



hey -

this zine was originally at EBABZ 2018 in Oakland, put there by my wonderful friends at Flash Thrive. it was sold there for \$7, but i'm putting it online for free in the spirit of sharing. show them some love ❤️

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you know, my feelings towards this zine changed and matured over time in a way i never would have expected. as i look back on my early 20's, i've been thinking a lot on what i regret, so much so that if you'd run into me on the street recently i probably just blurted it out. it's hard looking at the hesitation that held me back, and beautiful realizing that the uncertainty i feel every day now is a direct result of breaking free from that.

there aren't a whole lot of pictures of me from that time, as the person behind the camera. but in this zine, now, i see a wonderful picture of myself and anne:

the uncertainty, the vulnerability, the hesitation, and yet also the courage to take risks and the unexplained whim to write them all down.

i'm so, so glad i did, and i hope you enjoy this moment of time.

thank you for reading.

夢遠

@mngyuan

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Also showing: Unsubstantiated Claims on the Nature of

Companionship,

The Feeling of Staying in Place Your Whole Life,

and Other Topics

How to Have

and still feel

Friends

alone

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE GATHERED
THROUGH HOPES AND FAILURES AND
TRIAL AND ERROR AND ARRANGED IN
AN EASILY STOMACHABLE FORMAT



01

CURRENT DAY . CURRENT MONTH . CURRENT YEAR



how to have friends and still feel alone (alternatively how to have and still feel friends, or however you chose to read the cover) is a collection of words and photos loosely meditating on friendship and solitude and what it means when, at the end of each day, we all end up alone again.

thanks to anne for her lovely words and special thanks to the job i quit that gave me the time to make this.

Kevin Lee @mngyuan
Anne Lin @lumohn

HOW MANY TIMES, HOW MANY MILES

Words by Anne Lin



I go on walks alone—not because I know no one in this city. It's tiring to speak during the evenings, and there's just all too much pressure and guilt that comes with company.

But there are nights I regret choosing solitude.

Nights when the air is perfectly crisp and all I want is to boringly speak of how nice the weather is. We would complain about how fall never lasts long enough, and how this city knows only sticky and freezing. There would be talk about the way the deep sky looks, about how the stars seem sharper in this air and how the small strips of clouds absorb the lights that seep out from the tiny buildings below their bellies. My company would mention the desire for a cigarette and the breeze drowns us in its body.

Or nights when the lights

dance a particular way and the cadence of voices sing a certain tune. It's amazing how many sounds, words, intentions slip by us every day in the subway, on the streets, in the stores, restaurants, offices: each deliberate in its existence, but so often ignored and forgotten. On these extraordinary evenings, when everything small is brighter and louder, I remember how even the simplest things can bring splendor to an experience and all I wonder is if the lights and sounds had always tangoed like this.

And especially on nights when my thoughts are misbehaving and I have nowhere to run. I would have already been in my room earlier, before I stormed down the stairs outside the slammed door, before I ran past an oncoming car who saw me before I saw it, before I shoved the earbuds to drown out the anger,



sadness, or whatever else decided to manifest in my chest. These are the nights when the bone between the sky and mind becomes

a mirror.

I have come to realize that empty spaces are simply emptier unoccupied, and

presence, no matter how minute, gives it flesh. Those nights hold so much beauty, it's almost shameful to not be able to

share them with anyone.

And of course, here I am again walking at my own pace along the east river,



watching the water bend
the sky and lights back and
forth, entirely of my own
choosing.

