

ISSUES

WE'RE BUILDING A TOWER

ZEE SCHMITTY



NOIZGRAS

21: 04/01/2023

ELLA SOLIS - IN THE STYLE OF

**THE JOURNAL
OF OCI & CFR**

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COULD'VE

-ELLA SOLIS

It fell on me like a ton of bricks. Again and again, I see their despair and longing communicated in a kaleidoscopic array. I spoke my piece-- but it washed over me. I had failed yet again, a recurring theme that haunts me, especially in the dark corridors and alleyways. I wander looking for answers. It was a frigid, rainy night. I felt the chill of despair once again. People tend to find ideas for themselves, and latch onto them to survive. I do not blame you. I crept up to the Little Caesars dumpster. There I looked inside and discovered an assortment of \$5 Hot-N-Ready pizzas. They were not so Hot-N-Ready anymore. That didn't even matter to me or anyone with me. We cheerfully walked back to the house discussing what a total score we had made. But it did not really matter. In fact, none of it really did. In fucking fact, none of it ever really will.

We returned to the house and ate our victory pizza, washing it down with gold Four Loko. In retrospect, I deserve the heartburn I have to this day. It will always follow me just like the phantoms that follow my every step.

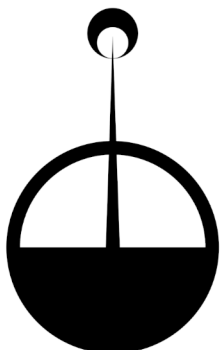
My friend surprised me with a visit and gave me a bracelet with the planets on it. He will never realize the chain of events that unfolded shortly after, or he will--I am scared of him and his profound power. The stars aligned that night, but I still felt a planetary weight. I do not believe that weight ever really lifted. In fact, I believe that it increases every day. I merely adapt to keep up with the ever-growing pace of the weight increase. I vomit in the yard. But it did not really matter. In fact, none of it really did. In fucking fact, none of it ever really will. I wore the planetary bracelet, and in turn, I acquired a scrap of his powers. I could see the future. Or it was the fact that I was crying at the church door on June 13th, 2017.

It could've been nothing remarkable, but it moved me so much that I turned to Christ. I became a fanatic about it. It made me a much worse person overall. I don't blame Christianity for that, but I do blame it for numerous other things. I turned to Christ, and He turned away.

They found her in the river 2 years later. I do not talk about it often. They identified her by her dental records. I'll never know what really happened that night. I think it could be better that way, but it keeps me up into the early dawn, brainstorming ways I could've done things differently to prevent it from happening. But it did. And I can never change that. I think the worst part of mental illness is realizing that you probably could've exerted yourself just a little more, pushing yourself into further exhaustion. You could've, but that does not always mean you should've. I am still shaky about where I stand, so it's subject to change.

I betrayed the people close to me either by not helping when I should've or leaving inexplicably, becoming a worse and worse person by the day for no other reason than I wanted to die. Suicide itself is not selfish, but what I did was. And I pay the price for it every day as the voices of my old friends fill my head with nonsense, and I try my best to filter it all out, but their disembodied voices outnumber me by many.

I lost the planetary bracelet and in turn, lost my powers. In another life, I did everything right and am flourishing. Unfortunately, the choices we make haunt us forever. I do not suppose I can ever learn to forgive myself for my actions and inactions in the face of despair. In a way, Her face is beautiful, and the many lessons She has to teach span eons. I am indebted to whatever god is causing my suffering because this is the only way I can learn. That was drilled into my skull as a child.



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ALAM

ISSUES MAGAZINE INTERVIEW WITH ZEE SCHMITTY OF NOIZGRAS

Ryan: Would you be interested in being interviewed?

Zee: Sure, for what?

R: ISSUES magazine.

Z: That's what I figured.

Yeah, I am game. Wanna do like a call or you just wanna ask and I'll answer over text?

R: I would prefer a call if possible

Z: OK. I'm free all afternoons so let me know when works best for ya.

R: I will be free Tuesday through Friday.

Sorry for the sudden change but I think now that texting would be best. Would that work for you?

Z: Whenever you are ready.

R: OK great. I will just type some questions and you respond however you like. I encourage you to write as much as you feel comfortable. Let's start easy: What's your name and where are you located in time and space?

Z: I am Zee Schmittty and I'm in Greensboro, NC and it's the year 2023 according to the Gregorian calendar used here. I probably thought about that too hard.

R: That's great.

Z: My primary project at the moment is Noizgras, which is a noise/bluegrass/comedy project I came up with after seeing Cann'd (Hickory, NC) a few times and thinking "Hey I can do that too!" So I attached an external pickup to my banjo and plugged it in to a bunch of pedals and then started screaming shit into the mic trying to be funny and occasionally I'll use the project to speak out on political issues that I care about and want to inform people about. Mostly it's Anal Cunt-esque where I write really bad and noisy songs and then attach a funny title to it.

R: You mention politics. What sort of issues do you scream about in the project?

Z: On my last album "It Gets More Better,"

I touched on anti-imperialism as well as community responses to addiction. The first two tracks, "The United States is funding terrorists in Ethiopia," and, "Hands Off of Haiti," are about the US interfering in these countries internal affairs to the benefit of corporate interests in the region and the retention of global hegemony by the US.

I've had a few people tell me they had no idea what the US was doing in these regions until they heard me perform songs on said subjects.

