
Senior Projects Spring 2020

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

Spring 2020

eurydice

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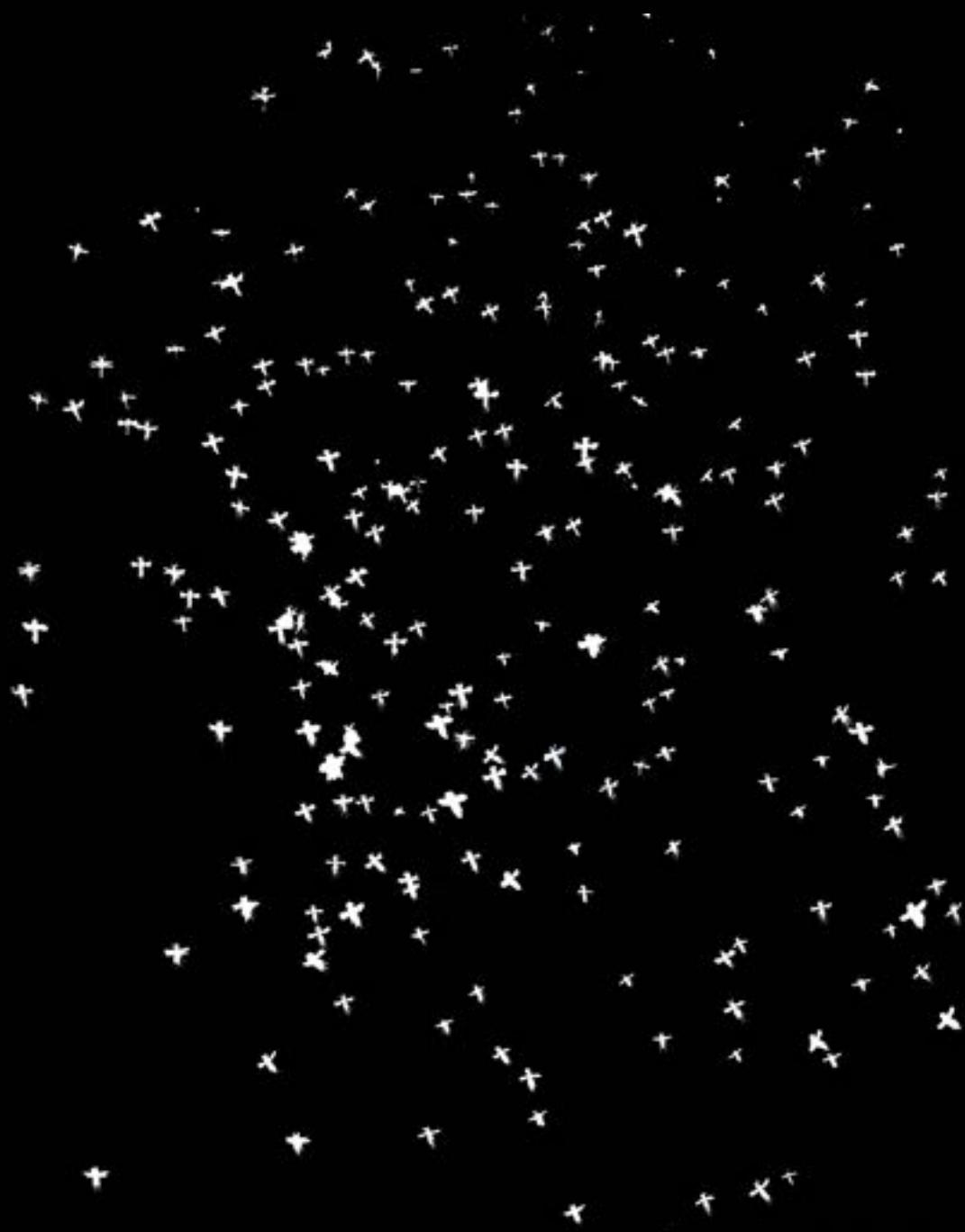


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Recommended Citation

Aronson, Gus, "eurydice" (2020). *Senior Projects Spring 2020*. 355.
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gus aronson

Full of pain when Eurydice fell to the underworld,
Orpheus played his lyre.

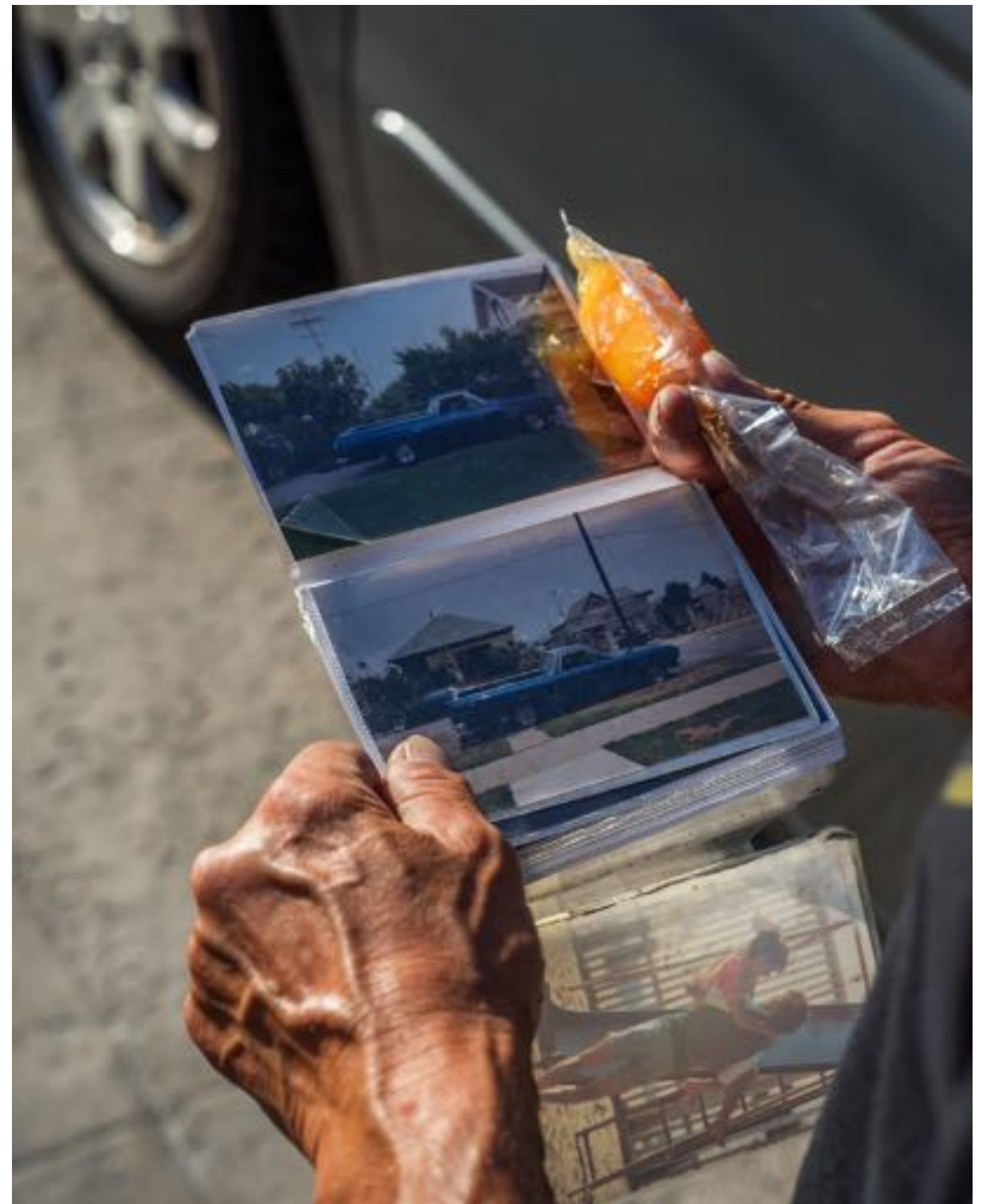
So full of beauty and bereavement were his songs,
that even Hades was moved to console. Thus Orpheus,
rapt with grief, was given one more chance. Eurydice
was to be granted life once again, but with Hades'
one condition: Orpheus was to not look back until they
had regained the world of the living.