MT TAMALPAIS

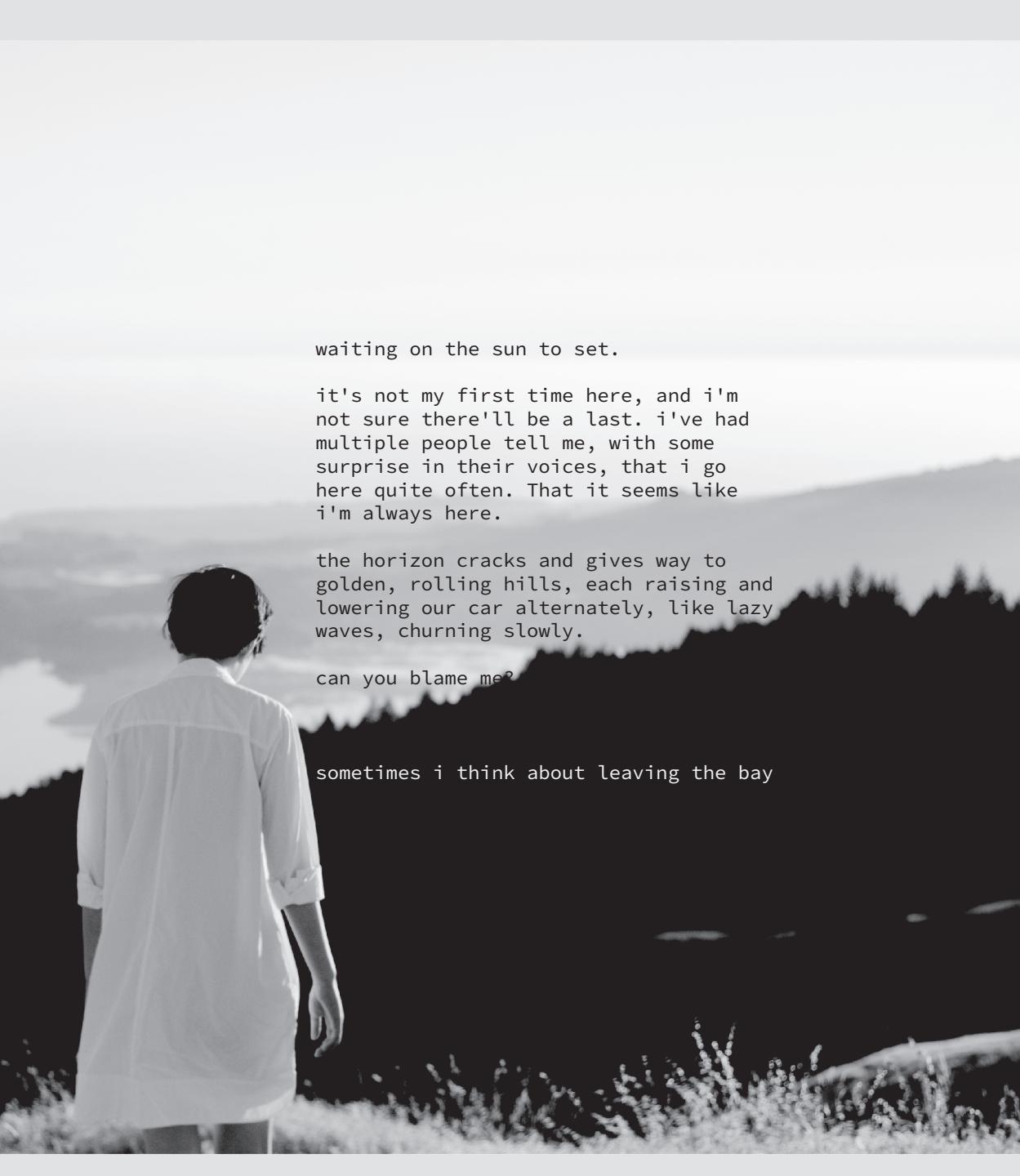
Kevin Lee



アイスクリーム above the clouds,



with friends,



waiting on the sun to set.

it's not my first time here, and i'm
not sure there'll be a last. i've had
multiple people tell me, with some
surprise in their voices, that i go
here quite often. That it seems like
i'm always here.

the horizon cracks and gives way to
golden, rolling hills, each raising and
lowering our car alternately, like lazy
waves, churning slowly.

can you blame me?

sometimes i think about leaving the bay

and sometimes i think how wrong i'd be
to do so.

THE WIND EATS AT ME.



between breaths i wonder about nothing. the shutter on my camera fails and comes back to life in the same moment.



i think if i'd've left this city sooner, i'd've grown up faster.

i'd've had to left some people here, leave some things behind. i'd've had to plant new seeds, and hope they'd grow, and i'd have to check in, and call, just to keep loved ones close, and watch less loved ones go,

the time between calls getting longer, the messages left read getting older.



instead, i'm watching them
rot up close, from neglect,
rather than space.



you live two blocks from here.
it's the fourth time i've been
by and not said hello. it's
just, i'm busy, and you're
busy, even though i think we
both have time, just that just
because i'd do anything with
you,

doesn't mean we will.