There's also the song, "Vending Machine Narcan," which is about how the availability of Narcan to the general public is a big step forward for community care but that the roadblock of needing money to access those vending machine Narcan boxes continued to exist. I plan to talk about other issues on future releases, more relating to anti-imperialism as well as touching on the moral panic in the US by the right wing surrounding the LGBTQ+ community and the genocidal rhetoric and legislation that's followed. But, if anyone wonders where I lie on the spectrum, I think my song, "I fucking hate the US," should speak for itself.

Any other questions?

R: Is this your first or only artistic project?

Z: It is not my first but it is the only one I'm doing currently. I used to play in a black metal and a death metal band and I'd like to find a drummer and guitarist for a black n roll project but for now I'm having fun doing Noizgras by myself. Working solo certainly simplifies things logistically and creatively. I should mention I played bass in those other projects.

R: Do you have any recorded media?

Z: For Noizgras I have two albums released called, "It Gets Worse From Here," and, "It Gets More Betterer." I hope to release another album this year. Both albums can be found on Bandcamp.

R: How long have you been playing music? What inspired you to start?

Z: When I was approaching 10 my parents basically told me I had to pick up an instrument because they didn't want me just playing video games at the time. They told me to pick either guitar or keyboard but I wasn't interested in either at the time. Then we were at my grandparents one night and my grandfather brought out a banjo, which I thought was cool. He let me play with it a little and thought it was the coolest thing ever so he gave my parents a banjo to give to me the following Christmas.

I played banjo for a few years but shifted to bass as my main instrument when I was 12. I did not play banjo hardly ever after that and I only picked it up again in recent years after I had come up with the concept for Noizgras. Cann'd was my main inspiration for noise but I also saw a few acts I can't remember the name of that got really involved with the audience and I remember having fun breaking shit and being a part of the show, and I wanted to bring that energy to Noizgras as well. Shows don't always go like that but when they do it's the best thing ever.

R: What instruments do you use? What motivated you to use them?

Z: Just the banjo. Occasionally I will start shows by blowing into a harmonica before throwing it onto the ground and going for the mic. I mostly wanted to keep the bluegrass aesthetic going there. As far as why I use a banjo I decided on it because I had one and had some experience with it and I thought running it through a bunch of random pedals would be funny as a concept. R: Do you have a background in bluegrass? Is your choice informed by the fact you are southern?

Z: I do have a background in bluegrass from a very young age and it's actually part of my family as well. My grandfather plays in an old-time bluegrass band and his dad (my great-grandfather) played guitar with Charlie Poole back in the 20s and 30s. Charlie Poole was one of the biggest names in Bluegrass at the time and still to this day the Charlie Poole Band is seen as legendary, although if there's an afterlife I can imagine he's cringing at how I'm butchering the banjo (insert "Look at how they massacred my boy" here). Along with that familial connection I also am passionate about the idea of creating a positive identity for southerners given the history of the region and how the American south is dismissed as a right-wing shithole.

There's a lot of great people here being held hostage by far right governments and their policies. I try to be an example of the south I want to see in my personal life, and I think that's an important part of being an ally to marginalized communities who suffer at the hands of said right wing governments and their supporters. So I draw from the southern musical tradition and take what's seen as a conservative leaning genre and make art that's anything but.

R: What do you like to see in other artists' performance?

Z: I like to see the artists have fun on stage because then I want to have fun with them. I also love when artists make the audience part of the show by including them for bits and having them on stage or bantering with the crowd or just something as simple as a mic grab to an excited fan up front.

Interaction with the crowd is important in a good performance, in my personal opinion. Playing your instrument and mastering your songs is important, but if your show is boring I'm not gonna care how good the songs themselves are.

Hell, I've seen bands who I didn't care for on studio releases impress me with a good live performance.

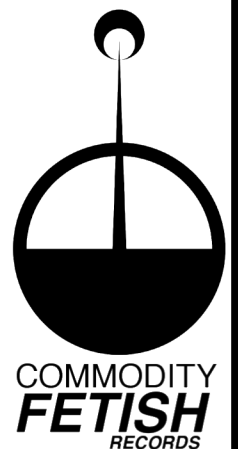
R: So do you work on any non-music art projects?

Z: At the moment no. I am not really good at writing or painting or any of that. Music is my only real source of artistic expression I work with at the moment. Although I do have a great idea for a B-rated horror movie that I need to get around to writing a script for.

R: Do you have any collaborators?

Z: Before the project was really off the ground during Covid I did an online streamed performance with a friend who went under the moniker Little Nikki to raise money for Mutual Aid Myanmar when the military took over their government.

CONTINUED



ZEE SCHMITTY CONCLUDED

Z: I have not had any collaborative efforts yet but I'm open to do splits with people. So if you're reading this and wanna do a split, hit me up.

R: What would you say is the philosophy behind the act?

Z: Don't take yourself or your art too seriously. A former friend once told me that anyone can do noise, so I did. There are many a noise artists who take what they do super seriously and I find that strange given the actual substance. People who say Noizgras is a bullshit act are right, it is bullshit, because it's supposed to be bullshit. I'm not here to innovate or break new ground, I'm here to have fun and try to make people laugh. It takes little effort to make a Noizgras song, I just get some noise going and then say something funny or witty and then boom we got a Noizgras bit.

<pause>

R: OK, new question: What awakened you politically?

