

# Issue 2: To be a hatchling again

Distributed 2/27/25 (My birthday 😊)

Hannah Lim

# Publishing Remarks

This zine was created with love during the winter that bridges 2024 into 2025. It was my first winter in New York. This print is one of a limited release, which shall never be distributed again unless for very special circumstances.

Printed at my office in Times Square, with the generous (unknowing) contribution of Microsoft Corporation.

This zine belongs to:

Ishita Padhiar ♡♡

## Forward: On Discontinuity

Annika Igmen does not believe in reincarnation. She believes that she is like a houseplant which occasionally outgrows its pot and migrates from soil to soil, eating up the new nutrients, and drinking up the new water, but that she ultimately remains in some essential, distinguishable mass. She believes that the same branches grow and shed leaves all their life, and the root network which might suffer rot at times, will always rebound to the inertial mass of its own original substance. I believe people are like butterflies, and that when the time is right, their imperative is to spin a cocoon, fold inward, and liquify completely. I believe that it is important to occasionally re-molecularize from scratch. Both metaphors are insufficient to describe the metamorphosis of a big move.

The Big Move flattens you to nothing. No root network, no sludge of the chrysalis, it's an undiscovered frontier. We often think of our essence as "Who are you when no one else is around?" but it's a question wrongly put. Who, actually, are you when nothing is left of who you used to be?

In "The Surrealist Manifesto", the poet Andre Breton, writes of dreams: "It is unacceptable, indeed, that this considerable part of psychic activity [*dreams*], (thought to present no solution to continuity: the sum of the dream moments, from a temporal viewpoint, and considering only pure dream in sleep, being in no way inferior to the sum of moments of reality, or to be precise, waking moments) has still received so little attention. The vast difference in importance, in weight, that the ordinary observer grants to events while awake and asleep, has always astonished me. It is because human beings, when they cease to sleep, are above all the playthings of memory, and memory in its normal state takes pleasure in re-

tracing the events of dreams only feebly, depriving the latter of all real importance. It [*waking consciousness*] has the illusion of continuing something worthwhile." I have been asking the same thing, Andre Breton: Why is continuity the good thing? Why is it better to last than to burn? There's something a little degrading about being called the plaything of memory, but if you're a nostalgic person like me, you already suspect yourself of this insult. Are you, today, a prisoner of your own memory? Am I capable of being anything I'm not already becoming? Is my destiny sealed?

In the end, maybe the *illusion* of continuity is itself worthwhile. I felt that a little bit when I prepared to leave Seattle, and the illusion began to crack. Moving somewhere new is as close as you get to reincarnation in your waking life -- not quite death, but more like the discontinuity of dreaming: Annika and I left Seattle at the same time, and about three months later, we would have these moments of discontinuity during the day. These little psychic attacks: I'd be ordering at a luncheonette in Midtown, and suddenly think "Why am I here? Why isn't this Seattle?" You have felt the same grief after waking up from a dream that you miss, even as you start to forget it. People keep asking me why I moved here: Because it's important to die and even more important to dream, and moreover you can't really avoid it. Because I want to see what's left of me without my memory. Because I want to inspect reincarnation up close.

Besides, being a baby again is fun. I am rediscovering how to make friends, I am rediscovering the taste of certain food and the definition of Winter. Everything is so new, and then of course, there is the sadness. I think that must be why babies leave the portal of the mother crying: for a second, they also remember everything they left behind in the last life. Big move, hence re-birth. Re-baby, re-be. Grow into re-me. I am play-acting (re)creation. This is not blasphemy. We are re-imagining ourselves back into being, just as (*in fact, exactly as*) God intended. I like to think he is flattered by our mimicry.

This edition documents my first steps in New York. I hope you like it!

## It's winter again already

12/30/24

Sometimes there is the threat that something new cannot start on the eve of an ongoing grief, that is, if there exists such a thing as a day before an infinite Euclidean line, I'm not sure if I'm allowed to love again yet, given that so little time has passed between the last winter and the next, should I stop inspecting the craters of the moon? After all it is almost dawn and I must prepare myself for the next expedition, zipping up my space suit, putting on my space gloves, guarding my eyes from the impending day, don't forget to bring a hat.

Is loving a resource ecology? Can the new flora get through the hard network of existing roots? Is there enough nitrogen in the soil for you? Or did I add the egg too soon? You have to let the wound breathe or else it will curdle. Can the next year come when the last has not yet ended? Can we be reborn before we have even died and if so how soon?

The answer is yes — it turns out:

I was born with all my daughters already inside me.

Ancient truths are simple like this.

They are true because they're true because they're true.

Take for example: the first snow.

The heat of your own blood.

A kiss.

So when the new year comes (because that is all it *can* do)

I go to wash my bedsheets but my mom says to put them outside in the light. This is what my mother and daughter already know — "again" is just how loving goes.

