

Candid



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Candid FW23

Watered With Love

Maxwell Wheeler

When you “grow up”, what do you decide to rid yourself of? We often think that we need to stop playing games, listening to music, watching anime, or pursuing hobbies as anything more than something to pass the time in private. We cut out the “excess” and insist that we need to become our most profound selves immediately. Pressure to be first place floods everyone’s mind so those who aren’t crazed by the same goal are seen as coping with their failure, settling for less because they don’t qualify for a title. What if they weren’t coping as much as they were living in their own happiness? They could be chasing pleasure over pain, building experiences instead of branding themselves in fire, or learning to live above knowing how to die.

The idea of growing up has been used as a scare tactic by parents and senior authorities for so long that many don’t question it; but it

doesn’t have to be that way. Questioning makes us eliminate who we aren’t and keep who we are. Anyone who has questioned who they are and what it means for them to grow up has, at the very least, found passion somewhere in life. Like most of the modern generation, we have questioned how religious we really are which has led to people cutting out what feels like an obligation. It doesn’t mean removing religion completely, but we only keep the parts that make us feel connected in the way we like. When plants grow, they move toward light and acquire more traits throughout their life before passing them on to their offspring. Whether you decide to have children or not, you still pass traits on to people around you when you express your passions. In life, we must decide if we will be a growing plant or if we will “grow up” into misery.

Many people get stuck in the belief that they must create their best work as soon as they



Photographer: Zach Winger • Model: Donna Reed

reach their twenties. As kids, we identify with kids our own age and feel spite that someone was able to do karate, play an instrument as well as any recording artist, or that they’re on TV. We get older and continue to do this by looking at people who have let their hobbies become passions that lead them through life. Students in high school do many things, but sometimes they’re recognized for achievements like being the fastest runner, the best woodworker, or the best writer. We latch onto their achievements and find a home in jealousy.

We say we don’t have the same opportunities because of obstacles that make us feel like we’ve fallen so far behind that we may as well

never start. However, people live full lives in as little as 40 years. Finishing high school and pursuing what makes you happy doesn’t even place you at the halfway mark. Some people live as long as 100 years, so being in school until 30 still gives you 70 years to do anything that makes you happy. Without considering money, ask yourself if you like who you are, enjoy what you do, love who you know, and feel fulfilled in how you live. If you feel like you need a change, know that it’s never too late to start because time is our friend when we allow it to be.

For those who see time as their worst enemy, think of actors like Bryan Cranston (Breaking Bad) who have only gotten recognition as they



have aged. Think about your favorite movies and look into the age of actors and the director, your favorite books and how old the author was at the time of writing—any art in general and how old the creator was when they made your favorite piece. The same applies to people in less creative fields, too—biologists don't graduate college and immediately become recognized scientists. They often have to work lower-paying jobs (like a zoo or aquarium) starting out, but it's their interest that keeps them passionate for what comes next. Bakers dedicate so much time to their craft too, but it's difficult for them to get recognition unless they make a large amount of money. Share some love to the actors, biologists, bakers—anyone whose career grows because of the passion they devote to it.

It can be hard to feel like you're enough in the world, being conditioned to "grow up" and stop feeling comfortable. Anything deemed "cringe" tends to be avoided at all costs, letting those around you know that you're not on that side. But what if you tried being sarcastic about it? Just as a joke, put yourself in the shoes of whatever's weird and laugh about it. Have fun and embrace that idea. Before you know it, you realize you don't hate it and the cringe factor has become a source of joy. Take anime, for example; 15 years ago, anyone would be bullied for admitting interest in anime, but people joked about liking it and would come across something intriguing. While we're not paying attention, it starts getting shown in more common settings and now an entire generation has grown up with anime. That generation has

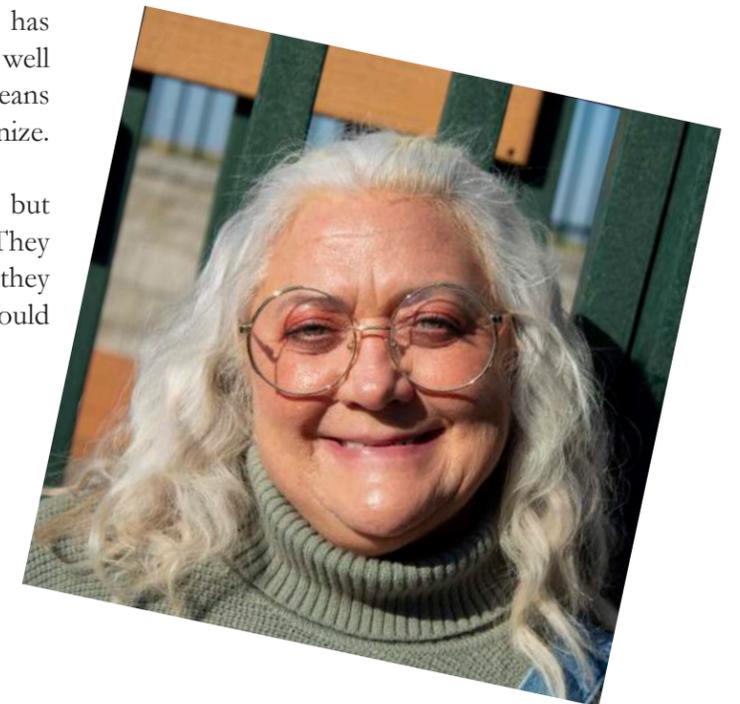
chosen to add traits that would place them under the category of being a plant. They have grown up but retained what makes them happy, what makes them who they are. The point is that if you slow down and stop caring about how your interests define you, you can be organically guided to what makes you happy. The band named "The 1975" says something about this in their song, "Sincerity Is Scary":

"Why would you believe
You could control how you're perceived
When at your best
You're intermediately versed in your own feelings?"

It means to say stop caring about what you look like to others when you don't even know yourself. Music is a great way to connect to your deeper self, but people avoid almost all types of music because they don't like the stigma attached to it; and if they do manage to leave their comfort zone, they never speak of it. You need to realize that it's okay to accept the mental hug and become vulnerable to interests and how they make you feel, not how it makes you look to others. So what if the singer has a shitty voice? They don't hit notes very well but they sing the words in a way that means something to you—in a way that you recognize.

Older games don't have the best graphics, but they have a quality that is undeniable. They still cared about looking presentable, but they cared more about how they felt to play. Could

the player connect with the blocky, faceless character on screen? If so, imagination would fill in the memory gaps and the themes of the game would alter the player in meaningful ways. If we stop grading everything around us on the social quality scale that we've subconsciously engrained—only playing games that look "realistic" in graphics, grading a movie as bad because it told a story unfamiliar to us, labeling music as "emo" and rejecting any emotions tied to sound—we may become closer with ourselves. We could learn to be proud of who we are and become brave enough to help others do the same. People won't have to deny what makes them happy and unintentionally do to the next generation what our leaders did to us. We could learn to speak in a language of love.