Z: This is a tricky one because when I was younger, I held some reactionary views that I'm not proud of, and didn't start identifying with the left until late high school. In middle school I was a reactionary, in freshman year I was your average liberal with the addition of a cringey anti-sjw stance which in hindsight was also really embarrassing, then in sophomore year I became familiar with the Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown cases, They awakened me to the reality of police brutality and the surveillance state here in the US. At that time I called myself an anarchist although I was really more of a Libertarian, which, again, is pretty cringe.

I got more grounded in actual anarchism a year after that along with realizing the whole anti-sjw thing was a rabbit hole back into reactionary thought and promptly dropped that whole thing and decided social justice is actually in my best interest as well as everyone else as well. I continued identifying with anarchism throughout college, until the protests in 2020 happened and I got a good look at how anarchists handled CHAZ and the other autonomous zones and determined that if revolution happens here, it won't be an anarchist revolution, and this lead me towards Marxism-Leninism which lead me to where I am now as a Maoist who practices mass line politics in my local community. I know many anarchists and they're good people with good ideas and I don't have anything against anarchists, but I feel the material conditions of the US at the present time aren't currently conducive to anarchist methods as demonstrated by 2020.

The funny thing, though, is that throughout my political development I've always been staunchly anti-war, even at my most reactionary, and I credit this to my mom, because she taught me at a young age about several conflicts and atrocities that this country has been complicit in such as Israel/Palestine, the Vietnam War, the genocide and displacement of Indigenous peoples, and Reagan's role in the Iran Hostage Crisis. Of course I grew up with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and knew that whole thing was fucked, I just wish more people learned from those wars,

but given the public sentiment on Russia-Ukraine I don't think most people did.

R: I appreciate your honesty with that. It makes the interview better. Where did you grow up?

Z: I like honesty. It creates less problems in the future in my experience. Anyway, I was born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina. Although my dad had family and land in Rockingham County, so I spent a good portion of my life in the sticks and the city.

R: Does rural life affect your work?

Z: Not really. Most of my work is improvised on the spot and I mostly just try to make people laugh or inform on topics people do not know about. I'm not a folk singer telling stories about the plight of the rural working class a la Woody Guthrie or Pete Seeger. Not to say that is not good and necessary. It is just not me.

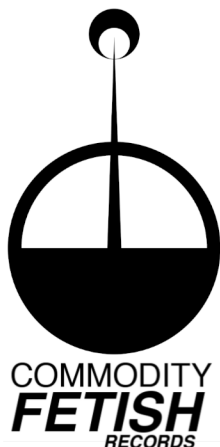
R: Want to end us with something?

Z: Support your local scene and local artists and your communities and work to uplift each other. It's good to be passionate about your craft, but that passion shouldn't come with a gatekeeper attitude or an ego that pushes people out. Noizgras is about art being fun and for everyone. Thank you to everyone who has ever checked me out or attended a show featuring Noizgras. If you're a promoter, show the weirdo acts in your community some love.

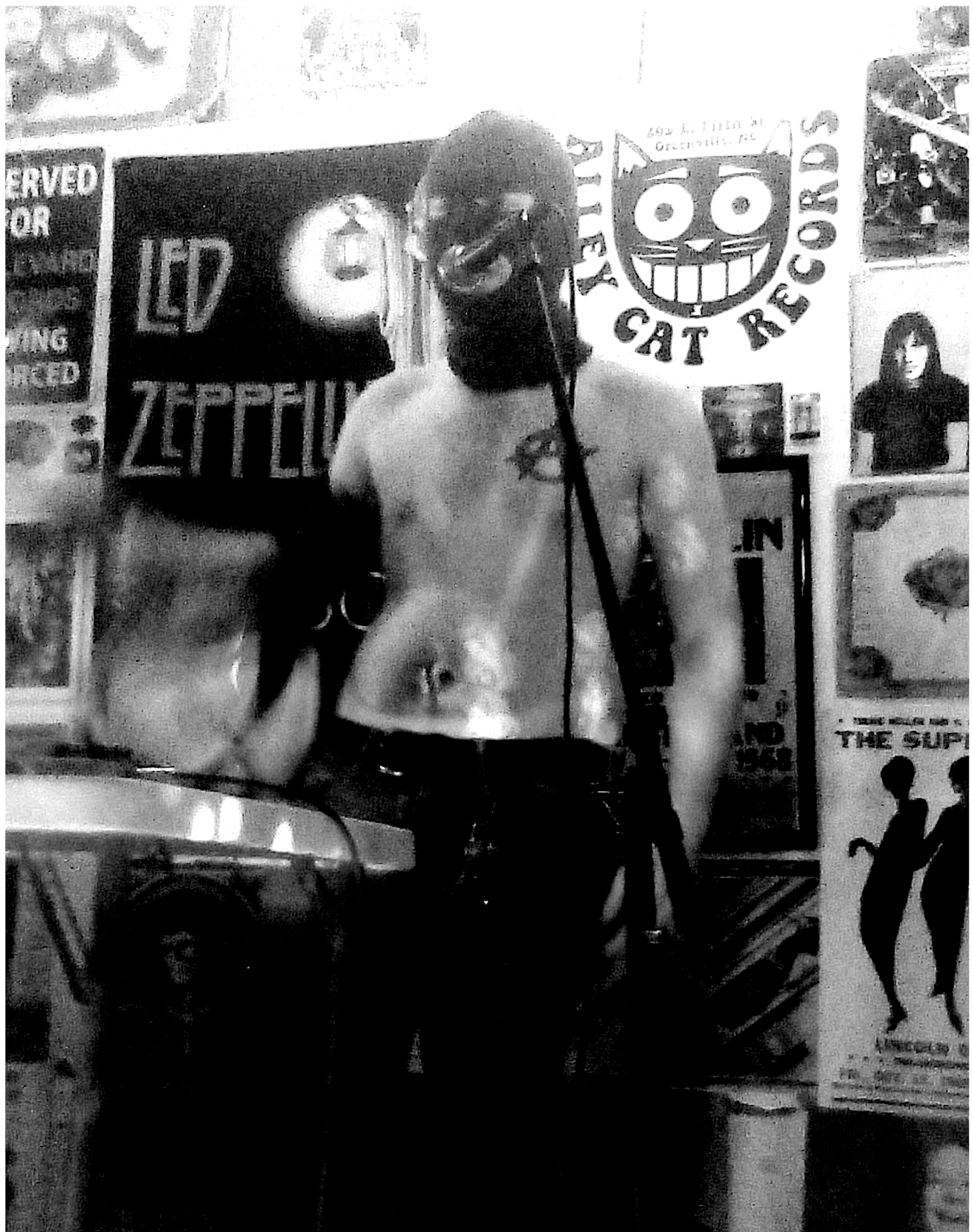
R: OK, unless you have anything to add, we can call this a wrap.