## Reader submission by Annika Igmen

This winter we traveled to Vietnam and Taiwan! My favorite thing about traveling when you don't know the language of the place you're visiting is the small interactions you get with other people that are just plainly human. Take this massage parlor for example. Our group, with the exception of Sherman and I, all got massages while I decided to take a nap on a nearby bench. A few minutes into my nap, unprompted, I awoke to an elderly woman putting towels on me as a blanket. I am seen and connected.



Winter is cold and sometimes I think people are too. Yet, sharing a laugh, coming to an understanding, or even experiencing the kindness of a stranger, beyond words, in and of itself thaws those thoughts to a lull giving me faith that not all humanity is lost and propelling me forward to the next day.

Thank you for  
writing in, Annika.  
It's lovely!! ♡♡♡

Pictured: Annika,  
asleep on a bench,  
Vietnam.  
(photo credit: probably  
Sherman!)

## Sisters

12/27/2024

I was lonely when we met. I was lonely, in fact for a long time before that too. My sister tells me that we are born alone and we die alone.

◆◆◆

There is a quality about misery among sisters. Something like how you don't turn around at night when your shadow catches up to you, even though you're certain it will hurt you. Something like flattened roadkill you run over again and again, on the street you take to work.

She likes you because you laugh easily and you are just small enough to dry-swallow. You must have been hungry, she sneers, and I'm guessing that she might as well be alone. It's because a sister is a version of you who got hit with the corner of the book instead of the flat.

There is a quality about misery among sisters. Something like how you can't tell if the screaming is coming from inside or outside. *Should we do something to help?* I don't know.

Something like rooms of flex walls falsely bifurcated at wrong angles. New Yorkers can take one look at my room and tell me that it was made all wrong. I nod, yes, *that must be it.*

One night, my sister:  
*I never considered her to be a good*

*Let alone a mom.*

Let alone a mom, and she  
stops telling you things. Like how  
one day, you see a fat bruise on her toes and  
ask her how it happened.  
She's not sure, which is code.

*You look just like your father.  
Who looks just like a crooked yellow tooth  
Skinny with rot where it never gets air.*

A sister is an animal that bites you  
just to taste her own blood.  
Like how your dad only calls you in the winter  
because no one else is picking up.

A sister is a new bird, messing up the pecking order.  
she gets wind-nested into these sick little tornadoes of hot motor oil  
we've been spinning up in America. Here, we prefer our poison  
laid out, a little pool of blood in the middle of my bed.

Yesterday, we were vomiting the same bile in and out  
of all our mouths all day long.  
All of us, gagging up the acid, hot dry wind.  
The past exploding into my eye like a highway gnat,  
smearing across the windshield.

*You look just like your mother.  
Who looks just like a slow, numb frostbite.*

I am used to this cross-contamination, but  
it's the sister I didn't factor. My sister who  
Let alone a mom,  
let alone me with these people.  
Now we have to take turns bleeding.

A sister is a rorschach test that always looks  
like the anger you can't shake.  
The one in your mouth when you woke up this morning.

By now she knows that she must become soft enough  
so that the blows make no sound as they land.  
soft enough to pass right through.

The sister, the black eyes of an animal where you can see yourself  
With black eyes too. But taller. Meaner. Deeper wound,  
somehow less blood. The sister as an echo,  
blasting radially outward in every direction. The sister as  
a curled lip, and she fights like an alley cat.  
As a petulant bitch refusing her dinner, and tearing out  
her own curled nails one by one from the pads of the feet in the  
struggle. The sister, crash-landed, earth-stranded, girl.

"I hate everyone but you."  
She bares her teeth saying this, drunk.

If you sit very still next to your sister,  
there is a ripple in the pond where you see yourself for the first time.

◆ ◆ ◆

My sister says that when I was born,  
she thought my mother had shit herself.  
That I looked like a little piece of poo.

What I don't say because we both already know,  
Only *big* sisters are born alone.

# On Consumption

Sex is often modeled as a possessive transaction. It's inescapable: from the macro-unit of the ubiquitous culture of monogamy, down to the pervasive micro-unit of our very language: You "give yourself" to the other. You "release" your inhibitions. You sensuously "take me!" (How pervasive, the mindset of possession). However, when a penis is inside me, I struggle these days not to enact a mindset of consumption. (I am a good little capitalist).

If male engagement in P/V sex is penetration, my engagement in P/V sex is encapsulation. You go inside me, and some part of the other becomes me. It's exactly like eating: there is the breaking down into molecular fragments, reconstituting through the permeable skin of my body to later become hair or muscle, or even a small amount of electricity which we call thoughts. The sexual union, thus, is an act of digestive absorption. When we are one, when the ecstatic distance between you and me is as thin as possible (in the physical dimension), if our spirits were stored in the fluid of our bodies as in the Greek model of bodily humors, then at the time of fluid mixing, we are entwined because I contain you — because I am becoming you, or you are reconstituting into me. You are like an ancient prokaryote, not yet become my mitochondria.

