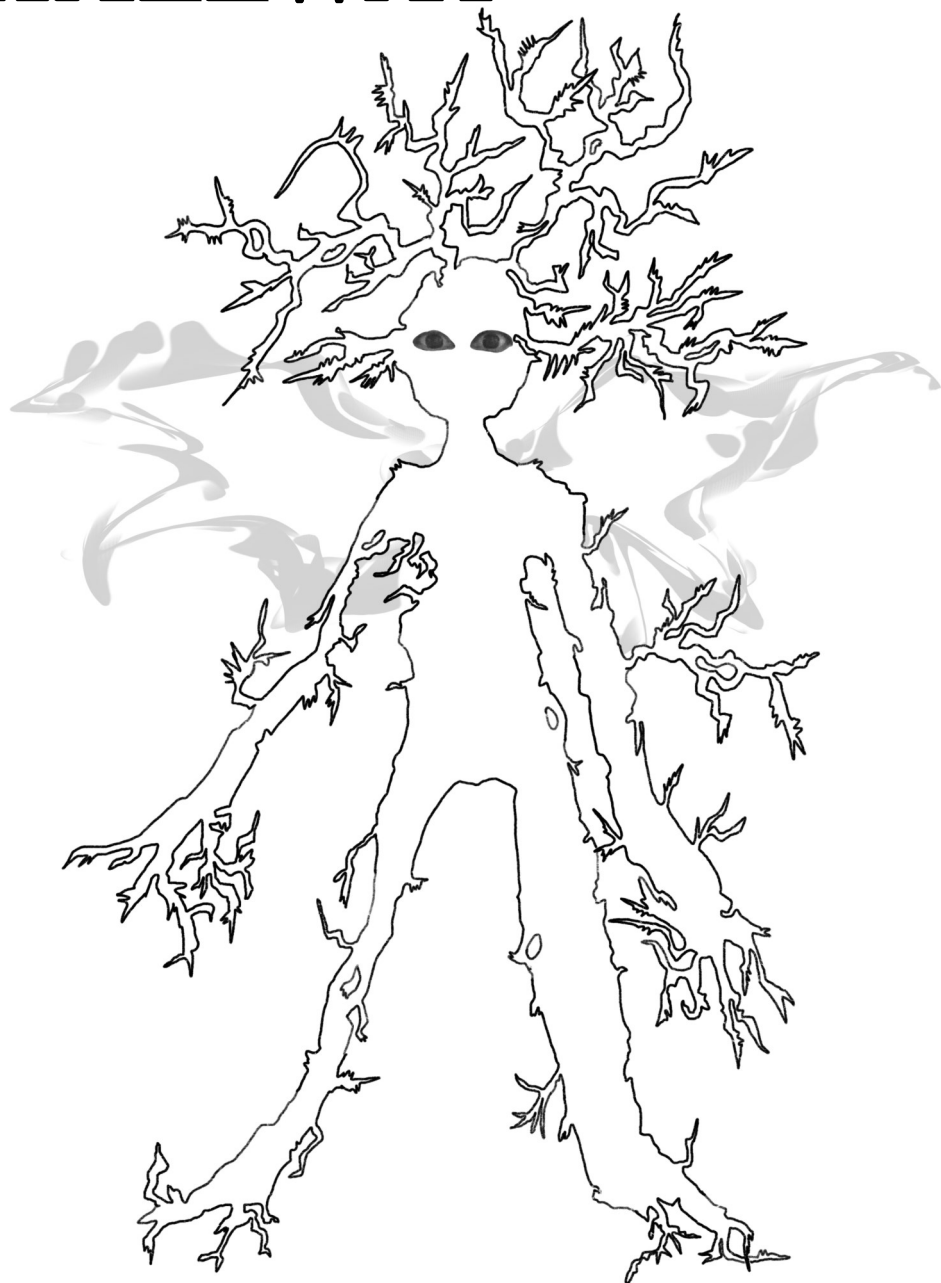


# HALLWAY

issue #1

december 2024



the clock strikes midnight and you enter the castle gates. somewhere nearby, an owl hoots. you make your way through low-lying fog, a horde of bats, a den of witches, some quicksand, a cemetery, some old moss, and some sort of swamp. finally, you knock on the castle door. it creaks open, revealing darkness and gloom and slimy shadow beyond. then: a face! don't be alarmed, it's just me. >:-)

"oh, hello," i say. "welcome to the hallway zine. the first ever issue."

