

pearl press



ISSUE NO. 26: SEED

September 2025

This issue of Pearl Press features work from:

Dustin Randall Keirns, Adelina Rose Gowans, Kat Shannon, Morgan Caramello, Mustafa Sarp Danisoglu, Jon Feinstein, Jeremy Ackman, Sherry Presnall, Chloe Scout Nix, Lukas Michaels, Toby Cotton, Vanessa Luz Vargas, Robin Campbell, Emmalyne Rosser, Judith Hornbogen, Alex Dawson

Cover image: Jon Feinstein

Curated by: Delilah Twersky



Unfinished Proofs: Dustin Randall Keirns

FAMILY TREE TELEPHONE ★

On my parents' 25th wedding anniversary, 800 miles away, I get approved for my first apartment. I post a picture on Instagram of my parents at an environmentalism event in the early 2000s, with me in a big blue baby backpack. Dave responds to my Insta story: We were all babies then! And I think of the papercut artist I follow on Instagram who wrote in a caption, once: Every cool thing about me my mother simply did first. See, I'm a writer because Dave always had a story in his pocket to give me—a vessel to turn the limits of my babyworld into endless wonder. I struggle to sit down and rest because Coco is made of energy and she gave me her racehorse heart. Our luck intersects like fireworks ☆ like nuclear family sweetgirl sparks. I stare at the photograph—the blackwater river behind us and the little leafy plants in front of us, the birdbox, the expanse of trees.. the Edisto River: my babyapartment; how everything in the photo came from somewhere and so did the three of us—all together, intersecting like the idea that if you believe—like, really believe—you can dream the world into something new.