Bright Fucking

Red Poem by Lexi Reed

My body is empty
Something dug into my ribs
And took out every piece of me
That is human.

My joy
My creativity
My self
Has been stolen away
And ripped from my chest.
I am empty.

I fill it with oxy.
It helps for a moment
Until I am empty again.

I fill it with alcohol.
It helps for a moment
Until I am empty again.

I fill it with heroine
It helps for a moment
Until I am empty again.

I fill it with cigarettes.
It helps for a moment
Until I am empty again.

I fill it with porn.
With sex.
Desperate for a physical sensation.
It helps for a moment
Until the addiction
Chips away
Piece by piece
And my spine is gone.

I see red.
Bright
Fucking
Red.

Why would I choose this?
do you think
I want this?
A choice?
Would *you* choose this?
For yourself?
NO

**SO WHY THE
FUCK
WOULD I**



Photographer: Drew Head • Model: Bev Rowley

Everything is black.
Empty and soulless.
My addiction steals
More from me.
my family
connections
love
laughter
and life.

I can't eat.
I am addicted to the emptiness.

I can't stop eating.
I am addicted to the fullness.

Stop looking at me like that
I can see your thoughts
Your eyes give way to your soul.
My size is not me
Whether frail
Or large.

Remember
Matter cannot be created
Nor destroyed.
The universe spared you
This trait
That has taken control.

There is no reason you are you
And I am me.
It is circumstantial
A random chance.
The universe rolled the dice.

...

I got 2
And you got 6.

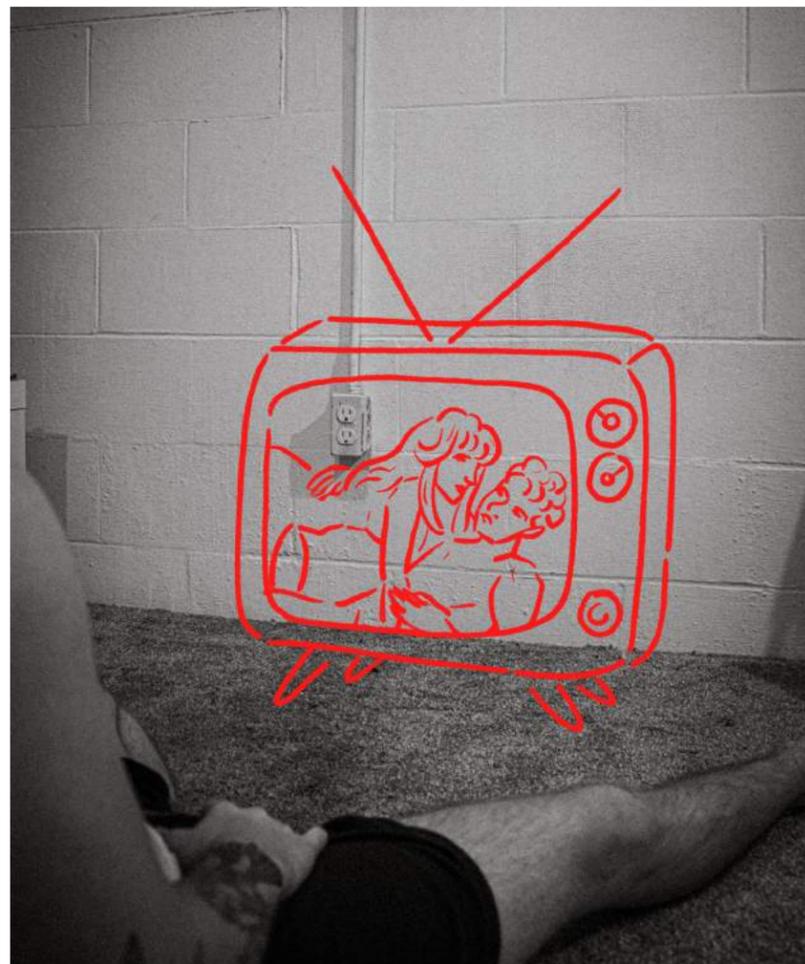
You would not choose this
No one does.
Certainly not I

Make it stop
I beg of thee
I am hungry.
Empty.
My chest is tingling
Deep from within.

I stand witness
Watching the film
Filled with horror.
I know what's coming
STOP I scream
DON'T DO IT I beg
But the characters remain.
They cannot hear me.

This empty void
Absorbs everything
I give it
With no remorse.
With no mercy.

I watch my cousins
Ripped from their mother
By necessity.
It's not her fault



Photographer & Model: Drew Head



Photographer: Drew Head • Model: Lexi Reed

She didn't choose this life
But neither did her children.
I ache for them all
Watching them sit
In my living room.

In the county jail I sit and wait
Hours after I totaled my car
Days before Christmas.
My father walks in
Only to leave me
Until the next day.
He wants me to learn a lesson
I suppose
I am an alcoholic.

I wait in the car outside the jail
Hours after watching my mother
Yank the IV from her arm.
Blood spewing everywhere

Hours after her DUI.
I was shopping for her Christmas present
And now I sob
panicking
In the emergency room bathroom.

I sit outside the jail
Hours after visiting the hospital
Where my daughter sits
After totaling her car.
My husband, her father, says
It's time for a lesson.
She spends the night in jail.

I sit in the car with my granddaughter.
We cry.
We cry about her mother in jail.
We cry about my father
And his addiction
And my childhood.

