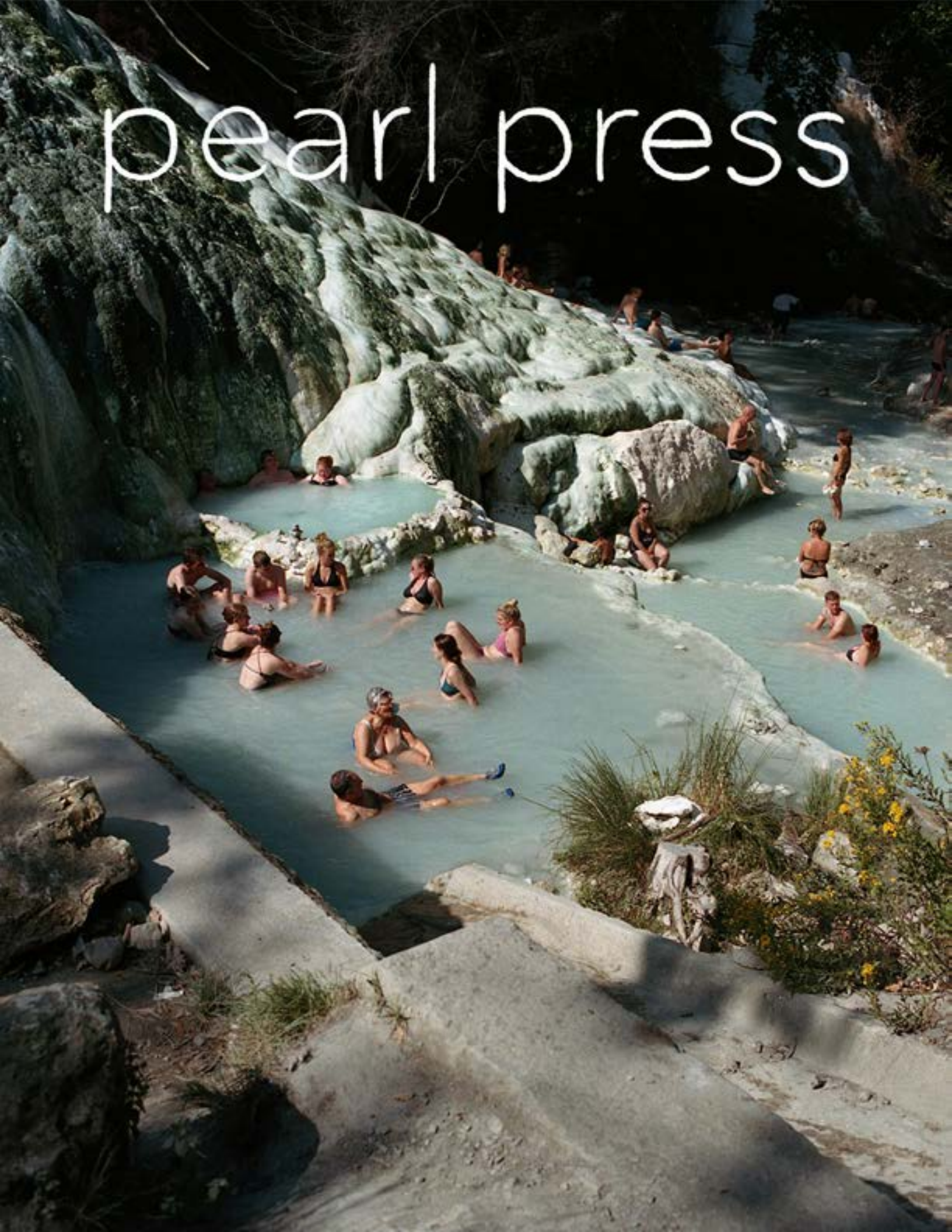


pearl press



ISSUE NO. 8: COURTSHIP

November 2021

This issue of Pearl Press features work from:

