

**THE INTENSITY  
poems by                    OF LIFE**

**THE INTENSITY**

**jana seymour                    OF LIFE**

**THE INTENSITY**

**and                    OF LIFE**

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**photographs by                    OF LIFE**

**THE INTENSITY**

**michael vierow                    OF LIFE**

“I felt wise and cynical as all hell.”

—Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*



*'Til human voices wake us  
And we drown*

I know that I'm experiencing a chemical imbalance  
But I wish you could feel the intensity of life that I feel.

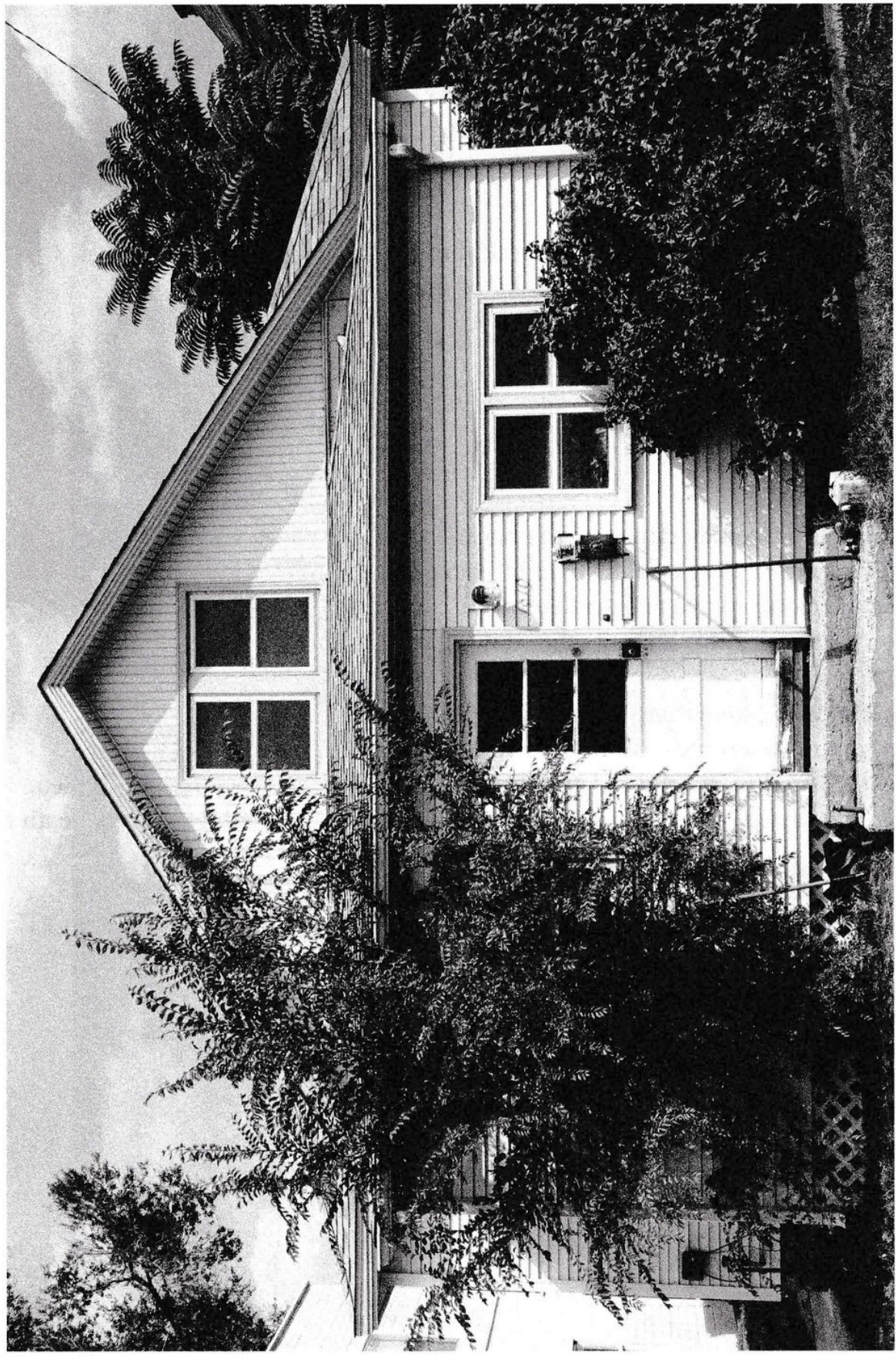
I feel everything.  
The sun warming my thighs,  
the wind brushing my ankles  
Sleeping on a bench.

