



In case we've never met: Art Horse is a silly and serious podcast about stepping out of your comfort zone - and this zine is a collection of art made by listeners. You'll find stories about creativity in the face of fear, fresh starts, self discovery, longing and letting go, and the satisfaction of Making Something. We hope you see yourself in these pages.

- Jess (right)

I have been thinking about "practice". During law school I didn't create —4 years!— and when I started up again it was ... crampy. What I love about Art Horse is that it's the regular practice of stretching out that cramp. Exercising this creative muscle that gets stronger over time, the more you do. Each of these pieces feels like *joyful movement*, no matter how sweaty and uncomfortable it might have been during the process. Ew, an exercise metaphor! Thanks for sharing these with us --- we are all so COOL!

-Fiona (left)



When I clicked "Play" on the first episode of Art Horse

I didn't expect to fast forward to a

new group of friends,

portraits of my dogs sketched in seconds.

A soundtrack, an image well,

Makers making no matter what.

Creating through a pandemic;

We are not frozen, this time is ticking.

We move and flow while the world

holds its breath.

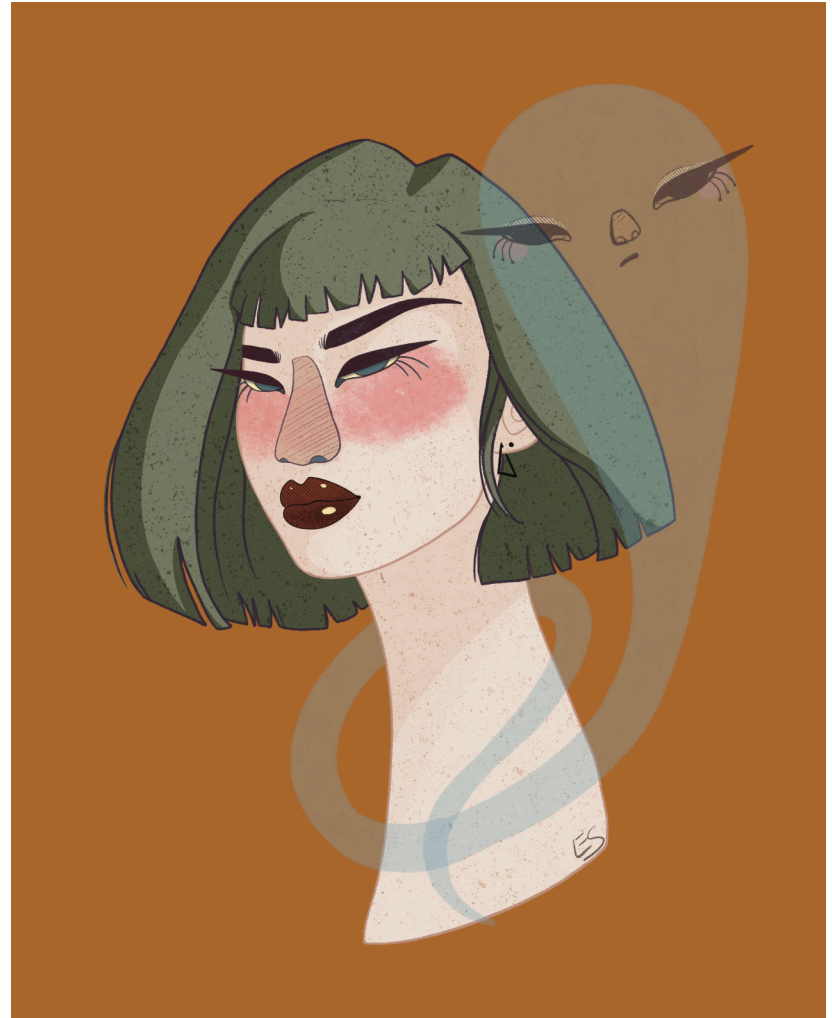
Erin / Violet
Key

The last few years were full. Full of career changes, school work, pain, injuries, loneliness, worry, fear, and thoughts. Lots of thoughts. I'd never had to sit so hard into my life as I did when quarantine happened. Everything felt heavier and harder. I needed to pull myself back up, and to do that, I had to convince myself I was worth lifting. I realized the hole that being forced out of a creative career (injury) left. I need to create. It's what makes me feel shiny and calms my flesh.