Bettina Stammen

Julie Fowells

Julie Lee

Martina Tuaty

László Gábor Belicza

Brian Van Lau

Jesse Egner

Jamie Bernstein

Ellie Musgrave

Ridwana Rahman

James Prochnik

Kristen Bartley

Victor Isaac Alvarez

Cover image: Martina Tuaty

Curated by: Delilah Twersky



Untitled: Bettina Stammen



Bougainvillea: Julie Fowells



A Map of Gentle Lovers: Julie Lee



Untitled: Bagni di San Filippo: Martina Tuaty



Untitled: Bagni di San Filippo: Martina Tuaty



Untitled: Bagni di San Filippo: Martina Tuaty



Diary: László Gábor Belicza



Road Trip: Brian Van Lau

JULIET'S POSTCARD

I woke up this morning and I couldn't even grab another word to hold onto besides her name. Today I feel light and drifting, maybe that's not the word. I feel something tingly from within my chest and as I'm rolling through these endless roads and looking into this pale blue, I can only think of her. It's actually killing me to not write about her, so I'm doing this outside of a McDonald's parking lot on the side of the highway. I wanna tell her everything. I'm glad I can tell her everything. I wish I could look at her. And see the way she understands what I mean when I say she's make me feel present in the world no one else can right now. I've been happy before, but this feels like it's overflowing. I don't ever want to lie to her, I don't have any cards left to play I feel. I wish I could write more right now, but my brain is just spinning. I can feel more now. I smile more. She affects the way I taste things, but mostly the way I see. I don't know what these pictures will be like, but I feel courageous and sure of myself. I don't ever feel that way. Right now, there's no return destination and it doesn't even matter, every day it makes me happier to know I'm getting closer to her. Maybe this is crazy, but in some moments, I can literally feel time bending around the gravitational pull between us, like I'm aware of the ebbs and flows. I've felt happy before, but this is the first time in years I've felt present, and even this feels so uniquely specific because of her. I wanna be a great writer too, and I want so deeply to have her look at me with pride in her eyes the way I have pride in my voice when I say her name.

Brian Van Lau



Diary: László Gábor Belicza



Diary: László Gábor Belicza



Untitled, from Disidentifications series: Jesse Egner



Untitled: Brian Van Lau



Sores: Jamie Bernstein

WEIRD FISHES

something whole-bodied, like a koi fish against the stream
felt, lonesome, in a dark cloister along tiled walls, circadian
rhythm thick on my tongue, cotton-mouthed ambivalence —

open-throated against your shoulder
eyes shut into the sparks of sensation
pinpricks in the curtained oblivion —

names like anyone, no one, only hinging on
the meaning of how you feel tonight —

like turning a lampshade on its end and
counting the silken stitches keeping you upright,
before needling them apart until your tissue-paper
visage catches fire, immolates, vanishes —

as determined as a tidal wave and
as calculating as a shallow creek —

smooth as the stones that line the roughest river bed,
pulled to gleam in the sun, reborn —

so you come to me when I finally tell you your name,
so you find your own meaning in my embrace.

