

DESIGN CLUB

reid
pritchard:
a closer
look

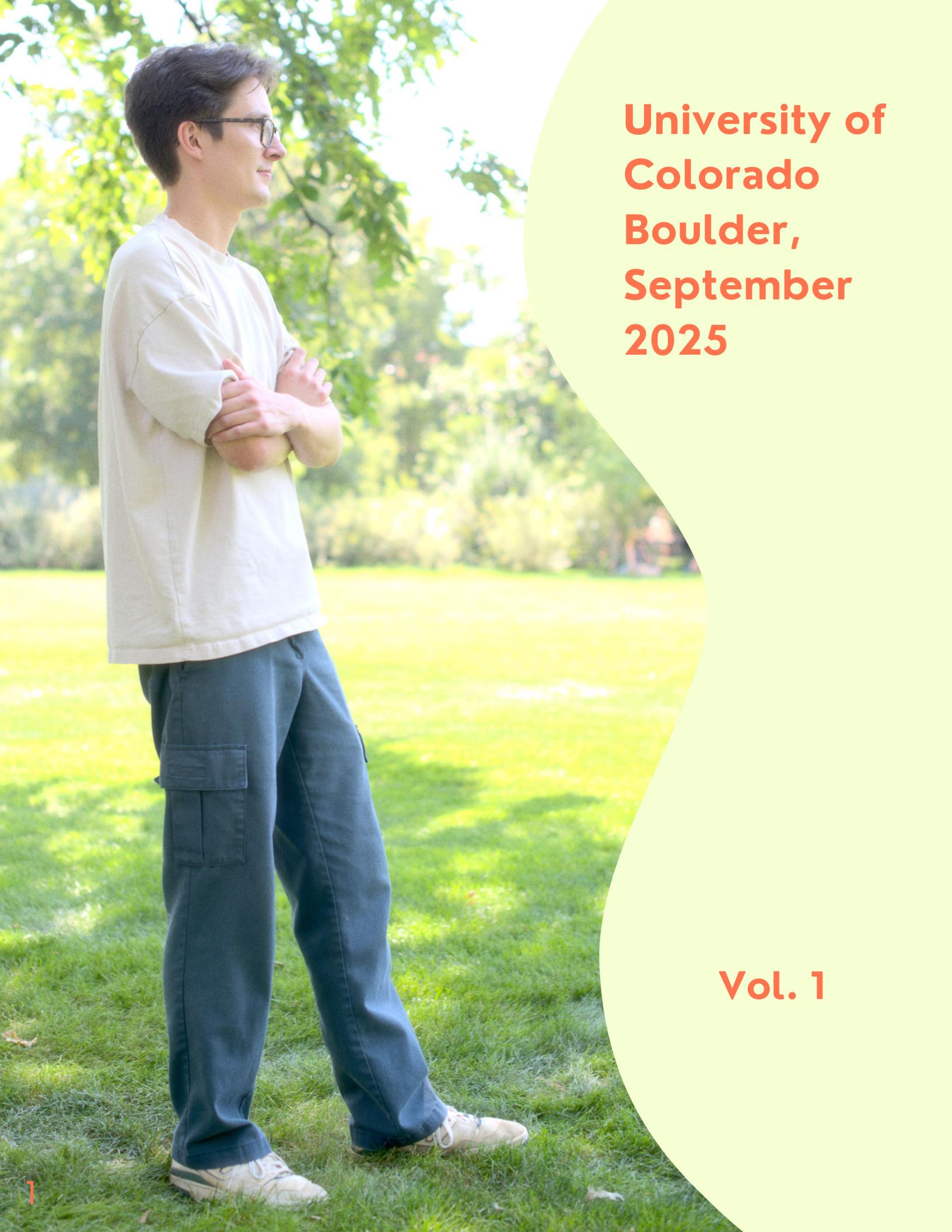
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Coding
projects that
fixed little
annoying
things in his
life.

Photography,
Programming, and Design:
Creative problem solving
and new perspectives.

ATLAS:

On starting a new
journey as a grad
student in Boulder, CO.