As he crossed the infinitely elusive border between
worlds, Orpheus yet looked back and Eurydice
vanished.



eurydice

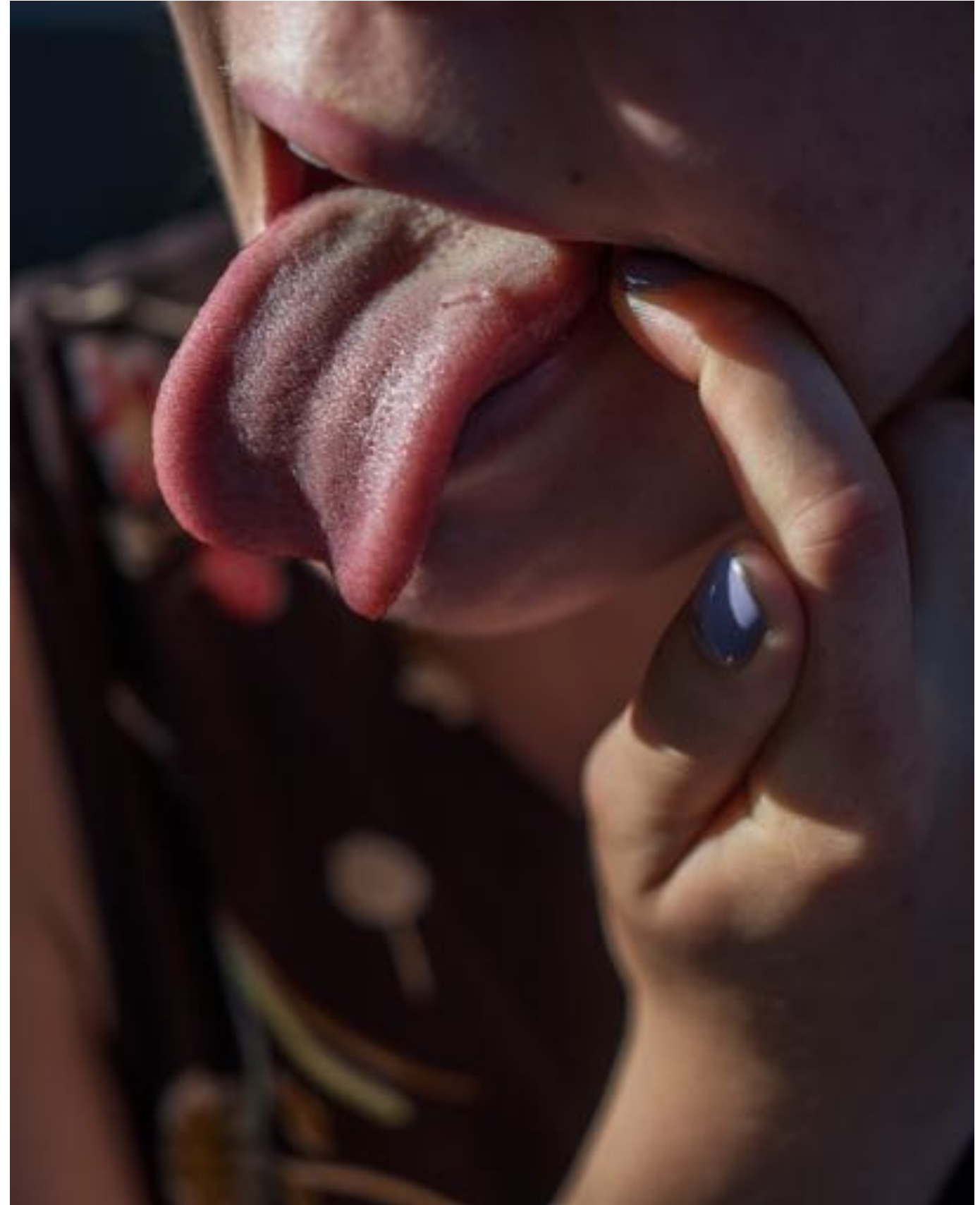


