic. The filter behind the eyes was still there, torturing me with even more fresh possibilities. The beat and the pulse jumping back and forth over the next few months between sharp, monotonous thuds and melancholic silences. I had no choice. I had to show you my spin.

I contacted you, and you were glad to hear from me but as I tried to show you my filter, my beat and my pulse, you sat on pause. And when you tried to match my rhythm again, I realised it was the same sound. Round and round. A broken record.

It was then that I knew exactly what to do. I took my record and smashed it to pieces. As a human I can liken myself to anything and no more was I willing to be a record. At present, I liken myself more to a climbing plant. Climbing up, to the side, around a corner, intertwining with others.

I saw you once more. This time you definitely saw me as I saw you. In your eyes, I saw your record. Still playing that same tune. Around and around. It seemed as though you searched mine for a piece of that smashed record. But it was no longer there and I climbed on in any which way I chose, while you spun. Round and round.



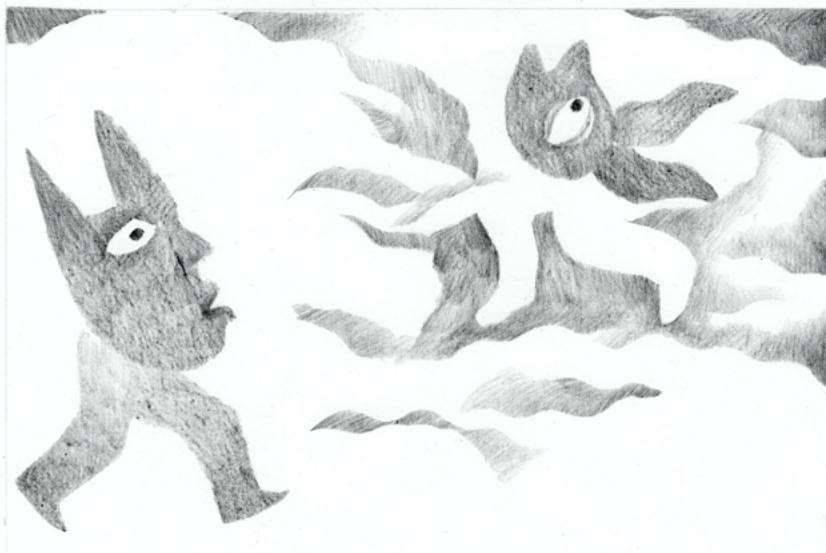
BIRTH OF THE NIGHT

NAHUATL LEGEND OF THE ORIGIN OF DAY AND NIGHT

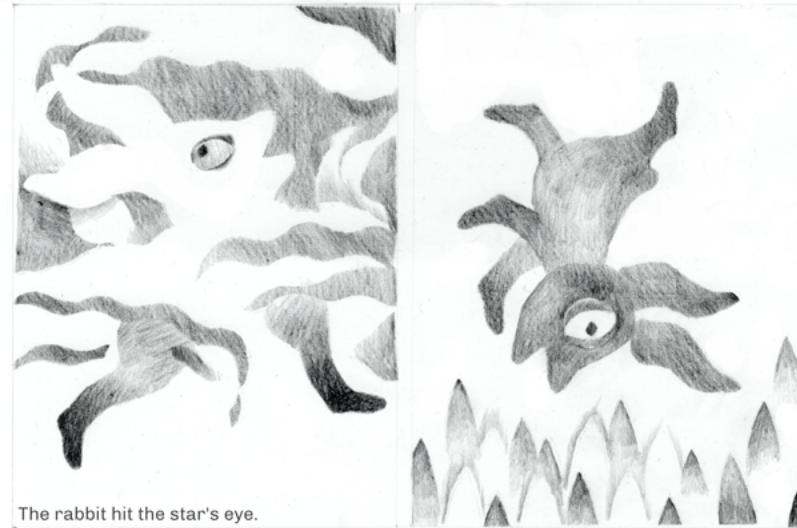
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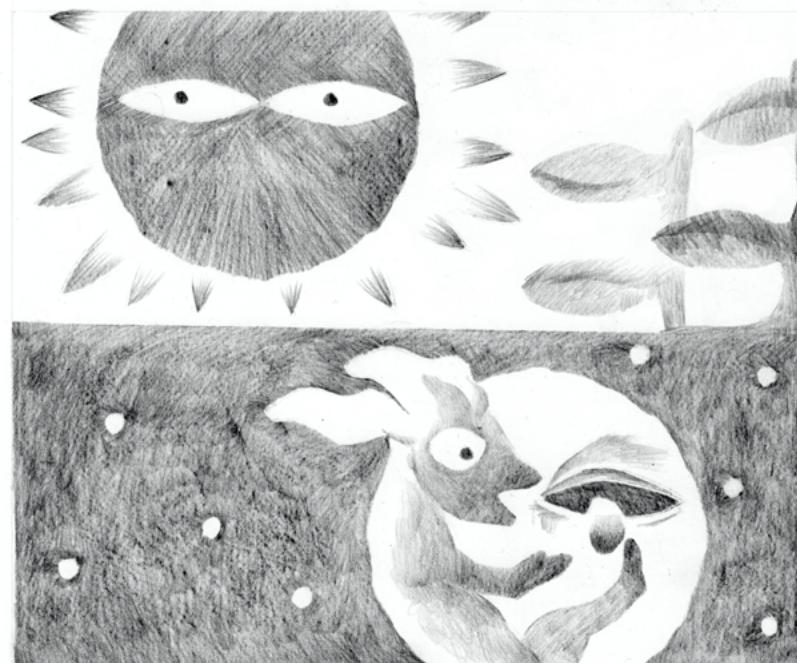
The earth was illuminated by two suns and night did not exist..