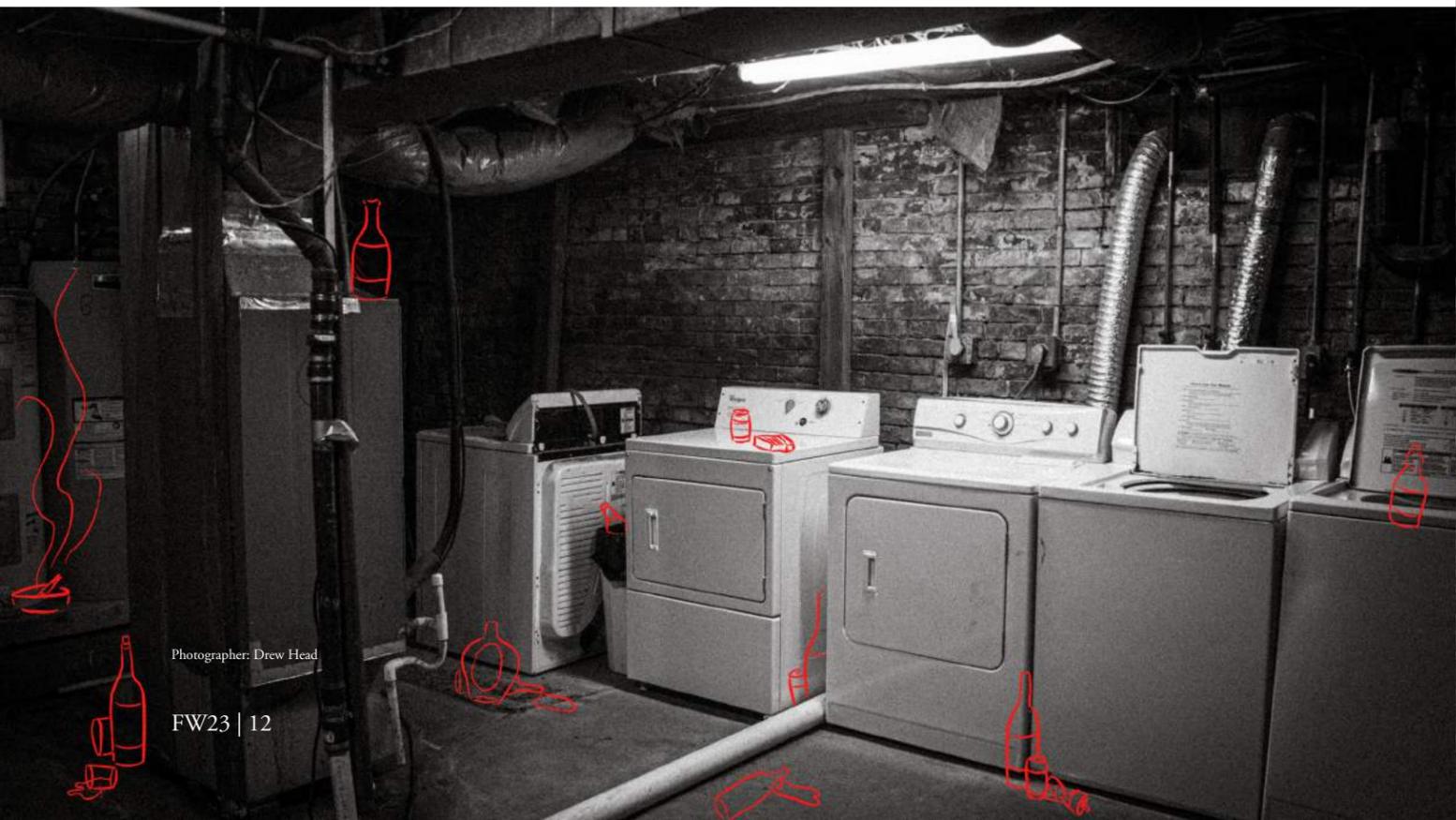
We sit and cry because we
Have been through this together.
Bonded for life
Her and I.

I am my daughter.
I am my granddaughter
My mother
My father.
The addict
The alcoholic.
The witness.
The endurer.

Now I am clean
I can eat
I can control my eating.
I can avoid porn
And limit sex.
I stopped buying alcohol
I stopped seeking drugs.
I sought control and tamed
The beast that ravaged
Inside of me
At my core.

Though it is tamed
the beast remains.
It always will be within
Rattling the bars
Begging to get out
Demanding sacrifice
slashing, fighting, writhing.

**I make a choice
Each day.
Beast,
Remain in the cage.**



Photographer: Drew Head



Photographer: Drew Head • Model: Zach Winger

RUSHING FOR PERFECTION

An editorial by Cierra Fitzgerald

Model: Briana Fitzgerald







Break Up with Your Anime Girlfriend

Mars Yates

- > be me
- > be a hot anime girl
- > have no real personality
- > objectified on the internet
- > used to sell merchandise

Who was your first fictional childhood crush? Edward from Twilight or Shego from Kim Possible or, if you're like me, Legolas from The Lord of the Rings? No matter what genre or medium you enjoy, there are always characters fans of a particular media idolize, especially in online spaces. You've seen the fan edits of anime boys on TikTok, you have them favorited. No matter your preferred genre or medium, there are characters you want to be; characters you want to be with, if you could. The joy of media is the possibility of it all: the divergence from the mundanity of your day-to-day, your class schedule and your 9 to 5.

Animated media in particular lends itself well to depicting things not possible for you in real life; intricate character design, fantastical plot lines and settings, and fast paced action sequences can be drawn only limited by creativity and not natural law. From pirates with superpowers to tentacled sex scenes, animation allows artists and viewers to explore things that wouldn't translate to live-action screens.

For some, this includes getting a girlfriend.

The rise of waifu culture in the west is something many people have likely come across online, thought "hey, that's weird!", and not given more thought before closing the tab. If you don't spend a lot of time in online fan spaces, the term waifu may not even be in your vocabulary.

Originating from the early 2000s internet amongst western anime fans, a waifu refers to an animated fictional woman character, usually from an anime, manga, or video game, that someone is romantically attracted to and considers to be their significant other (particularly, their wife). Okay, so some people online have fictional girlfriends; the internet is made for people to find their weird niche, so what's the issue?

"The problem does not lie in being attached to fictional characters — that would disregard the entire point of media in general — but particularly in the way these characters create synonyms between "wife" and "sex object"."

The way in which we consume media affects our perception of the real world. Blurring the lines between fiction and reality, especially when it comes to the commodification of women and their bodies as something to be viewed, marketed, and consumed, is messy at best and direly misogynistic at worst.

Popular waifus tend to fall into one-dimensional archetypes and lack any three-dimensionality inherent to the human experience. They become fetishized versions of a particular trait: naive, subservient, codependent, innocent, pure, physically flawless with maybe one or two other quirks to give a sense of some imitation of being human. The "ideal woman" to people with a waifu is not a three-dimensional person but someone physically attractive with no flaws and barely any personality. Even well developed



characters only get twenty minutes (undermined and intercut with panty shots or other explicit fan service) per episode runtime. There is no time to show how they live day to day, their habits, quirks, or their flaws; things that are inherent to the human experience and things all women in real life exhibit. Regarding one-note characters as the ideal puts women into impossibly narrow boxes and excuses objectification.

From conception, a majority of animated girls are designed with male sexual fantasies in mind. Fan service — risqué or overtly sexual scenes — are normalized in most mainstream content popular waifus are found in. It's an aspect many fans hold distaste for, and are expected to suffer through or ignore in favor of (sometimes) well-rounded media. From the story boarding room, sexual desire is used to be monetized; sex sells, even when it's animated. These pleasure-inducing objects are not limited to consumption by men, of course, but straight men are constantly told societally that they deserve an attractive woman that can fulfill all of their needs with minimal effort on their part to be the type of man she would want. In a society already built around over-consumption, it's easy to, quite literally, buy into.