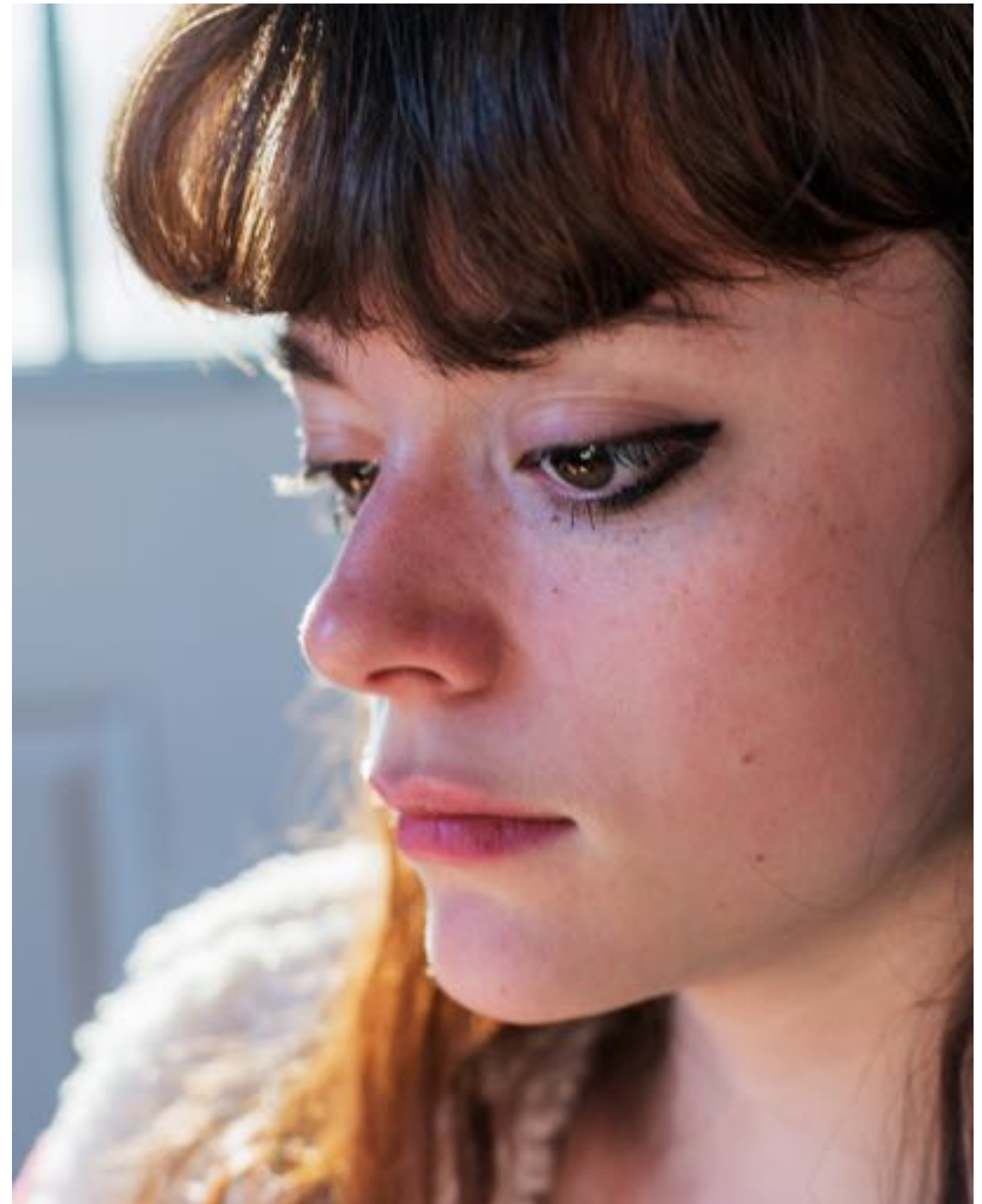














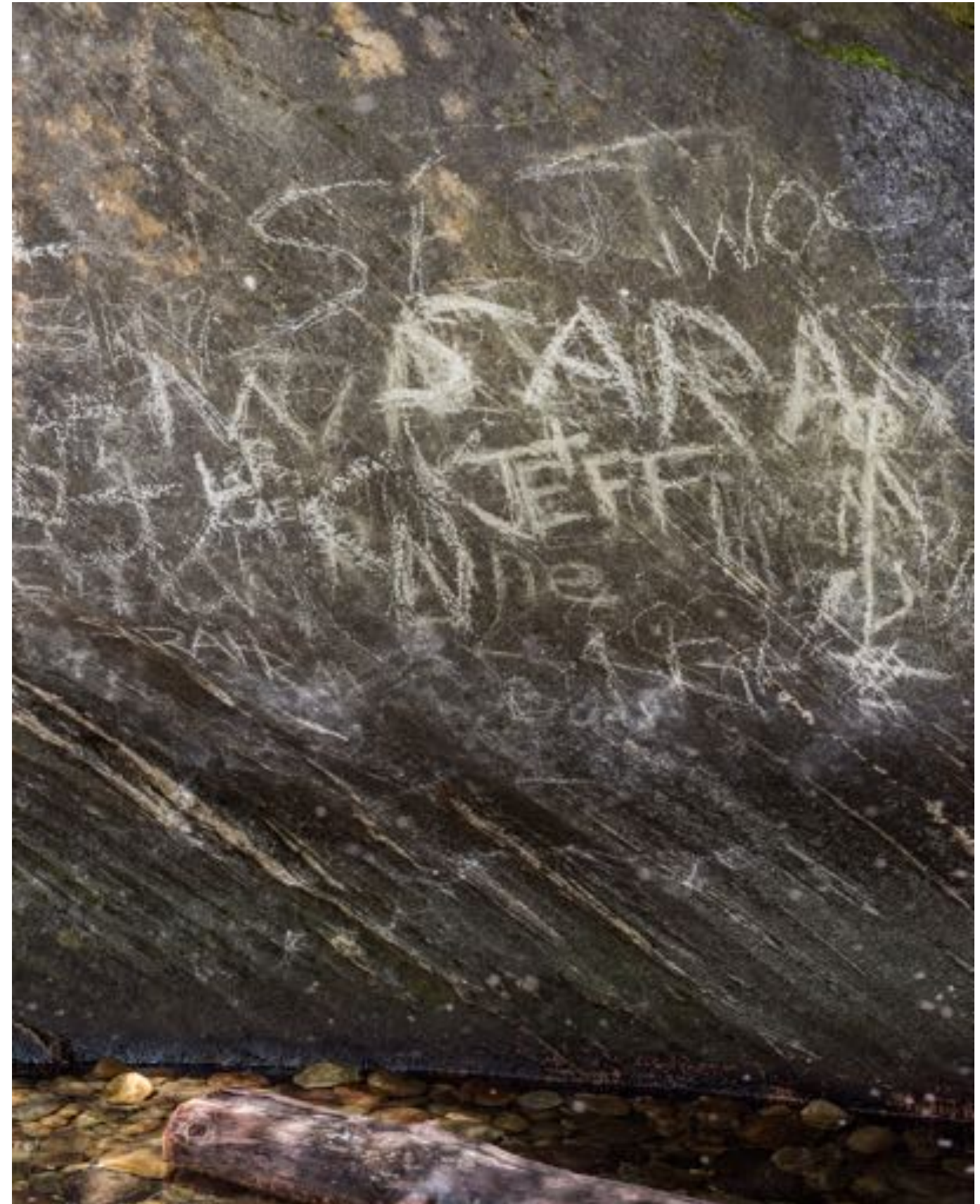


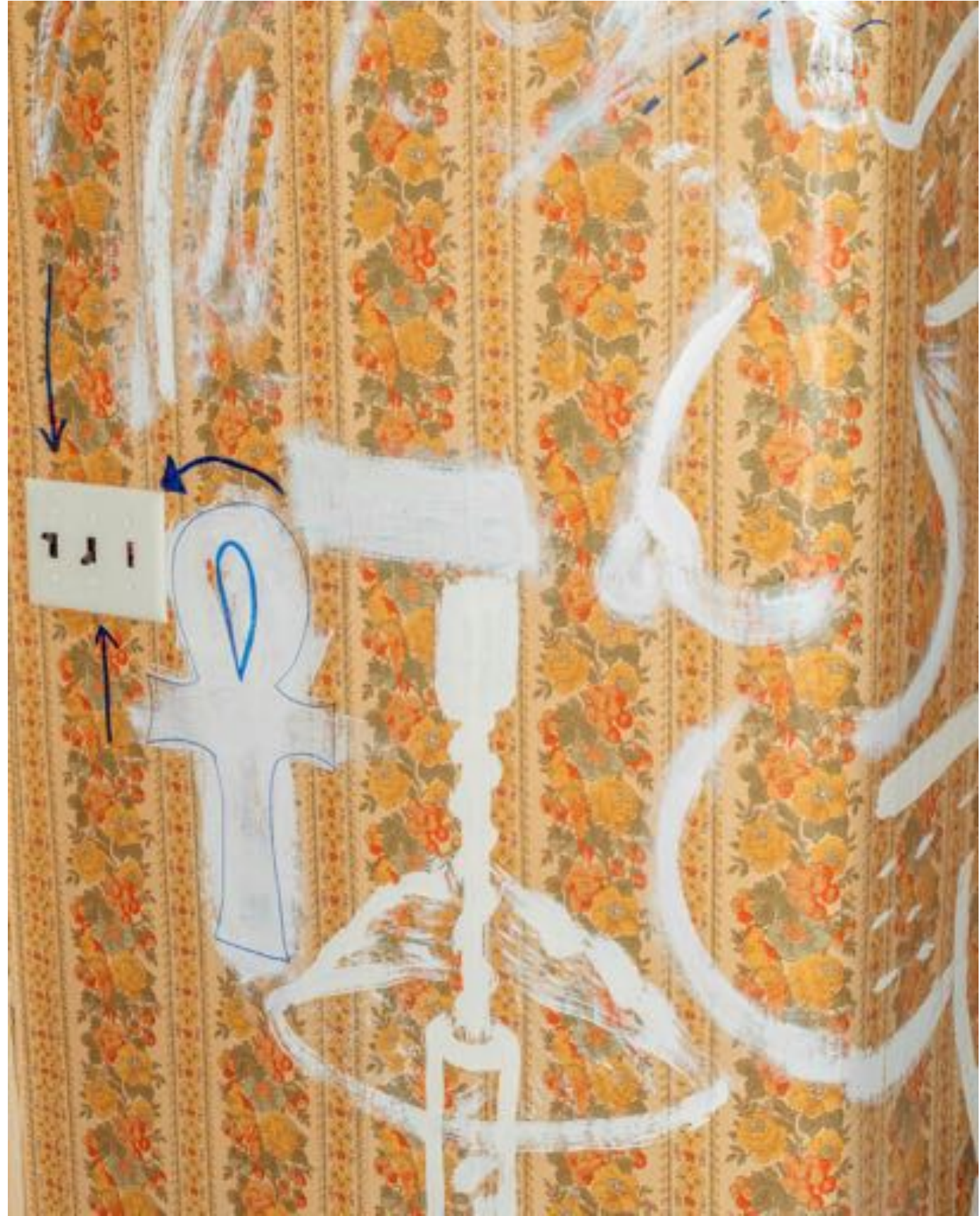


