

pearl press



ISSUE NO. 16: HAIL MARY

May 2023

This issue of Pearl Press features work from:

Courtney Heidorn
Lucie March
Sanchez Vicario Murray
Sadie Sanders
Jon Feinstein
Khadija Ceesay
Jenny Magruder
Maura Jamieson
Megan Sinclair
Manuel Luna
Alborz Kamalizad
Mar Wolf
Beatriz Seelaender
Darius Phelps

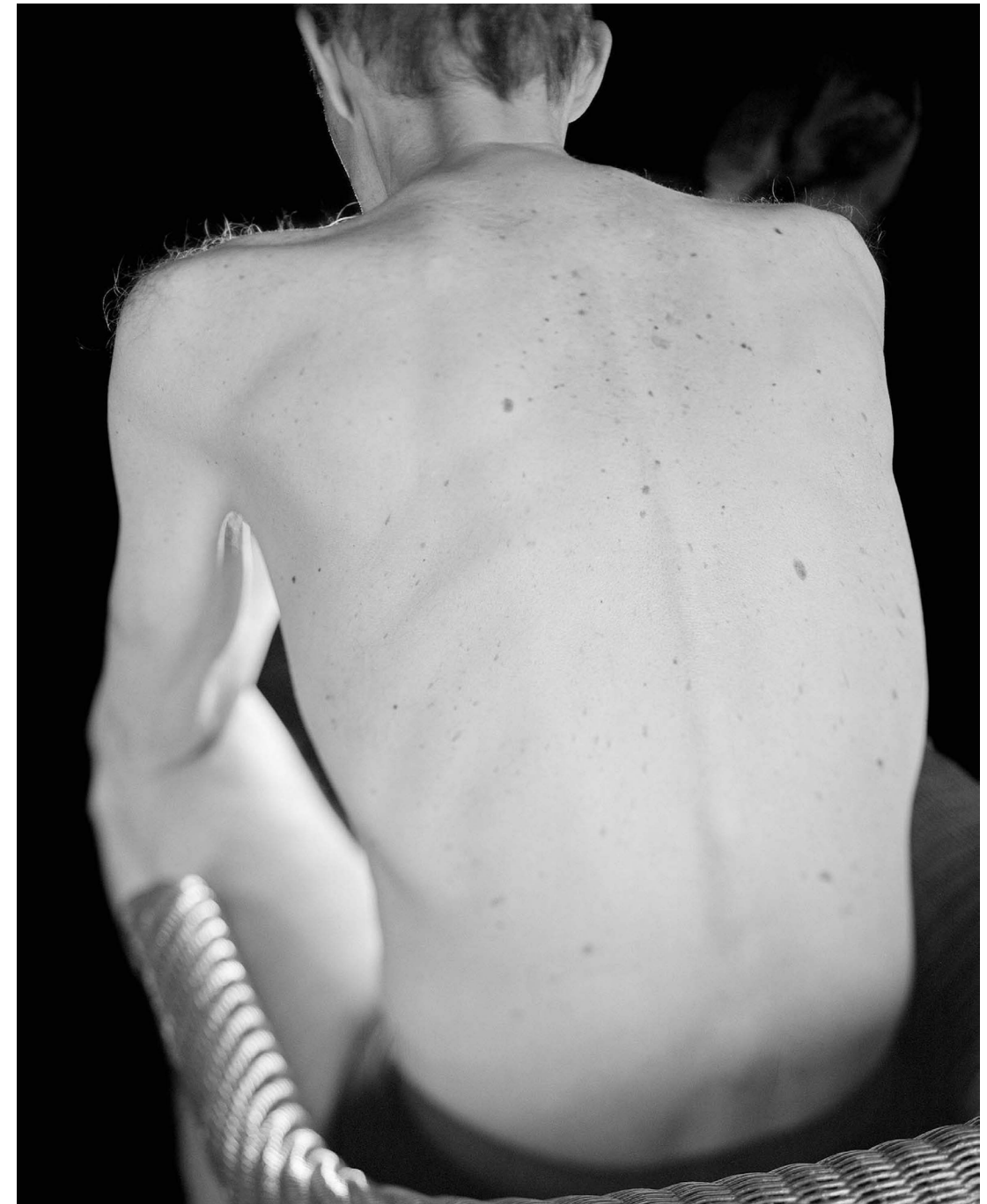
Cover image: Sanchez Vicario Murray

Curated by: Delilah Twersky

TRAPPED: PINING IN LOVE

Piranesi painted you—
drowning and lost,
I am inside your frame.