The leaves gracefully dance on the backdrop of the sky  
As it turns from gray to blue, then blue to gray  
while the clouds play tricks in shadows.  
I wouldn't notice this on any other day.

There must be something in the coolness of the air,  
The cool remembrance of another somewhere.  
I'm not here, I'm in England and the train is taking me to Shoreham By Sea.  
Then I wake up, alert to the feel of the wooden bench planted firmly beneath me.

I want to textualize everything.  
I want to take a bite from today  
And devour it for the rest of my life.  
I am dancing the expression of every moment.

Watch my shadows on the concrete  
Conduct the shapes you've never seen before  
like the waves that Eliot's mermaids  
comb back and drown in. Wake up! Join me!  
Take my hand and take a bite of life!



My biggest secrets that live in my old house:

I have written on the surfaces inside my closet.  
There is a huge purple spot on the carpet in my bedroom. Mom did it.  
I stuck a piece of toilet paper in the very top corner of my bathroom where  
the ceiling meets the walls because a small hole in that corner made me feel I was  
being watched.  
I used to go out and sit on the mailbox looking to the house when I felt  
unordinary.  
I tried to draw the house but I'm still really bad at drawing.  
A swing and a hammock used to hang from the trees. I used to swing a lot.  
There is a place on the side of the house outside mom and dad's bedroom  
window where a boy's knee touched the ground. It should be spit on.  
The hole in the kitchen wall was created in reaction to the dropping of the  
boy's knee.  
Only one boy has ever driven to this house to pick me up and take me  
somewhere, and he is still with me and he is not dropping any knees.  
The hallway stretches the length of this house; this house  
believes in walking the straight and narrow.  
There used to be a trampoline in the backyard.  
A dog has never lived here.



Tonight my nameless, faceless anxiety grew with intensity into thoughts that rushed like waves in my head and kept me awake.

Why doesn't anxiety know my happiness? Why can't the two live together at once with me instead of shoving each other in and out each week?

I can't keep up with their schedules, how am I supposed to feel tomorrow?





11:53 PM 7/31/2015

Waiting for autumn.  
Dreaming, and when I awake  
I miss his music.

Lonely in a bed  
Where my dream becomes a song  
I make up the words.