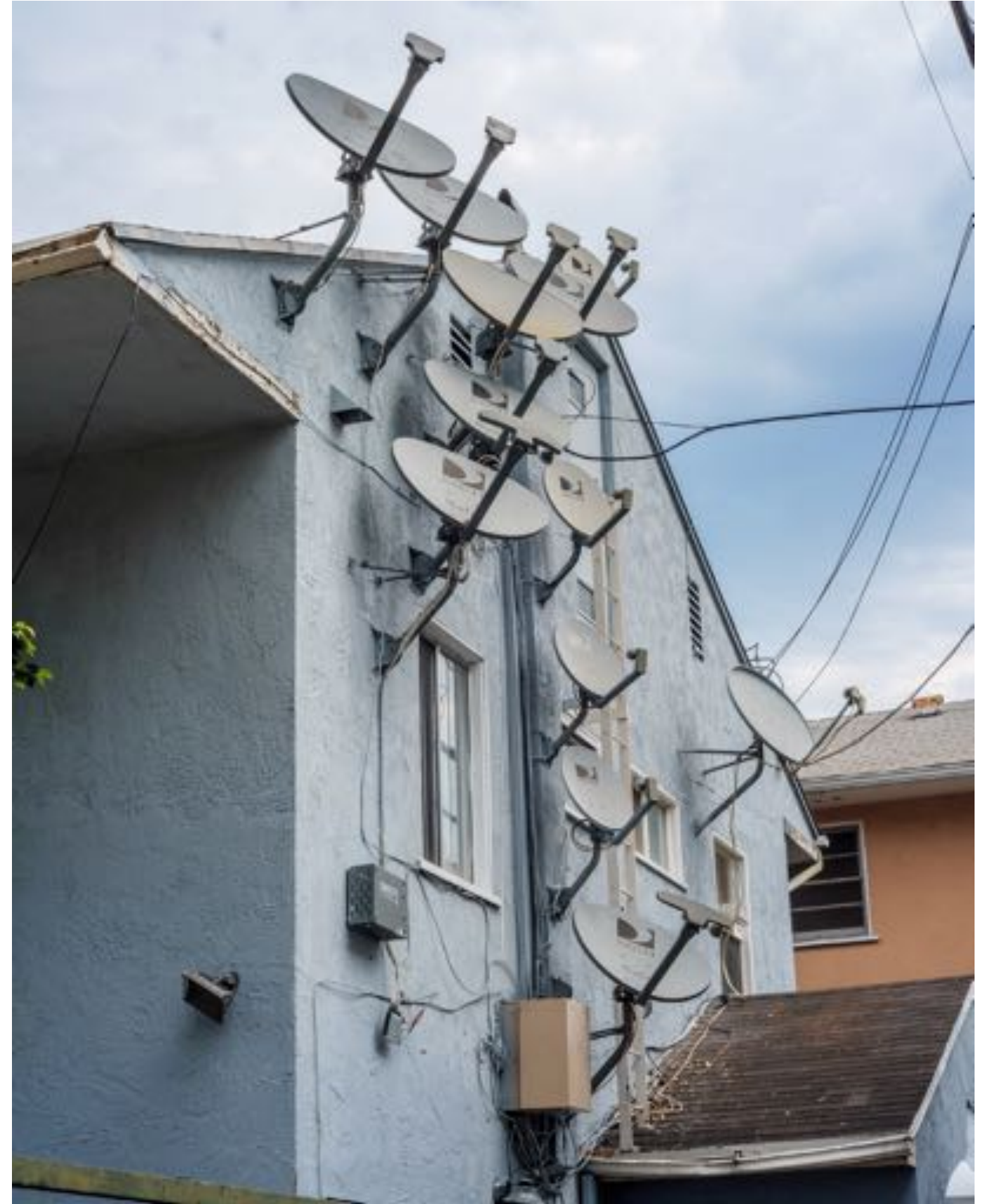






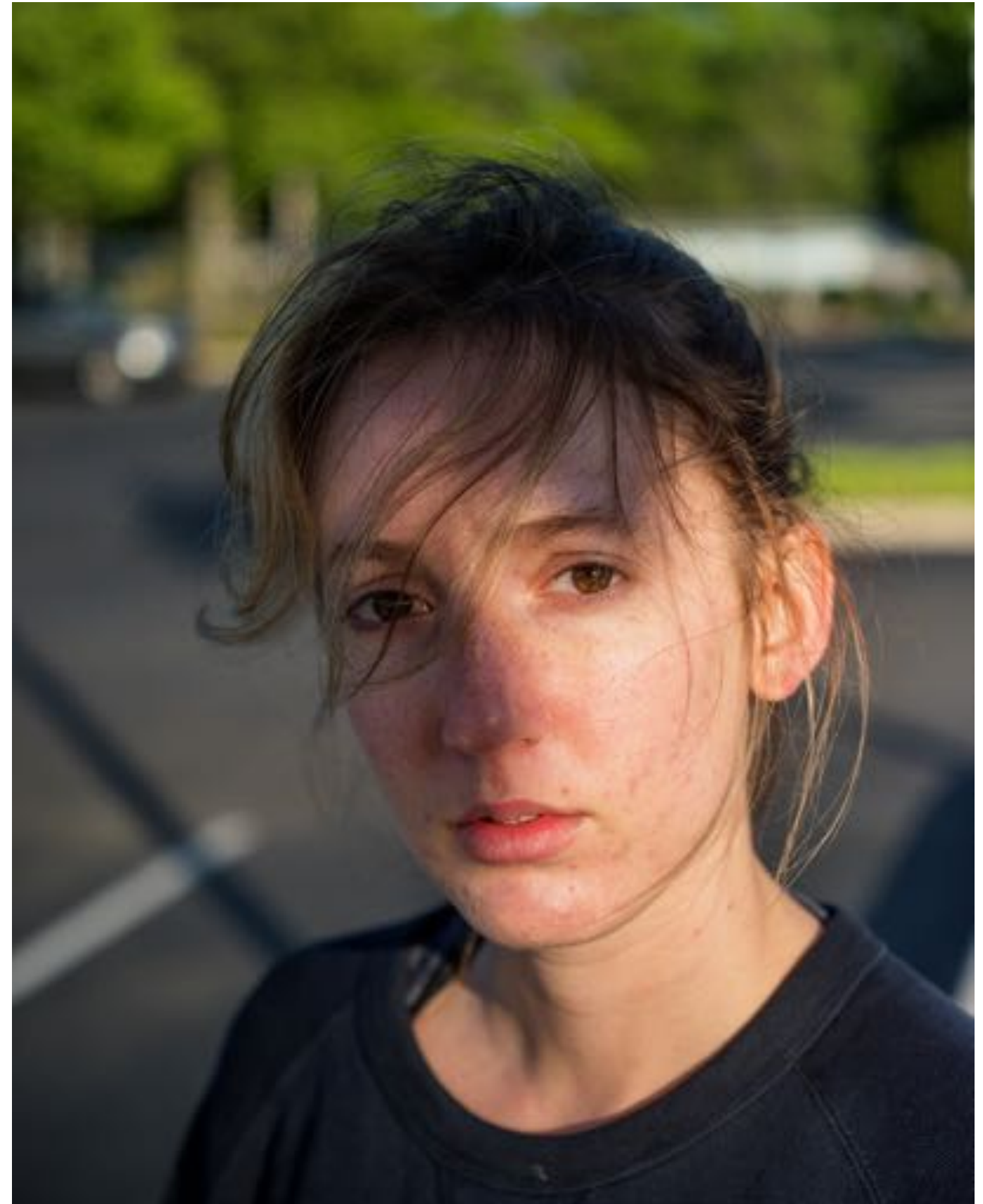
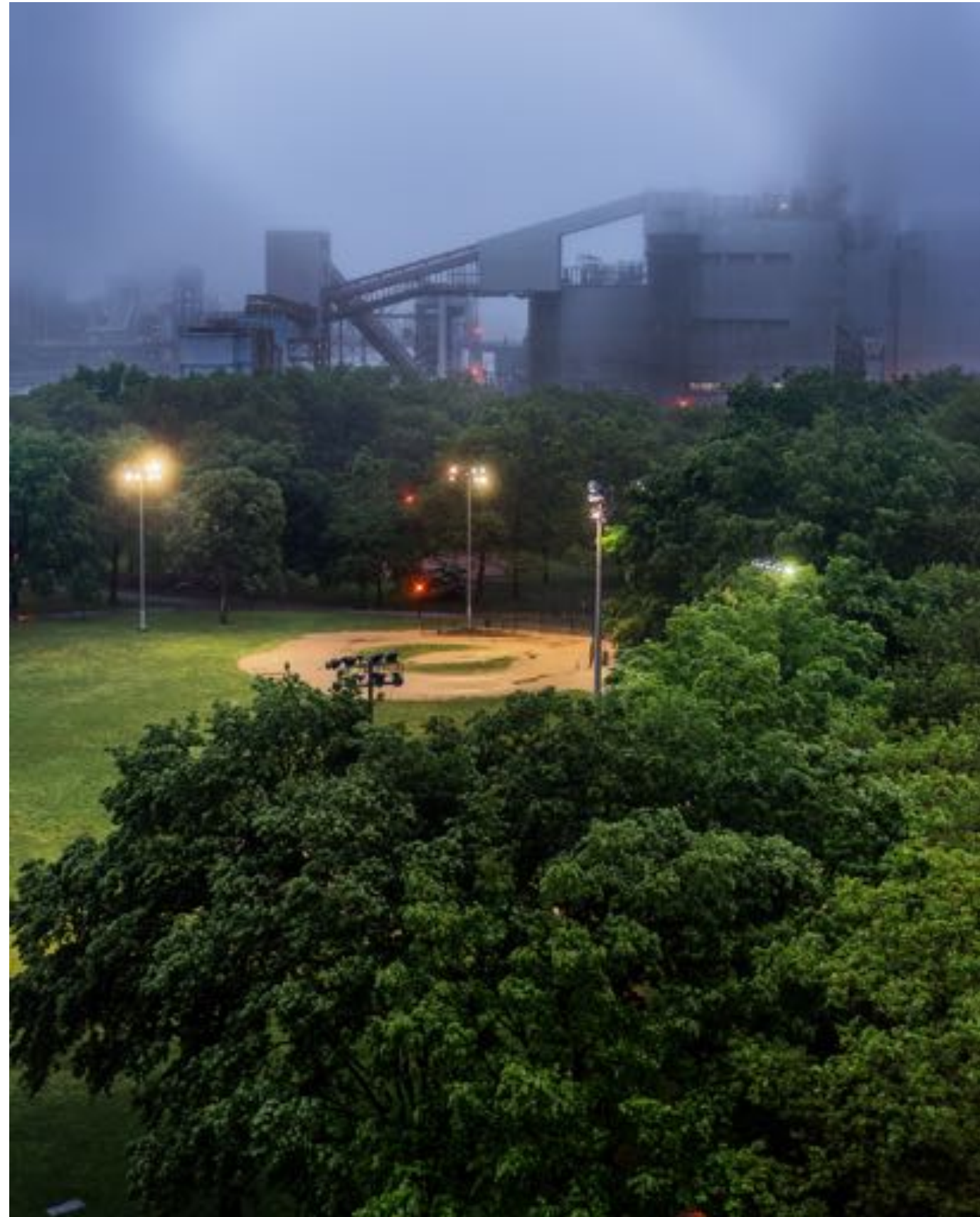