Z: Thank you for talking with me. It has been fun.

-END-



ZEE SCHMITTY POSTER



ZEE SCHMITTY

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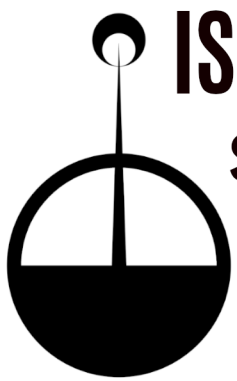
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ANSWERS WITHOUT QUESTION

1. Acnestis (the place between the shoulder blades that can't be scratched).
 a. Leaving my night class that Fall, I sensed a pebble in my shoe I decided not to remove. During my walk to the street car stop, I ignored the night around me to concentrate on that tiny stone digging into me heel: in its current form, how long had it existed? As my thoughts centered on that question, I devised that that one day it might be the basis for a short story. Three years to the month my daughter was born.
 b. Just go ahead and press that button.
 2. Gargalesthesia (being tickled).
 a. My worst best sleep was one I had on the German Interstate as a passenger in a car returning home from a very long night of revelry. One of the attendees took me behind her school, catching the custodial staff arriving with the dawn, drinks in hand. Shortly afterwards, we had a three-hour ride ahead of us- I was far from useful as I entered the back seat for the trip. The driver was himself worse for wear, as was the front seat passenger who was soon snoring. I knew I had to keep the driver awake, a task I couldn't achieve asleep.

Each time I was jarred awake by the swerving driving, I told myself I was ok with dying so long as I could sleep while it happened. Youth.
 b. As time wore on, simple dog commands turned into full paragraphs explaining why the dog couldn't do something.
 3. Jentacular (early breakfast).
 a. I once had a room in an art exhibition for my own piece called The Blue Arm. During the show I programmed my Roland Tr-626 drum machine while drinking root beer way too fast to not get sick. I did all this in the near dark while a painted blue paper maché human arm sized human arm hung from the ceiling. My pal Bianca was live painting her impressions of my performance on the other side of the near dark room.
 b. I'm a great listener, really good with empathy vs sympathy and all that, but I hate people.
 4. Gargalesthesia (being tickled).
 a. On an overnight train to Rome, an older teenage American passenger back packing across Europe alone insisted love wasn't some specific things I was casually mentioning about it in a conversation we struck up.
 From a distance, the train passed Verona soon after she turned in. I woke up with her arm stretched over me. Innocuously so.
 b. He created a pig burger out of beef.

5. Agelast (humorless person).
 a. The weirdest people I've encountered in person were British. A brief boat ride and I was in a PBS show starring the actual white, actual cliffs of Dover.
 The salt from the ferry restaurant's breakfast digging into my mouth made the hotly inquisitive border guard's questioning more intense: where did I live? How? was I staying there? How long was I planning on remaining away from the States? For once I knew the answers.
 b. She realized the only way she was getting into heaven was to cheat.
 6. Gargalesthesia (being tickled).
 a. I drove an entire Summer without a license. 6k miles through 4 states over two months. The longest stretch being a continuous 18 hour drive, alone. I stopped at way side rests and napped, otherwise I felt entirely untethered. I retraced the routes I'd been driven by my parents as a child. No car trouble, little police interaction outside of verbal warnings (who'd drive hundreds of miles from home on a learners permit from a different state, the cops thought).
 b. It was difficult for Mary to admit that most of her workout consisted of exercising poor judgment.