The cycle is a simple formula: design conventionally pretty girls and give them slightly varying personalities so they seem different enough to choose your favorite. Let the internet do its job and engage contention among fans, generating more engagement with the media. Make the fans choose: Which animated girl do you want — the one with big boobs and green hair or the one with big boobs and pink hair? These waifu wars can get visceral, but any publicity is good publicity. Now that you have a favorite and you've proven your devotion in Twitter threads, do you want to buy a \$150 PVC figure of her? The fans do the rest of the work: sharing and consuming lewd art from twitter accounts that shell out models of girls in different iterations of suggestive positions and skimpy clothing. From the start, the end goal is to make money off the objectification of women. From the looks of it, that is exactly what they are doing.

Even characters without any sexual connotations or fan service in their source material often have sexualized official merchandise. Underage characters receive official art or figure launches in clearly provocative clothes and poses. Though fictional, the willingness to disregard everything about a character, including the fact that they are children, makes it obvious women's bodies are viewed both by consumers and producers as a commodity they can do whatever they want with, as long as it makes them money.

If a market for this didn't exist, we wouldn't see it. The blurring of lines between fiction and reality can get messy very quickly, and it is up to viewers to engage with media that depicts nuanced and diverse casts of characters. Giving women characters the same respect, development, and character flaws that men are allowed to have is a good step. Follow shows and games with diverse writing teams and support their work. Maybe get away from the echo chambers of Twitter sometimes.

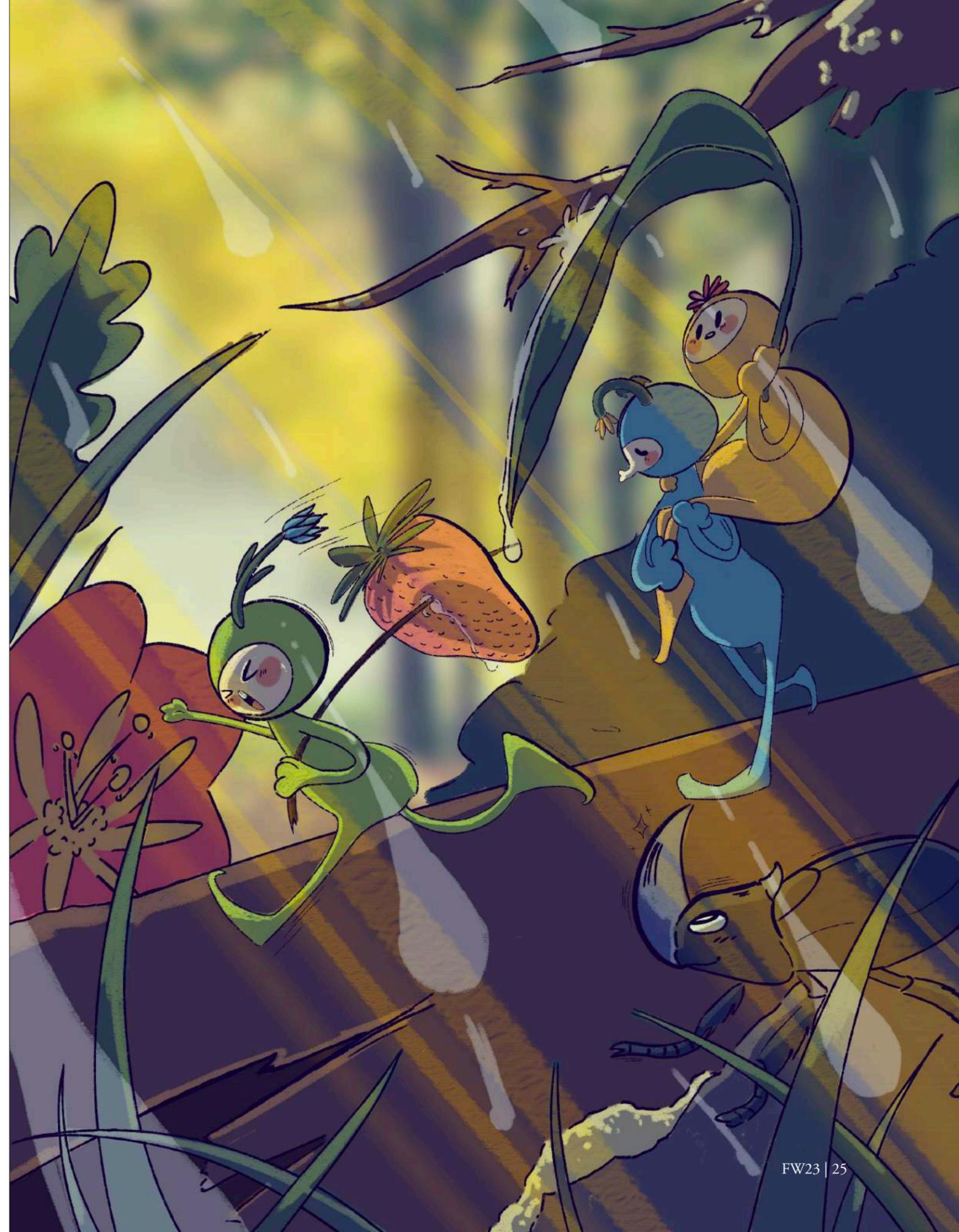
The takeaway here is not having a waifu is bad. Have a waifu! Have 10, if you want. The issue does not necessarily come from fawning over one-dimensional animated women, but when the lines are crossed between the media we consume and the people in our real lives. If you're going to froth at the mouth to defend animated girls, leave that behind when you close your laptop.



Illustrators: Lucy Blair and Eli Fossett

The Plant Pallette

Illustrators, in order: Kayla Allen, Holly Karges, Eli Fossett, Lucy Blair, Kamryn Johnson, Katherine Medina, Karri Fox









The Creative Lockdown

Oakland Jarboe

Think back to your early childhood, a time that can be blurry for most individuals. A little kid having the conversation: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Adults always seem to have some form of opinion on whatever you say, negative or not. It is a universal experience for kids growing up. Why is that? Why, as a society, do we pin down children’s dreams, making them feel bad so they will “be realistic” or “actually make money in the future”? Who decided that STEM-based careers are the only stable option in the workforce?

This social conditioning typically starts in the primary socialization point of life; young infants and children are raised with the understanding that you should do what makes you happy... but also “keep it logistic.” Sounds kind of counterintuitive, does it not? Throughout elementary school, you are continuously told that science and math

guidance counselors and advisors telling you to take AP Chemistry and Calculus because those fields help you in STEM college paths can be suffocating. The second you say you want to be a liberal arts student, they immediately try and backpedal your creative drive. When you socially condition a child by telling them to be a nurse instead of a dancer, even if that is the thing they have set their heart on, they are going to slowly piece together that every artistic job is “ridiculous” to achieve or hope for.