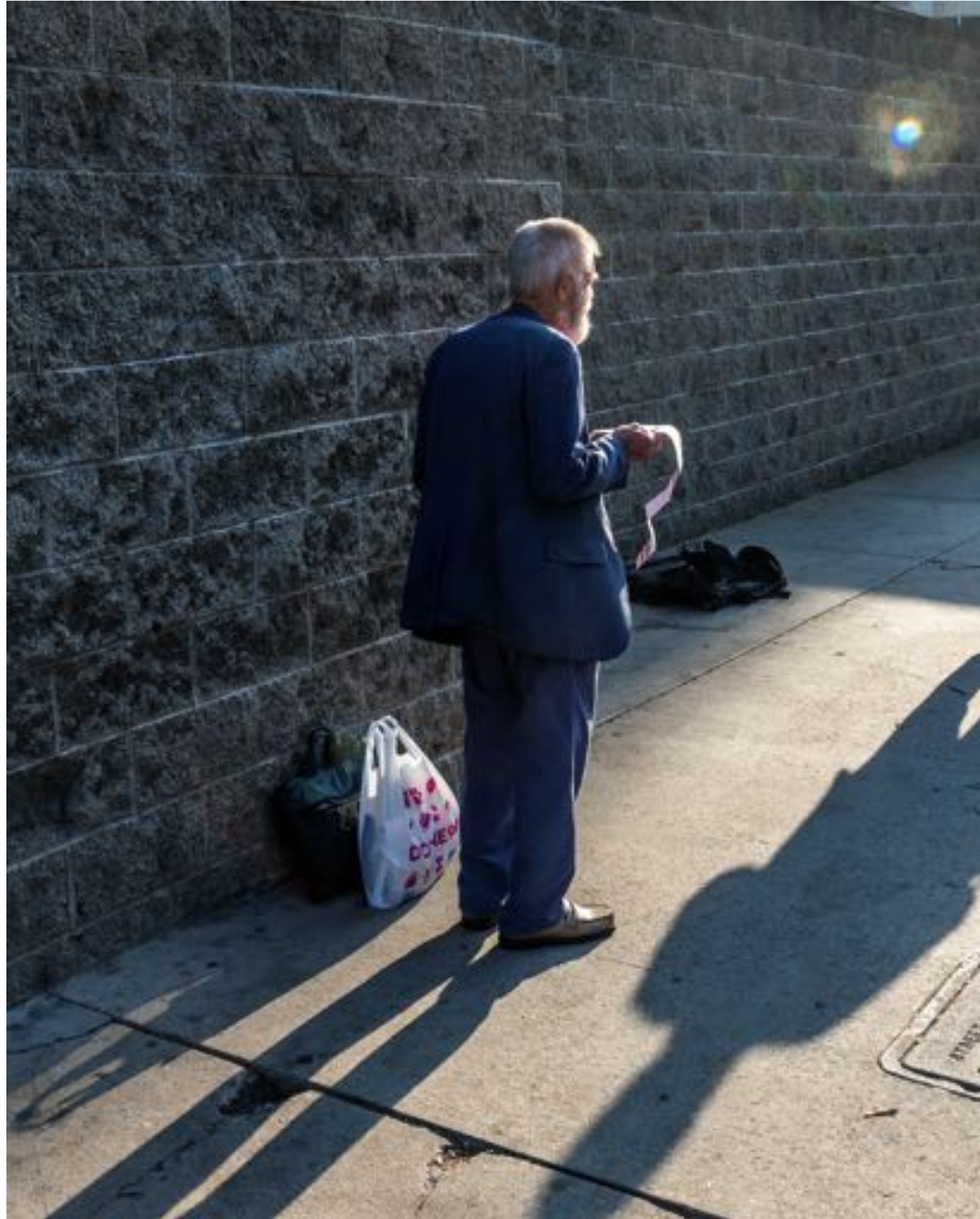






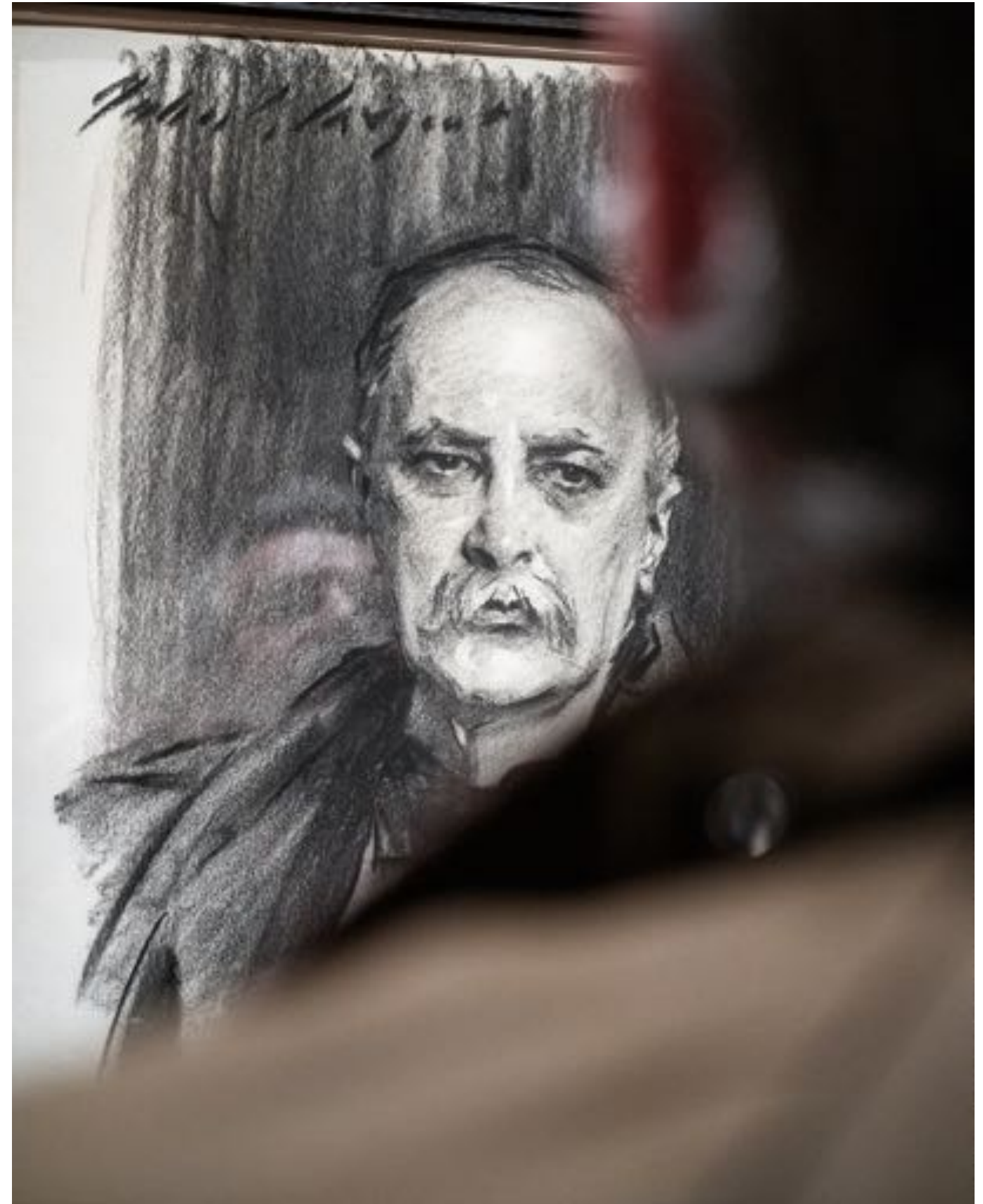