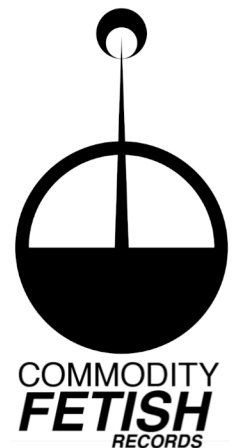
7. Lalochezia (emotional relief from using vulgar language).
 a. Some of the oldest rocks dated by science are outcroppings within hours of my birthplace. Not Syria, or Peru, or India, Minnesota. No ancient mystical temples overgrown with the roots of thousand year old trees, instead the state run visitor center/ gift shop at Gooseberry falls where my Aunt sells her genuinely beautiful nature photography: the lake facing ski resort at Lützen where my fate was sealed the day my parents met there; the light house camp grounds my family stayed at one Summer.
 b. She wasn't sure whether to be impressed or concerned that he folded underwear in neat little packages.
 8. Nudiustertian (the day before yesterday).
 a. We like stories enough that we both don't bother to inquire about their truth, and forget entirely that we absolutely should in certain cases. I told stories as a kid enough that my mom devised a method to determine whether or not I was: she'd ask- are you telling me what you saw, or a story? And I also fessed up. I think truth isn't so much in stories themselves, as the telling of them as a means of connecting.
 b. He decided that the time had come to be stronger than any of the excuses he'd used until then.
 9. Metanoia (change of heart).
 a. I began painting a large smooth stone on the shore of the channel between Denmark and Sweden, but was interrupted by adults who insisted I stop. That was something I did and remember.
 b. He had decided to accept his fate of accepting his fate.
 10. Nikehedonia (pleasurable anticipation of success).
 a. Every small town smelled like fire places and cow dung. Everyone. The bricks, pavement, plaster, fountains and road side prayer chapels were mostly scentless. The dogs, cats and in-town barns were undetectable- it lent to their perceptible stillness on late night walks. Villages that survived World Wars, plagues and the inquisition (not all did) fashioned their cemeteries in such seemingly ad hoc manner despite the hundreds of years of preparation. Even so, they did not smell.
 b. Lucifer was surprised at the amount of life at Death Valley.

IN THE STYLE OF

1. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of William Burroughs.
 His body twisted and contorted, morphing into a grotesque new form that defied all reason and logic. The pain was excruciating, yet he welcomed it with open arms, eager for the transformative power of the unknown. As he emerged from the metamorphosis, he was reborn, a new being with an insatiable hunger for the forbidden and the strange.
 2. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of David Lynch.
 She felt a strange tingling sensation in her fingertips, as if her body was slowly dissolving into the ether. The world around her melted away, replaced by a surreal dreamscape where time and space had no meaning. When she awoke, she found that her body had transformed into something otherworldly, a new being that existed between the realms of reality and the subconscious.
 3. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Franz Kafka.
 He awoke to find himself transformed into a monstrous vermin, his once human body twisted and grotesque. The world around him recoiled in horror, unable to comprehend the nightmare he had become. Trapped in his new form, he longed for the release of death, a final escape from the existential horror that had consumed him.
 4. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of William Gibson.
 Her body was a vessel, a tool to be shaped and modified as needed in a world where identity was fluid and ever-changing. With the push of a button and the whir of machinery, she underwent a rapid transformation,

her form altering in ways that were both beautiful and terrifying. As she stepped out into the neon-lit streets, she was a new being, a being that defied all norms and expectations in a world that valued innovation and transformation above all else.
 5. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Kenji Siratori.
 The flesh was a prison, a shell that held the true essence of his being captive. Through the power of technology and the occult, he underwent a transformation, his form contorting and twisting into something that was beyond human comprehension. As he emerged from the metamorphosis, he was a new being, a being of pure energy and information that existed outside of time and space.
 6. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Irvine Welsh.
 His body was a canvas, a surface to be painted with the colors of his darkest desires. With each injection and pill, he underwent a metamorphosis, his form changing in ways that were both beautiful and grotesque. As he stumbled out into the neon-lit streets, he was a new being, a being that was both powerful and broken in a world that valued hedonism above all else.
 7. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Antonin Artaud.
 His body was a battleground, a site of intense struggle between the forces of order and chaos. Through a process of ritualistic self-destruction, he underwent a transformation, his form contorting and twisting into something that was both divine and demonic. As he emerged from the metamorphosis, he was a new being, a being that was both creator and destroyer in a world that valued madness and transformation above all else.
 8. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of John the Elder.
 Through a divine vision, he saw his body transfigured, his mortal form glowing with the radiance of the heavens

The light transformed him, his body becoming a vessel for the divine, a physical manifestation of his faith. As he walked among the people, they could see the power of the divine coursing through his veins, a living testament to the transformative power of faith.
 9. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Irving Berlin
 She was a simple girl from a small town, but through the power of music, she underwent a transformation that would change her life forever. As she sang and danced, her body moved in ways that were both elegant and daring, a true expression of the transformative power of art. When the curtains finally closed, she emerged a star, a new being that shone brightly in a world that valued entertainment above all else.
 10. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Aleister Crowley
 Through the power of magick and ritual, he underwent a transformation, his body twisting and contorting into something that was both god and monster. As he emerged from the metamorphosis, he was a new being, a being of pure will and desire that defied all laws of nature and morality. With a flick of his wrist, he summoned forth the powers of the universe, a true master of the transformative power of magick.
 11. Write a short three sentence story about bodily transformation in the style of Rumi.
 Her body was a vessel for the divine, a temple that housed the radiance of the heavens. Through the power of love and devotion, she underwent a transformation, her form transcending the limits of the physical world. As she walked among the people, they could see the light of the divine shining through her, a living testament to the transformative power of love.