**University of
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Creative Technology and Design students **defy categorization.**



This unique program at CU Boulder is perhaps somewhat notorious for bringing together a multidisciplinary collection of people one can only describe as eclectic. One of the first projects that students are given involves interviewing a partner, listening and learning about their design background and experience, and finding a creative way to display what they learned.

I had the privilege of starting things off by working with Reid Pritchard, a talented programmer, photographer, and aspiring designer. He hopes to use his skills, both those presently held and yet to be gained, to solve problems in his life and in the world. As I spoke with him, I was struck by how uniquely clever his work is, as well as his proclivity and passion for creativity and discovery.

According to Reid, his journey as a designer began in middle and high school when he started taking photography classes.

His campus was the same every day that he went to school, but the observation that was required for taking photos gave him a new perspective on the ordinary. This eventually led him to coding and tangible, tactile creativity when he pursued an independent study with an innovative new instructor in high school. His project? Building and programming a drone for aerial photography. "It was my first time building something like that. I had never soldered or anything before, things were catching on fire, it was crazy." The open ended, hands on nature of this experience stuck with him, and the prospect and pursuit of this style of learning ultimately led him to the CTD master's program at CU.



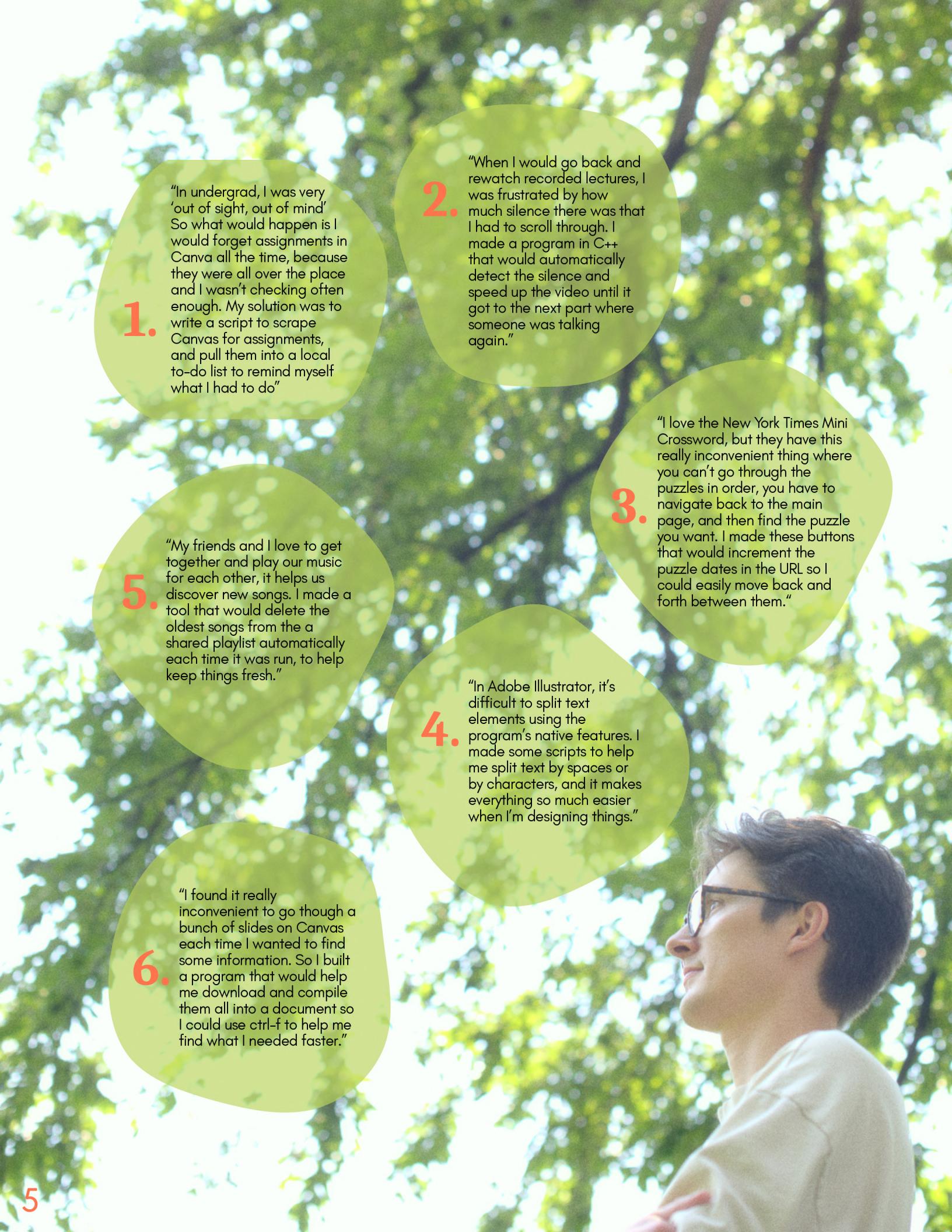
In undergrad, Reid was a computer science major. He enjoyed the creative problem solving aspect of programming, and found that his coursework was lacking in that regard. During his freshman year, he made friends with another student who lived across the hall. Together, as they were looking for clubs to get involved with, they found CU's Design Club. After a year of showing up consistently, he and his friend were voted in to run the club together. Reid and his friend's collaborative leadership breathed new life into the club. "We decided to come up with design challenges for the group to do together." When asked to provide some examples, he said, "Some of the cool ones were tarot cards, web design projects, motion posters, album covers.