Ellie Musgrave





Alone at Home Again in the Summertime: Ridwana Rahman



Summer Dreams: James Prochnik



Untitled: Bettina Stammen



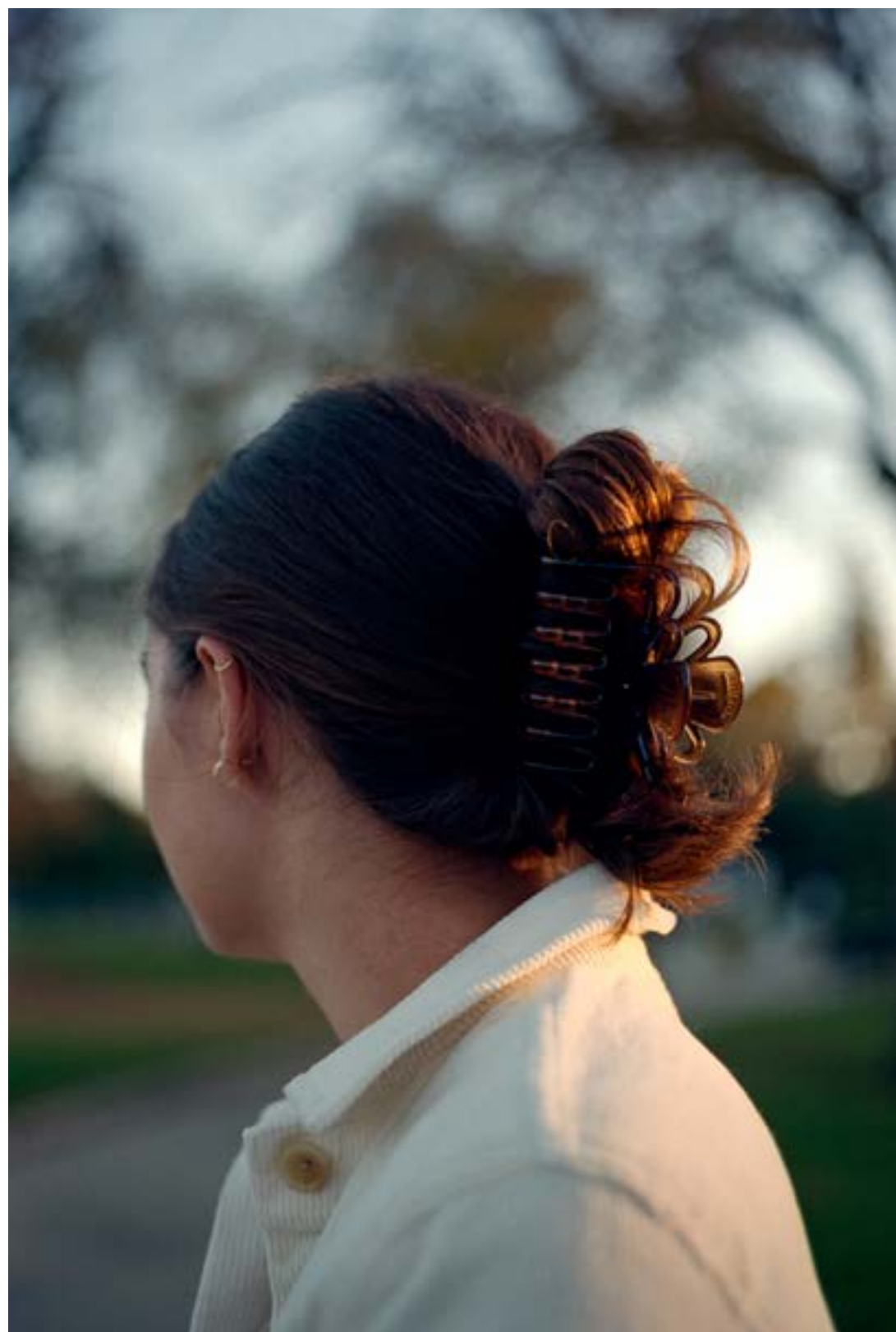
Cara at Riis: Kristen Bartley

BLOOD ORANGE:

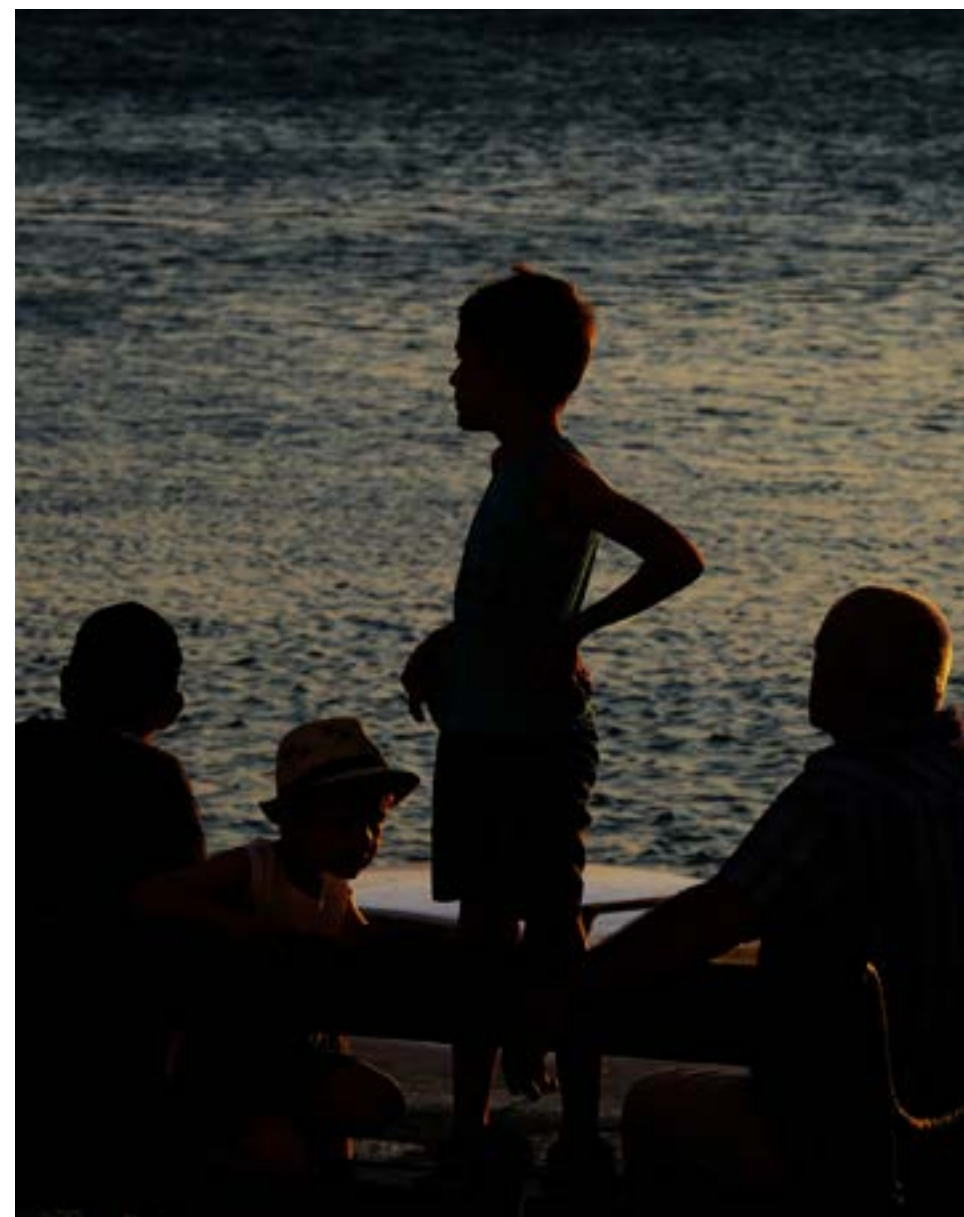
In my head, it comes in swift and unexpected: you find me unassuming and bring forth a long dormant reaction from me. You are bullish and full-throated enough for us both, and I finally trust you enough to let you speak for me, to let you tell me what I want and make me repeat it back to you. Your volition is a crack of thunder that shakes the walls and worsens the breakage in our bed frame while reinforcing the bedrock of our union, it is a whip of lightning that sings in the glint of your eyes while you are holding my tide-wild legs down. If your want is the relief of rain, cool on the desert: let me be the warm gulf wind to spur it into a rolling storm. Let me not sit idly by as you overcome my senses, let me ask this of you before I have to demand it. I miss so much about the way you touch me, I miss the twist of my hair in hand and I miss the plunge of your teeth into my shoulder. Having your hands on me again is like a blood orange: let me climb the tree, pull it from the branches, unfurl you section by section against my open-tongued want. Let me. I won't let you down.

Ellie Musgrave





Today you were far away and I didn't ask you why, 2020: Victor Isaac Alvarez



Diary: László Gábor Belicza

Thank you for reading.
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Delilah Twersky
Pearl Press
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