Society typically finds the liberal arts to be seen as ridiculous due to a capitalistic mindset. The main question people seem to ask when you tell them you are not in a STEM career is, “How can you make a living with that?” People have started to lose the “love what you do” mindset fundamental to creativity and self-expression. Now, the only thing that is focused on is maximal

profit, no matter the expense. It doesn’t matter to manufacturers if something is well made and will last or what damage it does to the earth; all that matters is that consumers are spending money. With this capitalist mindset, why would you make art? Why would you make things for people to enjoy that can’t be made in bulk for mass consumption? In capitalistic culture, the tender love and care that art has does not matter because money talks. Since money is the language of the world, they have to teach you that young.

Social institutions thrive via crippling, undying obedience needed to destroy creativity and outside-the-box thinking if you let the social normative traits get too intense. Starting at the beginning of existence, like all of our families and friends who were told the same spiel, all the way up through our entire lives, we have experienced this. That is why this works because we let it.



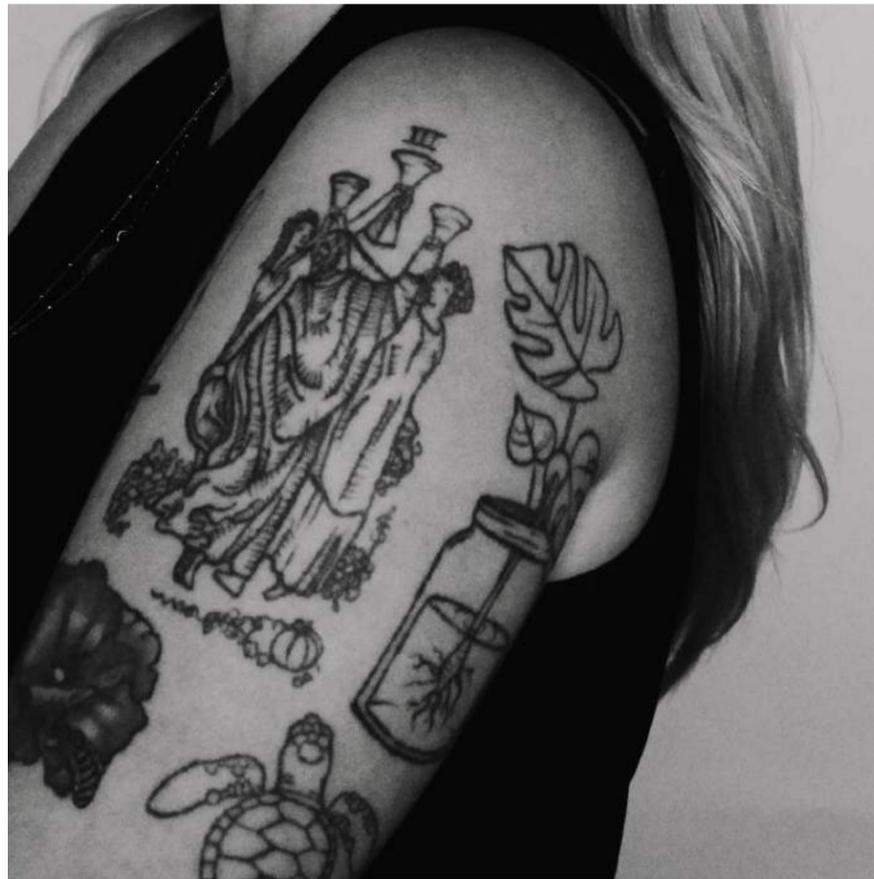
Illustrator: Katherine Medina



Science, technology, engineering, and math have a substantial impact on the built world physically, yes; however, what is the point of living if we cannot be creative with discoveries of the world and existence? This is not to say that one is more important than another, but more so an acclimation of the ideology that without one, the other cannot exist. With the creative thinking that led to creations in science and technology, giving us iPads, printers, and computers, we have digital art and animation. Meaning, in turn, you would not be reading this article or magazine today. You could sit here for hours thinking of ways the two field paths overlap, leading to infinitely many solutions.

Rather than pinning the two against each other, the goal should be a respectable bond between one another. This developing world relies on both, so it’s time society does the same.

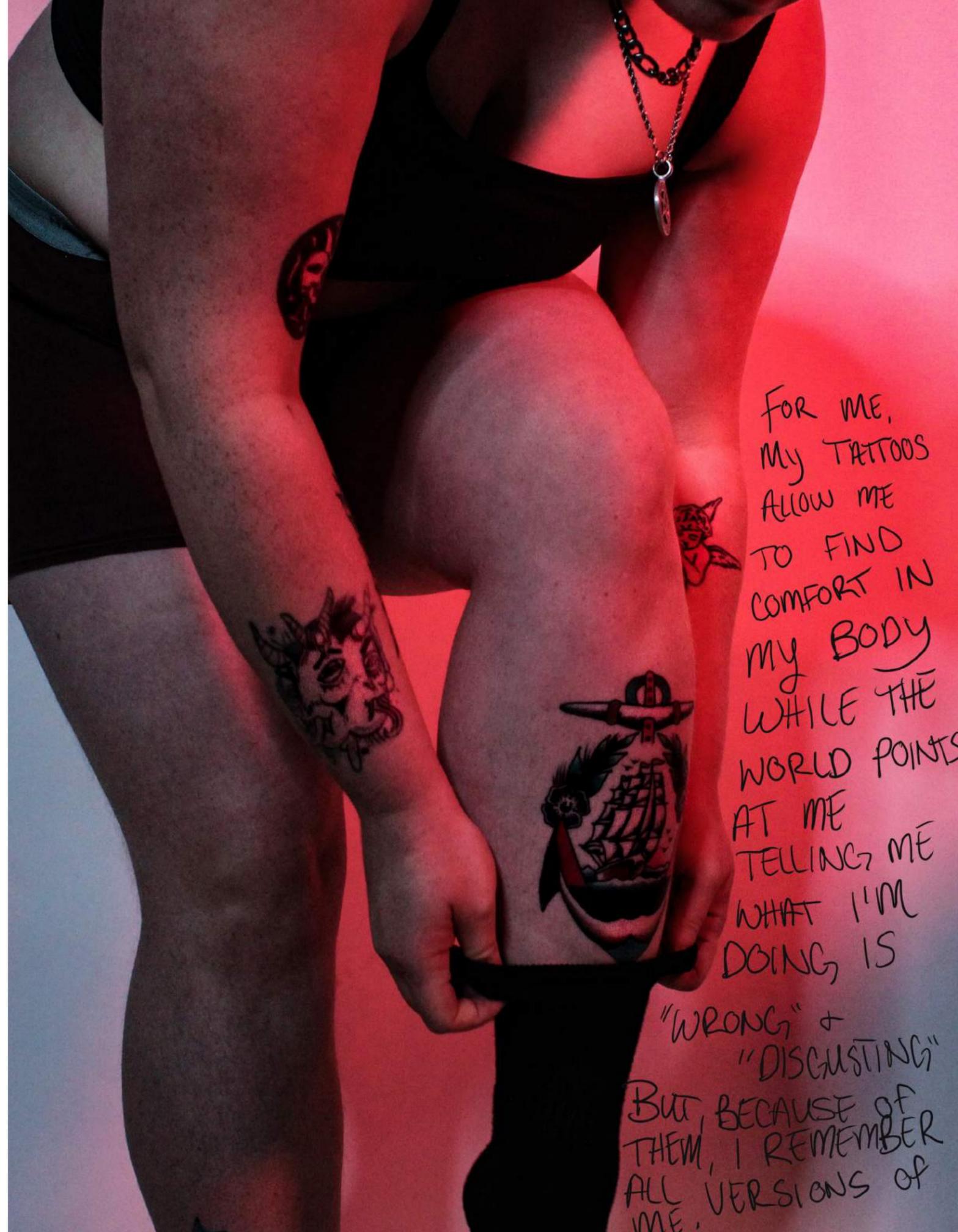
Who decided that STEM-based careers are the only stable option in the workforce?