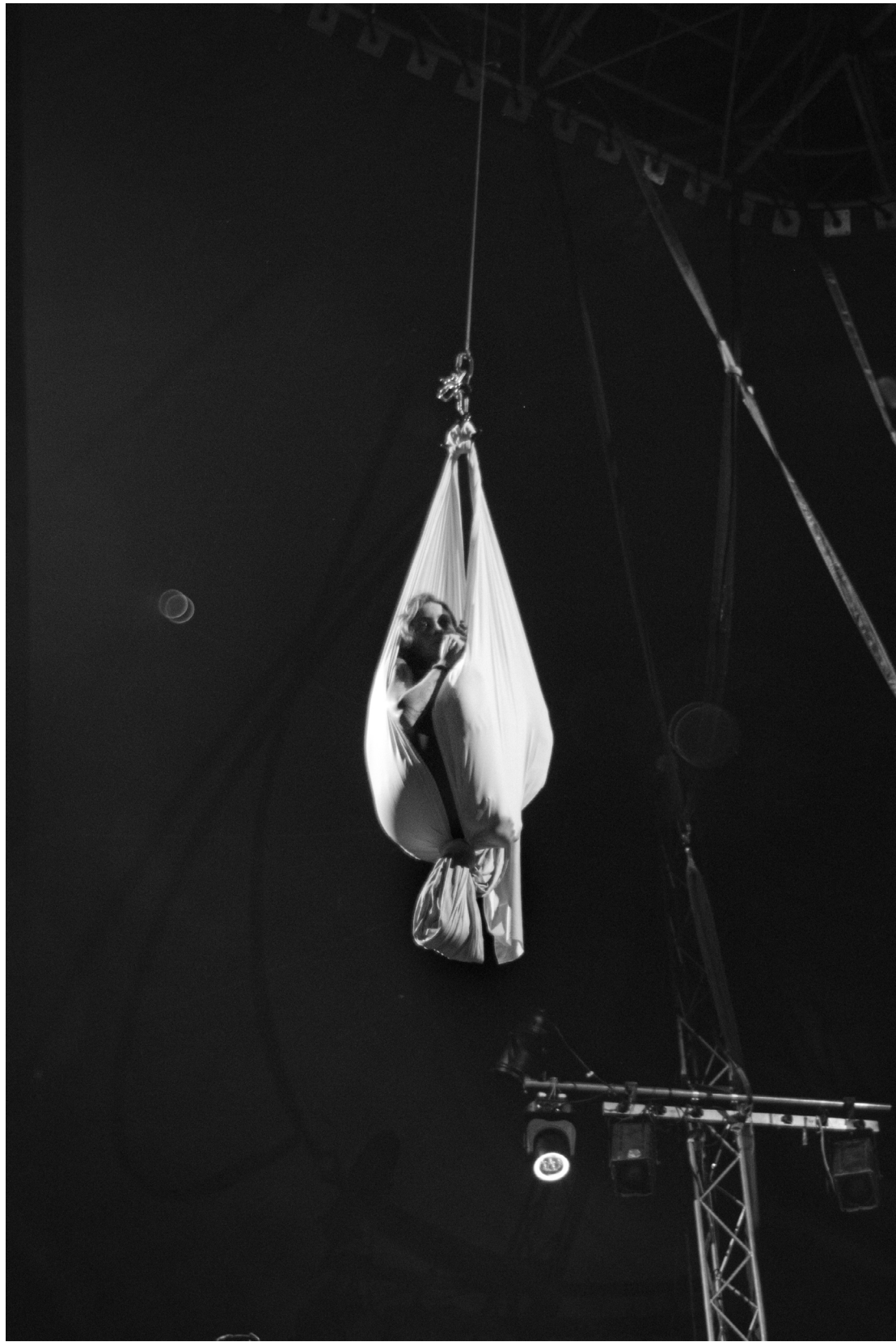
Adelina Rose Gowans



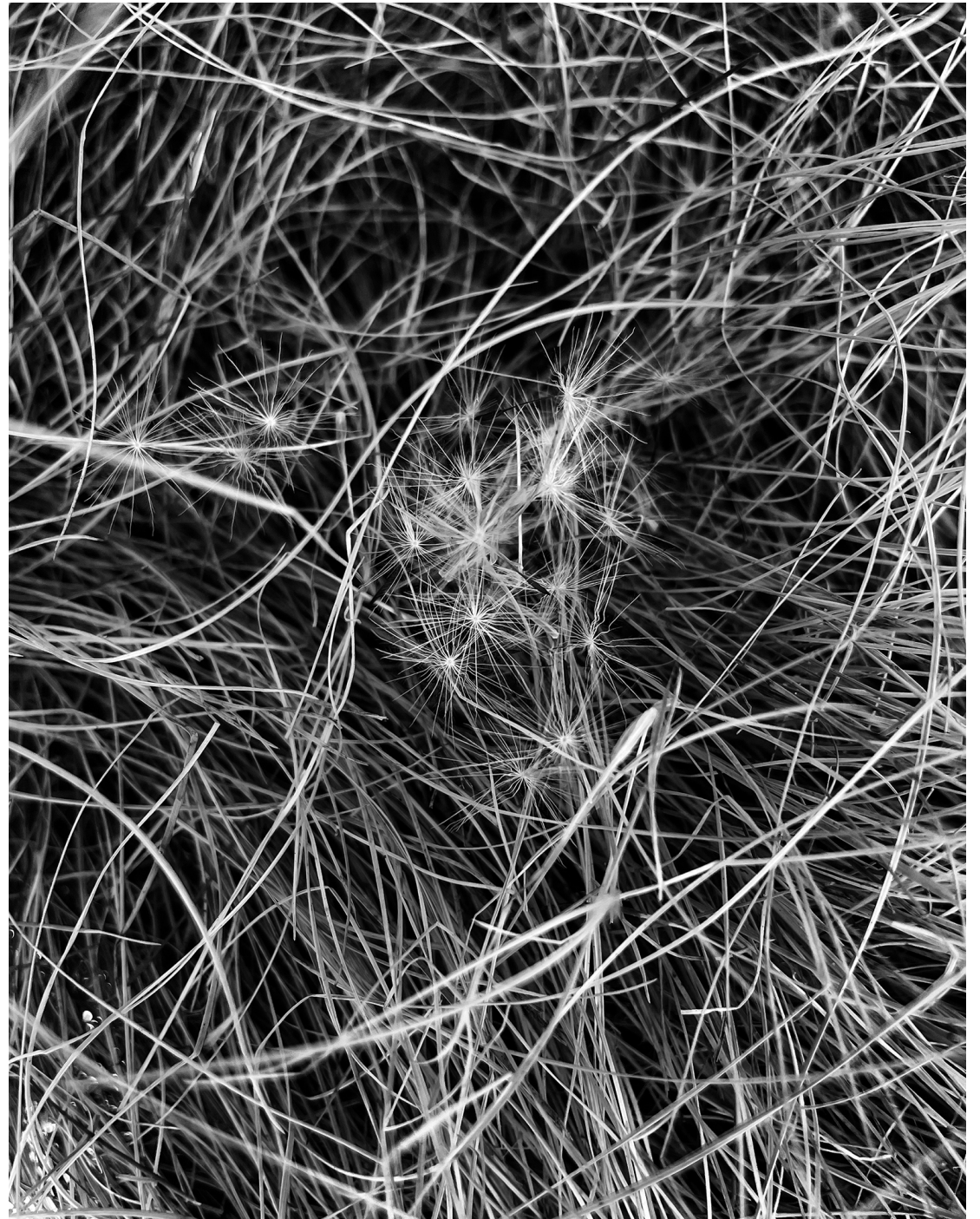
Untitled: Kat Shannon



The Battery, Silver Gelatin print 11.5 x 14, 2025: Morgan Caramello



Hanging in Between: Mustafa Sarp Danisoglu



The Balance: Jon Feinstein



Untitled: Jeremy Ackman

SHANGRI-LA

Bobby dropped him off at the entrance of the Shangri-la.