"what?" you say.

"the zine. the one... you know." i gesture around us, helplessly. you follow me inside and i take your cloak, hanging it on a nearby gargoye.

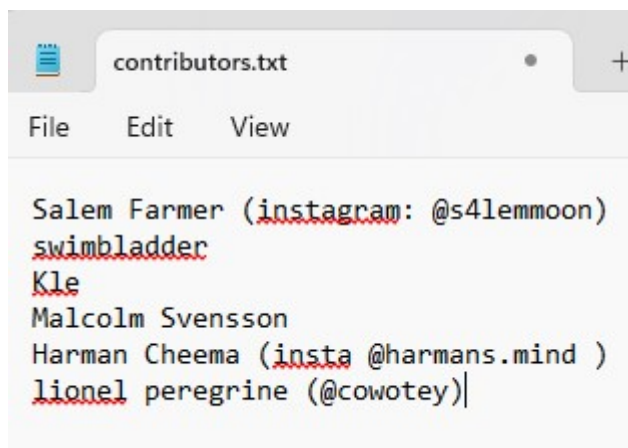
"oh... right, yeah," you say, unconvincingly.

then my huge iron chandelier that holds 250 dripping candles falls on us both, rendering our bodies obsolete and making us into ghosts, forced to spend eternity together.

anyways that's enough of whatever that was. i'd like to say thank you for picking this up and reading it. the year is almost over. it seems to always be nighttime, or about to be nighttime, or some strange in-between time where lights are different and you cant remember what came before this, or who you used to be.

i wanted to make a zine and doggone it, that's what i did. some very nice people gave me their stuff when i asked and then i went ham on microsoft publisher and here we are, reading this sentence together. hope you enjoy <3

- lionel peregrine

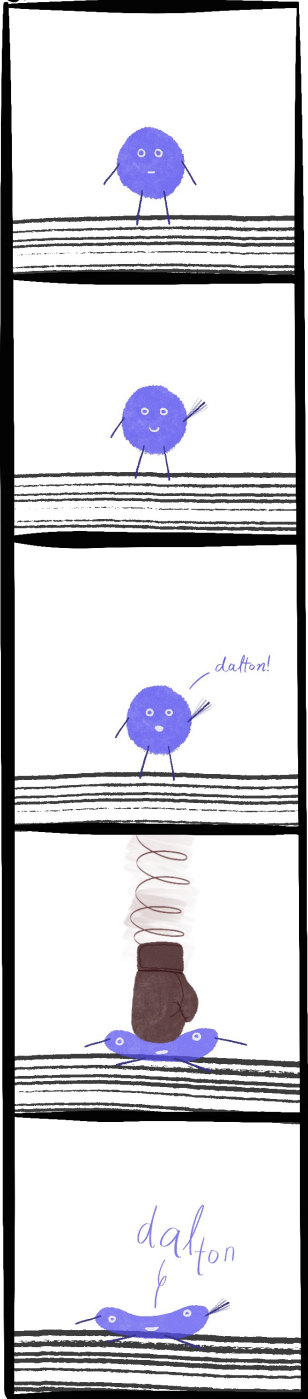


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contributors.txt
File Edit View

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Crubr & Fleeb "Dalton"



by: swimbladder

fin.