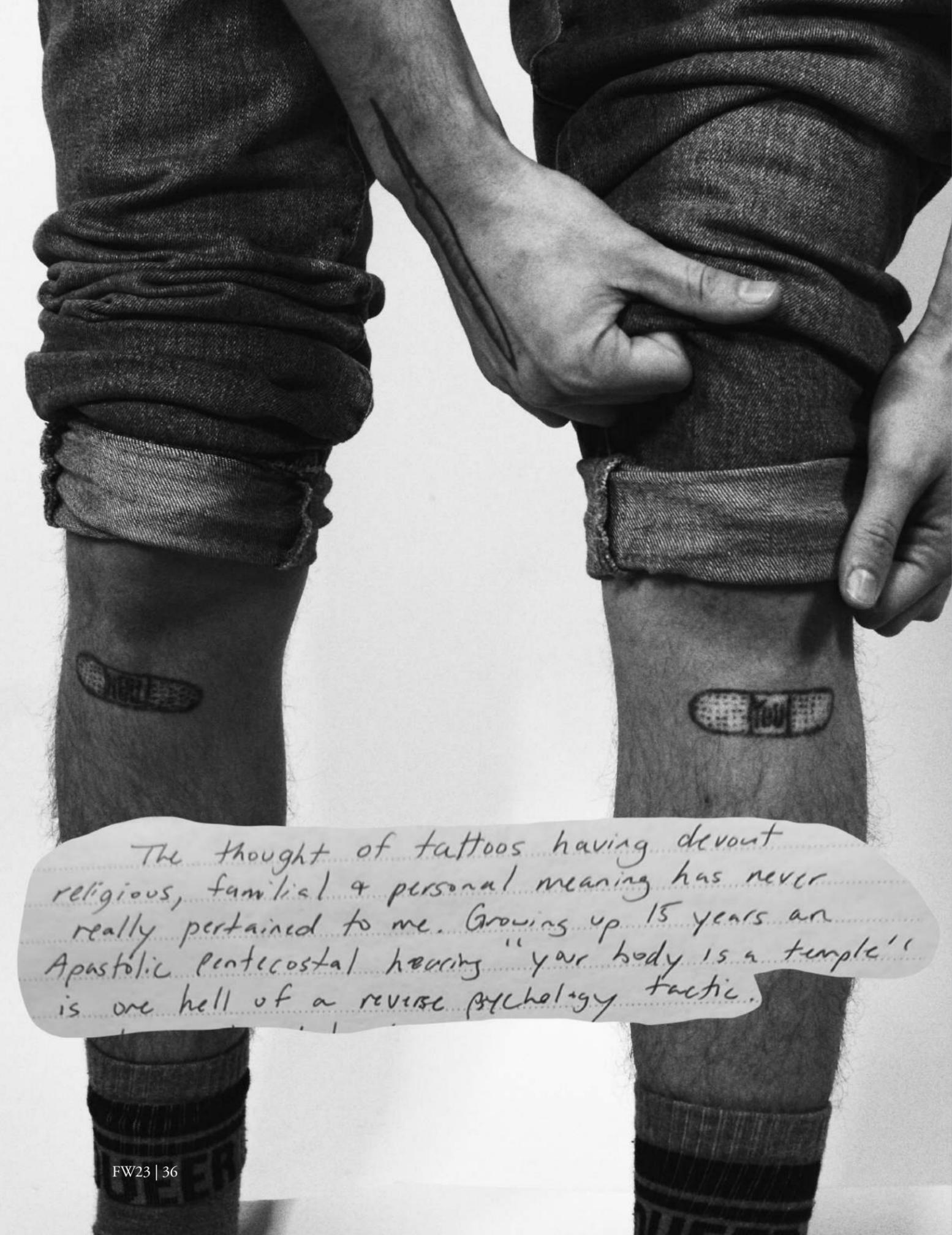
Beauty in Permanence

An editorial by Ripley Davoe

Models: Elizabeth Bowers, Ripley Davoe,
Mack Knight-Webster, Fox Stokes

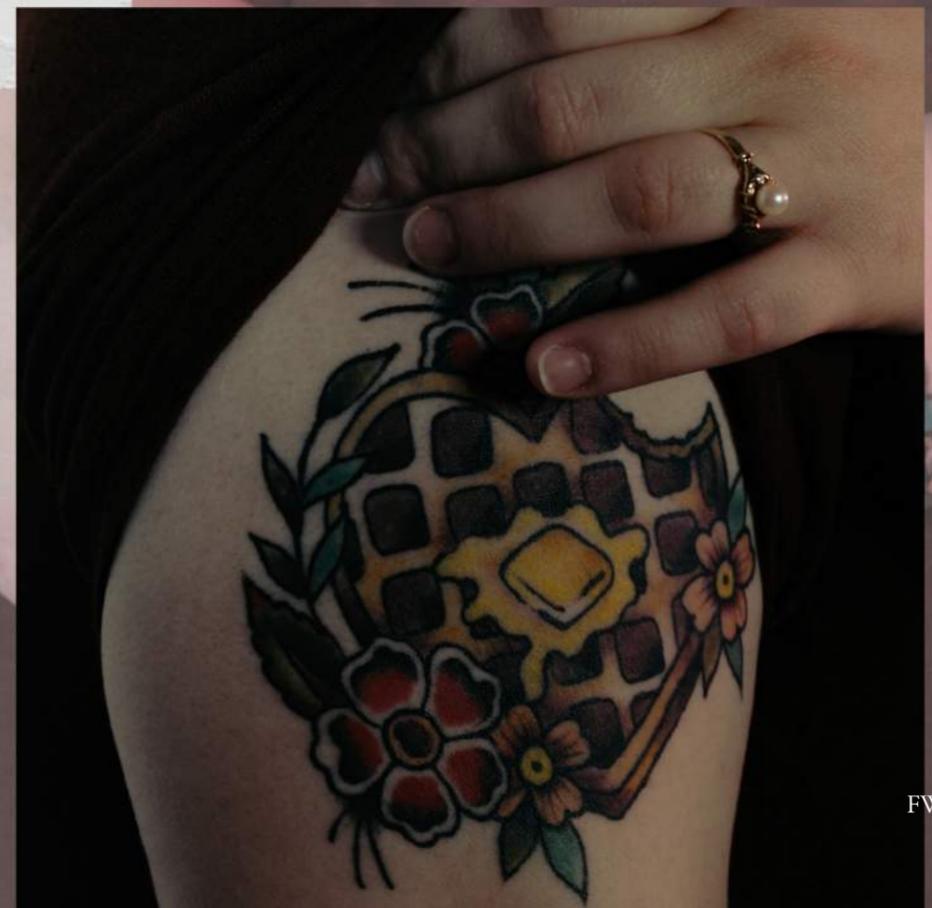


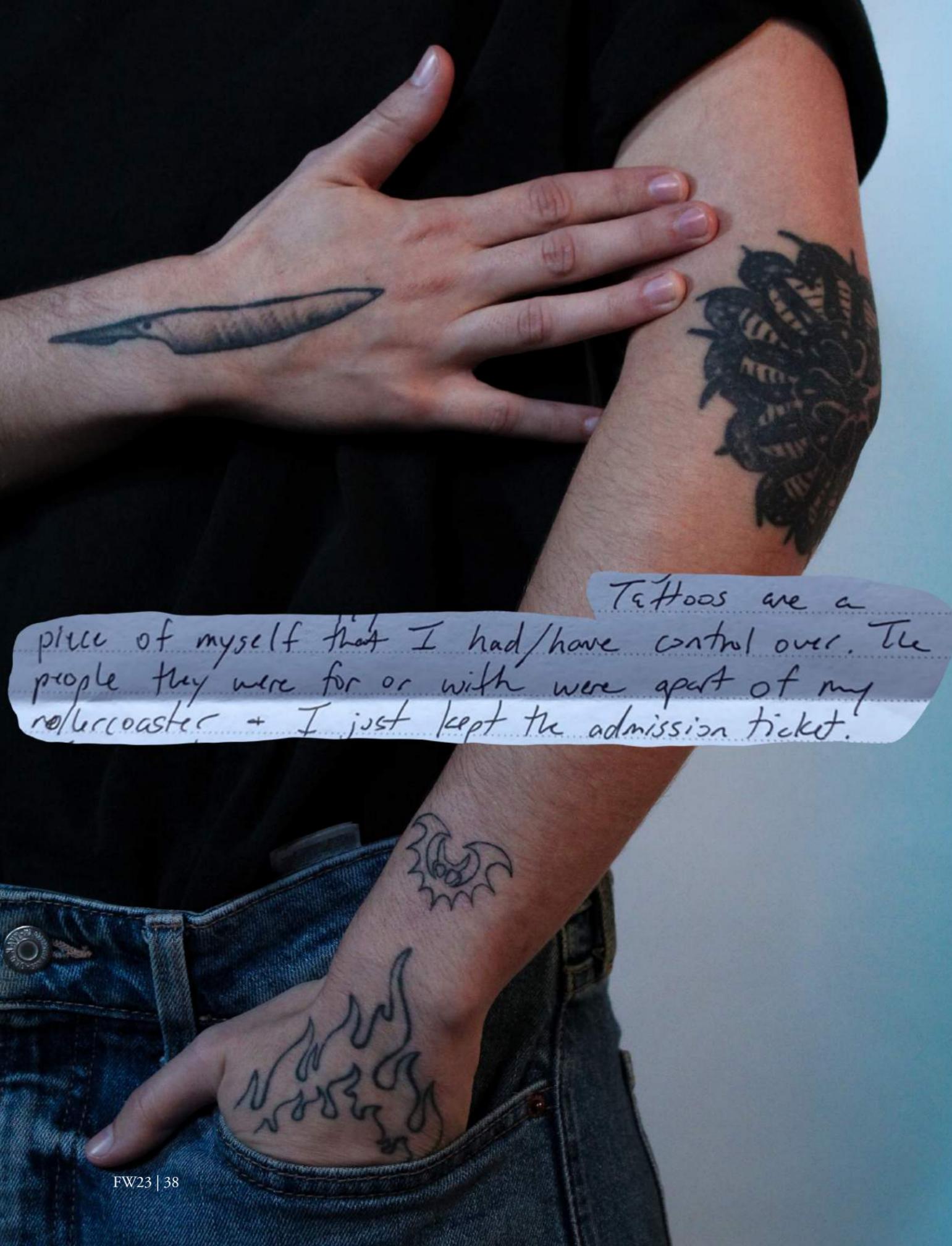
FOR ME,
MY TATTOOS
ALLOW ME
TO FIND
COMFORT IN
MY BODY
WHILE THE
WORLD POINTS
AT ME
TELLING ME
WHAT I'M
DOING, IS
"WRONG" +
"DISGUSTING"
BUT BECAUSE OF
THEM, I REMEMBER
ALL VERSIONS OF
ME.



The thought of tattoos having devout religious, familial & personal meaning has never really pertained to me. Growing up 15 years an Apostolic Pentecostal hearing "your body is a temple" is one hell of a reverse psychology tactic.

"I used to hate my body, but I never hated art or people. So when I started to fill the spaces on my body that I hated with art that reminded me of people and things I love - I had no choice but to start to love myself."





Tattoos are a piece of myself that I had/have control over. The people they were for or with were apart of my rollercoaster + I just kept the admission ticket.



People always say "you'll regret those when you're older" or "what if you hate it someday?" and I know I won't.

BROKEN PROMISES

Emely Sandoval

In the land of opportunity, where the pursuit of happiness is fundamental, a glaring inequity persists within its healthcare system. Beneath the surface of towering medical advancement and gleaming hospital facades, the United States healthcare system has repeatedly proven that it does not treat all its patients equally. Specifically, women of color (WoC) from Latinx and Black communities to Indigenous and Asian communities find themselves navigating a system that not only falls short but often dismisses them entirely. The statistics paint a grim picture: WoC faces a higher mortality rate during childbirth, lower breast cancer survival rates, and many more preventable chronic illnesses that go untreated or undiagnosed. It's a stark and sobering truth that demands our immediate attention. Even if you believe statistics can be easily manipulated, countless stories are shared by people who have been let down by a system that promised so much yet delivered so little.