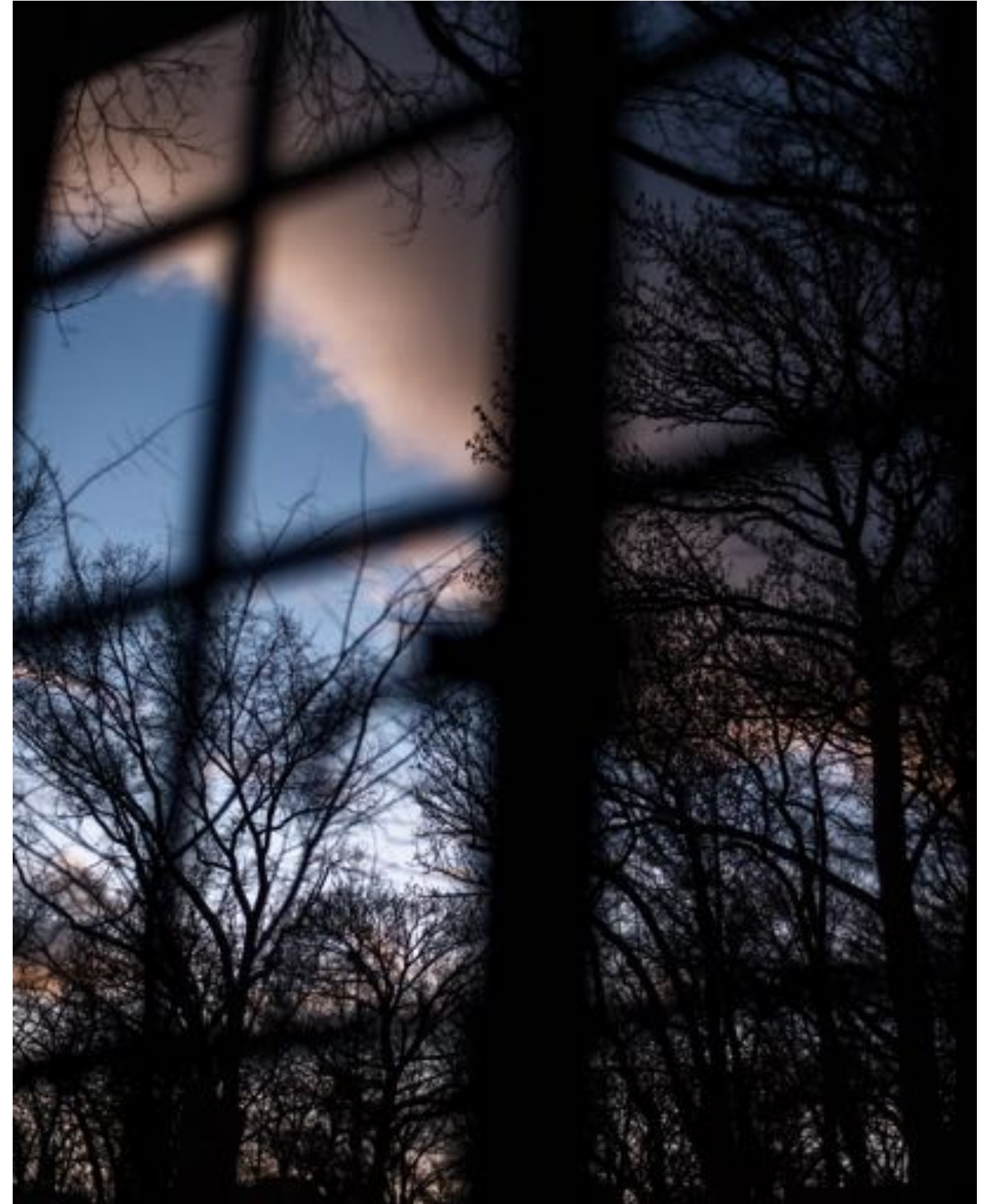
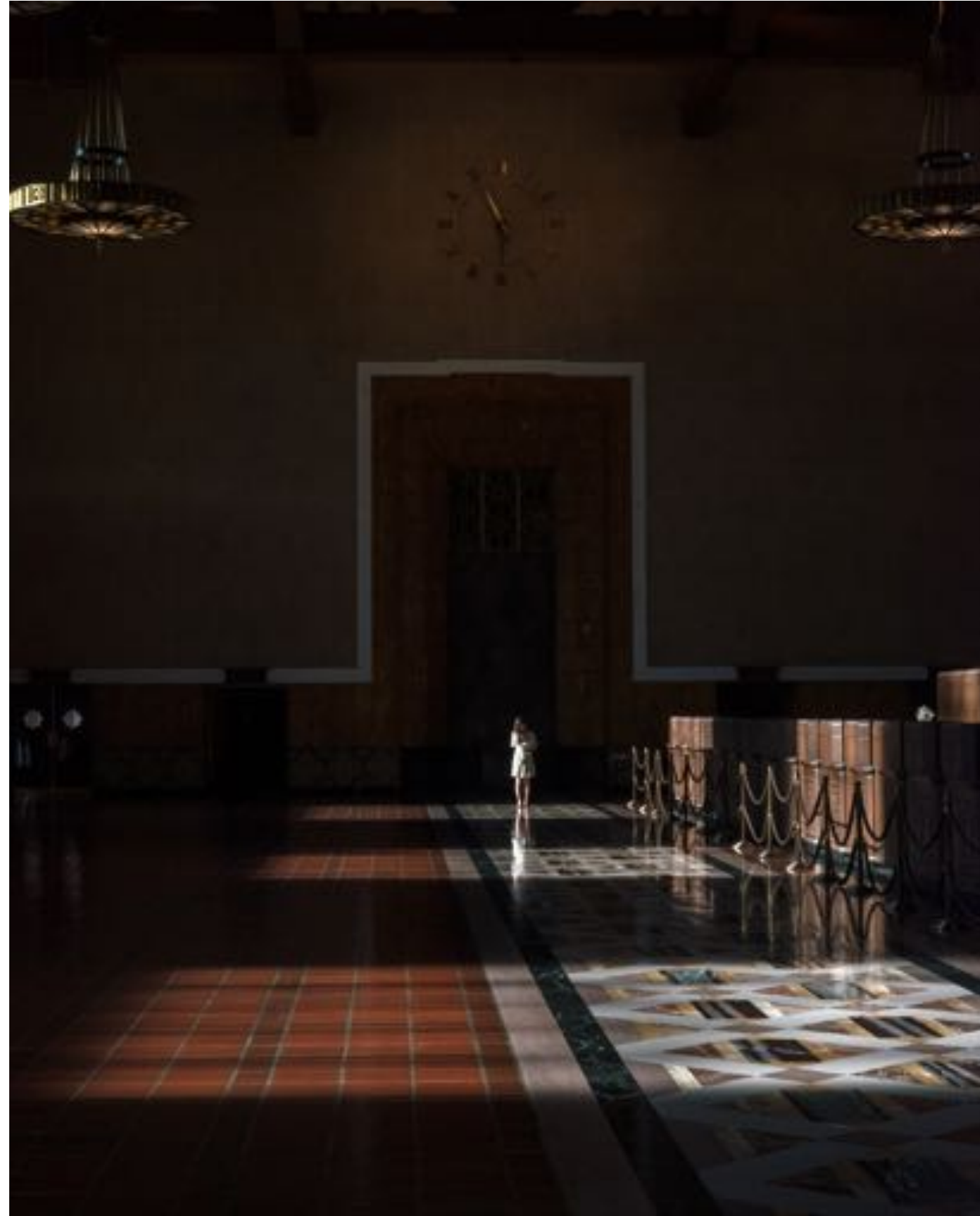