A cracked plastic sign at the corner insists

“Here, You’re Home!”

Rows of double wides sit shoulder to shoulder.

Cigarette smoke billowing out of cloudy windows.

The Arkansas Sun bakes the scruffs of teenage boys who are

too tall and too angry for their mothers to grab with floured fists.

Before, when the house didn’t have wheels,

He drifted in and out of daydreams.

Their edges tinged with more colors than brown.

Rust creeps through the bones of the place now.

Rowdy, winged things get caught in blue porch light.

This new earth smells of lemongrass and this heaven reeks of rot.

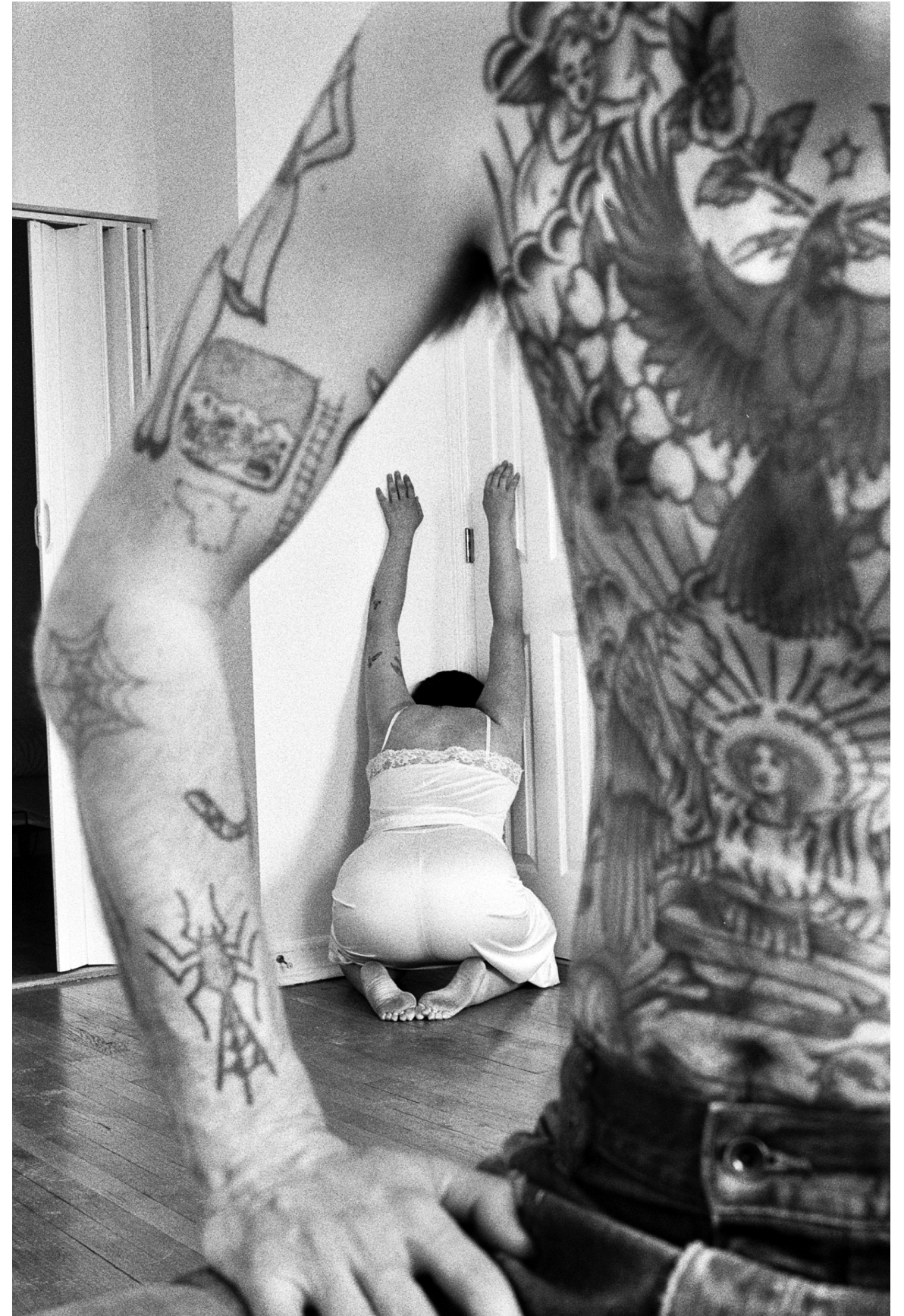
The decaying heart of a town and a mother who lost their pulses at the same time.