After discovering Art Horse, I really looked at myself in a different light, as an artist, not just a person that likes to art. I turned my big scary dream into a full thought: To make a living as an artist/creative. I'd always been interested in digital art, so I used my savings and bought myself an iPad and it's everything I hoped it could be for me. This is the first piece I completed that made me feel shiny and let me know I made the right decision. The journey to my dream will be work, and I still struggle with the heaviness of my life, but I think I can get there.

I believe in myself? Yeah, I believe in myself!

*Eden Sprout • Located on unceded Lekwungen speaking territory ('Vancouver Island')
@edensprout (Instagram)*



(Right) An old picture of my sheep flock. I have undertaken a huge project; processing, spinning and then knitting or weaving some projects with my huge back log of fleeces from my sheep. This project holds extra meaning as two of my original three sheep have passed away, peacefully of old age, over the last couple of years, but I still have some of their wool to make into something special. The size of this project is holding me back but at the same time has spurred me to get to work on it and not let the wool go to waste. The spinning is a peaceful, calming, joyful act.



(Left) Carded wool batts, bobbins of spun wool singles, and skeins of finished yarn

*Anna • Rochester NY, USA
@bubbaloohandmade (Instagram and Facebook)*

Some days
The longing fills my body

And the memories of your touch
Condense on my skin

And I can trace the places
Where your hands have been

This is a poem I wrote a few months
after ending a relationship. I knew I had
made the right decision but they were
still very present in my mind, so I wrote
the feelings down to release them.

Gabriela • Montreal QC, Canada
@gabriela_zinha (Instagram)

So I finally managed to convince myself to use my fancy watercolor sketchbook! I figured out I could use it as a learning tool, where I would explore a certain technique that I'm curious about, plan for future paintings or self indulge with patterns. If I mess up, I will point out the mishaps and write notes about what went wrong, if I nail one page, even better! At the end I will end up with a book that will work more like reference material for my self than a showcase to others.

So this page is an exploration of the primary colors I currently have (left) and a painting using the respective colors (right). I was a bit disappointed both mini paintings ended up looking so similar. Only the blues gave a stronger difference in general. I'm planning to repeat the experiment using bolder colors. So far I'm learning the nuances of each color and how they interact with each other. Also it was the first time I avoid using black all together!



Ileana
@ile.ileana86 (Instagram)

Unfinished Lyrics

- V1. I like to go walking with you
you stayed at my pace
and we swore at the cars
so I like to go walking with you
but that's not allowed
and it's getting too hard
to read your messages
- V2. I like to watch movies with you
you made me see things
that I'd never have seen
so I want to watch movies with you
but that's not allowed
so I'll stare at my screen
and read your messages
- Ch. Every time the clock ticks
a little bit louder
I think I can hear you
snapping your fingers

After a long and serious relationship ended unilaterally (read: after I got dumped), Jess suggested I write a song about it. I was hoping the lyrics that would come out of me would be triumphant and "I don't need a man"-esque but they were sad and regretful and full of longing. They all still are and that's ok. These lyrics aren't done and I'm not even sure what sort of melody or rhythm they could go to but: here they are, I guess! Writing lyrics occasionally is still helping me process things, even if they never become a song.

Fiona • Brockville, ON
@tofutti.klein (Instagram)



In my area of California, we have this owl species called a Short-eared Owl. We are right around the edge of their year-round range, so the time of year that people tend to see them is usually just for a few weeks—months in December/January, before they start heading north again for breeding and nesting. Bird photography Insta is always flooded with 'shorty' pictures at that time of year, and I had always wanted to see them but was always comparing my more amateur gear to the pictures I would see on Insta, and knowing that I'd never get anything that zoomed in and sharp.

But, this year I finally had a few friends who dragged me out because a group of shorties was being consistently seen close by, and I'm so glad they did. Even ignoring photography, they are just such gorgeous birds and it was so special to sit and watch them glide over the fields at dusk. I went back 3 times over the course of that week, and eventually managed to take a few pictures that I liked.