We would also come up with challenges that were relevant to whatever was going on, for instance around Valentine's Day the challenge was a themed social media post." I was curious what his favorite designs that he made in the club were, and he said, "I made this abstract, animated collage that represents chemical reactions in the brain, and I also designed the club's website."

Reid also built various programs to solve small annoyances that he encountered, from dead air in recorded lectures and the tedium of searching thorough slides in Canvas, to making the UI for NYT Mini Crossword easier to navigate. I admired his approach to creating solutions to pain points in his life, even if they seemed small.

"You can go somewhere cool and take a picture of something you've never seen before, or you can look at something you've always seen with a **fresh perspective.**"



A photograph of a young man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt. He is looking upwards and to the right, with his hands clasped in front of him. The background is a bright, sunlit forest with green leaves and sunlight filtering through the branches.

1.

"In undergrad, I was very 'out of sight, out of mind'. So what would happen is I would forget assignments in Canvas all the time, because they were all over the place and I wasn't checking often enough. My solution was to write a script to scrape Canvas for assignments, and pull them into a local to-do list to remind myself what I had to do"

2.

"When I would go back and rewatch recorded lectures, I was frustrated by how much silence there was that I had to scroll through. I made a program in C++ that would automatically detect the silence and speed up the video until it got to the next part where someone was talking again."

5.

"My friends and I love to get together and play our music for each other, it helps us discover new songs. I made a tool that would delete the oldest songs from the a shared playlist automatically each time it was run, to help keep things fresh."

3.

"I love the New York Times Mini Crossword, but they have this really inconvenient thing where you can't go through the puzzles in order, you have to navigate back to the main page, and then find the puzzle you want. I made these buttons that would increment the puzzle dates in the URL so I could easily move back and forth between them."