To grasp the magnitude of this crisis, we turn to the lived experiences of women like my mom, a resilient woman, who has faced the harsh realities of a healthcare system that failed her at every turn. My mom's journey began several months ago when she first started experiencing gnawing,

sharp pains that seemed to radiate from her stomach, leaving her doubled over in discomfort. These persistent, painful sensations were like a relentless drumbeat, a constant reminder of her distress. She described them as waves of discomfort, sometimes sharp and stabbing, other times a dull, persistent ache that seemed to settle in the pit of her stomach. These pains were a cruel companion, an unwelcome guest that lingered far longer than any of us had anticipated. Being the resilient and independent woman she is, she initially dismissed them hoping they would subside on their own. As the days passed, the pain grew increasingly unbearable, mercilessly robbing her of sleep and leaving her in a perpetual state of discomfort. It was as if every passing moment only intensified the agony, and we could see the toll it was taking on her. One fateful night, it became clear that we couldn't wait any longer. My older sister and I found ourselves in a whirlwind of urgency, helping our mom into the car, her face contorted in pain. The urgency in her eyes mirrored the urgency we all felt.

Driving to the emergency room in the dead of night, the world outside seemed eerily quiet, with



Illustrator: Kayla Allen

only the distant hum of passing cars to break the silence. The weight of the situation hung heavy in the air, a palpable tension that seemed to thicken with every passing mile. My heart raced, and I could feel my sister's anxious glances from the driver's seat. All I could think about was getting my mom the help she desperately needed, and the uncertainty of what lay ahead filled me with a mix of fear and determination. It was a surreal and tense experience, a race against time to bring my mom the relief she so desperately deserved.

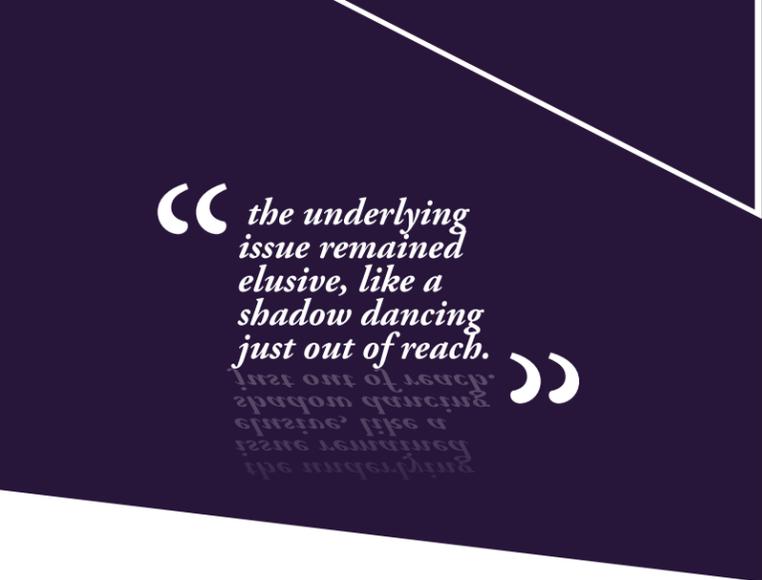
The attending physician swiftly conducted an endoscopy, hoping to shed light on the source of her suffering. While the procedure provided some insight, it didn't yield a definitive diagnosis. Instead, they prescribed medication to manage the pain and recommended further testing. It was a glimmer of hope, yet the uncertainty lingered. Days turned into weeks and the pain persisted. A return trip to the hospital became inevitable. This time, they opted for an ultrasound, hoping it would unlock the answers we so desperately sought. Regrettably, the results left us in the same state of ambiguity. It was disheartening, to say the least, to see my mom endure all of this without any concrete answers. The cycle of appointments and tests continued, each offering a glimmer of hope but ultimately leading to more questions than answers. By the time of the fifth doctor's appointment, my sister and I were adamant about accompanying her. We had a strong suspicion that the doctors may have been harboring a misguided assumption about her pain tolerance as a WoC being much higher than the one of a white woman.

It felt absurd, almost maddening, that she had undergone four tests across as many appointments, yet the underlying issue remained

elusive, like a shadow dancing just out of reach. We couldn't help but feel a mix of emotions – frustration at the lack of progress, fear for our mom's well-being, and a sense of helplessness in the face of this medical mystery. There were moments when anger bubbled up, a simmering frustration at the system, and the sense of being let down by it. We wanted answers, a solution, something concrete to hold on to. It felt like we were floating in a sea of uncertainty. As the appointments piled up, so did the medical bills. The financial strain was palpable, adding pound after pound to the already piling weight of fear and anxiety on top of our family. In the face of mounting expenses and the ongoing uncertainty surrounding her health, my mom returned to Guatemala, seeking the comfort of familiar surroundings and, hopefully, access to improved healthcare options.

A week before her scheduled flight, a dark turn of events further complicated my mom's situation. She received devastating news that the local cartel was menacing her and our family in Guatemala, demanding that we relinquish ownership of a property registered under our name. The threats were accompanied by demands for a significant sum of money. I vividly recall the day my mom received that distressing news. My sister and I had just returned from school when we heard her scream and rushed to her. She was on the floor, crying and shaking. My mom puts in immense effort to earn a living, and the mounting hospital, along with the distressing news of the cartel threatening her mom and sisters unless the cartel was paid off, had deeply shaken her. As her departure date approached, I couldn't help but feel a pang of worry for her safety.

Nevertheless, she had to go. During her week in Guatemala, my mom visited the doctor on her



fourth day. This time, to our relief she received a diagnosis on the spot. The doctor informed her that she was suffering from constipation, and it turned out that the medication she had been taking was the root cause. It really shocked me. I had feared it was something more serious, and discovering it was a medication-induced issue causing such distress was surprising. When she followed the instructions her doctor gave her, a few weeks later, the pain completely went away. My mom's horrible experience at the doctor's office made me reflect on the stark contrast between the healthcare system in the US and the one in a developing country like Guatemala. One cannot turn a blind eye to the numerous studies and reports that chronicle the disparities faced by WOC in healthcare. And like anything else wrong with the United States, one of the most insidious aspects of this issue is racism. More specifically the concept of being white. After all what is “white” but something that white Europeans invented to justify their mistreatment of anyone darker than them? Whiteness, in this context, does not merely refer to the skin color of individuals but rather the societal construct that implicitly grants privileges to those who conform to its norms. It is a pervasive force that often goes unnoticed by those who benefit from it while simultaneously exerting a stifling influence on those who do not.

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CREDITS



can·did

/ˈkændəd/ · adjective

Truthful and straightforward; frank.

Candid Magazine is a student-focused art/editorial magazine made by college students for everyone.

This magazine is an outlet for students to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions in creative ways.