The moral of the story is that sometimes it's nice to have a community that reminds you to stop overthinking it and just go look at the owls. Art Horse provides that to me as well, so thanks :)

*Mark • Sonoma County CA, USA
@snapsbymax (Instagram)*

Lagging Indicators

But you don't know what hope may bring,
how ceaselessly this dark of winter reiterates
its wrath to those who long for spring

time illuminating, finally, the fissures
of horrors long left unseen, and routing out
a mortise from inattentive snows, and as the light
stabs through the fluffy clearing clouds, you hope
that time has come for candor, and maybe reflection,

but you don't know if time for rest
is rest enough to understand this
wretched year, what reflections stand between
our return to little daily horrors, or

if anyone had reconciled the depth of history
before putting aside those horrors and
trying their best. Today the bells were tolling
to mark those lost, but nobody counts

the number of lives saved, or the bottomless
sacrifice that led here. It's easy to forget
you'd been holding your breath in
case of worsening incomprehensibles, but today

the roads are drying from the winter rains, and
the leafy greens have begun
to coat the roadsides, life both sides
enveloping the darkness, and as the white-crowned

sparrows sing their particular delights
in the late-morning fog, the tentative
orange constellations of poppies emerge
pellucid in the rearview mirror, and one day
you will never be alone.

draft 1 (commit 5861770) / 2021-03-14

(*Lagging Indicators*, previous page) I really didn't set out to write about the pandemic, but it seemed like everything I've started has eventually turned into being about the climate or the pandemic or both. What does relief really mean? Several friends who worked in the hospital had recounted the visceral horrors of the big winter surge in California, and many people I knew fell sick or had a family member who did.

The choice of the second-person singular is probably controversial. The intent was to make things a little more visceral; I was thinking about people who had lived through hardships in the past and what sort of hope or reflecting they must have done—what we might have to do beyond merely thinking of “when this is all over.” Because maybe there is no over, not truly. There was some anger/resentment for those wanting this nightmare to end and ready to just sweep aside all caution prematurely. But we all have some part to play.

My original intent was to convey the imagery of some tentatively-blooming flowers I saw in the rearview mirror at a stop sign in Albany, California, on the drive to my vaccine appointment. It had been raining a lot the end of February, just as the cherry blossoms and poppies were beginning to emerge, but while the white-crowned sparrows hadn't left yet. The not-yet-spring felt big and hopeful. So this is still a work in progress. It's twice as long and neurotic as I'd like it to be and has half the imagery.

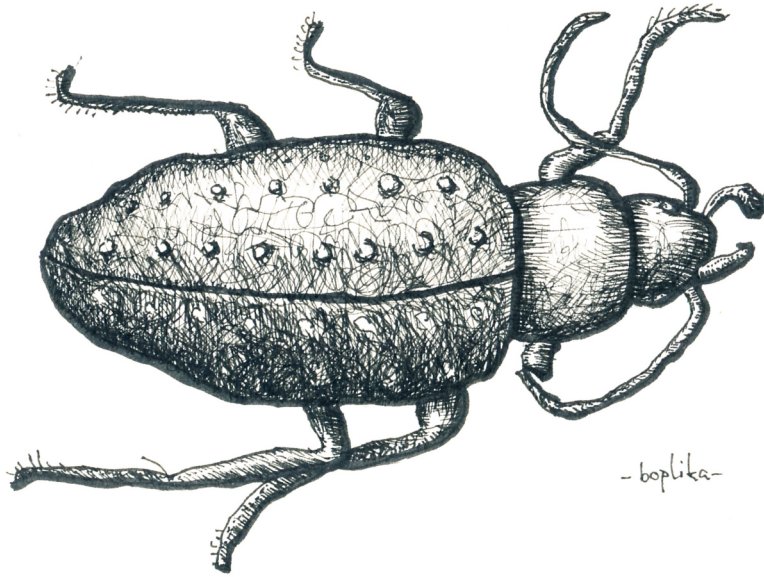
Bryan Bach • Bay Area CA, USA
@microphylum (Instagram and Twitter)

Did you ever just uncover something you made a long time back and end up really surprised you did that? Well, as I was hunting through my sewing pics, looking for the perfect thing, I argued with myself that it should probably be recent. And then I found the Cherry Blossom Princess. It is an entire outfit designed, sewn and detailed by me, modeled on an Asian ball-jointed doll – the first in my collection!



Back in 2013, when I made this, I was still fumbling my way around sewing for something that was 1/3 my size and full of tiny details. It was the result of a friendly challenge a friend and I did, where we bought the same fabric in the same amounts, but didn't tell the other what we'd make. I found inspiration from an artbook image and took the plunge. This is one of those things that really makes me sit back and think "if I can do that, what else can I do?" A lot has happened between then and now, but I'm really eager to find out!