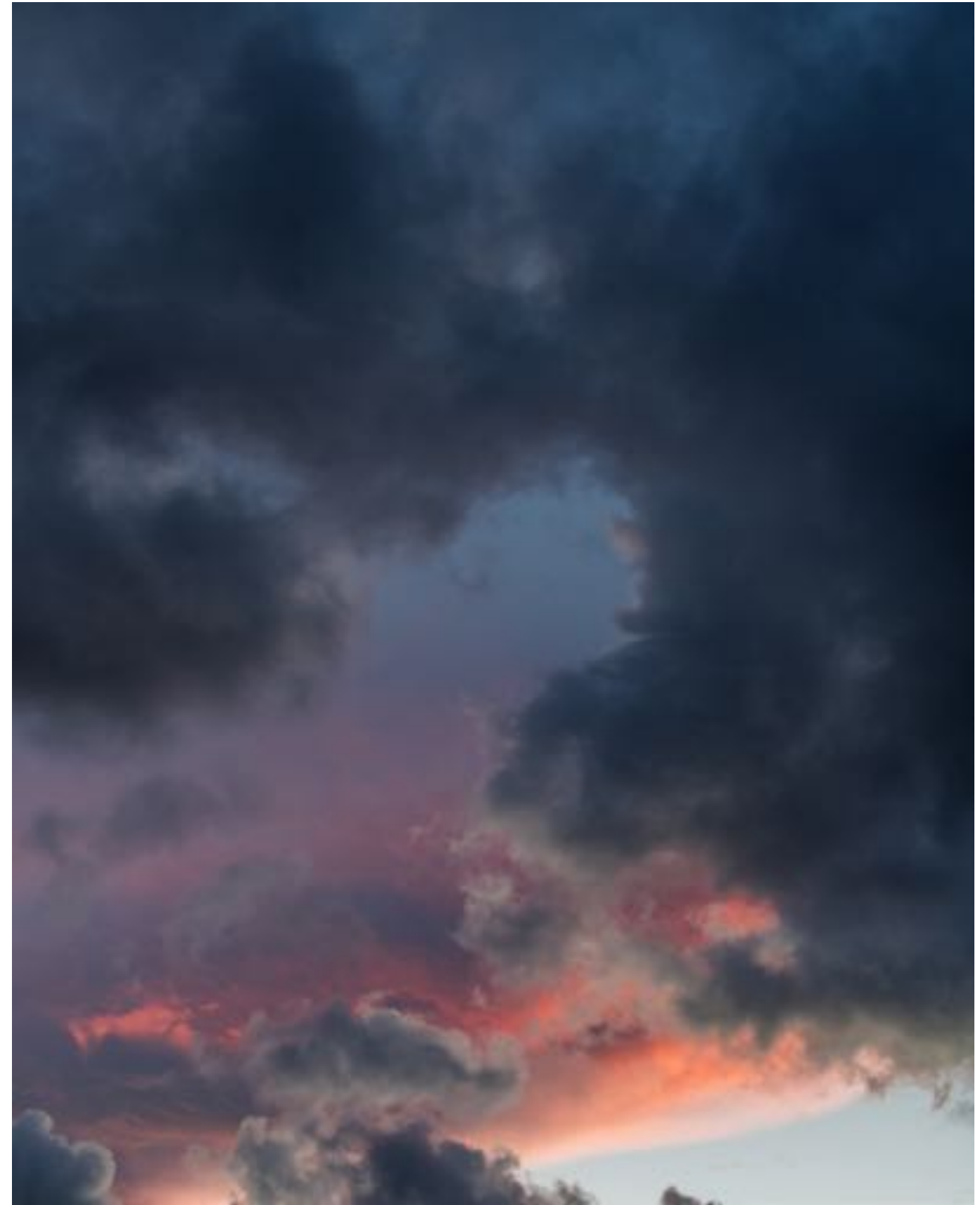


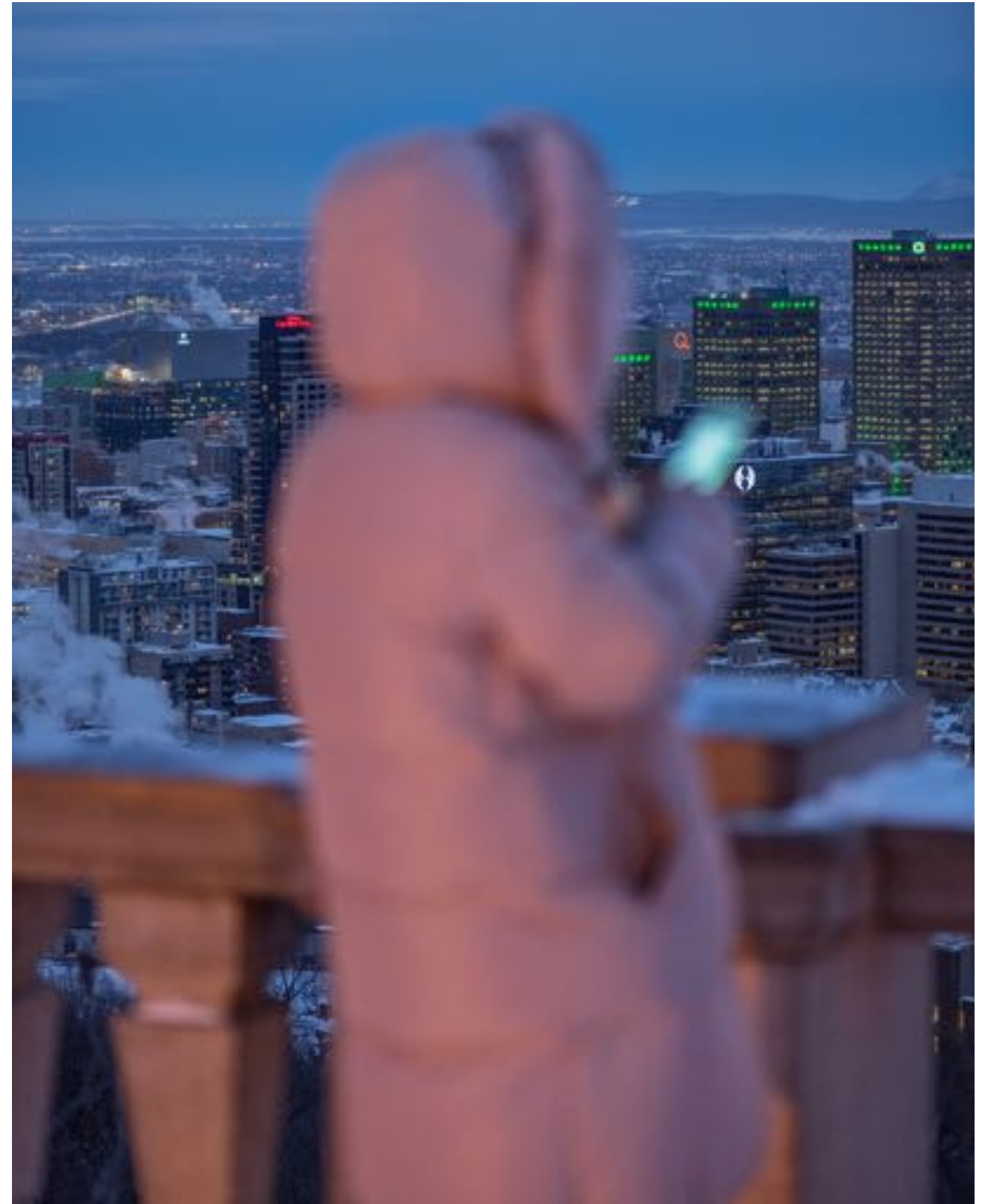




67-53
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Time









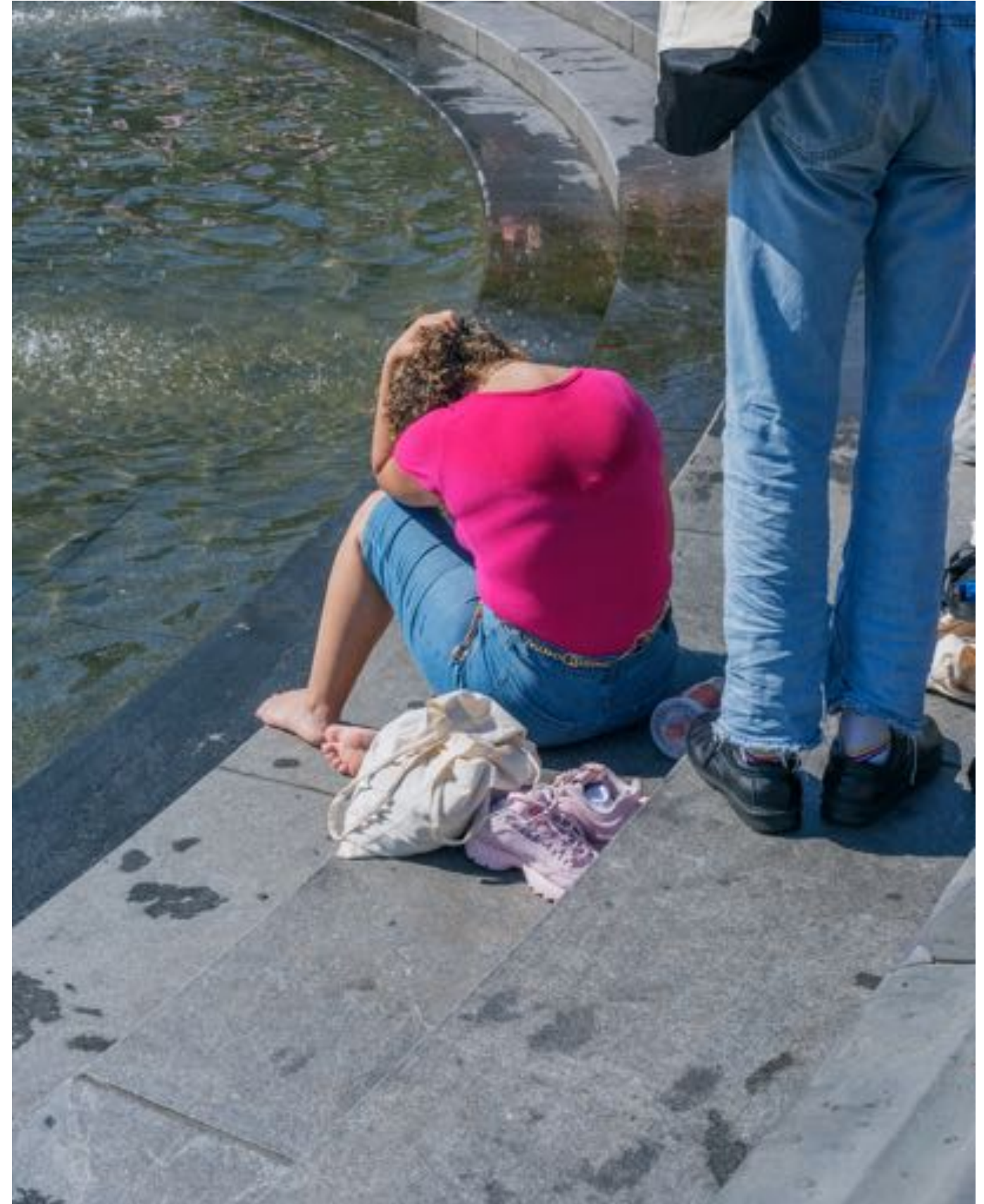




















Eurydice is a being of intimate and infinite love, of need and annealing completion to Orpheus.

When he looked back in her absence he saw the phenomenon of his own illusion.

Photographs, like Orpheus, look back. Eurydice was always a wish. To look through the viewfinder is to realize our own Illusions.

for my grandparents

Does the attention we pay to the world around us when we photograph destroy the inherent truth of it, as it was when Orpheus looked back at Eurydice? Is our attempt to understand the world by preserving it through a photograph only a fleeting attempt for survival in the face of eschatological thought? Or does photography – the act of looking itself – render the opaque into a living clarified truth through poetic action?

As Roland Barthes notes in *Camera Lucida*, “the Greeks entered into death backward: what they had before them was their past.” What Orpheus had behind him was his memory of Eurydice, brought to life by imagination, not by Hades. Barthes again notes that history “is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it – and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it. As a living soul I am the very contrary of history.” Photography is a tool of exclusion, photographs separate us from life. Photographs, like Orpheus, don’t see the truth. Eurydice vanished when Orpheus looked back because she was never there, she was beheld only in his mind. In the viewer’s completion, photographs can show