Then a rabbit was thrown into a sun.



The rabbit hit the star's eye.



The rabbit blinded the star and drove it into darkness. So the night emerged and since then a rabbit has lived in the moon.

An Eye For An Eye: The Dark Breasts Of Justice

Are you a revengeful person? Does your blood boil when your neighbor children play around stamping their feet like baby elephants and you fantasize about putting a burning shit in front of his door, ringing the bell and running away? Do you feel the urge to burn the office down every morning when you come to work? Do you laugh inside every time you pass your ex on the street thinking that you might have ruined his life?

We live in a cruel and unmerciful world. Sometimes it's hard to make ends meet, people walk around with a broken heart like zombies anywhere, everywhere, the promises made in bright kindergartens fall into pieces every day we live longer. Doesn't matter how hard you try, the dice was thrown much before you started playing. Some people still take meritocracy as granted: you only reap what you sow. Yet, there's always someone to blame for human misery.

So I asked myself, how do people around me vent out their frustrations? Do we have a way to get avenge our ills? Do we have an escape? Is revenge a random meaningless act of madness or rather a satisfying way to claim what was ours? I started looking for answers to all these questions, but when asking people around me, soon I realized, revenge is not a thing they seem to be proud of. Actually most friends didn't show to be very keen on it (call it peaceful or coward) or were just way too revengeful to be willing to share their abominable acts of vengeance with anyone. Revenge is certainly still a tabu, a deep dark secret we like to hide in the drawers of the past like forgetful magpies.

But the ones vengeful enough to be sharing their experiences, all came to the same conclusion: revenge is healthy and they have no regret. So don't hesitate any longer. Put that burning shit in front of your neighbor's door (there are even companies that will do it for you, so no excuses for lazy fellows), take that extra money from the cash register you know you deserved but didn't got, puncture that asshole's tyres while you laugh like a movie crazy villain, because our time is now.

And if you need some inspiration, here is what I got. Real testimonies from heroes that, out of resentment, pride or pure insanity managed to claim their own justice. Stay, read and come and suck from the dark but dark breasts of justice. It could be a cathartic experience.

The Bicycle Avenger by Ander Urania

I caught the junkie neighbors charging their stolen electric bikes on the building's electrical panel (bike theft and electricity all in one, a roundabout plan). I got pissed off and took the cable with me as a warning, but it didn't work. The bastards kept using the bikes using new cables, like I don't give a shit.

One day coming back from a drunken party I popped one of the many beer bottles that they left lying around the same area and punctured the wheel of the bike with it.

I went up the stairs laughing while the sound of the deflating tyre echoed throughout the staircase. It might have been a bit too much, but I've never seen them screw it up again. WIN-WIN

Teenage Revenge by Anonymous

When I was in high school, I had a teacher I really disliked. She was our sports teacher, but she really didn't care much about the subject or the students. When we had class, she would throw us some kind of call and disappear into her office. Worse was when we had a theory lesson. Instead of photocopying the information and reading through it together, she would use an overhead projector and make us write the text over the entire lesson in silence, then study it on our own at home. She would also ask students to go and collect her lunch from the canteen 5 minutes before the bell would ring, which meant that it would ring as you were on your way back to the gym – as it was on the other side of the school. And of course once you had brought back her lunch, you then had to go back to the canteen and were always last in the line. I was one of her favorites to ask, she seemed to call on me more than the others and I being the angsty teen that I was, despised her for it. So one day she had asked me to go and collect something from her car. This was my chance for revenge. I took the bundle of keys in my hand, and as I looked at them, I wondered what I could take. She had a collection of keyrings. They were all quite large and I was sure she would notice one missing. There was of course the car key, but that too was far too obvious. The final key on the chain was her house key, small and easy to miss. I decided that was the one. I took it from the keychain and handed her back the keys. During the break, I showed my friends and we threw it into a drain at the back of the school. She never mentioned it to me, and I can't be sure, but I think she didn't ask me to collect anything else for her.

Burn After Tore It Into Pieces by Ananya

It happened at least 8 or 9 years ago, when I was in university. I had a boyfriend and when we broke up, it was a horrible one. He cheated on me and there was evidence all over the place but he never admitted it. Everyone knew except me and even then, he never wanted to admit anything, so it was really fucked up. When we were together he applied for a scholarship at our university, but it was wrong, as the scholarship was supposed to be for students with lower income background and he was definitely not like that. He was faking it.