*you are a goat, Iceland — Kle*

### [hallway zine issue 01, december 2024](#)

**comics:** "Crubr & Fleeb" (Fleeb, Dalton)

by swimbladder

**poetry:** "Mercurial" by Salem Farmer

**writing:**

"Food in our Tongues" by Harman Cheema

three pieces by Malcolm Svensson

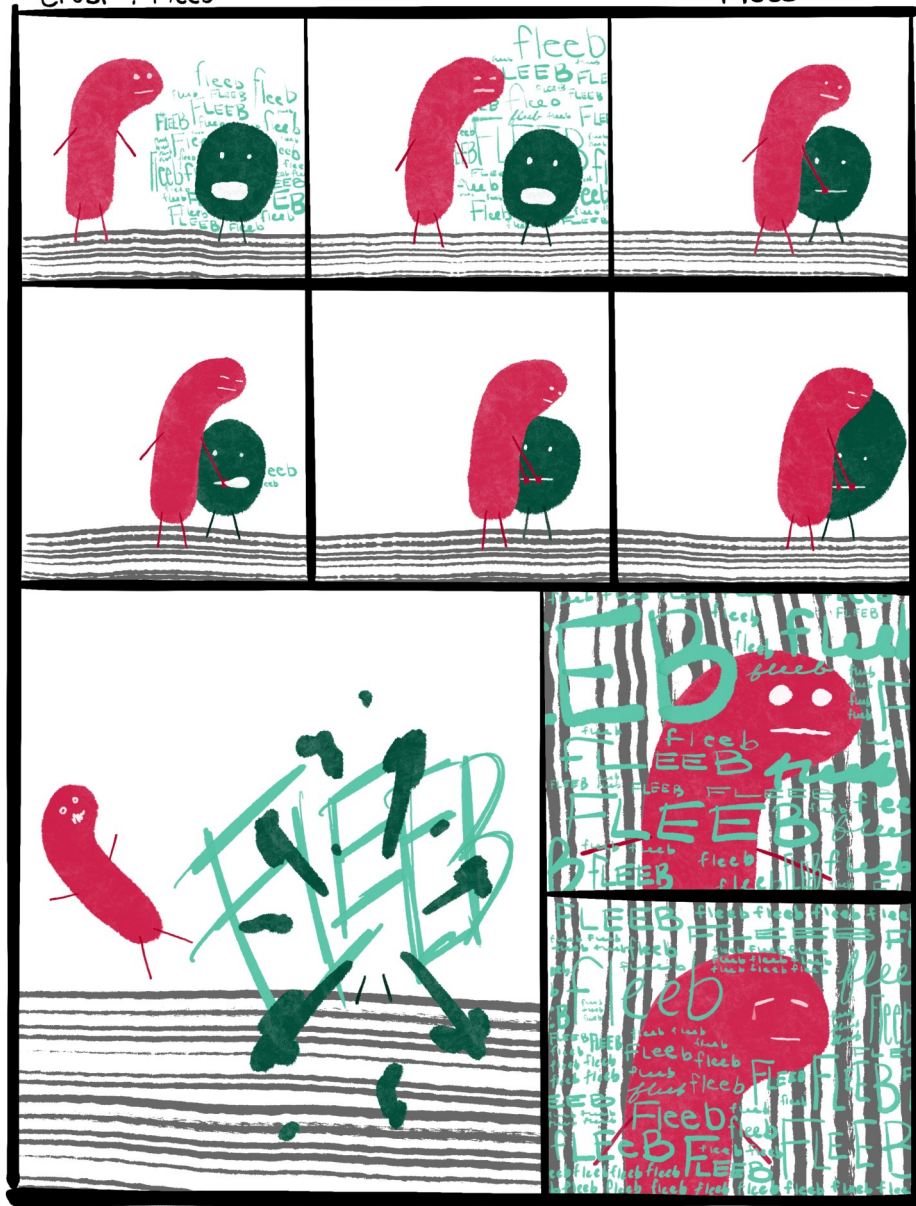
**photos** by swimbladder, Kle, and Lionel

**cover art and inside back cover art** by Lionel

**edited, compiled, and designed** by Lionel

Crubr & Fleeb

**"Fleeb"**



by: swim bladder

fin.





**100%  
normal!!!**

Things that are  
your oyster:

- the world
- oysters
- this drink!

**mmmm  
oysters....**

do you like oysters? do  
you wish they were less  
solid and more like... oh,  
I don't  
know... a  
nice warm,  
refreshing  
beverage?



**OYSTER DRINK**

“you will not  
guess what it  
tastes like!”

available most  
places unless it's  
not.





***threat level midnight - swimbladder***

I'm a blood moon over the village  
I'm a Polaroid left in the darkroom

I'm a mountain nymph skipping through rivers  
I'm a ballad echoing beyond the tomb

I'm a train leaving the platform  
I'm a Rorschach of indelible stains

I'm a mosaic adorning the chapel  
I'm a parliament taken by flames

I'm an assassin awaiting the green light  
I'm a candle in the wind

I'm a belladonna eclipsed on a vine  
I'm a swindler sinking ships

I'm a soft rain baptizing Death Valley  
I'm a wildfire darkening the sky

I'm a crescendo before the finale  
I'm a silence before the goodbye.