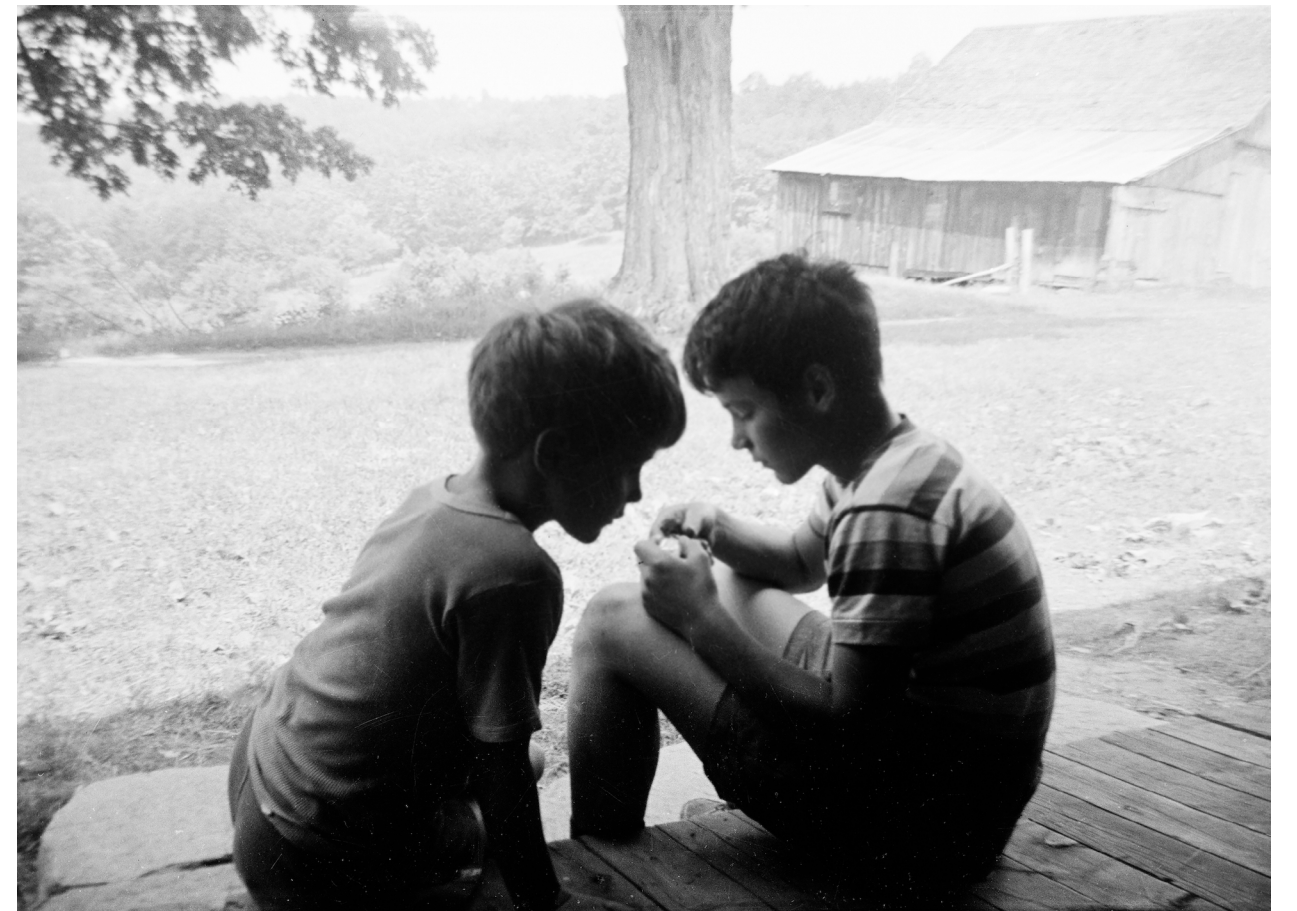
Courtney Heidorn



Untitled (Father II) from Core Sample, 2022: Lucie March



Extraterrestrial: Sanchez Vicario Murray



Two Boys from Core Sample, 2022: Lucie March



Untitled: Sadie Sanders



Untitled: Sadie Sanders



Untitled: Sadie Sanders



Untitled, 2020: Jon Feinstein

MAGIC SHOW

I am standing in the middle of a dive bar
holding a knife as a microphone.
I am giving pieces of my tongue
to an audience who chews and spits it out at my feet.

They ask if I have cake instead,
tell me my knife is dull but don't offer me
a bandage when I show them the inside of my mouth.

For my next trick, I will dig into the flesh of my arms,
and shovel fistfuls of myself into the mouths of
these zombies, the best I can do on such short notice.

They rumble when I reach into my ribcage
and pull out a rabbit to present them with my
sacrificial poetry.

Khadija Ceesay



Untitled (Unraveled) from Core Sample, 2022: Lucie March



Proof series: Jenny Magruder



Proof series: Jenny Magruder



Light Interiors series: Maura Jamieson



A Preservation of Character 19: Megan Sinclair



Jalisco Pier: Manuel Luna

SOUND COMES BEFORE WORDS

meaning,
an owl coos before “I’m sorry” and
a tree falls before “I don’t miss you” but

your violent words sound as if the cruel ocean tides could speak.

And I’m scraping words off my tongue
like I just ate sand, hoping it would be water.

But I cannot make a noise that sounds like
forgiveness,

meaning,
the scream of a lamb, then, silence.

Courtney Heidorn



Ponder: Sanchez Vicario Murray



Earthshine series: Alborz Kamalizad

CARINA

Here we are! Straight through glass walls streaked in fiber glass cleaner, right between little fog plumes there's our faces pressed at the sides, tacky in sweat and gritty dust or sand, decidedly friends now — just friends — our hands itch for zip flies and warm skin and also wet dirt to sink into. With a mouthful of each others' spit on the curb, it's dry and scratchy