Rikka • York County PA, USA
@crimsonchimera (Instagram)



Carabus hortensis. A few years ago I was working away from home for 4 months. I sketched a lot during this time since I lived alone. I found this dead beetle on the windowsill of the cottage I rented. I sketched it on the first page of a new sketchbook. It is the best sketch in the book.

boplika • Mårsta, Sweden
@boplika (Instagram)

Cozy Queen Bee in her winter hide out with a stockpile of royal jelly. Apparently bumble bee queens dig a hole in the dirt to hibernate alone, pretty cute. This piece was inspired by my own experience with pandemic isolation and being a strong independent lady.

I just started learning how to do digital art and this was the first full illustration I did on my own. It's the first time I really felt like I could see my own art style and that I'd found a character and world I really connected with using techniques and colours that felt all my own. This piece really pushed my ability to use a limited colour palette, new digital watercolour brushes, character design, perspective and storytelling. It's one of my favourite art pieces I've ever done and I feel really proud of it!

*Kat • Ottawa ON, Canada
@katmids (Instagram)*





The idea for this felted lil dude came to me while chatting with Fiona and Mark on the Art Horse Discord, and hung around for a week until I finally gave in and got started. This was my first time felting around a wire armature - it required some experimentation and a lot more needle control than my previous felting project!

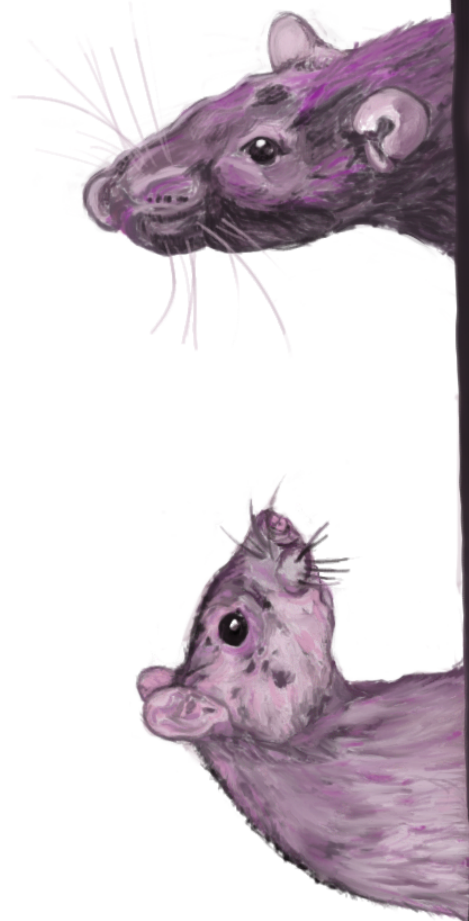
*Mandi • Prince George BC, Canada
@sundogcreativestudio (Instagram)*

On the topic of "just doing the work" I've been lamenting that I find digital illustration scary and told myself I was stuck between choosing software to get started and the thought that it would be a steep learning curve. And while maybe the latter is still true, going through my Samsung old tablet (which has Corel Draw installed) I realized I actually had already been dabbling with digital drawing...so I was just making "excuses" to get started and just need to PRACTICE.

Looking through my tablet stored images I bumped into these "2 rowdy rats" which I drew about 2 years ago. I drew them inspired by shadows that something we had hanging on a cupboard projected on the wall. It reminded me of 2 rats sneaking behind the cupboard (or I hadn't been sleeping enough, also possible) and I thought they would have a story to be told.

What I learned? Well the story of these purple rats is still to be told. And the reason to feel "overwhelmed" with what others do or which program to buy in current tablet? Pure procrastination. Just need to stop thinking and do it :)

*Marina • Utrecht, the Netherlands
@themissingglove (Instagram)*





This piece is imperfect but it started healing something in me all the same. I didn't bother finding matching materials--it was a fancy white, Dollar Tree blue and yellow, and a magenta out of a mostly separated inkwell, but it didn't matter. It was just a relief to escape a rough few days (weeks...months...you get it) to find a dreamy atmosphere in a limited palette.