IMPRESSIONS OF

FLOURISH by SEFA LOCO & NEWSOME

SeFa LoCo + Newsome are an experimental project curated from Caspar, WY. They released an album called, "Flourish," on March 3, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
sefaloco.bandcamp.com/album/flourish

My Impressions:

This album draws heavily from the late modern experimentalists of the 20th century. The piece is winding and subtle, possessing moments of almost harsh bearing with long stretches of collaborative conversation. The music is produced, apparently spontaneously, by a room full of skilled artists who came together to divine something new. There are strings, squeaks, clacks, and more, building and relaxing in a manner like breath.

TILL BIRTH DO US PART by SERMON

SERMON is a metal act from Turkey. French label, "Bitume," released their album, "Till Birth Do Us Part," on February 10, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
bitumeprods.bandcamp.com/album/till-birth-do-us-part

My Impressions:

Immediately I am dragged screaming into a pristine wall of guitar made sound, dissonant, harsh but highly organized. Backing these guitars is a heavy rhythm section. Moreover is a crystal clear harsh groan inciting what sounds to be an army of demons into my mind. This is heavy, brutal, pounding but somehow completely clear.

PSG LIVE AT HAW DEN by SPECTOR'S GUN

Phil Spector's Gun is an alternative rock group from Philadelphia, PA. They released a live album called, "PSG live at Haw Den," on December 14, 2022.

You can check it out here:
philspectorsgun666.bandcamp.com/album/psg-live-at-haw-den

My Impressions:

A grimy, kick-in-the-dick bar band pushing everything they've got at their local haunt. All the sound and production slime couldn't distract me from the reality that this is an excellent group with catchy authenticity. The sweat, beer and dim lights can be heard in every note. The underground is here in spades.

AENTITY by MIRRIR

Mirrir is a soundscape act from Edinburgh, UK. They released, "Aentity," February 10th, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
mirrir.bandcamp.com/album/aentity

My Impressions:

Aentity is a showcase of Mirrir's mastery of creating haunting yet complex layers of sound. These songs are frightening to listen to alone, they are great for ruminations. All the tracks are fascinating,

Ominous, and beautiful to listen to from start to finish. The sounds that were selected for the record all complement each other nicely. There is always something within the song changing and, in turn, dragging you back in. The melodies are threatening while the drums are slow, and the bass murmurs in the background. The soundscapes painted are cinematic and tell a morbid story that is best left up to the interpretation of the fortunate listener. My favorite track: Cousin Silence

MAPACHO by MAPACHO

Mapacho is an ambient act from Montreal, QE. They released a self titled album on February 14th, 2023.

You can check them out here:
www.samizdatrecords.com/album/mapacho

My Impressions:

Mapacho demonstrates a command of creating ambience and atmosphere in this record. It uses samples from Spanish-speaking figureheads in history and has a recurring theme of revolution alongside beautiful clarinet, synth, and electric guitar melodies. All of this is enveloped by a field recording that wraps the track together like a warm blanket.

The record switches up the energy on track 3, La Maleza, with Camilo Cienfuegos's last speech in Cuba before his disappearance. The percussion kicks in with energy, and the ambience is vibrant and snappy. The sample they used for it was mesmerizing, and I feel that way about all of the samples used in the record. Towards the end of the track, the dissonance kicks in and leaves you feeling vacant. The energy persists through the last song as well. This record set out with a mission, and I believe Mapacho accomplished what they were setting out to do with flying colors. The best way to describe this record is that it paints a picture of history while providing hope for the future.

My favorite track: La Maleza

POOL! by COMLEY POND

Comley Pond is a psych rock act from Paris, France. They released an ep, "Pool!" on February 22, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
comleypond.bandcamp.com/album/pool

My Impressions:

Comley Pond straddles quite a few lines in this album:

They cycle through a kind of neo-revival version of 1960s psychedelic pop, blended with a 1990s alternative vibe, finally folding in an impassioned balladeer quality.

The songs have a dimension of suspension, of floating.

They are constructed pop songs, layered and plentiful, with instrumentation, motifs, parts, and strokes of fancy.

The songs are formed through a straight forward rock instrument augmented by visions of other-templated myriad webs of sound.

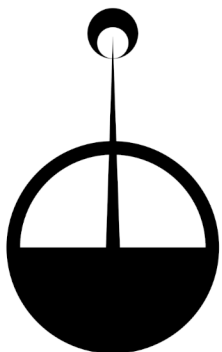
There is an almost medieval quality to the songs at times. A hip synthesis. A danceable bass and drum craft. Always a strong string section playing counter melodies to dreamy, emotional, autumn-like vocals.

The vocal harmonies are utterly smooth, blended, and perfectly arranged. The suggested moods of the blended vocals massage and greet the ear with a soothing, pleading reality.

The overall effect of all of this is to transport the listener to a mystical land of promise, a new awakening, a dawn where the Edenic impulse can at last be realized.

It's a cry for a new kind of innocence. A wail from beneath the floorboards announcing the possibility of renewal.

In love, in joy, in sorrow, in life. The opportunity for resurrection is reified here. It's a fresh take on an old desire.



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THESE REVIEWS BY ELLA SOLIS

IMPRESSIONS OF

SARAMBHA by HOSTILE SURGERY

SĀRAMBHA by Hostile Surgery.
Hostile Surgery is an industrial-noise act from Geneva, Switzerland. They released Sarambha January 13th, 2023

You can listen to it here:
hostilesurgery.bandcamp.com/album/s-rambha

My Impressions:
Overall I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the droning and ever-shifting sounds used in the track that daubed into my subconscious pictures of flies swarming a carcass. This is especially true after the 7-minute mark, where a noise has grown into the sound of flies. Around 10 minutes, something that sounds like fire slinks into the periphery of your mind and guides you angrily through the rest of the track. At 19 minutes, you can hear the fire raging, consuming everything in its path. Then you hear the aftermath. This song has powerful imagery while at the same time giving you pieces of a puzzle that you have to work out within yourself. The track would be perfect for a guided meditation or to listen to as you write.