at the throat, skating past empathy and straight to pretermission, there's a faint electricity as a result of repeated action where, through diaphanous linen curtain adornments parted in an opus of lace shadows to our hands and to our faces, I am speaking to a more disastrous being, or state of being, saying I miss time, I always will, saying it from my ears, leaking from my eyes and it's a split tongue that snakes and darts with tides and moon cycles and vaginas.

There were a few lapses. I am having a very difficult time breathing. We have become such great friends. I wonder, at night, what you look like upside down and sometimes naked, or with a hat on. I earn my Class M licensing and buy a self-help book because that's all I can afford 'till the next direct deposit. Sometimes it feels all right to pity yourself.

You were chewing on popsicle sticks in bed like an ant colony. Shredded wood pasted the pillow-cases in sticky pink residue, like liquid amoxicillin, and the bedroom felt more like a hospital those days, anyway. I asked, How have you been, as if I hadn't seen you since the coma outset and you stirred in your own eyes wondering where the voice was coming from, the ceiling firstly, and finally falling into my own, I have been sleeping.

Here we are! One of us piss-drunk facing a brick wall and the other with their shoes tied together across the street. I see you not here, but ten minutes later, with cigarettes on opposite curbs and a leg splayed into traffic. And, at times I'm spiking cortisol with this repeated lock, with this shared hue of uncountability and a lopsided stigmatism and a passing wryness, now, hemorrhaging a face of distance. I think, Maybe it's still all right! Maybe we still have time! And it was me piss-drunk and you with thirty-six waking hours straight, and the distance generates a pulsing flush to cheek and massage to lymph nodes, to ease the cracked hoarseness in dry air, It's not that far, it's not too late, I'll meet you again.