On a midnight trip through Yukon, OK

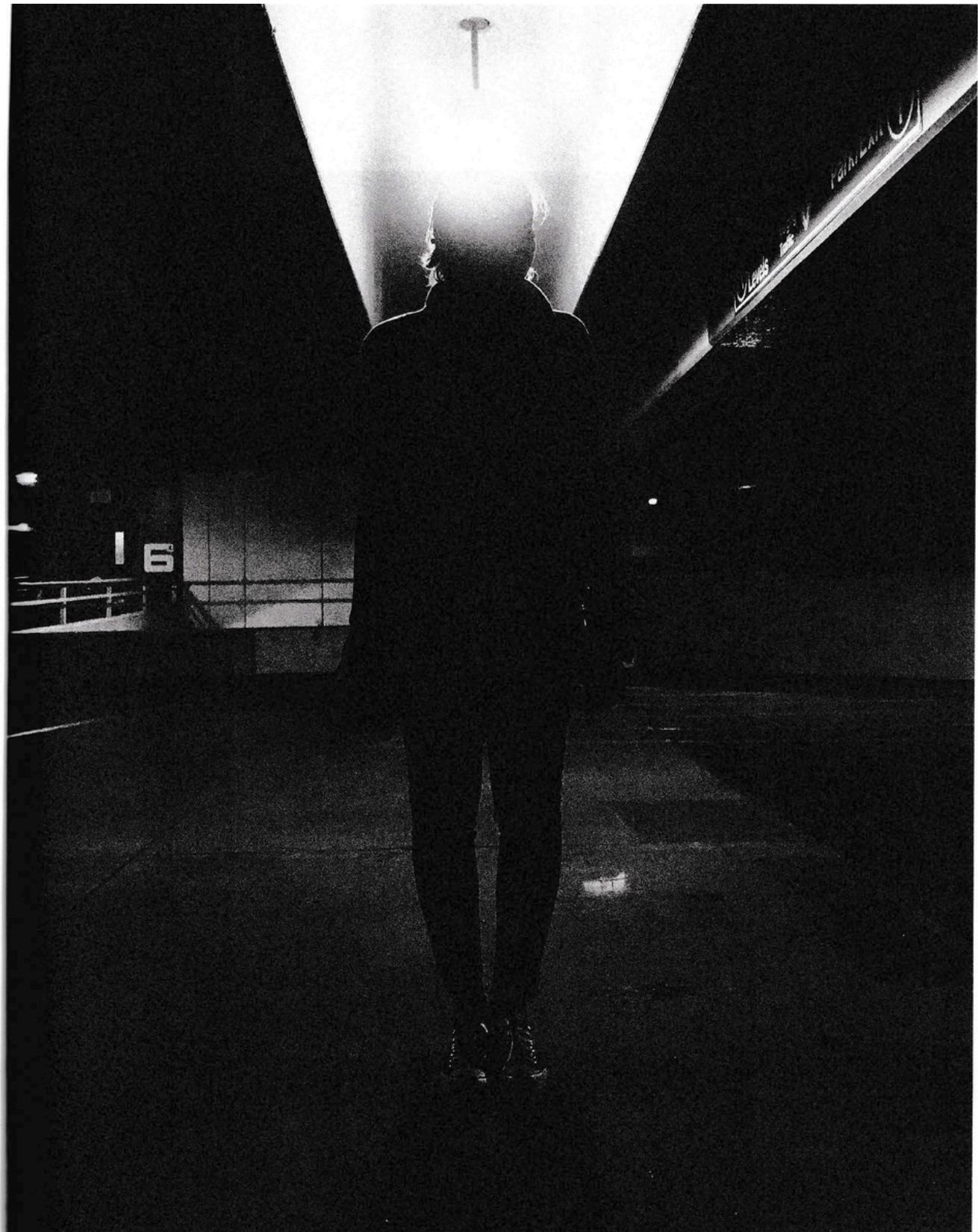
what if we reached the lights  
at the end of the black road stretched out,