what was never there, if the viewer is possessed with the presence of mind to parse the difference. Such an education is no mean feat. Photographs are direct records of a moment in time and space. Light reflected off of the world chisels itself into a semi-permanent record of enchanting stardust – to the enchanted.

The frame of an image is incontrovertibly finite, yet there is an infinite world to which the frame opens: an image is as much what you bring to it, as what it brings to you. “It is what I add to the photograph, and what is nonetheless already there,” Barthes says. It is a cyclical relationship. The window to which a photo opens is partially a reflection of your own experience, one that contains the image itself. Acknowledging this cyclicity, the writer David Company notes that “Photographs turn things into signs of themselves.”

Photos are inert, they don’t change, but how we see them does, and thus animated with fresh meaning in this dynamic much may be newly realized and what they reveal is potentially infinite.

Like Orpheus, both the photographers and the viewers of their images look back.

Who and what is your Eurydice?

Thank you to my Advisors An-My and Tim for pushing and inspiring me over these years, to my parents for giving me all the freedom and love in the world, to Ginger Port for her unflinching love and support, even when times were rough, to Theo Matza, Aurora Amidon and Ian Ullmann for their friendship, to the entirety of the Bard Photo Department and my close peers who make me hopeful that through art, we can make the world can be a better place, to Ryan Rusiecki and Bridie Carey for their essential help on this book at the end.