Memories live inside the chicken wire garden.

Side by side with cherry tomatoes, weeds grow like a second skin.

Two yellowing seeds beneath the surface.

Sherry Presnall



She is Sunday: Chloe Scout Nix



Foundations: Lukas Michaels

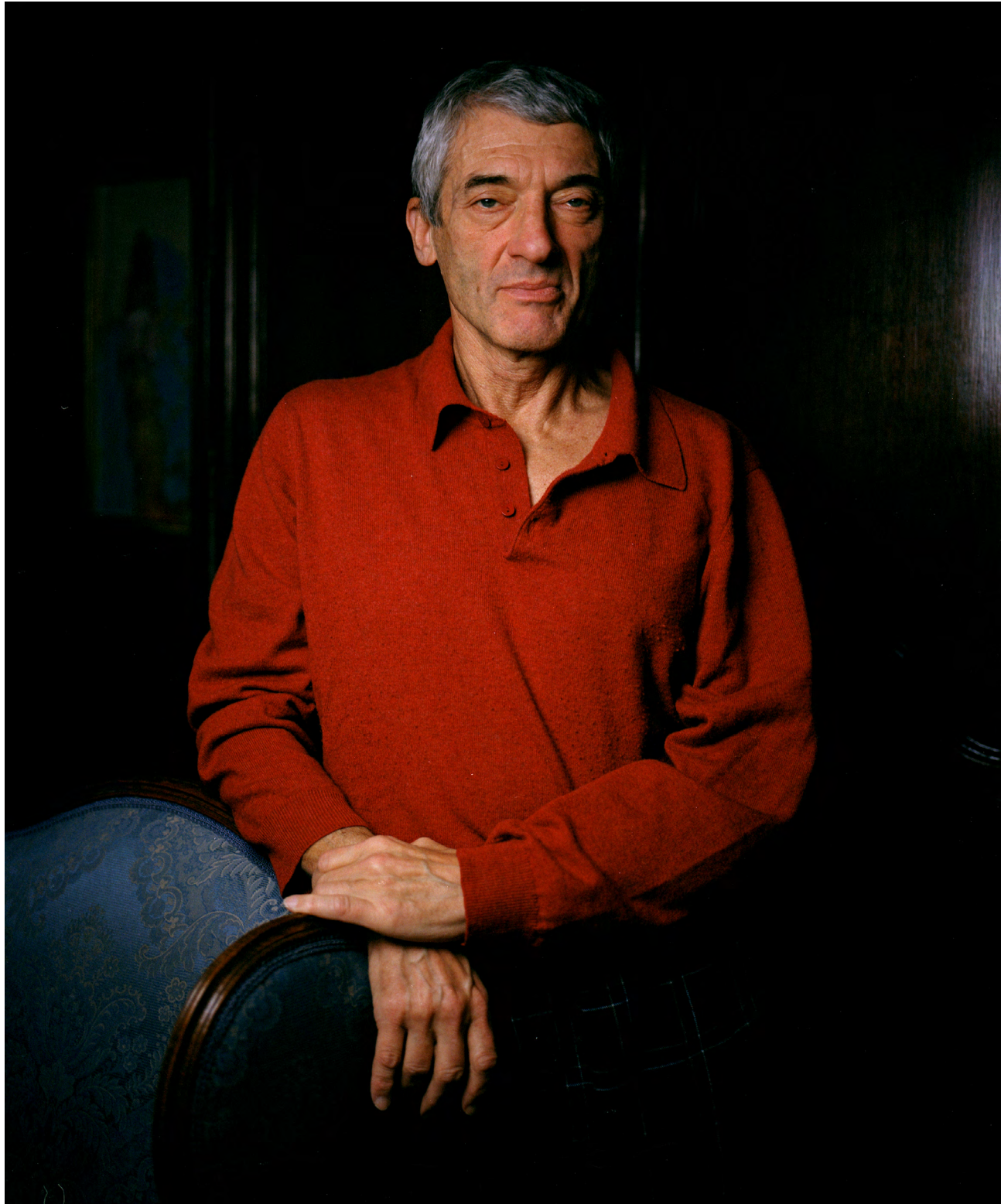


Foundations: Lukas Michaels

A MEADOW

Freshly cut grass. Creamy white shirts -
people sat cross-legged, their backs to me.
Suffused light held in the air by trillions
of ions of pollen or perhaps something else.
I notice a face turned back to meet my gaze.
It belongs to my father. Serious yet serene
and ever so slightly nodding to me, shifting
the light. It seems to say 'we are where
we're destined to be. What you are is right.'

Toby Cotton



David Portrait: Dustin Randall Keirns



Untitled: Vanessa Luz Vargas



Keep the Plants from Burning, Silver Gelatin print 11.5 x 14, 2025: Morgan Caramello