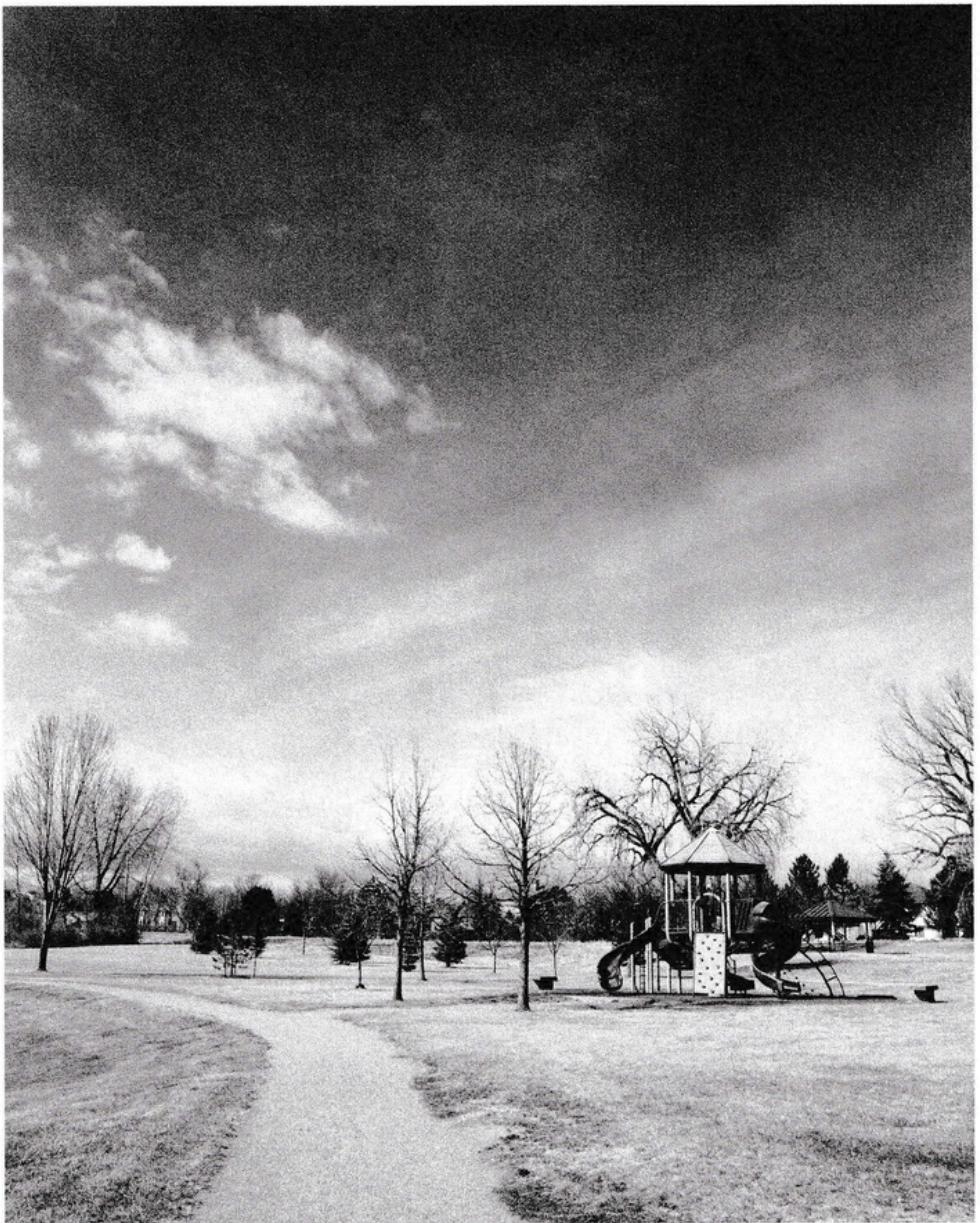
the white dots behind the black lines,

what if we found  
when we reached the dazzling dots,

we were the last inhabitants of this world.

what if we slept and in the morning we found  
we were it, we were all, and we felt nothing.





January 29, 2016

“Today is such a beautiful day!!” 1:28 pm

“Yes, it is, my dear! Enjoy it!!!” 1:29 pm

I'm bowing to the ground, nose to the earth, arms outstretched,  
Just to feel some relief in my aching back.  
I know this; the ladies at the Bible study do not.  
Sincerely they say, "Thanks so much for coming,"  
And give me a reassuring pat at that place on my back.

Is reverence a position? Am I doing it right?  
When will my stretching turn into worship, when will I feel it?  
"You're welcome," I mumble, and my back still aches.





Today Existential dread and all feelings of emptiness knocked on my door and I welcomed them,

but I don't want to sound like one of those kids who starts throwing around words like Existential dread because he just learned them,

no, I want to sound like today I spent as much time as I could laying in my bed making myself face the wall and feel the emptiness settle into the pits of me like ageless sedimentary rock.

It remains unmoved.

I'm becoming fascinated with birds.

Usually I don't like them, but a few days ago I walked past a black bird pecking at the ground. It seemed black, but perhaps the sunshine was doing a number on its feathery costume because I saw within the black, flecks of yellow and red and blue, and it was beautiful. It took my breath away. I kept walking but I slipped my phone out of my back pocket and typed a text to mom, "hey would you let me get a pet bird?" She responded with impressive speed, "No." That's fine, because I don't know that I really like birds a whole lot anyway.

From a distance, I like birds.





10:21 AM 11/3/2015

Do not tell me how  
To write a poem, for I  
Have written them all.



Jana Seymour currently lives in Moore, OK, where she grew up. She first realized that the words she composed from her own feelings could have significance on their own when she was 18, and since then has been plagued by that pursuit. Her blog details some of those feelings involved with becoming a writer at [jnseemore.wordpress.com](http://jnseemore.wordpress.com).

Michael Vierow lives in an Airstream in an undisclosed suburb of Oklahoma City. When not taking photographs, he enjoys sitting in silence and feeling guilty about not being as productive as capitalism demands. Michael is easy to find.

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