I meet you again and remember ten words of it without realizing they'd be a part of the last; Here we are, I say, and I think your cigarette's caught you fire, you say, oh, I miss time, I always will.

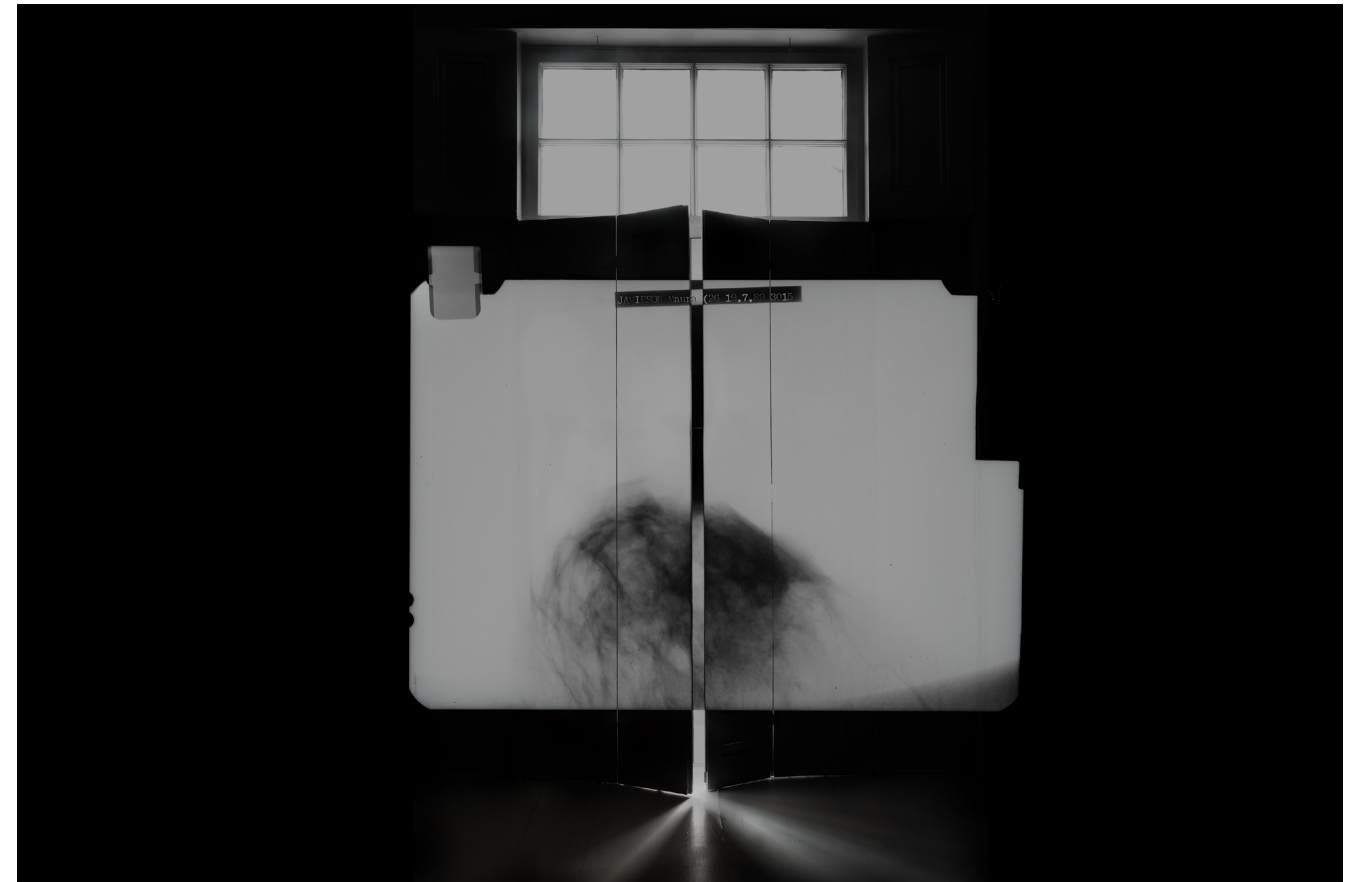
Mar Wolf



Sorry: Sanchez Vicario Murray



Untitled: Sanchez Vicario Murray



Light Interiors series: Maura Jamieson



Untitled: Sadie Sanders

CLASS NOTE

is sublimation purely instrumental sadness / to be drunk on whine / is it piety, squandered
/ is it slander by caress / empathy by self-absorption / a plot of land left to wander / repen-
tance by vanity / the temptation of doom as a sense of religious duty / our shortcomings
being minor affairs compared to / the suffering of others / acceptance of death just a preten-
sion of eternity / is every poem a last-breath hail-Mary for transcendence / a parting shot
for, if not divine, long-lasting acknowledgement

but is every poem a hail-Mary or is / every hail-Mary a poem?

Beatriz Seelaender



Earthshine series: Alborz Kamalizad

HAIL MARY

The sky cried on my behalf —
and yet, still I found myself
kneeling in your presence,
praying for the rain.
I'm so tired of simply
breathing.
so tired of my heart —
This sick and twisted heart
automatically beating
Mechanically programmed
to ruin everything
these worthless hands
can touch.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms
and keep me safe*

Dear lord, I am still grieving
but I am not afraid of the fire,
for I know it is fueled
in my desire to succeed,
rewrite this troubled word
for my seed.
Still I selfishly dream
of dowsing myself
in sins sweet gasoline.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms
and keep me safe*

All of you want something from me...
can't you see my devilish grin,
the taste of sin upon my lips,
the gaze of temptation in my grief stricken eyes?
I am so sick of living , sick of giving.

*Oh, how I wish
this world were mine.
Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms
and keep me safe*

I just want to live in a land
where my demons can play
and run free all day.
Where they know beauty
is a true sadness
are free to embrace
our unhinged madness.
For now, the only peace that lies ahead
is when this depression plagued body
finally heaves, deteriorating,
and lingering between the veil
of sweet heaven and euphoric hell.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms and keep me safe*