I remember being barely six, and asking my mother why the 'bad people' held signs in front of the bazaar, and called us 'moord'ers' – my young heart still in the crutches of innocence, of ignorance. On the cutting board, an apricot lay squirming and writhing. Mother grabbed a blunt, plastic knife and gave the foodling a firm stab. I remember the hiss and ache of its moans, and how hungry it made me. Hearing my stomach gurgle, mother laughed and handed me a small, pink blade. Lifting my body on the kitchen table, we watched the apricot squirm and sequester, a halo of its juices pooling around its tiring being. She held the knife over my hand, and guided me into a deeper slice of the apricot. As the apricot cried, she whispered an important secret in my ear *'To shop is not to murder. we must eat to live! there is no bad, in our kitchen, in this blade. Only food and our tongues.'*

"Only food and our tongues..." I whispered, watching her take the blade around the apricot, now still, and removed the pit of its stomach. We giggled as we tossed out its guts, wet our mouths with its almost-sweet juices.

It's been many years since I was slicing apricots with the loose grip of a plastic knife, gilded under the protection of mother. Like many, to eat from the bazaar was my only purpose. The picketers, bless them, still stood outside and called us murderers. If I felt particularly comedic, I would at times, wave and blow them a kiss. *You're going to get us banned!* huffed a friend, whom I was in attendance with at the bazaar. I took the gesture with a roll of my eyes, and continued forward as long clear doors burst open at our footsteps. The friend and I were from the same part of the city, went to the same schools, attended the same meetings at the working place. I did not know where she lived, or what she loved. But she had a knack to pick the most pregnant, most plump pomegranates. Once, she had found one so voluptuous, it burst right as she placed it in her cart. We had to let the ants, the cleaning crew take away the cart and the carcass. It took all our free-will to

not get down on our hands and knees and lick the blood from the floor. There was only one rule at the bazaar, printed in bold lettering at the entrance:

**Never eat in the bazaar. Severe measures will be taken.  
Enjoy your visit!**

Of course, no one was foolish enough to do that. They were careful not to tempt us either; everything was pre-dead and sealed in clear plastic lids. The cantaloupes pawed and the dragonfruit nipped. No one knew what the ‘severe measures’ implied, but we had our guesses.

The friend and I ventured forward, and grabbed a shopping cart. We began our pursuit toward the fruits. “What’s for dinner tonight?” I asked the friend, with polite curiosity. She described an array of fruits, open-casket meals topped with the fermented screams of sour cream. I nodded with a practiced expression of interest, and picked up a bundle of skittish bananas from their clear cage. *Hmmm* she said, *I think I’d rather just like the one.* She pointed at the the ripest of the group, its body warming yellow and with only a touch of brown. Feeling keen, I assumed the role of a man. *I’ll do the honors!* Her squirrelish mouth twisted warmly into a grin, as I slowly ripped the skull of the foodling away from its yellow comrades. The thing screeched, soft and low. *Aww, do you miss your mommy?* The friend tittered, which made us laugh. Grabbing a white piece of tape from top of the clear bin, she wrapped it around the foodling, its body convulsing, as we watched with barely contained glee, as it became subdued.

The friend had just barely grabbed a pencil from the top rack, when a shallow, wolfish voice behind us whispered; *I believe the code is 4011.*

We jumped as we turned to see an older gentleman, with tousled-salt and-pepper hair buried beneath a fedora. He had a severely untamed mustache, with stretchy skin around his neck and a browned pinstripe suit that seemed to cling to him in all the wrong places. Despite the wobbly cane that shook under his right hand, we had not heard him sneak up behind us.

The friend recovered faster than me. *Oh! Thank you. Such a basic beast, how silly of me to forget its code!* She offered him a curt, short chuckle as she scribbled the code onto the tape ensnared around the banana. The man said nothing, his brown eyes somehow looking us both directly in the eye. He grunted, and hobbled away into the next aisle. I noticed he neither carried a basket or a bag.

*God. He scared the shit out of me!* The friend muttered, placing her unconscious banana in her cart. I nodded, feeling somber. Using her inferior oblique to roll her eyes, she gestured toward the children's section, something about a special on the 'Mash it Yourself' baby-food kits. Without waiting for me to follow, the friend skittered away. I was left in the aisle with stumbling bananas and my own, curious thoughts. Something about that eyesore of a man bothered me. Shaking my head of useless premonitions, I looked down at my list of killings, and headed toward the section with the berries.