A black and white landscape photograph showing rolling hills and mountains in the background. In the foreground, a car is parked on a grassy hillside. The sky is filled with soft, diffused clouds.

THE SUN FLICKERS

from beneath the horizon.

if i'd've left this city
sooner, i think i'd've grown
up faster, watching these
things change, swirling
around me, just new, new,
new, fighting for meaning,
rootless changes dying to be
made sense of.

instead, i'm watching myself
change up close, placed
somewhere between these
unmoving hills,

feeling myself grow into
them as the people come and
go.

GONE FISHING



Words by Anne Lin

I left a home to find a new one. I left the people I grew with to grow by myself. And eventually, after some time, when I needed a rest from searching, I returned for a visit to find that I no longer belonged to the only home I knew. It's not that it wasn't there anymore. The physical house, the people, the memories were all still there, very much standing and alive. But forked paths are meant to go separate ways, and rarely reconvene into the same again.

There is great discomfort that comes with realizing how distant a home has become. Almost unbearable. But there's a greater discomfort that comes with realizing how distant one has become, because there's assigned responsibility and guilt. Maybe if I hadn't left, I would still remember where particular things were around my bedroom. Maybe if I hadn't left, I would still be able to share

experiences that are so important to the livelihood of friendships. Maybe if I hadn't left, I would still have a home.

I forget at times why I ever left behind everything I knew and found comfort in.



SLIPPING A LITTLE AND LETTING

myself eat a little more decadently. between my laptop dying and the smoke blanketing oakland ive been stuck pleasantly inside, languishing and rotting at the hands of my own boredom. ive finally started screen printing and reorganized my vinyl, listening to some forgotten records id bought because i thought i needed them but clearly hadn't. ive given up on lolita, for now, since occupying the



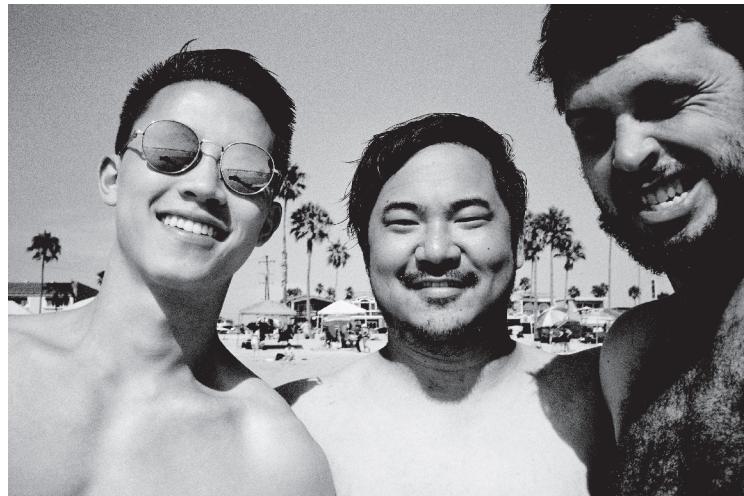
the headspace of a pedophile is becoming more and more draining as he focuses more and more on his lust and less on his gorgeous and witty descriptions of his evil. instead ive lifted and unlifted the various objects in my apartment to no end, thinking maybe this time there'll be something new to do and instead finding my own unwillingness to work and it's slow erosion, as boredom fades to a shadow and the uneasy peace of the need to work settles in it's place.

im not sure what it means to be happy or to be alone, but this must be close to it. somewhere in the interrupted rhythms of work a stability has taken over, and it makes me wonder on the cavernous space needed to start something. how is it that time wasted folds over to become words? how is it that ideas too need defrosting and marination and salt rubs and gristle? only because i have done nothing for days on end that i am able to now do what i wanted to in the beginning, and create. is that nothingness part of what i make, too, and is it part of me? the process of learning to trust the randomness is less anxious than id thought. somehow i just let go and things come. somehow i release all of my designs, my machinations, my blueprints detailed with worry and overplanning, and very thing i had prayed so hard to plan for comes.