*Morgan K Gengenbach • Denver CO, USA
@m.kathleen27 (Instagram)*

A Poem I Wrote In
the Middle of the
Night on my Phone

A bird flies
into a window
on a clear day
a rabbit dashes
onto the road
and into the lights
it feels right
until the impact
a fevered bliss
but then it hurts
to die like this

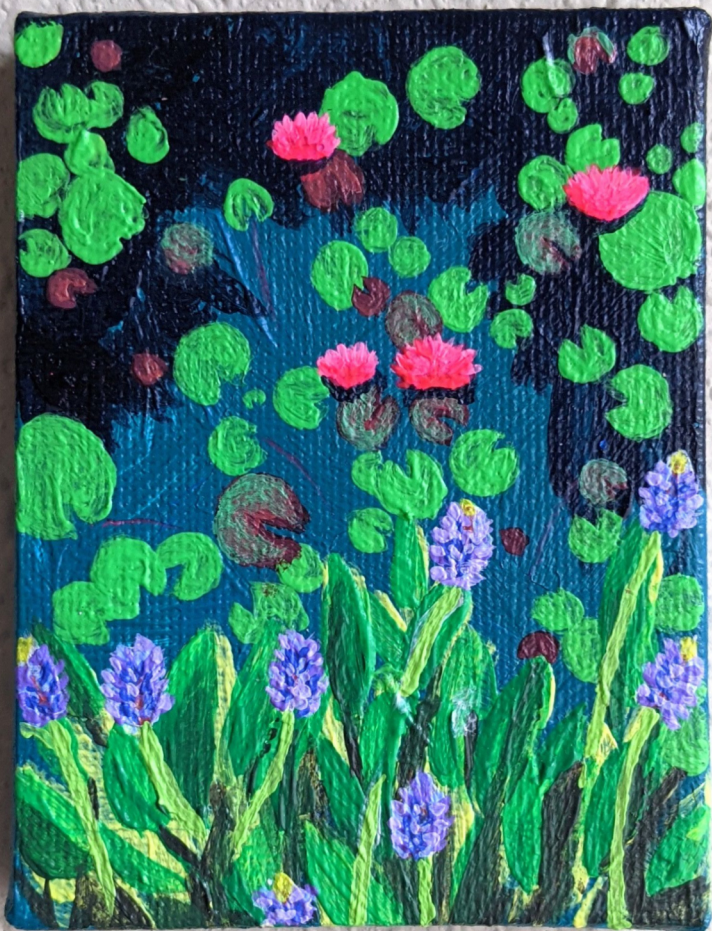
I wrote this poem, as the title might suggest, in the middle of the night on my phone. I typed it out in the dark and was like "yeahhhhh" and fell right back asleep. I found it a few weeks later and was like "...what?" I think it's about being self destructive and making bad decisions that feel really good/right in the moment.

Fiona • Brockville, ON
@tofutti.klein (Instagram)

This piece is very important to me because it's the first drawing I consciously hoped would represent my current drawing skills, style, and personal aesthetic. This jackalope feels like the most recent version of the art I enjoy creating, and I've made it my new @emthejackalope logo. I'm very drawn to the teal, magenta, purple, and blue color scheme, and I like seeing my geometric animals look increasingly more three-dimensional as I practice them. Since I've been posting and selling art since 2016, finally having a personal logo feels like a new step in the right direction.

*Emily Schanowski • Wausau WI, USA
@emthejackalope (Instagram and Etsy)*





This little (3"x2") lily pond painting is the first acrylic painting I have completed in probably at least a decade. When I came across the reference photo (credit to @metzpottery on Instagram), my whole being said "PAINT THIS," so I did. I had a lot of fun matching the colors to the photo - although it took about 6 weeks to get the fluorescent pink color in the mail; apparently it was a hot color last summer! - and figuring out how to capture the depth of the pond. There are a lot of things I'd do differently if I were to paint this again, but I'm just so pleased with the choices I made and this li'l painting brings me lots of joy! It also represents a major breakthrough for me: the whole time I was working on it, I was trying to decide which friend/relative I should gift it to, but then I thought, "wait, I set out to make this because I wanted to look at it, so I'M keeping it!"

Megan • Austin TX, USA

You know how creativity inspires creativity? That's how I feel every time I crack open one of Catherynne M. Valente's books. Her prose is so rich you can taste it and the characters are so unique and alive that eventually her Klabautermann, *Ballast Downbound*, started trying to get out of my colored pencils. I have never worked on one piece for so long before or since. It was a learning experience I'm very proud of, but to be perfectly frank I've been a little afraid of not being able to pull off another colored pencil piece that I'll find as "successful," ever since. Somehow it's only recently that I've realized the only way to guarantee that is to never try again, so I'm getting over the fear of wasting supplies and getting back to being inspired by my fellow creatives to just play.