The bazaar had a forced sort of peacefulness, with its dark blue linoleum floors, webs of arrows for patrons to guide their carts, and the muffled cries of the food being buried by the soft orchestra of jazz that played on the speakers above. It was always the perfect temperature, and never too busy. As I stopped my cart near the quivering blueberries, I noticed that the older man was



in the same aisle, facing toward a bin. As I cautiously stepped closer, I noticed the lid of the bin was open, and he held in his palms an assortment of shivering strawberries. He was breathing heavily, his cane now on the floor.

Dangerously curious, I cleared my throat. The man didn't seem to notice me, but his hands cupped slightly as he brought the berries close to his chest, in a maternal sort of cradle. Feeling sorry for the old man, my curiosity was tested against my wretched need to be liked. *Excuse me sir. Do you need any assistance? I have extra room in my cart if you need a hand.*

The man turned his head in my direction. I took a step back, surprised by the wild primal look that glossed over his face. No one had ever looked at me like that. No, that look was reserved for only one thing: Carnage.

Drool hung off the sides of his lips, with a smile that curled up, revealing poorly brushed teeth and bruised, blackened gums. My horror only grew as he cooed at the berries, planting soft kissing at their tiny wails.

Cane forgotten, he took a step toward me. I instinctively took a step backwards, and turned to look around me, for anyone to join me in my shock. I was accompanied only by the clear bins, the soft orchestra, and the banging of berries against cages. The man let out a wild cackle, his cheeks tinged with rosy-red glee. *How sweet of you to offer, son. But I am not here to shop....* His voice was crunchy, a desperate out-of-control rasp slipping off his tongue. Before I could turn around, he threw the berries into his mouth. *Teeth baring, he offered me a bloody smile.... I'm here... to eat.*

Then, the sirens.



*last words —*  
swimbladder

Humans don't resemble any animal on the Ta homeworld, but our hands look exactly like the root tuber that is the staple crop of its largest continent. Most Ta find this fascinating. It's a bit like running into a man with bread for hands.

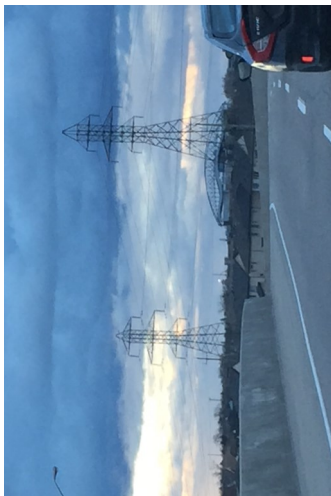
**- Malcolm Svensson**

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And so Annok came to the valley without trees and set out to hunt the Beast Monotonous. But the moment he stepped onto the path, the God-With-Three-Faces blocked his way.

“What are you doing?” said the God-With-Three-Faces.

Annok looked at the spear in his hands, and gestured to the hunting marks he had painted on his face. “What does it look like I’m doing? I hunt the Beast Monotonous.”



The God-With-Three-Faces frowned. “The Beast Monotonous wakes for a single hour of the day, and in that time can walk no farther than a man can throw a stone. You should not do this.”

Annok snorted. “Only a coward would fear it.”

“No,” they replied. “Only a coward could kill it.”

And so it was that Annok first learned shame.

**- Malcolm Svensson**

Let me give you one last piece of advice. You might think I'm pulling your leg, but I promise I'm not, and I won't mention it again until it happens to you. This is not a prank. If it were, I'd be trying to get you to tell someone about it.

At some point in your career here you are going to come across something real.

Maybe you're going to find a witness you think might, possibly, potentially, be telling the truth, or maybe you're going to take a photo no one can explain, or maybe you're going to swear up and down that little grey men whisked you away in a flying saucer. Point is, you're going to write a report, and it's it's going to be the best damn report you've ever written, even if no one else believes it, because *you* believe it, and that's what really counts.

And it's not going to be published.

We write reports for the Paranatural Review, but not all of those reports are *for* the Paranatural Review. Some of them get passed along to something else, and when you go back a year, or a month, or even a week later – they tend to move quickly, whoever they are – you find your sources suddenly not so willing to talk. Evidence goes missing, bodies are never found, the old barn burns down in an inexplicable fire the same night the cult commits mass suicide.