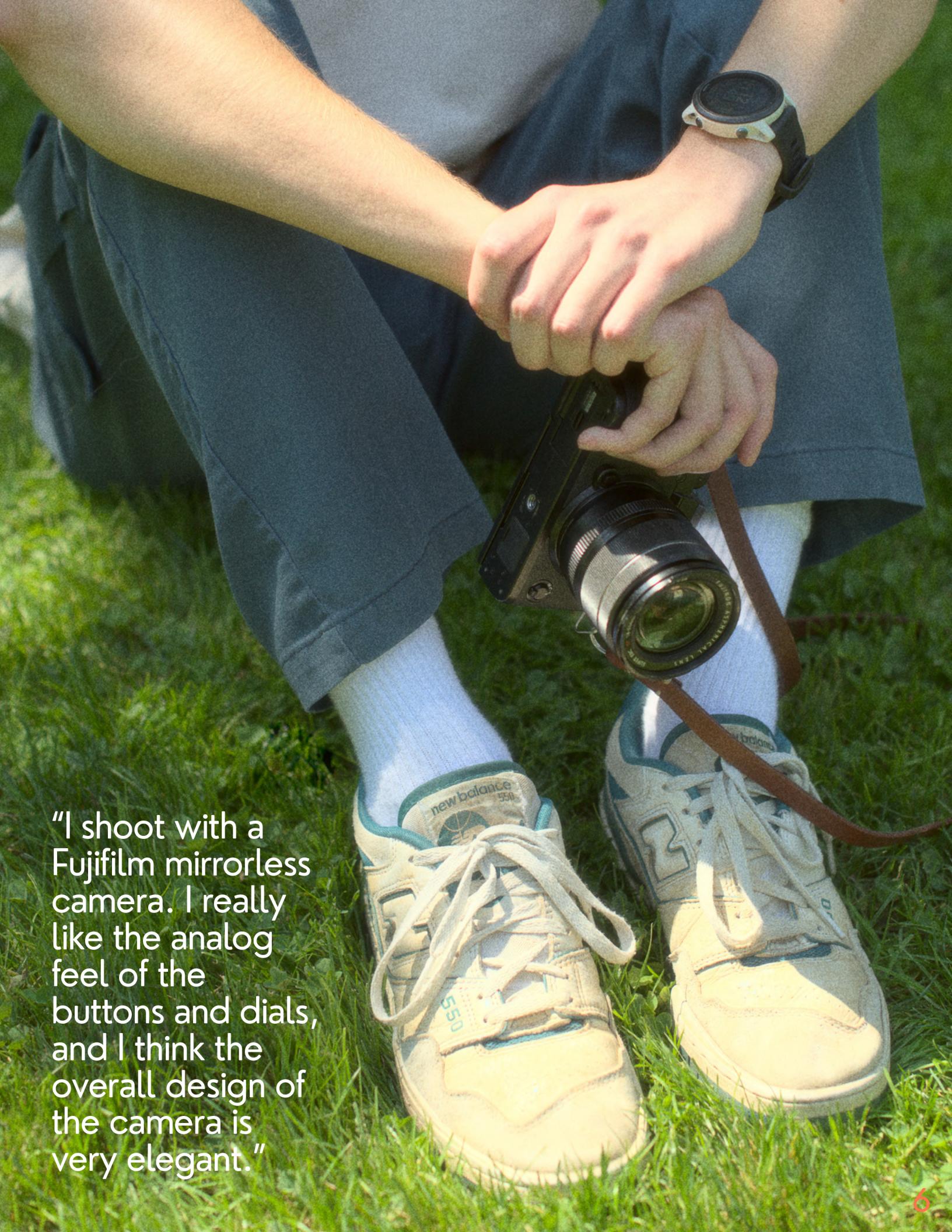
4.

"In Adobe Illustrator, it's difficult to split text elements using the program's native features. I made some scripts to help me split text by spaces or by characters, and it makes everything so much easier when I'm designing things."

6.

"I found it really inconvenient to go though a bunch of slides on Canvas each time I wanted to find some information. So I built a program that would help me download and compile them all into a document so I could use ctrl-f to help me find what I needed faster."

"I shoot with a Fujifilm mirrorless camera. I really like the analog feel of the buttons and dials, and I think the overall design of the camera is very elegant."



A close-up portrait of a young man with short brown hair and brown eyes. He is wearing black-rimmed glasses and a light green crew-neck t-shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred green foliage.

**“I like the idea of being
able to solve a problem
from start to finish.”**

After completing undergrad, Reid took a position as a full time software developer for a GIS software company called Esri. "I wasn't really designing anything in that position, I was just writing code. That's a big part of why I quit that job and decided to pursue a Master's Degree." He hopes to continue creating, learning new skills, and solving problems throughout his time in CTD and beyond.

Towards the end of our interview, Reid was kind enough to give me a thorough tour of some of his previous design projects, and after seeing the imaginative quality and technical caliber of his work, I can confidently say that any opportunities there are for him to bring his creativity to new audiences and projects can only lead to exciting, interesting, and wonderful things.

-Vikki Wong, 2025



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