Oral sex continues to beg the metaphor by bringing it to the site of the mouth. I don't go to church anymore so giving head is as close to a spiritual meal as I usually get. (Do I dare call it communion?) However, the key difference between eating and fucking is that sex is not a *finite* consumption (as in my using it, does not *use it up*). In consumptive union we "consume" to *become more*. To become each other. To become bigger and bigger until we contain the entire world and everyone in it.

During ecstatic encapsulation, you have ascended from a member of my environment to a member of me. I sometimes pity the penetrator who does not complete the metaphor of containment.

A straight man does not experience any contradiction to the illusion of his individuality because in sex he is rarely penetrated. He sees that you are becoming him, but he does not imagine that his own fragile cell might itself be changed. Even the penis, an interrupting protrusion into the outer environment, is not made of permeable skin (in contrast to a vagina or anus). It is not suited to eat, only to be eaten. How, thus, can a penetrator imagine the pleasure of being entered? This disconnection to the spiritual consumptive union is one origin of the classic attitude of male heterosexual selfishness in bed.

Barring anal play (though not to dismiss it), how do we encourage the straight men in our lives to enjoy sex as a consumer? We must teach them, that in sex, the more we eat, *the more there is to eat*. Allow me the honor to become you, allow me the joy of being part of you, changing you. Have sex with me, which is to say, allow me to devour you. Allow yourself in turn, to be devoured by me. I am hungry for you. I want to be a part of you. I long to be of you. I want to come to your house. Invite me over. Have a taste. Do you want to? Allow me the pleasure to vaporize into your blood and reconstitute through your eyes, your nose, your loving mouth. Then be exhaled into the air where we will rise by the heat of your blood, then become a cloud through which a goose formation cuts. We will precipitate with our human acid like tears dripping down the side of a cold cup on a summer day into the great ocean, joining all the other animals of the earth. Do you long for me? Do you long for me like I long for you?

# Blowjobs, smoking, and other self-soothing techniques

2/11/25

How many times do you see a ghost before suspecting yourself of psychosis?

And what if it is the same ghost every time? Is that better or worse?

I'm too tired to act nonchalant tonight, only breathing helps: in through the nose, out through the mouth. It's such bullshit advice.

They call it circular breathing. Someone should show them a circle for the first time.

Real circular breathing is when you pull smoke out the back of your mouth into the front of your mouth and back and forth, throat to teeth, teeth to throat. He always smelled like smoke.

## Winter Incantations

### Trump Term 2: Hope is your civic duty

Forough Farrokzod was a poet, filmmaker, and feminist. She was born in Tehran, and died there in 1967 at 32 years old. Below, is a short excerpt from the end of her poem, "Let Us Believe in the Dawn of the Cold Season". For this magic, I am borrowing her words because she had a son and a divorce in Iran in the 50s, and thus knows more about hope than I do. Performing this spell grants you a small amount of hope to get through the winter. After that, we will only have each other. We have to keep our spirits high because at this time, hope is our civic duty. To cast this incantation, write it by hand onto a piece of paper, and burn it:

let us believe,  
let us believe in the dawn of the cold season.  
let us believe in the ruin of  
imaginary gardens,  
in idle inverted scythes,  
in confined seeds.

Look how it shows...  
perhaps the truth was those two young hands,  
those young hands

buried beneath snow —  
and in the coming year  
when spring mates with sky behind the window,  
fountains of green saplings will erupt —  
saplings that bloom, beloved, my truest  
friend.

let us believe in the dawn of the cold  
season...

# Acknowledgments

I've been rewatching *Fleabag*, and early in the ill-begotten love affair of season 2, the Priest explains to *Fleabag* that he became a priest because he believes he was born to love. He loves God, and he loves all people as a Father (as a proxy of *The Father*). He loves the parishioners as his own children.

I feel the same way. I believe I was born to love, but not as a father, as a little sister. My new roommates cook for me, boss me around, and keep me safe (I always did get along with unnies). But it's not just people – take for example, the city, the trees, I am their little sister. I feel small, looking up at the tall buildings. I watch the wind bounce around between them while I am safe here on earth. This city loves me back, I can feel it: Every morning, it cradles me in its belly underground, and delivers me, warm to the beginning of my day.

I think I love like this because it's the only way I know how to be. I never really thanked my blood sister for teaching me to be a little sister. Thank you.

Special thanks, also, to the first snow of the year, the Greenpoint branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, the unusually warm days in January, and to the halal cart man who calls me *habibi* even though he calls everyone *habibi* ☺

## **I have something new for you this time: an art assignment**

Write a poem about your day. Five sentences max. I suggest writing about the weather. Send it to me if you made something you like.