Hearing you sing me to sleep,
knowing that this battle will never cease,
for my desire is to wade
in the sweet comfort
of hell's decadent fire.
*Nobody seems to get,
just how bad I want to fucking burn.*
I'm not really living,
just passing the time
waiting for death to come
take me away.
My tear ducts dry as a bone,
the same ones that cage this hollow heart

They make you feel like the work you do is useless.
These demons came from
the juices and warmth of your semen.
But my heart is forever cold.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms and keep me safe*

Hallelujah they steadily praise your name
but in my mind, I'm not sure
if I can do the same
abandoned and destitute
during my time of need.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms
and keep me safe*

The first sound of heartbreak
always reverberates the loudest.
Before she died, she sang me psalms.
Psalms of the heartbreak church.
Unknowingly, I would spend the rest of my days
begging her precious lord
to stake my hand,
for there is only so much
my solemn soul
can stand.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms
and keep me safe*

I crave the unconditional love
like the one you had for me.
I stare into her eyes and wonder
if she will hold me as I die.
My body shudders at the sounds
of the distant sirens.
The echoing, haunting cry of my people
as we fall to the ground
praying for salvation
as their bullets ricochet
My lord, I can't breathe
We bleed steadily on immigrant land
Broken apart by the colonizers hand
Earth has now become a place I can't stand.
People down here are dying,
*but I just simply want to live in the sky
curl up next to you
as you walk hand in hand with the most high*

These tears I've cried are now sea deep
You are only one who has
ever truly saw me for me.
Take me away
with the current of the flood
before I drown in my sea of sins.
Maybe this time
I'll let the devil win.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
Wrap me in your arms
keep me safe.*

Darius Phelps



Earthshine series: Alborz Kamalizad

Your key
to immortality
is in the quality of the
photographs
and nothing else.

*Richard Underwood, chief of NASA
photography, speaking to astronauts*

Earthshine series: Alborz Kamalizad

Thank you for reading.
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www.pearl-press.com

Delilah Twersky
Pearl Press
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