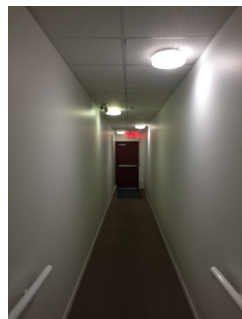
All this is going to happen. But that's not my piece of advice. My piece is advice is this:

Don't go asking after the people who did it, because either you won't get anywhere, or you will, and they'll find you useful, and they'll show you why all those bodies are necessary.

Take it from me.

You don't want to know why.

**- Malcolm Svensson**



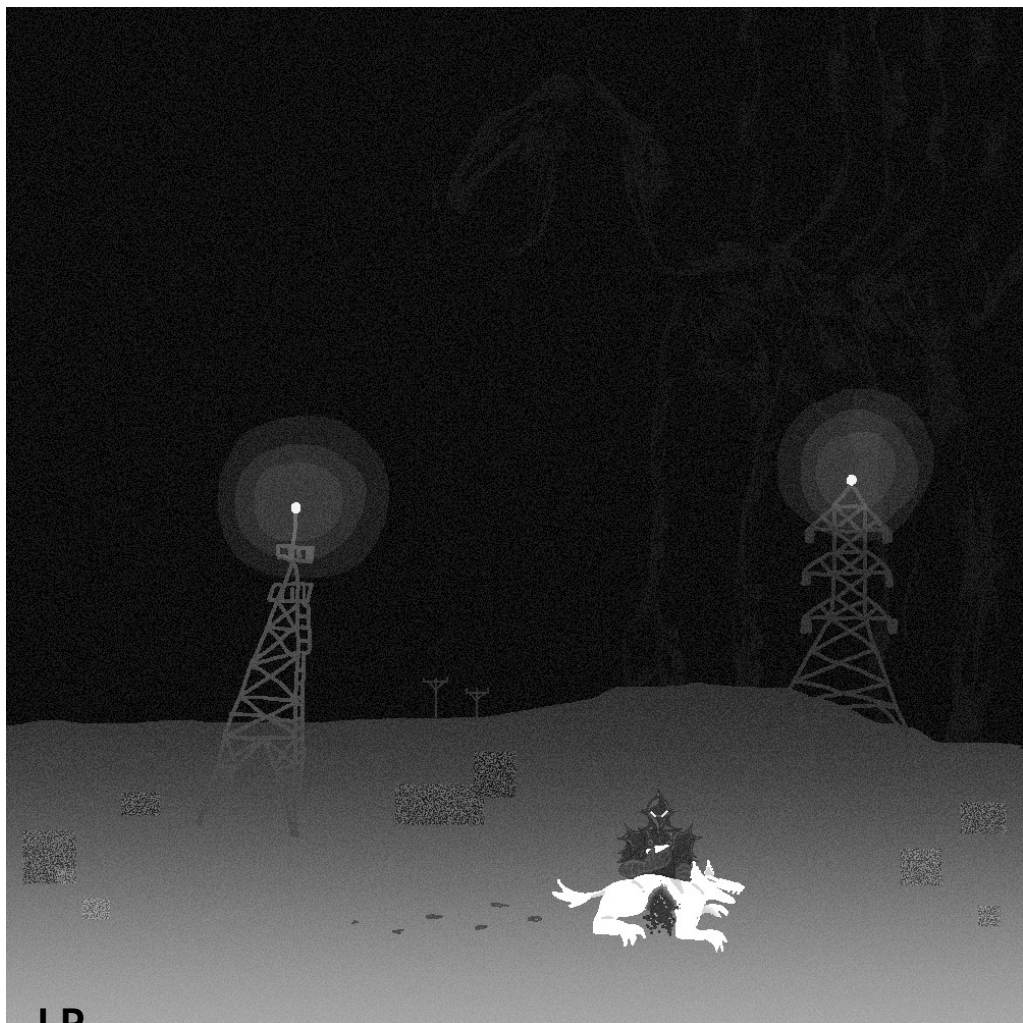


*carwash wonderland, Winnipeg*

- kle



*present arms*  
swimbladder



LP

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thanks again for reading!





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