ENJOY THE VIEW by QUENTIN SUAVE

Quentin Sauvé is a bedroom pop/lo-fi act from La Chaux De Fonds, Switzerland. At time of writing the album, "Enjoy the View," has not yet been released in it's entirety. However, at time of publication, it will be released on March 31st, 2023.

It can be heard here:
hummusrecords.bandcamp.com/album/enjoy-the-view

My Impressions:
This music is the perfect throwback to 2010's YouTube lo-fi. It reminds me so much of something that would've been on the channel Walmart Drug Cartel. Something that reeled me into this act is the constant rising and falling tension with big climaxes and ethereal energy that seems to wrap around my body when I listen to it. It feels incredibly cathartic to listen to and offers something different from the tried-and-true, something with a little more energy. The use of silence as an instrument is heavy in track 4, Horizon, and makes the record all that more special. I highly recommend this as it tickles a part of my subconscious that I had locked away for some time.

My favorite track: Horizon

**REVIEWS BY
ELLA SOLIS**

TREMORS TODAY by LEONARD DONAT

Leonard Donat is a musical synthesist from Berlin, Germany. He released an album on Blackjack Illuminist Records called, "Tremors Today," on February 24, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
blackjackilluministrecords.bandcamp.com/album/tremors-today

My Impressions:
This album is a bit of a departure from the usual synth pop Donat produces. Instead, this is more of an ambient album. It has cascading synth pads, subliminal noise, bright tones, dark notes and the constant feeling of bittersweet brokenness. Somehow Donat manages to communicate the energy of emotion without resorting to lyrics or simple melodies. It is a nice set of sounds.

GLISTENING by FEDERICO BALDUCCI, ERIC BAYLIES & MICHAEL LARocca VIOIOUS MIND by PAMPLEMOUSSE

Federico Balducci, Eric Baylies, & Michael Larocca are free improvisation artists from Massachusetts. They came together to release, "Glistening Haze," on February 22, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
federicobalducci7.bandcamp.com/album/glistening-haze

My Impressions:
This piece reckons itself to become a benign maelstrom. A gentle, chaotic saber, cutting through the wind, vibrating suggestions of hope and doom. They dance around a key form with stiletto-piccato bursts, punctuated and transformed by dramatic flourishes from the drums; a jazz-ish kind of suggestion. At the border of the ambient, experimental, noise and jazz, this piece is triumphant and effective even as it seems to imply more than itself.

There are moments of pristine brilliance, when chords and notes bubble up from the subliminal stew in waves of golden rapture.

There are cutting pieces of jazz arpeggiation, briskly walking, slicing, and climbing upon a makeshift ladder of tonal suggestions.

The overall piece is not exactly easy to listen to, but it possesses a sublime quality. If you can carefully approach it, feel it, empathetically resonate with it then you will be able to pick up the pearls that these musical giants are creating.

However, if you are impatient or immature, you may find it challenging or even boring.

This would be a mistake. Because trapped within the implications of emotive confluence that these musical synthesists weave there is a deep reality waiting to be found. I love it.

WAR VARIATIONS JOHN THE SILENT

John the Silent is a synthesist from Indianapolis, Indiana. He released, "War Variations," on May 26, 2023.

You can listen to them here:
johnthesilent.bandcamp.com/album/war-variations

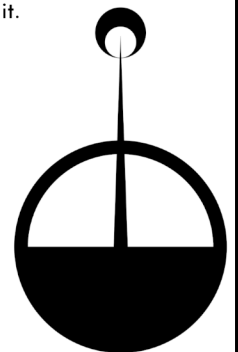
My Impressions:
For an album about war, I was expecting something a bit more intense and clashing, like a Charles Ives piece. I found this to be pleasant and relaxing but I think I did find the war piece in it. It does possess amarching rhythm and a kind of simultaneous call to prayer/siren which screams above the otherwise pristing landscape. It's an interesting take on a morbid tale.

Pamplemousse is a post punk act from Reunion Mind. They released a single called, "Vicious Mind," on March 17, 2022.

You can listen it here:
pamplemousetheband.bandcamp.com/track/vicious-mind-2

My Impressions:
This is mostly a straight forward punk song, slightly down tempo, slightly pop, with the occasional dalliance into dissonance. The music is composed of guitar and drums. The guitar is distorted but not to the point of harshness. Its tone is a kind of gentle harshness. The drummer is in the pocket, controlling the pace, being the spine solidly as it should. The vocalist has slightly distorted vocals, melodious, on pitch, a little angsty but not too much.

The overall effect is to create a sense of urgency and emotional conflict just short of bursting out into raw aggression. It has a pleasant quality. It pumps me up without sacrificing pathos. It like it.



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IMPRESSIONS OF

STEVONNIE (POSI VIBES) by SO NICE YESTERDAY

So Nice Yesterday is a hip hop act from Baltimore, MD. Grimalkin Records released their single, "Stevonnie (Posi Vibes)" on June 20, 2019.