on a regular day i worry. i check my email, first personal, then business,

then my old school email, in case a bill or a promotion or an shipping update, then my twitter, and facebook, though less nowadays, attending to my feeds as if they were plants and my attention were sun and water. tinder reminds me that sex and companionship evade me, as instagram does adventure. the folders on my desktop need organizing again, and my mind flickers as i brush past unfinished projects on my way to them. photos lay open unedited and messages asking, politely and excitedly, to see them stay anxiously unread. i wonder if im single because im not trying hard enough? ask the walls. or because im ugly? i scribble the date and my daily task in a small notebook. "i write one thing down a day and make it true" i tell anyone patiently enough to listen, though in practice many days i am wrong about the course of the hours and night comes with a different reality reached, and equally many days are empty. maybe i havent made it yet because im too scared. not sure of what, probably commitment. the room yawns as it flexes in the sun, lending my procrastination some legitimacy by proximity.

work feels like im fishing. ideas wash over me slowly, like a showerhead with a painfully slow drizzle, and i watch them come and go in slow motion like silver fish in a silver creek, streaming by and glinting white like crests of waves. sometimes my lazy hand snatches



Clockwise from top:

Frank's mom beating him in rage cage
Dumpling night
Homemade kimchi fried rice
Old roommates in Newport Beach

greedily and fails to catch anything, stumbling awkwardly through empty space. the hours fall down one after another. do people think of me as close? are they tired of me yet? the worries nest in the wrinkles of my brain. i should microanalyze all the things that were said and done further in case the obvious was standing there in plain sight. a glimpse of a fish pulls at me. this font should definitely go there. i wonder if she thought i thought dinner meant a date? black probably wouldn't go well with this. my limp thoughts weave in and out of attentiveness to the task at hand, the overstimulus of last night's anxieties melded with today's task and the room sitting around me overpowering their ability to organize and be coherent. instead of a line they form a zig zag in my head.

being alone isn't the same as being lonely, my roommate often reminds me. the thought wrestles with me absently. of course being alone is lonely; it's the very definition of it. yet somehow being with others too is lonely, depending on the time, weather, day, and on the others. in the month i spent meandering new york i met many who would fit this description, people who exist to me sadly only as actors in my own life, figments of my imagination bustling and selling and buying and eating. not that i myself am special but more that none of us seem to occupy the same stage. there are the strangers, too, who become friends, the ones with the old cameras and the kind of



From left:

Dim sum

Leaving the bay



hair that is personality all of its own. sometimes those strangers click; sometimes those strangers meet and talk and find ground they share, and that ground becomes an island growing in this ocean of nobodies, emerging further with each band and each food and each drink shared. each is a tiny celebration of newfound friendship.

and there are the strangers who don't quite click; or maybe they click first, excitedly smiling into each other over a shared quirk or interest, but they don't become islands. the first few signs were a lie; the next few fizzled awkwardly and die. i don't really like spicy food. id rather never have to slouch through the tedium of reading the news. dogs are clearly better than cats. they're such small little forks in the road, such small variations of preference and ideology, and yet somehow they amount to the impassable, the irredeemable. the more steps taken together feel like steps taken apart; the more food shared the more it feels set for one.

i know i shouldn't set myself up; i know i shouldn't have these insane expectations for others to match me as not even my blood matches me. yet the excitement of being on the cusp of having found someone who understands you, as if you were a complex machine to be studied, overwhelms. i think part of me still hopes that relationships aren't work, that they aren't all just luck of place and time and shared circumstance

and stockholm syndrome. that, out there in that ocean, there exists someone processing the exact same thoughts at the exact same time, wondering and poking at the exact same things as you and waiting to be met. that, friendships aren't just predicated on convenience and compromise, that fondness isn't just born from geographical closeness and a similar socioeconomic background. it's hard killing that ideology in me; it's hard because i want to feel like anyone can connect, transcending borders and time zones and poverty and wealth, overcoming trivialities like occupation and education to meet in the middle with what's left.