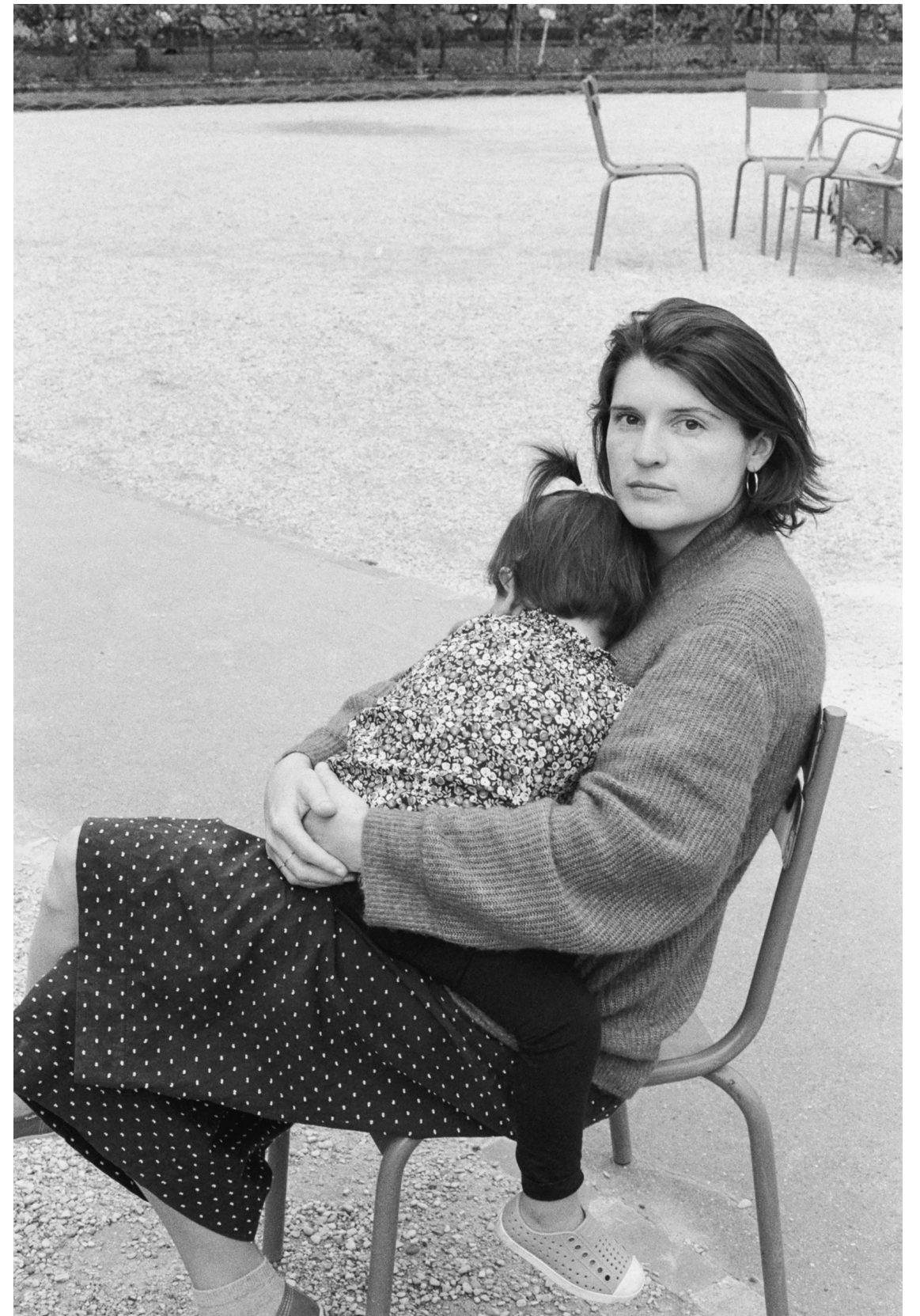
David on Edge: Dustin Randall Keirns



Lounging: Dustin Randall Keirns



Untitled: Kat Shannon



Untitled: Kat Shannon



Foundations: Lukas Michaels



THE YIELD THAT TOOK YOU

Gardeners' World tells me
that planting is a hopeful thing

you do it not knowing what the world
will look like when it sprouts

you were still here
when I sowed the seeds

now they are grown
and you are gone

I don't know what that says
about the world

but I wish the curtains
in your house weren't drawn

and the lights
were still on

Robin Campbell



Make Me Feel Small: Chloe Scout Nix

A POEM FOR MY MOM

who is full of so many feelings
that I fear when I was young,
you took mine, held them hostage

for safety, forgot to
return them in time
for me to get to know them

the way you got to know yours
on the floor of bathrooms and closets
where you spent my childhood

digging through sweatshirts
and mania to try and find where
your sanity was hiding –

and yes, today, I am still unlearning
the things I learned from you
but that you did not teach me,

trading them for more
nourishing realities
and did you know that

in the woods, crashed trees and dead roots and fallen leaves,
the remains of living things, decay into nutrient-dense humus,
that gritty brown substance on the forest floor that feeds anything
that wants to sprout.

Don't you see the hope in that?

The smashed and shed parts of us will break down into dirt
that will sustain the hopeful generations to come.

Emmalynne Rosser



Am Mühlteich, Vogtland: Judith Hornbogen



Untitled: Kat Shannon

IN WHICH I REIMAGINE THINGS

The shed in the backyard was the headquarters
of a spy operation, and the fence outside

was a barricade against the enemy and the
unfinished basement was the bowel of a beast

as it's breaking and my grandmother's fingers
were each weathered ropes to safety and the car's

mangled body was a red skeleton that was still
bleeding, and the knife under her pillow was a leaf

that fell and then froze there, and his fist through
the wall was a stone that fell from a great height

and that little girl was a flower at the end
of the world.

Alex Dawson

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

Delilah Twersky
Pearl Press
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