"What's luck? Luck is for lubby-landers, leprechauns, and lazybones. I told you it's my job. More'n my job, it's my body and soul. I'm the best Klabautermann you'll ever meet. Can patch a hull in a hurricane, sew a sail in a zombie fight. Or let them all drown, if a ship's got tired of living and wants a nice patch of seafloor to retire in. Raise Anemones. Take up with a fancy fish."
- *Ballast Downbound*. Catherynne M Valente, *The Girl Who Soared Over Fairyland and Cut the Moon in Two*. Feiwel & Friends Constable & Robinson, 2013.

Morgan K Gengenbach • Denver CO, USA
@m.kathleen27 (Instagram)



One of the hardest parts about writing any sort of fiction is coming up with that one-liner that tells someone what it's all about. And so it goes with Home-Adjacent. It's a story that means the world to me because I'm writing it from some of the best and worst places in myself. And I don't even think I meant for it to start that way; it just started spilling out onto the page as I wrote. I started it during National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) 2020, a time that was already fraught with so much emotion. Even though I didn't finish, I'm still very proud and continue working on it to this day. I'd love to publish it, so that someone out there can feel seen and understood. The best summary I can give is a little "pitch" I did on the fly...

A queer found family comes together, with a dash of magic. I want this book to be like a warm cup of tea in your favorite nook. I want it to be a sudden summer rain when you don't have an umbrella. I want it to tell you something about me, but also something about yourself. Believe in magic, believe in real soulmates, not just the romantic ones, believe that family can be more than just blood, and home can be more than just a place.

Rikka • York County PA, USA
@crimsonchimera (Instagram)

"So, are you still making up for lost time or are you in the new chapter?"

Parker should have expected the question. Still, it felt like it carried a weight, as if there could be a wrong answer, even though there probably wasn't.

"New chapter, I believe. The hero steals away to a new frontier."

"Where are you going? If you don't mind me asking. 'None of your business' or 'fuck off' are both acceptable answers, too."

Parker recoiled at the idea of even saying that to her, and whatever horrified look had contorted his face made Saint burst out into a wicked cackle.

"It's pretty hard to offend me," she told him. "If you met my friends, you'd understand."

Without his permission, his gaze automatically shifted to the collage of pictures nearby. If he had to guess, the girl with the colored streaks in her hair was 'none of your business' and the boy with the rings was 'fuck off.' He so did want to meet her friends and yet quickly dismissed it out of hand. Good friends were sacred; you didn't just go letting anyone near them. If you were lucky, they stayed in your life, but most of the time, they disappeared when you dared to blink.

"I'm not sure where I'm going. I...got that feeling. Guts unraveling, like you said. I, ah, left home."

There. Parker tried out the taste of the words, and quite truthfully, the flavor was awful. An unholy recipe of guilt and fear without knowing the proper balance of hope and excitement to measure in. When he dared to glance at Saint's face, she had a complicated look about her, and Parker noticed that same hint of something bitter underneath. This surely had to be where it all fell apart, the timer on his place in her orbit ticking down to zero. Running away from exams wasn't the same as running away from home.

"Are you going back?"

"For dinner or for good?"

"Either," she shrugged. "Both."

The answer felt pivotal. "I don't think I fit there," he admitted. "My mother wants me to come back next weekend, but I don't..." Another new flavor to try. "I don't want to stay."

"Then don't. You're the one who has to live in your skin, not them. They don't feel it when you're about to jump out of it, when it itches as soon as you walk in the door."

Parker stared at her, dumbfounded. He knew the itch, knew the compression of wearing a face that didn't match what was underneath. It was like she'd read how his story went already, sliding between the pages to see where the plot was going. His jaw worked uncomfortably, trying to make a response come out that he simply didn't have the words for.

Saint unfolded her legs and hopped off the desk. "We're going to celebrate after all. New chapter, scene change. Where do you want to go, Parker?"

"Ah, isn't this your...aren't we celebrating you?" he asked helplessly.

"Us." She came over to him, putting her hands around his on the mug. It was like the interrupted hug, only somehow even more devastating to Parker's senses. Her eagerness was vibrant under his skin, behind her eyes. "We're celebrating us, so where to?"

Parker swallowed, his head so full of white noise and Saint. But he said softly, "Are we...anywhere near Reading Market?"

Saint beamed at him, straightening again.

"I'll go get changed."

He missed her hands on his immediately.

Thank you for reading, and thank you
so much to everyone who shared
themselves with us for this project.
This has been such a treat.

Keep making art!!

Love,
Fiona and Jess

PS: Find us online at arthorsepod.com