So after we broke up I happened to see his application in the office because I was one of the representatives of my cohort and I was in the admin office. When I saw his application I was so mad at him that I took his application and freaking tore it and kept the pieces with me. I was so mad I ended up burning them in my room. I haven't told anyone this before but well, it was fun. I still think about it sometimes.

The Unavailable Bastard by Stay Calm, Keep Cursing

I was in an open relationship with a guy for more than two years, when he started wanting to play some bad tricks on me. He pretended to make appointments and then said that he was busy one/two days before it. He really took advantage of me to the last moment he could. He rescheduled (on purpose) the date and came to work in my place in the afternoon. We had sex as we always did (or more precise, he still lured me to have sex) and purposed to break-up shortly before he had to leave. I told his already grown-up daughter (from the previous marriage, not with the then wife when we dated) that he took advantage of me to the last moment; he looked for sex when he traveled with his son (the brother of the daughter) und afterwards used last minute cancellation tricks. She confirmed

that he was also distracted by the smartphone while traveling with her. Besides, he also played the same last minute cancellation tricks when the children were young.

I sent a postcard with largely written "Do not fuck during office hours" (something like this in German) to his office. He is the owner of a 10-20 person company. There is a reception in the office building. So, the receptionist and the secretary of the company probably saw it. I also sent a big letter with some insulting words with his pictures on the envelope to his place. His daughter / his new girlfriend might see it. I only regret not having acted faster. I should have sent even insulting stuff. I actually had some marijuana leaves from him (ya! he grew some marijuana plants) and the picture of the plants. I could have sent these two things to his neighbors and the police.

When revenge hits you by Maryola

When I was a child I was told that cats have seven lives. I was curious and I decided to check it by throwing the family cat a few times from the first and second floor of the family house. I managed to do it six times and the cat survived. However when I was going for the seventh time, the cat fiercely scratched my face and ran away. I never discover if they have seven lives but his behavior was certainly suspicious.

If I regret it? Hell no, I was acting out of pure scientific curiosity. Maybe the cat should regret it, or the people who were spreading such rumors about him, but not me.

Sabotage From Within by Anderson

I was working in a famous fast food restaurant and it was a chaos. There were so many problems with the organization and every time there was any issue they would always blame us employees.

Due to some "internal problems" they decided not to pay me some days of sick leave. I was already so tired and didn't give a shit so I decided to just take the money left from the cash register. No one is going to steal my time or my money so I have absolutely no regrets.

A Disgusting Revenge by Anonymous

My ex roommate was an asshole. My clothes started disappearing and soon I realized she was using them. She would steal all my clothes, use them and never give them back again.

So far so good. She wanted to keep my things? Fine. I started to rub her toothbrush in the toilet bowl. I don't know if she ever realized but it was extremely satisfying. I would like to keep this anonymous to avoid people unfriending me. I'm not evil, just don't steal my things.

An Underwear Affair by Pepi R.

This one is from the days back in my Erasmus in Prague. I was living on the ground floor of a student dorm in a corridor shared with approximately other 60 students. The dorms were in the middle of a park with a lot of homeless people that used to watch into our rooms from the lower part of the windows. Oh, what a fantasy place, especially when I terribly fell in love with this guy who was living

two rooms away from me. We hooked up and he seemed to be very much into starting something. Everything was going beautifully until a few weeks after our first encounter, he hooked up with my ex roommate at a Halloween party I was NOT attending -the poor bastard probably thought I would never know about it? Well, I got very pissed off and we had an argument until he told me it would never happen again, cause he really wanted something with me. The young and stupid me believed him of course, just to find out a weeks later that the guy had done the same again at another party.

I was crying and devastated in my room when a friend told me to have just seen him hanging his clothes in the corridor. I put on my poncho as a terrorist balaclava and went out like a madwoman to steal some underwear. When I had it in my hands I laughed and cut it, shaping it like a thong. I threw the rest of cloth out of the window and left the new shaped thong with the rest of the clothes with a

note written in mongol: “The rest of your underwear is in the park. It belongs to the pervert homeless now. Go and find it if you dare, bastard.”

The best part is that the guy was sharing his room with a very good friend of mine and apparently asked him if he thought it could have been me. My friend totally gaslighted him and told him, of course, I could never do that. But the crime definitely had my name written everywhere. Anyways, I still laugh when I think about it.

The pippi affair by Pepi R.

Once when I was drunk, I also peed like an animal on my neighbors doormat and entered back home shouting “vendetta, vendetta!”. I’m not sure about the reasons for the vendetta anymore, but my family definitely had a tense relationship with that neighbor so I’m sure it was justified somehow. The next day I was scared that people would blame a dog, cause I didn’t want to create any problems with the doggies in the neighborhood. Luckily nothing happened and my remorses disappeared quickly.

Do you have any revenge stories? Do you fantasize about taking justice on your own? Share with us your infamous, hideous, funny, delusional revenge stories at zine.verschenken@gmail.com. We are all ears and confidentiality!



Zine **Verschenken**

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