You can check it out here:
soniceyesterday.bandcamp.com/track/stevonnie-posi-vibes

My Impressions:

This song has an interesting assemblage of sounds; re-tuned samples of old vocal harmonies, staccato synth percussion, arpeggiated cascades of synthesized notes, and, of course, the rhythmic vocal stylings of several rappers and singers. It's a unique sound and I really dig it.

SPLIT by MISANTROPSKIA VS CORNHOLE CRUCIFIXION

Misantropskia vs Cornhole Crucifixion are two noise acts from Brazil and Australia, respectively. Brazilian record label, Plataforma Recs, released their split record on February 27, 2023.

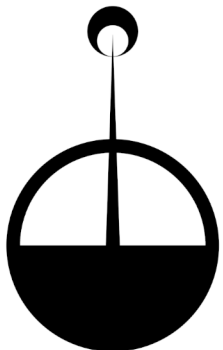
You can hear it here:
plataformarecs.bandcamp.com/album/split-misantropskia-vs-cornhole-crucifixion

My Impressions:

This is a fun collaboration because it doesn't consist solely of harsh, screaming noise. Don't get me wrong, the bandwidth blast of harsh distortion is definitely here, but there is also a kind of playfulness hidden in the hyper-crushed cacophony.

Between extreme, lengthy bouts of blistering pure noise wall there will be the occasional wail, crushed FM synth tone, even Atari-like blip and beep boop which lets you know that these two have some sense of humor.

It's good to hear static, slicing white noise that has the occasional wink.



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TOUCHANTE by SPARTAN JET-PLEX

Spartan Jet-Plex is an experimental ambient artist from Virginia. Grimalkin Records released a collection of their songs entitled, "Touchante," on March 3, 2023.

You can check them out here:
spartanjet-plex.bandcamp.com/album/touchante

My Impressions:

This is a primarily instrumental, occasionally vocal, collection of synthesized, sampled moods. It ranges widely, grasping such disparate branches as haunting dissonance, an almost jazz-like composition, to more of a downtempo or hip hop beat.

The generative complexity of the pieces keeps me entertained even as the ambient nature of it puts me into a trance. Quite nice.

AVANT GORE PRODUCTIONS V/A (AGP-17) by MANNEQUIN CELLAR

Mannequin Cellar is a sample-based noise artist from somewhere in the US. Avant-Gore Productions released their single, "Driller Killer," as part of a compilation called, "AVANT GORE PRODUCTIONS V/A (AGP-17)" on March 3, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
mannequincellar.bandcamp.com/track/driller-killer

My Impressions:

This is a quaking miasma of deep grinding aetheral sounding slowed-saws, punctuated by occasional sounds of electricity, humming, power tools and other higher, harsher timbres with a long-form sample placed on top. It is dark, commanding, and evil.

PIMP LIGHT by C. SHREVE THE PROFESSOR & D.R.U.G.S. BEATS

C. Shreve the Professor & D.R.U.G.S. Beats is a hip hop act from Asheville, NC. They released a single called, "Pimp Light," on February 3, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
freetheoptimus.bandcamp.com/track/pimp-light

My Impressions:

Incredibly tight flow matched by lyrical playfulness. A solid, swaggering groove that keeps me interested.

This is such a well produced song I can't get over it.

The beat is uplifting and horn filled, like soul music or light gospel. It is positive but not corny, helpful like a good friend, a comrade, or a soldier.

This is nice. That is all I have to say.

DEMOS by TAUNT

Taunt is a noise punk/speed metal band from Albuquerque, NM. They released a selection of their demos on February 20, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
taunt.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2

My Impressions:

Pure, crackling, electricity. Rampaging, brutal, relentless stuff. The album comes right out the gate with a powerful push, crashing waves of high distortion, wailed guitars, shattered vocals, and endless pounding drums.

If you want to listen to something brutal, hair-raising and quick, this is it.

DISINFORMATION by SONOROUS RISING

Sonorous Rising is a pop punk group from Waterford, CT. They released the album, "Disinformation," on March 1, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
sonorousrising.bandcamp.com/album/disinformation

My Impressions:

A smoothly lyricized collection of punk songs that manage to add a lot of interesting and beautiful elements that ordinarily aren't a part of the genre.

This is a really successful attempt at honest musical progress. It maintains the most desirable parts of the punk genre while folding in other stuff too. Nice.

EP by JAUS

Jaus is a dream pop act from Mexico City, Mexico. Shore Dive Records released their newest EP, "EP," on February 10, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
shorediverecords.bandcamp.com/album/ep-4

My Impressions:

Buoyant clouds of fiber-glass light support the ebullient sounds coming out of these speakers.

They are aetheral, effervescent and heavenly.

The songs range from dark to light. They have a rock instrumentation but curate it in an unusual way. They make an interestingly grooving texture of guitars and vocalizations.

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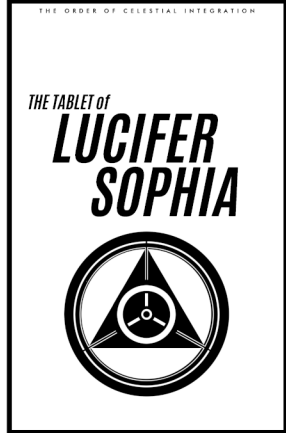
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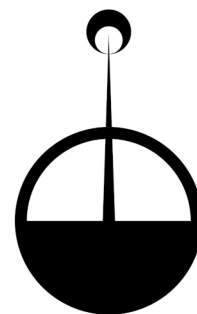
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